



**SERO Institute  
Domestic Student  
Handbook 2020**

# WELCOME

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All of the information you need when studying  
with SERO Institute!

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# INTRODUCTION

## WHERE TO BEGIN

Enrolment into courses at SERO Institute is to be completed prior to the commencement date of the course. SERO Institute does not accept students who have not enrolled prior to commencement of classes. Your enrolment is not confirmed until you receive formal advice from SERO Institute.

In order to enrol in any of our courses, you will be required to complete an enrolment form regardless of if you are:

- Completing a full fee for service course
- Completing your course online, through the workplace or on campus

Our enrolment form includes a detailed Pre-training Questionnaire which provides the College with specific information about any pre-existing knowledge and skills that you may already possess. We use the information to identify any potential for you to apply for recognition of prior learning and assist you to decide on the best qualification to suit your needs. It will also assist to identify any extra learning support that you may require throughout your study journey.

Study time is the time for you to do some extra reading or study to reinforce key messages. If you are studying on campus, try to set aside, on average, half an hour of your own time to do some reflection, reading and/or research. However, this does not stop you doing extra reading and research should you wish to do so.

## UNIQUE STUDENT IDENTIFIER

If you are undertaking nationally recognised training delivered by SERO Institute or any other registered training organisation, you will need to have a Unique Student Identifier (USI). This includes studying at TAFE or with a private training organisation, completing an apprenticeship or skill set, certificate or diploma course.

A USI gives you access to your online USI account which is made up of ten numbers and letters. It will look something like this: 3AW88YH9U5.

A USI account will contain all your nationally recognised training records and results from 1 January 2015 onwards. Your results from 2015 will be available in your USI account.

When applying for a job or enrolling into further study, you will often need to provide your training records and results. One of the main benefits of the USI is that you will have easy access to your training records and results throughout your life.

You can access your USI account online from a computer, tablet or smart phone anywhere and anytime.

## DO YOU NEED A UNIQUE STUDENT IDENTIFIER (USI)?

You will need a USI when you enrol or re-enrol in training if you are a:

- student enrolling in nationally recognised training for the first time, for example if you are studying at TAFE or with a private training organisation, completing an apprenticeship or skill set, certificate or diploma course;
- school student completing nationally recognised training; or
- student continuing with nationally recognised training.

If you do not already have a USI, SERO Institute can apply for one on your behalf when you go through the enrolment process and provide consent for SERO Institute to do so.

If you prefer you can apply for a USI yourself. You can create a USI account by accessing the USI website at <https://www.usi.gov.au/your-usi/create-usi>

This website will also advise on the documentation and identification you need to create a USI.

Once you are on the website:

1. select 'How do I create a USI?'
2. select Create a USI
3. accept the Terms and Conditions
4. have an acceptable Form of ID
5. set a password
6. check Questions and Answers

# TRAINING

## FACE TO FACE BASED TRAINING

Training and assessment is conducted in a training room approved by the College or at a campus. Training will be undertaken by combination of lectures, practical sessions, individual activities and group activities and Trainer/Assessor moderated discussion on assigned projects.

Training and assessment is conducted using simulated workplace environments. Our locations have skills labs and workshops that assimilate a real workplace environment with state-of-the-art equipment. Written tasks and practical tasks/projects are completed and submitted for assessment.

Each classroom is equipped with an overhead projector and white board. In addition, other resources are accessed on a needs basis. Computers are available for student use. We also encourage you to access your community libraries for an array of resources.

## VOCATIONAL PLACEMENT

Student vocational placement is often a compulsory part of our qualifications. To find out if your course requires you to complete a number of hours of placement in a workplace environment, please contact administration via email at [admin@sero.edu.au](mailto:admin@sero.edu.au).

If you are required to do vocational placement you will need to work in businesses or organisations which can give you appropriate experience. SERO Institute already has some collaborative partnerships with businesses and organisations and must approve any placement arrangements prior to commencement. Your trainer will be able to advise you further on vocational placement arrangements for your qualification.

During vocational placement, your trainer will use email, phone or skype to contact you during any placement time. In some cases, your trainer may also make arrangements to visit you on site during your placement. They will support you and help you have a positive and meaningful experience. They will also be noting the educational outcomes and are able to help you make the most of the placement.

Please note you may be required to get a police check or working with children check (blue card in QLD) in order to undertake vocational placement in some qualifications. Your trainer will be able to advise you.

## COURSE PROGRESSION AND DURATION

SERO Institute monitors, records and assesses student's attendance and progression to ensure students are in a position to complete their course.

All students are set times for the completion of their qualifications. These range from three months to eighteen months. To determine the expected duration of a qualification please feel free to contact SERO Institute via email at [admin@sero.edu.au](mailto:admin@sero.edu.au).

Accelerated progression enables students to complete their training earlier regardless of their mode of delivery. SERO Institute implements intervention strategies to students who are not making satisfactory course progress. An Intervention Strategy is a systematic plan of action adopted in an attempt to address

and reduce the causes of academic failure. It is developed to provide students with optional assistance to achieve satisfactory course progression.

Time management and self-motivation are factors affecting your progression through your studies. To successfully complete your qualification in the set time or less, you will need to use your organisational skills.

Our student support staff are able to show you what you can do to help yourself and guide you with your studies. Use your trainers to stay motivated, organised and progress through your course. Non progression may result in a unit being repeated and incurring further debt.

Further detail is contained in the Student Progression Policy that follows.

# STUDENT PROGRESSION POLICY

## PURPOSE

This policy outlines SERO Institute's (the College) approach to ensuring that progression of students is conducted in an ethical and responsible manner. This policy also applies to instances of deferral and cancellation instigated by the student or the College.

## DEFINITIONS

**Deferral:** A deferral is defined as a postponement of studies prior to the commencement of training.

**Extension:** An extension is defined as additional time provided to complete the course, if requested by student.

## POLICY

It is the policy of SERO Institute to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to complete their training regardless of circumstances. SERO Institute has developed this policy to ensure that all students are aware of and utilise the mechanisms available to maximise the opportunity to complete their qualification. However, if it is identified that students may not be conducting their behaviour within the guidelines contained in this handbook SERO Institute may commence a withdrawal process.

## STUDENT DEFERRAL

Students are able to defer their studies upon acceptance of an enrolment application before the commencement of studies for up to three months. Where a student does not commence at the conclusion of the three month extension period, they will be required to re-enrol.

In order to formalise a request for deferral, students are required to make their request via e-mail to [admin@sero.edu.au](mailto:admin@sero.edu.au).

SERO Institute will defer the enrolment and upon recommencement, reactivate the enrolment from the new start date in accordance with the date specified. Where a student does not recommence on the nominated date, SERO Institute may commence to cancel the student's enrolment.

## COURSE EXTENSION

Where a student identifies that they may not complete their course within the specified timeframe, they are able to request an extension of the duration. Extensions up to one month can be approved by the trainer. Campus students requesting an extension will need to complete and submit to their trainer the Request for Extension of Assessment Submission form.

To apply for an extension (for longer than one month), students will need to speak with the trainer and the trainer will have the authority to approve the extension.

Extensions of three months and beyond will only be granted in exceptional circumstances such as medical conditions, overseas or interstate travel, work commitments or family emergencies. Evidence to support the need to extend the course should be included with the request. Requests will be approved on a case by case basis.

## COLLEGE DEFERRAL

SERO Institute reserves the right to cancel, terminate or defer courses without notice. See Refund policy in relation to refund of fees in these cases.

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# CANCELLATION POLICY AND PROCESS

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## POLICY STATEMENT

A student may at any time cancel their enrolment. However, should they wish to return to study they will need to inform the College via email. Cancellation of a course may affect a student's Centrelink payments

SERO Institute may cancel a student's enrolment for misconduct in accordance with the Misconduct Policy included in this handbook.

## PROCESS

### CANCELLING AN ENROLMENT

Cancellation of enrolment must be done in writing. Requests must be emailed to [admin@sero.edu.au](mailto:admin@sero.edu.au).

Where the student has completed any units of study and all fees have been paid, the student will be issued with a Statement of Attainment identifying those units.

Cancellations will be processed immediately upon receipt of the request.

Where SERO Institute cancels an enrolment, the student will be informed via email or letter. The student's enrolment will be immediately suspended. The student will have 28 days to appeal against the cancellation. If the complaint procedure is activated the cancellation will take effect once the complaint procedure has been completed.

For information on refunds following cancellation, please refer to the SERO Institute Refund Policy in this handbook.

**NOTE:** If the student's enrolment was cancelled half way through a unit the student will be required to re-enrol in the entire unit and will incur the full cost of the unit.

# RECORDING CLASSES AND TUTORIALS

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Students who wish to record classes, tutorials and other programs must first seek permission from the staff member in charge. In seeking permission, the student must advise the staff member of how they wish to record the class (such as; phone, tape recorder, camcorder, tablet). No permission will be granted for recording assessment sessions.

Students who have been granted permission to record the class may proceed to do so, subject to the following conditions:

- The recording of class material must not cause disruption to the class or teaching space.
- The recordings may only be used by the student to study and revise course material.
- The recorded material may not be provided to any other persons without first obtaining the consent of the staff member who initially granted permission.
- The recorded material must be destroyed by the student on the conclusion of study for the course.

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) & CREDIT TRANSFER

SERO Institute recognises qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by other RTOs. Not only that, but, during your lifetime, you have gained knowledge and developed skills. You may have previously worked either full or part time or in a voluntary capacity. This work may have involved some training (either formal or informal). You may also have attended other training courses.

Your current knowledge and skills may be relevant to the course you are wishing to enrol in. Each unit you study is made up of various elements and competency outcomes. Each one consists of a range of performance criteria. If you can provide evidence that you have the relevant skills and knowledge, you may be able to use this to gain recognition for all or part of a course. This is known as recognition of prior learning (RPL).

When you apply for RPL, your knowledge and skills are measured against the equivalent unit(s) in the relevant course. If you are successful, you will be assessed as having already completed those units in your course. This may enable you to complete your studies in less time.

## APPLYING FOR RPL

The application for RPL is an assessment just like any other assessment you may undergo while you are a student with the College. It is, therefore, not to be taken lightly. However, if you look at the advantages in undertaking this process, the time may be well spent.

You are able to apply for RPL for one unit or several units of competency using the RPL process. You must be able to support your application with documentary evidence. RPL applications must be submitted to your Study Coach or trainer as soon as is practicable to enable assessment of your claim to be conducted without delay and avoid unnecessary course fees.

If you believe that you already have competencies in the course you are applying for, contact your nearest campus or your trainer. If you are completing your study via Online contact us via email at [admin@sero.edu.au](mailto:admin@sero.edu.au).

## CREDIT TRANSFER (CT)

Credit Transfer involves assessing a previously completed course or unit of competency to see if it provides equivalent learning or competency outcomes to those required within your current course of study.

The purpose of Credit Transfer is to make it easier for students to move between courses and institutions. This gives people more opportunities to fulfil their potential and respond to changing employment needs. It means a student can gain credit for previous study and complete current qualifications more quickly.

Credit Transfer allows students to count relevant, successfully completed studies at TAFE institutes, accredited private providers, professional organisations or enterprises and universities toward their current course of qualifications.

To apply for Credit Transfer, you will need to provide a certified copy of a Statement of Attainment or qualification and Academic Transcript, confirming the units of competency that you have already completed.

## WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR TUITION FEES?

Students who are successful in obtaining RPL will have their tuition fees adjusted. RPL attracts a charge (100% of the fee per unit), please contact your nearest campus for full details or email us at [admin@sero.edu.au](mailto:admin@sero.edu.au).

# ISSUING QUALIFICATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF ATTAINMENT

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In accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015, SERO Institute will issue a qualification within 30 days of successful completion of all units of competency in that qualification. A Statement of Attainment will be issued within 30 days of exiting a qualification, completing a short course or completing an individual unit of competency (where applicable). While we won't issue a statement of attainment to students each time a unit of competency is completed as part of a qualification, you can request a copy of your academic results from the administration team at any time via email [admin@sero.edu.au](mailto:admin@sero.edu.au).

Once all outstanding fees have been paid, SERO Institute will send the qualification (and a transcript of results) or Statement of Attainment to the student's nominated address. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they keep their address details up to date at all times to ensure that they receive their qualification or Statement of Attainment.

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# SUPPORT SERVICES

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SERO Institute cares about the needs of our students. If you are finding the program is conflicting with your work and domestic responsibilities, please do not hesitate to speak with a trainer or the Program Co-ordinator. There may be a simple solution when viewed from another perspective. Students who are not coping with the academic demands of the program will be counselled by their Operations manager.

We are dedicated to continuously improving our services to meet the needs and expectations of our students and our friendly staff are on hand to give advice. Student Support Services helps to resolve problems that may impede the successful completion of student's study programs.

All students of SERO Institute have access to student support services. Services that we provide include:

- Day to day administration support
- Academic and language support
- Orientation program to study within the specified program
- Emergency and health related support
- Administration procedure support
- Extra tutorials and evening class options

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# EXTERNAL COUNSELLING SERVICES

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## [Lifeline - Child, youth & family counselling](#)

24 hour telephone counselling is available. Face to face counselling is available by appointment. Counselling support is provided for couples, families & individuals suffering crisis & emotional distress. Phone: 13 1114  
Web: [www.lccq.org.au](http://www.lccq.org.au)

## [Relationships Australia \(Relationship Counselling & Gambling Help\)](#)

Addiction, Financial & Family Relationship counselling & Mediation is available to everyone. Phone: 1300 364 277  
Web: [www.relationships.com.au](http://www.relationships.com.au)

## [Life Support Counselling Services](#)

Offering support and counselling Phone: 1300 7335 030  
Web: <https://lifesupportscounselling.com.au/>

# LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND NUMERACY SKILLS INDICATOR (LLN)

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All students are to complete the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Skills Indicators to identify any special learning needs a student may have prior to the commencement of training. This will help to identify any access and equity or learning support services that may be required to maximise the student's chances of successfully completing their course.

For face-to-face delivery, students assessed as requiring additional support, trainers, will discuss, with the student, a strategy and document this strategy where assistance is required. However, should specialist assistance be required, we will work with the students to identify the most appropriate program or pathway to support.

Based on the individual student's level, reasonable adjustment may be made to the delivery strategy to assist the student with successful completion of all units of competency. If the level of assistance is higher than the trainer feels able to manage, the student can be referred to an external specialised service. Fees and charges for these services will not be met by the College and will be the responsibility of the student.

# COURSE FEES, AND OTHER FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Students **MUST** pay their course fees by the due date, as per their payment schedule provided. If fees are not paid on time, staff will attempt to make contact with students to arrange an appointment with Administration and you will be given the opportunity to discuss any compassionate and compelling circumstances and get your fees up to date.

Fees include:

- Facility and program orientations
- Tuition, tutorials and lectures
- Study guides and authorised supported learning materials and compulsory textbooks (if applicable)
- Student counselling and support
- Student identification card (Full time students)
- Australian Goods and Services Tax (GST) where applicable to items listed above
- One (1) copy of all completion documents (at completion or withdrawal/early exit as applicable)

## POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL FEES AND CHARGES

Description	Cost
Replacement student ID	\$15
Replacement Log Book	\$20
Re-Issue of qualification or statement of attainment (contact your campus admin for details)	\$40
Replacement safety glasses*	\$10
Replacement hearing protection*	\$12
Re-attendance of classes (if Fail)	Contact Student Support
Recognition of Prior Learning	100% of unit cost
Replacement Study Guides	\$10
Late Fee – applies for overdue fees	\$100
Nonstandard Letter	\$50
Administration Fee (maximum may be charged)	\$250
National Police Clearance Certificate (costs vary)	\$40-\$50

Following your enrolment, SERO Institute will issue an invoice for these fees. Fees must be paid in accordance with the invoice either by credit card, debit card or direct debit from a nominated bank account.

The type of study and your personal circumstances may affect the amount you pay i.e. concession and health care card holders make smaller student contributions than other students.

Students enrolling in full fee paying courses have a number of options for paying course fees. These include:

- Up-front payment
- Instalments/payment plan

Fees can be paid by:

- Credit Card
- Direct Debit
- Cash

Students are advised to keep their receipts regarding education expenses for taxation purposes.

SERO Institute reserves the right to suspend a student's enrolment in the program when fees remain unpaid and to follow legal processes for monies outstanding. Suspension of enrolment will include the removal of access to student services, records of training, placement opportunities and online course access (if applicable). Please remember that during all placements, students will be working and will not be paid for this time. Therefore, careful budgeting is essential.

## OVERDUE FEES

All fees must be paid in advance of the Stage/Term of study to which they apply. Students will not be permitted to commence the relevant Stage/Term until all fees for that Stage/Term (plus any outstanding fees) are paid in full. Accounts that are consistently or significantly overdue will be referred to a debt collection agency, and tuition will be withdrawn (students will not be permitted to attend any further classes or access any College services including assessment, online services and placements) until the overdue amount is paid in full.

SERO Institute will not issue a qualification or Statement of Attainment to any student who has overdue fees.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

SERO Institute is committed to the compliance of all laws and the highest ethical standards. Part of this commitment is compliance with the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (the CCA) and the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) which is part of the CCA and is Australia's national, state and territory law to protect consumers and ensure fair trading in Australia.

## COOLING OFF PERIOD

A cooling off period is only applicable if an enrolment has resulted from unsolicited contact from a SERO Institute representative. If this is the case a prospective student has a cooling off period of **ten (10) business days** in which they can cancel the agreement with the College without payment or penalty. The cooling off period gives the prospective student time to fully consider their personal circumstances and the terms of the enrolment and cancel the agreement without penalty if they change their mind.

# SERO INSTITUTE STUDENT REFUND POLICY

Once a course/semester has commenced or a student withdraws prior to the completion of the course/semester, there are no refunds of the course/semester's fees or material fees. SERO Institute may at its discretion issue a non-transferable credit for the remainder of the course/semester fees.

If written advice of cancellation is received by SERO Institute more than 28 days prior to course/semester commencement, SERO Institute will make a full refund of course and material fees (where applicable) within 28 days of receipt of written cancellation advice. If written cancellation is received by SERO Institute less than 28 days before the course/ semester commencement, a cancellation fee of up to a maximum of ten percent of the paid course fee will be charged.

SERO Institute reserves the right to alter timetables and class locations without notice. SERO Institute reserves the right to cancel, terminate or defer courses without notice. If any course is cancelled or deferred and does not start on the agreed starting day or is started but terminated before it is completed for whatever reason, SERO Institute will refund all course and material fees within 2 weeks after the default day.

Full-time students are required to attend all scheduled classes and activities in class time and maintain academic progression. A student whose academic progression is not satisfactory may risk course suspension or termination. No refund will be provided in this instance. Please see Course Progression for more information.

SERO Institute reserves the right to withdraw all its services if the student's conduct disrupts the normal operation of classes. In this case no fee will be refunded.

Course fees are not transferable to another person or institution.

The student must agree to indemnify SERO Institute and/or its staff from any responsibility and/or claim for any possible injury, damage or loss during attendance at any SERO Institute program or activity arranged by SERO Institute. This agreement does not remove the right to take further action under Australia's consumer protection laws. The SERO Institute dispute resolution processes do not limit the student's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

## OBTAINING A REFUND

If a student believes they are entitled to a refund, they must complete a student fee refund application form (available from the campus admin). The form must be returned together with any supporting documentation to the campus administration within 28 days of termination of enrolment. Requests for refunds will be processed accordingly and written notice of the outcome given to the student. If a refund amount is due, this will be paid into the student's nominated account within 28 days from approval.

Fees incurred by SERO Institute due to incorrect bank account details being supplied either by a student or an agent will be deducted from the refund payment.

# CODE OF CONDUCT

## PURPOSE

This Policy outlines what SERO Institute (the College) expects from students while in college, or when representing SERO Institute. Students are expected to behave in a considerate, respectful and courteous manner when dealing with staff, other students, clients and members of the general public so that learning and teaching can take place freely, safely and without interference due to the misconduct of others. Students are expected to respect the property of the College, their fellow students and staff. All students are to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity to maintain equality and validity of their work.

## STUDENT MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct is defined as:

Attempts to cheat, plagiarise or otherwise act dishonestly in undertaking an assessment task, or assisting other students to do so. Students are considered guilty of cheating if they seek to gain advantage by unfair means; such as copying another students' work, or in any way mislead a Trainer or Educator about their knowledge, ability, or the amount of original work they have done.

Plagiarism is defined as:

The act or instance of the practice submitting part or the whole of someone else's work or ideas and passing it off as one's own or without proper referencing of the original writer.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to the following:

- the submission of work, either in part or in whole completed by another
- failure to give credit for ideas, statements, facts or conclusions which rightfully belong to another
- failure to use quotation marks (or other means of setting apart) when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, a sentence, or even a part thereof
- paraphrasing of another's writing without credit of originality
- use of another's project or programs or part thereof without giving credit

Cheating is defined as:

Cheating includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism, allowing someone to hand in your work as his or her own, several people writing an assignment and handing in multiple copies all represented implicitly or explicitly as individual work, acts of dishonesty, copying from another's exam or assignment, discussion of answers or questions at any time in an exam or assessment (unless such discussion is specifically authorised by the Trainer or Educator), accessing unauthorised copies of an assessment, using or displaying notes or other information devices inappropriate to the prescribed exam conditions, allowing another person to complete an exam or assessment on behalf of the student, and obtaining or attempting to obtain (including aiding another to obtain) credit for work or any improvement in evaluation of performance by any immoral or dishonest means.

General misconduct is defined as:

The following examples indicate the kinds of behaviour which constitute general misconduct. They are for illustrative purposes and are not intended to be exhaustive. Student misconduct occurs when a student:

- breaches any state or commonwealth laws
- breaches any of the College's policies
- wilfully disobeys or disregards any lawful order or direction by a College staff member
- breaches any policies and procedures of external organisations while on vocational placement
- prejudices the good name or reputation of the College
- bullies, intimidates, harasses or acts violent towards themselves, other students or staff; including causing other students or staff to fear for their own safety, security or wellbeing, whether face to face, by telephone or by the use of technology. This includes prejudice and discrimination because of race, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital status, sexual preference, disability, age, political conviction, religious belief or for any other reason
- prejudices the good order and governance of the College or interferes with the freedom of other students to pursue their studies, carry out their functions or participate in the life of the College
- behaves in a disruptive manner; such as swearing or using offensive language, misbehaves in class or other activity under the control or supervision of the College, or on the College premises or other premises to which the student has access as a student of the College, obstructs any member of staff in the performance of their duties
- disobeys or fails to comply with contractual or legal requirements
- misuses, vandalises, damages or steals any of the College's facilities, premises or property (including altering/defacing the College documents or records), or the property of other students or the College staff
- misuses the information technology communication infrastructure of the College at or away from the College premises while acting as a College student (including viewing or distributing offensive material via the internet, email or other means)
- unlawfully uses, possesses or distributes drugs and/or alcohol
- refuses to identify him or herself when lawfully asked to do so by a College staff member
- fails to comply with any penalty imposed for breach of discipline
- acts dishonestly in relation to admission to the College
- breaches any confidence of the College

Any breach of Commonwealth or State law by a student which may result in a criminal conviction will be reported to the relevant authorities.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are to:

- respect the right of others, their differences and diversity
- respect people's right to privacy and confidentiality
- treat people in a fair and non-discriminatory way
- undertake studies in a diligent manner by attending all sessions, complete all requirements to the best of your ability and behave in a co-operative manner with other students and staff
- give requested feedback to other students and staff in a specific and sensitive way
- personally bring any matters requiring attention (such as learning concerns, accidents etc.) to the notice of the Operations Manager or Study Coach as soon as practicable.
- all students must visibly wear their Student ID card (if issued) when entering, leaving or remaining on the College premises.
- bring no food or drinks (excluding bottled water) in classrooms or teaching areas.
- dispose of all rubbish in the bins provided.
- not use mobile phones (must be turned off) and other electronic equipment not approved by the College while in class.

## SERO INSTITUTE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Students can expect staff to:

- treat people in a fair, non-discriminatory way and with due regard to their privacy
- be professional in performing their duties
- respect the rights of others, their differences and diversity
- respect people's right to privacy and confidentiality
- be supportive of your education
- give appropriate consultation about your progress
- give clear and specific feedback in assignments and if appropriate in subject sessions

Students are to be regarded as innocent of the alleged misconduct until they have either admitted to it or been found by proper investigation. Past misconduct is not evidence that a student has behaved in the same manner again. Each case is dealt with on its own merits and according to its own circumstances with the provision that the first instance of misconduct will be penalised more leniently than subsequent instances of misconduct.

All instances of alleged misconduct will be referred to campus management for investigation. The student will be notified of the investigation within 5 working days and a meeting is scheduled so the student can be given an opportunity to discuss an allegation of misconduct. The meeting should occur within 14 days of the initial notification.

Where the student is unable to attend the meeting, the discussion may occur via email or teleconference. Where a student chooses not to participate, campus management or a delegate will immediately advise the

General Manager who will then determine and take action. The student and campus management, or a delegate may each elect to invite a nominee, or any staff member or student nominee, to be present at this meeting, or to participate in the email/teleconference discussion.

If, as a result of the discussion, campus management or a delegate concludes that no misconduct was involved, no further action will be taken, and no record of the discussion will be placed in the student's file.

If, as a result of the discussion, campus management or a delegate concludes that the action of the student was an example of inadvertent misconduct, the student will be counselled by campus management, or a delegate and / or will be permitted to resubmit the piece of assessment if applicable. Campus management or a delegate will place a note to that effect in the student's file.

If, as a result of the discussion, campus management or a delegate concludes that the action of the student was deliberate misconduct a penalty is determined, and the student is notified in writing.

## PENALTIES

Penalties imposed will take into account the nature and the extent of the misconduct, the students' stage in the program and the conventions of the field of study. Depending on the severity of misconduct, it may result in cancellation.

The following penalties may be imposed:

- a warning
- re-submission of an assessment
- failure, of an assessment or unit of competency, a note in the student's file and a reprimand from the General Manager
- suspension from the course for a period not exceeding 6 months (See Deferring, suspending or cancellation policy for further details)
- temporary exclusion from classes
- the police will be contacted when necessary
- a charge for the cost of damage to facilities and equipment

## NOTIFICATION AND APPEAL

The campus management or a delegate will prepare a written statement setting out the findings of the investigation, referring to the evidence or other material on which the findings were based. This statement is to indicate any penalty/ies to be applied. Campus management or a delegate will, within 10 working days, provide a copy of the report to the student and the General Manager and a copy of the report will be added to the student record.

Where the campus management, or a delegate concludes that the case involves deliberate misconduct and either:

- the student does not admit to misconduct; or
- the student does not agree to accept the penalty;

The campus management or a delegate shall advise the General Manager who will conduct an initial inquiry following the procedures outlined above. The student has the right of appeal against the decision of the inquiry and may appeal in writing to the General Manager. Appeals must be lodged in writing with Student Services within 20 days of the date of the student being notified of the consequence. The process will commence within 10 working days from the date of receipt of the student's appeal.

## FAIR TREATMENT AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

SERO Institute will treat all students fairly and persons seeking to enrol.

### ACCESS & EQUITY

SERO Institute applies access and equity principles through all its policies and procedures to promote full and equal participation of all students in its courses, to foster an environment free of discrimination and harassment, and to assist students to identify and achieve their desired outcomes.

### PRE-ENROLMENT INFORMATION

SERO Institute will ensure that prior to enrolment prospective students receive adequate information regarding the course, training, and assessment.

SERO Institute will provide clear information to each student, prior to enrolment in regard to:

- student selection, enrolment and orientation procedures;
- course information, including educational and vocational outcomes;
- fees and charges, including refund policy;
- provision for language, literacy and numeracy assistance;
- student support services;
- welfare and guidance services;
- flexible learning and assessment procedures;
- grievance and appeals procedures;
- disciplinary procedures;
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) arrangements and credit transfer.

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# COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY

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## PURPOSE

SERO Institute seeks to continuously provide high quality education and training service in which all are encouraged to strive for excellence. It is committed to implementing an effective complaint resolution procedure that, where possible, is managed quickly, at the local level and with a minimum number of people involved. The resolution process will focus on a rapid re-establishment of good education working relationships and positive outcomes. The procedures aim to avoid blame and undue investigation. This policy provides clients with a clear process to register a complaint or appeal. It ensures all parties involved are kept informed of the resulting actions and outcomes.

## SCOPE

In handling a complaint, whether formal or informal, confidentiality will be maintained to:

- Protect all parties involved in a complaint under the principles of natural justice
- Involve the minimum number of people possible

The College is not compelled to consider:

- anonymous appeals; or
- appeals that appear to be of a frivolous nature, or vexatiously or maliciously made; or
- appeals made on the basis of the judgment of the College staff member who made the decision;
- or appeals that fail to meet the lodgement requirements

All students and staff are to be informed of the complaint resolution procedures. The focus for resolution will be on issues rather than individuals. Students are to be protected from victimisation. Natural justice principles will be used to ensure procedural fairness. A complainant has the right to withdraw the complaint at any stage.

Where a complainant is a current student, their enrolment must be maintained while the complaints and appeals process is ongoing. Complainants can choose to utilise resources outside the College to resolve their complaint. Complaints managed by the College are not charged however; if an external mediation service is required this service will be charged.

## DEFINITIONS

A complaint can be defined as a student's expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the College's services and activities, such as:

- the enrolment, induction/orientation process;
- the quality of education provided;
- academic matters, including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study;
- handling of personal information and access to personal records;
- the way someone has been treated.

## PRINCIPLES

The College is guided by the following principles in resolving all student complaints and appeals:

- complaint and appeal procedures will be readily available to ensure students understand their rights and responsibilities, including their right to have a support person present at any interview or proceeding
- the complaints and appeals will be well documented, and the results of complaints and appeals will be communicated to relevant parties within 20 working days
- Complainants will be advised of the outcome of the complaints through written notification that the complaint has been resolved
- the principles of courtesy, mutual respect, confidentiality and procedural fairness will be observed by all parties to the complaint resolution process
- there will be no direct financial cost to the student relating to internal review and appeal processes
- complaint and appeal procedures will be applied consistently and transparently
- a student's enrolment will be maintained while the complaint and appeal process is ongoing
- records will be kept for a minimum of five years and are kept strictly confidential
- the complaint resolution process will be used by the College to identify areas for improvement in the quality of services and support it provides to students
- the complaint resolution process does not restrict an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies
- students may choose to have their complaint reviewed externally

## Victimisation

All complaints will be handled with fairness in accordance with the principles of natural justice. The College is committed to ensuring that students and respondents do not experience any victimisation as a result of making either an informal or formal complaint.

Whether a complaint is formal or informal, steps will be taken to ensure that neither party is victimised or disadvantaged as a result of a complaint being made. The Nominee appointed to manage a formal complaint will be responsible for ensuring that no victimisation occurs.

## Natural justice

The duty to act fairly includes two rules: the fair dealing rule and the no bias rule. This means that all parties must be given the opportunity to present their case, be fully informed about allegations and decisions made and have the right to be represented by another person.

In addition, a decision maker must have no personal interest, beyond the scope of their role in this process and must be unbiased. If the decision maker cannot meet these requirements they must immediately withdraw from the process. The procedure shall have regard to the duration of an overseas student's stay in Australia. In order to expedite the process, students shall also have regard for this and not unduly interfere with the mediation agent or the procedure. Should interference by the student affect the normal process of events, the College shall not be held responsible for the consequences.

## Record keeping & confidentiality

Records of all complaints handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the General Manager.

These records will be maintained electronically. All electronic data is permanently archived to a secure offsite storage facility on a monthly basis. Archive cartridges are kept indefinitely.

All records relating to complaints will be treated as confidential and will be covered by SERO Institute Privacy and Personal Information Policy.

# HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT PROCESS

## Complaint

Formal Complaints maybe made by forwarding a written complaint to the following [admin@sero.edu.au](mailto:admin@sero.edu.au). The written complaint must be made within two months of the incident occurring.

An informal complaint can be made verbally by contacting the SERO Institute Operations Manager, Dallas Kenn directly on 1800 206 010 or by email [dallas@sero.edu.au](mailto:dallas@sero.edu.au). The Operations Manager will manage the complaint and will forward it to the relevant Operations Manager within SERO Institute to assist in effective and rapid resolution. If the complainant is invited to present their case in person, the complainant may be accompanied by an advocate of their choosing. Each party will have an opportunity to formally present their case should they wish to do so.

The Operations Manager will provide the complainant with an outcome of the complaint and will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

## Academic Review

All students have the right to request an academic review. Where a student is dissatisfied with the assessment of an assignment and/or an examination result, the student should discuss this informally in the first instance with their Trainer/Educator.

Where a student is dissatisfied with the assessment of practical work and/or vocational placement assessments performed in the workplace, the student should discuss this informally in the first instance with their workplace mentor/supervisor. If the student remains dissatisfied, the issue should be discussed informally with their Trainer/Educator.

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, a student may submit a request for a formal academic review in writing to the relevant Operations Manager within twenty (20) working days of receiving the reviewed academic result. The request must outline why the student has requested a formal review of the result.

The relevant Operations Manager will seek to resolve a formal academic review through the appointment of an independent and impartial educator to conduct an investigation and make a recommendation. The relevant Operations Manager will make the final decision on all formal academic reviews.

All parties involved in any formal academic reviews will be advised in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the decision within twenty (20) working days from the date the review was lodged. If a student's formal academic review is successful, the academic result will be amended.

Where a formal academic review is not upheld by the relevant Operations Manager, the student will be advised in writing of the option to access the appeals procedure.

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# INDEPENDENT COMPLAINT HANDLING AUTHORITIES

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## External mediation services

Should a complaint or appeal not be resolved using the College complaints, academic appeals and appeals process, then impartial mediation by an external mediator is available. Contact with the mediator should be initiated by the student in all cases.

## ASQA

Students may contact Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) on 1300 701 801.

You can submit a complaint to ASQA by completing the 'Complaint about a training organisation operating under ASQA's jurisdiction' form <http://www.asqa.gov.au/forms.html#complaints>.

# MARKETING AUTHORITY STATEMENT

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SERO Institute would like to use photos and videotapes taken of you and /or recordings made of your voice in its printed/electronic promotional material.

By enrolling at SERO Institute you agree to the following;

- SERO Institute may collect your image and record your voice
- SERO Institute may use photographs and videotapes taken of you and/or recordings made of your voice across any medium that may include, but not limited to, advertising, publicity, learning resources and editorial as many times as we want
- Images may be reproduced in colour or black and white and may be altered, distorted or blurred for design purposes without any liability on our part
- All photographs, videotapes and/or recordings of your voice shall be the sole and absolute property of SERO Institute and can be used for an unlimited period
- You will not receive payment, you do not own the copyright to the images, vision or sound and you will not have the right to inspect or approve the printed/electronic material in which your image or voice appears

To be able to agree to this you must be over 18 years of age. If you are not 18, your parent/ guardian agrees by signing the enrolment form. If you do not consent to the above, then please advise us immediately.

Where possible, the College will collect the information directly from the individual.

The College acknowledges that there is no obligation for an individual to provide personal information. However, if an individual chooses not to provide the College with personal details, it may not be able to provide the individual with a full range of services.

# SERO INSTITUTE PRIVACY & PERSONAL INFORMATION POLICY

The College may require the collection of personal information from individuals to enable it to provide its products and services or for the purposes of employment. The College takes its obligations under the Privacy Act seriously, and as such, will take all reasonable steps in order to comply with the Act and protect the privacy or personal information that it holds.

This Policy supports the College's commitment to the protection and non-disclosure of personal and sensitive information of its students and provide staff with a better understanding of the type of personal information that SERO Institute holds on individuals.

The Privacy Act 1988 is an Act that regulates the transparent handling of personal information about individuals. This includes the collection, use, storage and disclosure of personal information to other individuals, Government entities or other organisations either by law or for other purposes. The Privacy Act includes 13 Privacy Principles that apply to the handling and use of personal and sensitive information.

UNDER THE PRIVACY ACT, PERSONAL INFORMATION IS DEFINED AS:

"Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable"

- a) whether the information or opinion is true or not; and
- b) whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not SENSITIVE INFORMATION IS DEFINED AS:
  - a) information or an opinion about an individual's:
    - 1. racial or ethnic origin; or
    - 2. political opinions; or
    - 3. membership of a political association; or
    - 4. religious beliefs or affiliations; or
    - 5. philosophical beliefs; or
    - 6. membership of a professional or trade association; or
    - 7. membership of a trade union; or
    - 8. sexual orientation or practices; or
    - 9. criminal record; or

that is also personal information; or

- b) health information about an individual; or
- c) genetic information about an individual that is not otherwise health information; or
- d) biometric information that is to be used for the purpose of automated biometric verification or biometric identification; or
- e) biometric templates.

## USE OF PERSONAL & SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Personal information about students studying with the college may be shared with the Commonwealth and State Government agencies and designated authorities (The Australian Skills Quality Authority, The National Centre for Vocational Education Research and the various state training authorities). This information may be used for the purposes of audit, verification, research, statistical analysis, program evaluation, post completion surveys and internal management services.

The National VET Provider Collection Data Requirements Policy specifies the use of data collected by registered training organisations including enabling employers and individuals to make informed choices about training operations, accessing historical records on training undertaken, allowing industry to pinpoint skills being developed in the training sector and enabling governments to develop more targeted policies and better direct public funding to training priorities.

## COLLECTION OF PERSONAL & SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Personal and sensitive information is collected by SERO Institute in order for it to carry out its functions as a registered training organisation (RTO). This information is collected in accordance with the requirements of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015, the National VET Regulator Act 2011.

Personal information that is collected includes:

- Name
- Address
- Contact details (telephone and email)
- Postal address
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Emergency contact details
- Employment status including employment details (where necessary)
- Language used
- Reasons for study
- Educational history
- Images
- Copies of Proof of Identity (drivers licence, passport, Under 18 card etc)
- Videos
- Voice recordings

Sensitive information that is collected includes:

- Ethnicity and origin including language and literacy needs
- Health and disability
- Memberships of professional or trade associations

Where possible, this information will be collected directly from the individual. However, the College acknowledges that there is no obligation for an individual to provide personal information. However, if an individual chooses not to provide the College with personal details, the College may not be able to provide the individual with the full range of services.

## HOW THE INFORMATION IS COLLECTED

Personal and sensitive information is generally collected through the completion of the College's enrolment process or through the completion of an application for recognition of prior learning.

In some cases this information may also be captured via web cams, voice recordings and scanned images depending on your mode of study

## DATA SECURITY & STORAGE INFORMATION

The College will take all reasonable steps to protect the security of the personal information that it holds. This includes appropriate measures to protect electronic materials and materials generated and stored in hard copy.

The College ensures the personal information we hold on individuals is protected against interference, loss, unauthorised access, use, modification, copying, download or disclosure. All staff of the College are bound to act in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles, this Privacy and Personal Information Policy and privacy and confidentiality requirements specified in the College Employee Policies and Procedures Handbook.

Where information held by the College is no longer required to be held, and the retention is not required by law, then the College will destroy such personal information by a secure means.

## ACCESS TO PERSONAL INFORMATION

The College will make available for inspection all personal information that it holds in relation to an individual by that individual upon request. There is no charge for an individual to access personal information that the College holds about them. However, we may charge a fee to make a copy. Individuals may contact the Student Administration at their campus for information on how to access their personal information. Alternately, the student can contact their trainer to access their personal information.

## DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL & SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Personal information may be disclosed to the Australian Skills Quality Authority, the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research and various state training authorities in the carrying out its regulatory and statistical functions in the VET sector. This information may be used for the purposes of audit, verification, research, statistical analysis, program evaluation, post completion surveys and internal management services.

The following personal information may also be disclosed to Job Network Providers and Disability Services Providers:

- Training information and progress
- Reverse Marketing
- Referral to Employment
- Work Experience
- Employment related further training and licensing
- Post Placement Support
- Confirmation of employment
- Arranging interviews and obtaining feedback from interviews

In accordance with the Privacy Act and the Australian Privacy Principles, the College will not disclose an individual's personal information to another person or organisation unless:

- a) the individual concerned is reasonably likely to have been aware, or made aware that information of that kind is usually passed to that person or organisation;
- b) the individual concerned has given written consent to the disclosure;
- c) the College believes on reasonable grounds that the disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of the individual concerned or of another person;
- d) the disclosure is required or authorised by or under law; or
- e) the disclosure is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law or of a law imposing a pecuniary penalty, or for the protection of the public revenue.

Where personal information is disclosed for the purposes of enforcement of the criminal law or of a law imposing a pecuniary penalty, or for the purpose of the protection of the public revenue, the College shall include in the record containing that information a note of the disclosure.

Any person or organisation to whom personal information is disclosed as described in this policy will be required to not use or disclose the information for a purpose other than the purpose for which the information was supplied to them.

## DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION OVERSEAS

The College utilises cloud based computing systems for the housing of personal information collected from its students. As such, in accordance with Australian Privacy Principle 8, before the College discloses any personal information about an individual, the College will ensure the recipient of the information is subject to a law that is at least substantially similar to the way in which the Australian Privacy Principles protect the information or ensure that the person acts in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles.

## STAFF COMMITMENT TO PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY

All staff, upon commencement, are required to sign to confirm that they have received a copy of and understand the content of this policy. All staff are committed to and implement their responsibilities under the Australian Privacy Principles.

## UPDATING PERSONAL INFORMATION

It is the individual's responsibility to keep the College informed of their contact details. If at any stage while enrolled, personal contact details change, the individual is obliged to inform the College. A Change of Student Contact Details Form is available from Student Services which should be completed as soon as is practicable. This allows the College to send any communication to the individual in an efficient manner.

## COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY & AUSTRALIAN PRIVACY PRINCIPLES

If an individual has any concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, then the individual may lodge a complaint to the General Manager in accordance with the Complaints, Academic Appeals and Appeal Policy and Procedure.

## STORAGE, ACCESS & RETENTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

The College will take all reasonable steps to protect the security of the personal information that it holds. This includes appropriate measures to protect electronic materials and materials generated and stored in hard copy.

The College will store securely all records containing personal information and take all reasonable security measures to protect personal information collected from unauthorised access, misuse or disclosure.

The College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that any personal information collected is relevant to the purpose for which it was collected, is up to date and complete.

## ACADEMIC RECORD KEEPING

The College maintains comprehensive records of each student's involvement with the College, including class attendance, academic results, personal details and financial records. To assist in the resolution of any dispute each student is encouraged to maintain their own similar records.

## QUALITY INDICATOR SURVEYS

From time to time you will be invited to take part in surveys being conducted by SERO Institute to seek your views on the quality of our education and training.

Surveys are conducted to collect feedback from students and employers about their training experiences. SERO Institute uses the feedback it receives as part of its continuous improvement processes to ensure it provides quality training and assessment. SERO Institute must also provide a summary report of feedback to its Registering Body to provide an indication of its performance. This is a condition of registration.

Responses are private and confidential. Individual respondents will not be identified in any data or reports and survey responses will not be linked with enrolment records. Participation in surveys is highly valued, but voluntary. We will protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your response to the fullest possible extent within the limits of the law.

## WHAT IF SERO INSTITUTE CEASES TO OPERATE AS A REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATION (RTO)?

SERO Institute is committed to the provision of high-quality training and assessment for all of its students. However, in the unlikely event that SERO Institute ceases to trade as a registered training organisation, we are required to meet certain obligations under the Standards for RTOs 2015.

Upon identification that SERO Institute intends to cease trading as a RTO, SERO Institute will source a suitable organisation/s with capability, capacity and sufficient resources (physical and human) to engage SERO Institute students and ensure that they complete the qualification/s in which they are enrolled. All students will be issued with Statements of Attainment to enable credit transfer to be applied by the new RTO.

SERO Institute will notify the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to advise that it intends to withdraw its registration. The notification will include:

- the details of all past and present students
- the qualification/s in which they are enrolled
- completion status (including a full list of units of competency and associated outcomes)
- contact details for each student

This will enable ASQA to reissue qualifications and/or Statements of Attainment where necessary.

SERO Institute will circulate formal notification to all current students including campus based, Online and workplace based students. This notification will include what arrangements have been made to transfer students to another RTO offering the same qualifications.

## WORKPLACE HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE

SERO Institute is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its staff, contractors, students and volunteers while working for or participating in activities and courses.

All students have the responsibility to:

- protect their own health and safety and to avoid adversely affecting the health and safety of any other person
- not wilfully or recklessly interfere or misuse anything provided by SERO Institute in the interest of health, safety or welfare
- co-operate with health and safety directives given by staff
- ensure that they are not, by the consumption of drugs and alcohol, in such a state as to endanger their own health and safety or the health and safety of another person.

If you have a personal health condition that may become acute while attending your course, please advise your Operations Manager before commencement of enrolment. All information will be treated in confidence and is only needed so that appropriate support or treatment can be provided should an emergency arise.

Should you be involved in any accident during training which results in personal injury and/or damage to equipment or facilities, please notify the trainer immediately.

## ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS

SERO Institute is committed to providing a worksite and learning environment which is free from any kind of substance abuse. To maintain this, students and staff are not to indulge in the consumption of alcohol and/or illegal drugs during business hours, including break times, on or off site.

The use of drugs prescribed by Medical Practitioners for health reasons are excluded from this policy statement. The use of or being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs on campus or during training and assessment activities, is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct. Students found to be consuming alcohol or other drugs or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs will be dealt with in accordance with the Student Misconduct Process. This process may result in:

- Counselling the student
- Suspension of the student
- Expulsion of the student

## HEALTH & EMERGENCY SERVICES

### Ambulance/Fire Brigade/Police

Phone number is to be used in an EMERGENCY ONLY for those who find they are in need of an Ambulance, Fire Brigade or Police immediately in sudden, distressing circumstances.

Phone: 000 (triple zero)

### State Emergency Service (SES)

For assistance in flood, storm, fallen trees or buildings Phone: 13 25 00

### Poisons Information Centre

Ring for information 24 hours a day. Phone: 13 11 26