



## **Consumer Guidelines For Making A Complaint**

### **Who May Complain and About What?**

Australian Traditional Medicine-Society (ATMS) practitioners are bound by the Society's Code of Conduct. If a consumer believes that an ATMS practitioner has breached any aspect of the Code, a complaint may be made against the practitioner.

A copy of the Code of Conduct is available free-of-charge from the ATMS office by contacting ATMS by telephone 1800 456 855, fax (02) 9809 7570 or email: [info@atms.com.au](mailto:info@atms.com.au). It is also accessible on the ATMS website at [www.atms.com.au](http://www.atms.com.au).

The Complaints Committee can also deal with complaints about ATMS accredited colleges.

### **How Do I Know if the Practitioner/College is Accredited with ATMS?**

Ask the practitioner if they belong to ATMS. The ATMS membership certificate should be displayed on the wall. Also, a list of members can be found on the ATMS website at [www.atms.com.au](http://www.atms.com.au), or telephone the ATMS office on 1800 456 855.

The ATMS website ([www.atms.com.au](http://www.atms.com.au)) lists all of the ATMS accredited colleges.

### **How Do I Lodge a Complaint?**

The Complaints Committee will only receive a complaint on the ATMS Complaint Form. The Complaint Form can be obtained from the ATMS website at [www.atms.com.au](http://www.atms.com.au), or email: [info@atms.com.au](mailto:info@atms.com.au) or by telephoning the ATMS office on 1800 456 855.

When your Complaint Form is received, you will be sent a letter of acknowledgment.

### **What Information Do I Need to Supply?**

Supply as much information as you can. The Complaints Committee will rely solely on the information that you supply it. It is important to let the Complaints Committee know what you hope to achieve by lodging the complaint.

If the complaint is against a practitioner, specify which part/s of the Code of Conduct that you believe that the practitioner has breached. The Code of Conduct does not apply to a college.

### **Who Can I Speak With If I Want More Information?**

If more information is required about lodging a complaint, please contact ATMS on 1800 456 855, and ask to speak with the Complaints Committee Secretariat. If the secretariat is not at the office, leave your name and telephone number and your call will be returned.

The Secretariat will answer questions about completing the Complaint Form or the complaint handling process. Discussion with the Secretariat is treated as confidential.

The final outcome of the complaint is the responsibility of the Complaints Committee.

### **What if I Lodged My Complaint Elsewhere?**

If the complaint has been lodged with the police, a health complaints commission, another organisation or legal and/or court proceedings have commenced or pending, the Complaints Committee may not be able to process the complaint until the matter has been settled.

### **What Will Happen To My Complaint?**

Your complaint will be sent to the practitioner/college that you complained about for their response. We cannot process your complaint unless the practitioner/college you are complaining about sees the complaint, and is given the opportunity to tell their side of the story. This is how our legal system works, and is known as natural justice.

If you wish, we can conceal your address and/or telephone number, but your name and complaint must be shown to the practitioner/college. When the Complaints Committee has received the response from the practitioner/college, the Complaints Committee will schedule your complaint for the next meeting.

### **Are All Complaints Processed?**

No. The Complaints Committee will not consider a complaint if it is vexatious, trivial, misconceived or lacking in substance or good faith. Also, the following complaints will not be accepted by the Complaints Committee:

- verbal complaints
- anonymous complaints
- complaints that occurred more than 5 years ago, unless substantive reasons can be given.

### **Is the Meeting Open to the Public?**

No. The Complaints Committee meeting is not a court of law.

### **When Will I Know What Happened?**

Shortly after the Complaints Committee meeting, you will be sent a letter advising of the determination. The decision of the Complaints Committee is final.

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