

Court Network

Service Charter

Court Network



This Service Charter sets out the standard of service that the community can expect from Court Network.

It provides guidance to Court Networkers about their role and responsibilities in delivering support, information and referral, and in empowering and increasing the confidence of court users to better access the justice system. Importantly, the Service Charter identifies key elements of Court Network's model and how they each contribute to the provision of high quality services.

Court Network (CN) is a frontline community organisation that provides support to people attending courts/tribunals in Victoria and Queensland.



Our Vision

To provide the community with volunteers who stand beside, empower and instill confidence in all court users.

Our Mission

To provide support, information and referral to persons attending court and to advocate for the needs of all court users.

Our Values

Impartiality, Empathy, Compassion, Accessibility, Pride

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1. What We Do

1.1 Who We Support

Court Network supports **all court/tribunal users**. Our service philosophy is based in human rights principles that recognise the right of every court user to be treated with dignity and respect.

Our role is to support **primary court users** who are people at court/tribunals to attend a hearing including: victims, witnesses, accused people, family members, and friends.

We also support people working within the court, such as lawyers, police, court staff, or other professionals, after we have reached out to all primary court users.

Court Network supports children in the care of primary court users to whom we are providing a service. Primary court users might also be children or young people who are appearing at court (e.g. Children's Court) in their own right.

Court Network **does not** perform the role of child care.

1.2 What We Provide

Court Networkers provide:

Support for court/tribunal users which is visible, active, empathetic and discreet. Support provided by Court Networkers:

- responds to the diversity of all court users
- enhances the dignity of all court users by responding to them in a non-judgmental and respectful manner
- recognises the needs and concerns of court users with particular needs and vulnerabilities
- promotes the safety of court users
- promotes and respects the decisions made by court users

Information about court processes to lessen the trauma of going to court and to empower court users.

Referral to court-based services and to community based agencies and services by using accurate and up to date knowledge of services, provided by Court Network, which may further assist court users.

1. What We Do

1.3 How We Work

Networkers **advocate** for the needs of court users. By proactively supporting court/tribunal users, Networkers can assist people to be more aware of their own rights and to feel empowered to speak up for themselves. Networkers' positive relationships with other professionals within the court can also assist to advocate on behalf of court users, for example working with court staff to respond to the individual safety needs of a court user.

Networkers will **proactively outreach** within the court/tribunal to help identify court users most in need. Networkers need to understand their own biases and prejudices, enabling them to work respectfully and to effectively reach out to court users.

Networkers are required to understand and respond to **levels of vulnerability** for individual court users. This means considering the specific needs of individual court users such as their safety needs, their need for an interpreter or culturally appropriate support, and their

level of anxiety or confusion. Court users with a high level of vulnerability are prioritised for support.

Networkers will **prioritise referrals**, but with formal referrals – those coming in to Court Network – taking priority. This may include referrals that have been noted in the daily diary and referrals communicated by your Program Manager, or received via telephone and email from the office. In responding to referrals, Networkers consider the individual circumstances of the court/tribunal user, have a clear understanding about the services available, and assess the needs of the court user.

In the Victim Support Unit in Queensland, Networkers provide targeted support to adult victims of crime and vulnerable witnesses, but make referrals for the accused and the accused's family to access Networker support from the core service wherever possible.

2. Day To Day Operations At Court / Tribunal

2.1 Hours Of Operation At Court

Court Network offers a community service during court hours of operation.

In determining service needs at court in the afternoon, Networkers will check:

- with court users via outreach
- with other professionals working with court users
- registry and court lists
- with team members at court
- availability to be called back if needed
- with Program Managers

2.2 Daily Team At Court

Court Network provides a daily team of a minimum of two Networkers at the court to meet our commitment to impartiality and to enable service coverage requirements at court.

The daily team allows us to provide non-partisan and impartial support by having the capacity for both parties of a court/tribunal matter to each be supported by a Networker. Where this occurs, Networkers must not communicate with each other about the matter. It is unacceptable for one Networker to support both parties in a matter.

Each Networker in the daily team provides empathetic support to individual court users, regardless of which party they may be supporting.

The daily team enables Court Network to be responsive to referrals to the service.

The team approach offers opportunities for Networkers to consult, to debrief, and to support each other's safety needs.

2. Day To Day Operations At Court / Tribunal

2.3 Identifying As Volunteers

Networkers should identify themselves as volunteers accountable to Court Network.

Identifying as a volunteer is meaningful for court users who see the service being offered by a community service worker who is:

- choosing to be at court to help their community
- seen to be on more equal footing with the court user
- someone who can take the time needed to provide support without rushing court users
- someone who has lived and diverse experience
- not an employee of the court
- not a lawyer or legal professional
- part of a not for profit organisation and accountable for the service being offered

3. Quality Service

3.1 Quality And Consistency

Court Networkers observe the organisational systems and processes to assure service quality and consistency.

This includes:

- fulfilment of the Networker position description and the seven key capabilities
- regular and respectful communications between Court Networkers and their Program Manager
- upholding Client Rights and Responsibilities
- adhering to the Code of Conduct and observing policies and procedures in the Volunteer Information Kit
- complying with annual continuous education and other learning and development requirements, including Volunteer Reviews
- attending reliably on their rostered day
- following Court Network's procedures for the court/tribunal in which they are networking

3.2 Reflective Practice

Court Network places a high value on its ability to reflect on, and continuously improve its services.

Feedback from court/tribunal users enables us to be reflective about our practice. Networkers facilitate this by ensuring that each court user receives the Court Network brochure which includes a Compliments and Complaints feedback slip.

Positive participation in Volunteer Reviews with Program Managers is an important component of our approach and commitment to reflective practice.

3. Quality Service

3.3 Communication

Communication is critical to ensuring quality services can be delivered across the day-to-day operations.

Networkers will make contact with Program Managers as agreed to assure:

- service coverage
- formal referral, those that come in to the service, are communicated and responded to in a timely fashion
- workplace Health and Safety requirements
- networkers' communication with their daily team members and peer Networkers will include:
- respectful daily communication
- participation in team meetings

3.4 Team Culture

Court Networkers play an active role in building and maintaining a healthy and respectful team culture.

Healthy and respectful teams:

- come together at the beginning and the end of day to support, resource and debrief each other
- distribute equitable and transparent roles, that is, there are no specialised roles
- seek, and are receptive to, feedback
- recognise the need for continuous development and reflective practice
- are involved as mentors to assist with renewal of teams
- deal with issues or conflict in a manner that is respectful, focused on reaching resolution and that observe confidentiality and privacy requirements

4. Service Charter Review

Court Network will review the Service Charter and its implementation as part of its regular program of policy and systems review. Where practicable this will include feedback from Networkers, staff and stakeholders.



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