



HUMAN GENETICS SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA

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Terms of Reference

Title:	Genetic Counsellor Professional Concerns and Complaints Committee (PCCC)
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Function

The Professional Concerns and Complaints Committee (PCCC) is a committee of the HGSA, and determines formal complaints about the practice or conduct of HGSA genetic counsellors.

The aim of the PCCC is to maintain the credibility of MHGSA and FHGSA genetic counsellors and protect the recognition of these individuals as the appropriately qualified health care professionals to be providing genetic counselling in Australasia.

Members of the PCCC will administer the [Complaints Management Procedure](#) in a timely manner and ensure that all parties have an opportunity to be fairly heard and represented as required.

The PCCC will investigate the complaint as required.

The process will involve:

- investigating the facts and circumstances in relation to the complaint
- allowing the Complainant and the Respondent to present their respective positions
- seeking further information from the parties and assessing that information
- reaching a determination in relation to the complaint
- requesting an appeal process through the HGSA Council to investigate disputed decisions.

The PCCC will provide a final recommendation and any recommended action to the HGSA Council in writing. Outcomes of the Complaint Management process that result in suspension or termination of membership and/or certification status are reported to the relevant regulatory bodies, published on the HGSA website where they are available to the public, and otherwise released or published as required by law or directed by the PCCC.

Establishment

Following a call for expressions of interest, the PCCC members will be selected by the HGSA Executive/Council.

The committee will elect the following Executive Officers from among its members for the term of the committee:

- Chairperson (Complaints Officer)
- Deputy Chairperson
- Secretary.

The Chair of the Committee will also be the Complaints Officer. On retirement or resignation of an Executive Officer a replacement will be elected by the Committee from the remaining membership of the Committee until the completion of the Complaints Process. In the case that the Complaints Officer retires or resigns while the Committee is not in session, a new Complaints Officer will be appointed by the HGSA Council through an EOI process.

Relationship to the Society

The PCCC reports to the HGSA Council directly. It is subject to the provisions of the HGSA Constitution and its By-Laws, and is under the direction of the HGSA Council with regard to all matters in connection with the Committee including, but not limited to, its establishment, membership, operation, and termination. Administrative support for the Committee is provided through the HGSA Secretariat.

Membership

The PCCC will be convened as required and consist of a minimum of five members, including at least:

- two Certified Genetic Counsellors (FHGSA)
- one Clinical Geneticist (FHGSA)
- one member of the Allied Health Professionals Association
- one consumer representative.

One FHGSA genetic counsellor with at least five years of experience post certification will be designated as the Complaints Officer and will also take the role of Chairperson.

Members of the PCCC must not hold a current position on the [Board of Censors \(BoC\) for Genetic Counselling](#) or any of its functional sub-committees ([Accreditation Committee](#), [Certification Committee](#), [Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\) Committee](#), or [Recency and Resumption of Practice Committee](#)).

Operation

The Complaints Officer is responsible for receiving and managing complaints under the [Complaints Management Procedure](#). The PCCC members will be convened by the Complaints Officer as required. As a matter of principle none of the PCCC members will simultaneously be eligible to be a member of the [Board of Censors for Genetic Counselling](#) or HGSA Executive. This will ensure that the PCCC is undertaking an objective assessment of the decision.

The PCCC will be convened as soon as possible after a request has been received by the Complaints Officer but within a maximum of four weeks.

The PCCC may choose to manage and make a determination on a complaint by correspondence alone

(including by email) as long as there is full consensus on the outcome from all PCCC members. In the event that a meeting is called by the Complaints Officer (which may be held in person, by telephone, by videoconference, or any combination of means) a quorum will require attendance by:

- the Complaints Officer/Chair (not a proxy or delegate)
- at least one other genetic counsellor member of the PCCC (not a proxy or delegate)
- all additional members or a representative proxy.

It is the responsibility of any PCCC member unable to attend a called meeting to ensure attendance by a representative proxy or delegate who can act in the interests of the group that they represent to ensure that the composition of the Committee maintains a broad perspective from stakeholder groups. For example, if the Consumer Representative is unable to attend, they must nominate a proxy who is also capable of acting to represent consumer interests.

Committee Meetings

At a minimum, the Committee will meet at least annually in the month of November to prepare and review a de-identified Complaints Register for submission with the [Board of Censors \(BoC\) for Genetic Counselling](#) annual report to the National Alliance of Self Regulating Health Professions (NASRHP) in December each year.

Term

Committee members will stand for an unspecified term. The PCCC will be considered current until the [Complaints Management Policy and Procedure](#) and all necessary reporting requirements have been completed to the satisfaction of the HGSA Council.

Communication

The PCCC will report the outcome to the HGSA Council for ratification upon completion of a complaint investigation. The PCCC may request the establishment of an Appeal Committee to the HGSA Council following a request from the Complainant or Respondent. The PCCC may need to collaborate with other regulatory bodies or professional complaints committees as required by the nature of the complaint.

Finance

The operating costs of the PCCC will be accounted for by the HGSA Council, and are subject to any expenditure limits determined by the HGSA Council. Funds provided by the HGSA to the PCCC for a specific purpose must be used for the purpose intended. A kitty of \$20,000 will be managed by the PCCC to cover the costs of managing complaints.

Termination

The termination of the PCCC is at the discretion of the HGSA Council after the resolution of a complaint. Upon termination of the committee, all records, developed, acquired, created or HGSA PCCC Committee Terms of Reference maintained by the PCCC will be transferred to the HGSA Council.