



**RESPONDING TO REQUESTS
FOR INFORMATION AND ADVICE:
POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

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Document Title:	Responding to Requests for Information and Advice - Policy and Guidelines.
Summary:	The aim of this policy document is to articulate management's expectations and establish standards and guidelines for dealing with: "Ministerials"; "briefings"; and requests for information and advice from external sources (phone, fax, Email and correspondence).
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Relevant References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ministerial and Briefing Guidelines – Executive Support Unit (DOH); ➤ Media Liaison Protocols – NSW Health, March 2004; and ➤ Good Conduct and Administrative Practice – NSW Ombudsman, August 2003.
Main Legislative Implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act/ Regulation</i> – with respect to 'Guarantee of Service' / "Commitment to Service" standards; and ➤ <i>NSW State Records Act 1998 and Regulations</i> - with respect to the management of paper and electronic records.
Applicable Delegations of Authority:	<p>See Ministerial Delegation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ s2.10.9 - (authority to divulge information about staff of Cancer Institute NSW to external bodies (eg FOI and Health Care Complaints Commission)); ➤ s2.10.10 - (make official comment on matters relation to Cancer Institute NSW or release of contents of internal working documents or privileged knowledge); ➤ s3.5.1/2 - (approve media releases and verbal discussions with media personnel); and ➤ s3.7.1 - (power to deal with FOI applications). <p>Delegations are subject to review refer Cancer Institute NSW Delegation Manual for latest position.</p>
Related Cancer Institute NSW Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Employee Code of Conduct & Ethics; ➤ Privacy Management Plan; ➤ Policy on Records Management – May 2005; ➤ Records Management User Guidelines (<i>to be advised</i>); ➤ Media Liaison Protocols (<i>to be advised</i>); and ➤ Complaints Handling Policy and Guidelines (<i>to be advised</i>).

Cancer Institute NSW

Responding to Requests for Information and Advice - Policy and Guidelines

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets out Cancer Institute NSW policy, principles and procedures for dealing with and managing requests for information and advice received from the public, health professionals, the Minister's Office, government agencies and other external sources concerning the Institute's activities and programs. Critical aspects covered within this policy guideline include:

- responding to **Ministerial correspondence** and briefing requests involving both the Minister's Office and the Director General, NSW Health;
- responding to requests for information and advice received from external sources by:
 - **telephone**;
 - **Email**;
 - **correspondence**.
- **quality service principles** relevant to the responsive and responsible communication of information that represent "good conduct" in public administration;
- **media liaison** requirements;
- **Records Management** requirements associated with the provision of information and advice – (including requirements covering electronic records);
- rules for making "**public comment**"; and
- related **privacy** and confidentiality issues.

These guidelines are aimed primarily at the management of requests for information received at the Cancer Institute NSW corporate headquarters however, the principles and procedures detailed herein will need to be considered by Managers responsible for Institute's key business units (BreastScreen Unit, Cervical Screening Program, Central Cancer Registry and Pap Test Register) and incorporated, where appropriate, within their respective information management guidelines.

In particular, the Cancer Institute NSW business units need to ensure that enquiries concerning matters of **significance**, not involving routine operational issues; matters that are **sensitive** or **contentious** that are likely to lead to Ministerial or political involvement; and any actual Ministerial or other enquiry (involving NSW Health or another government agency), are directed to Chief Cancer Officer. All such matters are to be co-ordinated and managed centrally by the Manager Policy and Executive Support (*see section which follows*).

Important:

All Cancer Institute NSW employees must exercise caution when responding to an enquiry not to provide advice that by its nature could be viewed as "**clinical/medical advice**". In addition, when responding to an enquiry care must be exercised not to endorse or appear to endorse or promote any products or a particular medical practitioner.

Note:

Separate policy guidelines have been developed covering - *Complaint Handling and Freedom of Information (FOI)*.

2. CO ORDINATION OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE CANCER INSTITUTE

The Executive Office within the Cancer Institute NSW has established a central co-ordination function to facilitate the preparation of responses to requests for information from external sources about the Institute's activities and programs. This function is undertaken by the **Manager Policy and Executive Support**.

Matters requiring intervention at Chief Cancer Officer, Board or Chief Operating Officer level are:

- matter is complex, contentious and/or politically sensitive;
- matter requires a formal response to a government agency head, unless the matter is considered routine and has no resource implications;
- matter relates to a complaint against the Institute, a staff member or the manner in which a function of the Institute has been exercised;
- matter involves an allegation of corruption, misconduct etc;
- matter is of strategic importance to the Institute's programs, functions and resources;
- matter requires a co-ordinated response involving other Divisions or other agencies; and
- matter has the potential to impact on the Cancer Institute NSW public image.

Any matter that meets the above criteria **MUST** be referred to the Manager Policy and Executive Support at the earliest opportunity. This officer can be contacted on **Ph. x5636 Email: Charles.Latimer@cancerinstitute.org.au**

The Manager Policy and Executive Support has a range of responsibilities that includes the preparation of high quality and timely **briefings, Ministerial correspondence**, responses to **Parliamentary questions**, preparation of Cabinet documents on behalf of the Chief Cancer Officer etc.

The position also provides timely, expert advice (both internal and externally) relating to the Cancer Institute NSW's operations, services and activities and other cancer related issues as directed by the Chief Cancer Officer. The position also ensures that sensitive and controversial issues are identified, analysed and referred to the Chief Cancer Officer with advice on appropriate action required.

Key Responsibilities of the position (*with respect to the management of external requests for information/ advice and assistance*) are:

- prepare briefing papers, reports and review documents ensuring timely and accurate responses to requests;
- Ensure the preparation, quality and timeliness of policy advice and stake-holder correspondence for the Minister on behalf of the CCO;
- provide timely expert advice on the management of requests for advice and information from the Minister's Office, the Premier's Department, The Cabinet Office, the Department of Health and intergovernmental forums;
- approve the release of routine correspondence and briefings, as agreed with the Chief Cancer Officer, to the Minister's Office;
- contribute to the development, establishment, monitoring and reporting on **communication protocols and procedures** throughout the Institute for the provision of advice and information to the Minister, ensuring the highest standard of confidentiality;

- consult and co-ordinates responses on issues from all relevant sources across the Cancer Institute NSW to ensure that advice and information provided to the Minister is both proactive, identifies emerging issues for attention, and is comprehensively;
- maintaining contact with the Board of the Cancer Institute NSW, Directors, and staff members across the organisation, in relation to **quality management of correspondence, briefings and other documentation** for the Minister and Chief Cancer Officer;
- determining issues that may be dealt with directly and those that are to be referred to the Chief Cancer Officer or the Minister's Office;
- sign off of correspondence and briefings, with the exception of highly controversial or politically sensitive issues; and
- determining the content of advice provided to staff and managers throughout the Cancer Institute NSW on preparation of correspondence and briefs and management of issues.

3. MEDIA LIAISON PROTOCOLS

It is essential that the Cancer Institute NSW has in place an active response to media enquiries and a well-organised strategy to manage communications in relation to the Institute's operations and cancer issues as and when they arise.

This critical business function is managed through the Institute's Media Unit. This Unit is responsible for **all media inquiries and for arranging media interviews** with Cancer Institute NSW staff / Board members. The Unit also advises on issues relating to cancer control and other matters within the responsibility of the Cancer Institute NSW, through media releases, media conferences and campaign launches.

The Media Unit is the **primary point of contact** for news organisations. Requests for interviews or information for the media must be directed to the Unit.

How to contact the Media Unit

All media enquiries are to be directed to the Communications Manager, Mr Adrian Grundy. The Cancer Institute NSW website also provides media contact information.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Although employees of the Cancer Institute NSW have the right as private citizens to express personal views through public comment on political and social issues they must not make or appear to make statements on behalf of the Cancer Institute NSW. Public comment includes public speaking engagements, comments in the media, views expressed in letters to newspapers, online services (such as Internet bulletin boards) or in publications (*refer section 9, Cancer Institute NSW Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics*).

Cancer Institute NSW employees must **not** make official comment on matters relating to the Institute unless authorised to do so by the Chief Cancer Officer or otherwise required by law¹. Particular care must be exercised when dealing with media representatives. In such instances the Institute's *Media Unit* must be involved.

The rules governing "public comment" also require Cancer Institute NSW employees to exercise caution when responding by phone, Email or letter to requests for information or advice from external sources. A common sense approach is required

¹ Refer Cancer Institute NSW Delegations of Authority Manual.

in such instances however, any matters that are complex, contentious and/or politically sensitive and matters that have the potential to impact on the Cancer Institute NSW public image **must** be referred in the first instance to the relevant Divisional Director who will co ordinate an Institute response in consultation with the Manager Policy and Executive Support (see section 2).

5. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Cancer Institute NSW employees **must not** access, use, disclose, release or discuss any internal information or data unless they are authorised to do so in the course of their work. It is a responsibility of all employees to protect the privacy and confidentiality of client (personal) information as required by the Institute's *Privacy Management Plan* (also refer section 6, *Cancer Institute NSW Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics*).

Privacy legislation and the Institute's *Privacy Management Plan* requires Cancer Institute NSW employees to exercise caution when responding by phone, Email or letter to requests for information/ data that may be privileged. In such instances staff are to refer to the Institute's *Privacy Management Plan* and relevant business unit policy guidelines (for example, guidelines that govern the release of Registry data to Researchers) to ensure relevant privacy/ confidentiality requirements are not breached.

A common sense approach towards the release of information is required however, if any doubt exists then the matter **must** be referred in the first instance to the relevant Divisional Director who will co ordinate an Institute response in consultation with the Manager Policy and Executive Support (see section 2).

6. CANCER INSTITUTE NSW – CONTACT ACCESS PORTALS

The Cancer Institute NSW operates a number of contact access portals that allow members of the public, clients, health professionals and other interested persons and agencies to contact the Cancer Institute NSW to obtain advice, information and assistance.

These contact access points are shown in [Attachment 1](#).

7. PROVIDING A RESPONSIVE AND QUALITY SERVICE

Accurate, effective and timely communication within the Cancer Institute NSW and with persons external to the Institute ensures appropriate exchange of information, enables effective decision-making and supports the Institute in meeting its corporate goals and achieving its strategic and operational objectives.

As a public sector agency the Cancer Institute NSW has a responsibility to serve and assist the public, the Minister and government, health professionals and other government agencies, to name a few. A key element in satisfying this responsibility is the maintenance of effective communication arrangements that are both responsive and responsible.

The New South Wales Ombudsman has developed a number of **quality service principles** relevant to the responsive and responsible communication of information that represent "good conduct" in public administration. Cancer Institute NSW

employees are to ensure that the **good conduct** principles presented below are applied on a routine basis.

Responsible Service

- Cancer Institute NSW employees are to provide a relevant and responsive service (satisfying Institute's service performance standards) to members of the public, health care professionals and others, providing all necessary and appropriate assistance;
- Information, advice and assistance is to be provided promptly and in an appropriate format that is easy for the recipient to understand with a level of complexity appropriate to the situation. Information provided must be clear, accurate, current and complete;
- All persons seeking information and / or advice are to be treated courteously, attentively and sensitively; and
- Cancer Institute NSW employees are to ensure that persons seeking information or advice are treated fairly and impartially and that confidentiality and privacy requirements are complied with.

Courtesy

- In performing their official functions and duties, Cancer Institute NSW employees are to treat all people (whether members of the public, other public officials or politicians) with courtesy and respect, and be polite, helpful and sensitive to their rights;
- Cancer Institute NSW employees are to provide members of the public and their colleagues with courteous service when dealing with people who are not demonstrating courteous behaviour towards them;
- Cancer Institute NSW employees are to refrain from any form of conduct in the performance of their official or professional duties likely to cause any person unwarranted offence or embarrassment. This includes rudeness; and
- Identified mistakes, improprieties or rudeness should be frankly admitted and apologies promptly given where they are due.

Patience and sensitivity

A commitment to patient and sensitive service is important. The people of NSW are very diverse. Barriers to communication due to age, limited English skills, other cultural differences, education or physical or intellectual disability affect a significant proportion of the members of the community. Cancer Institute NSW employees must therefore be particularly conscious of the need to demonstrate patience and sensitivity in dealing with these members of the community.

Coordination

Active and positive steps are to be taken to ensure full and proper liaison and co-ordination within the Institute and with other agencies. This is important to ensure that the best possible service is provided and to avoid confusion, unnecessary duplication or conflict.

Content of correspondence

- Correspondence with the public is to be written in plain language using simple terms and easily understandable formats. The purpose and meaning of each letter and form must be clear; and

- Correspondence and information to be made available to the public is to be translated into appropriate languages to suit the needs of members of the public who use, or could potentially use such information².

Responding to correspondence

- Correspondence is to be acknowledged within a reasonable and specified period of receipt;
- A substantive response to correspondence is to be made within a reasonable and specified period of receipt;
- If a delay in responding is anticipated or occurs, an interim response is to be provided advising of the delay;
- Responses are to include details of the name and contact telephone number of the staff member responsible for the matter; and
- language used is to be clear, simple and courteous.

Responding to telephone calls

Telephone contact between Cancer Institute NSW employees and members of the public and others allows the Institute to respond quickly and effectively to inquiries, comments and complaints. The following principles/procedures are to be adopted.

- Telephone calls are to be answered within a specified period either in person or by an automated telephone answering system;
- Cancer Institute NSW employees are to give their name when answering telephone calls;
- All Cancer Institute NSW employees have a responsibility to answer telephones;
- Cancer Institute NSW employees answering telephones are to either:
 - respond to the call;
 - promptly transfer the caller onto the officer who can best respond; or
 - if the call cannot be responded to, take an appropriate message.
- Cancer Institute NSW employees are to ensure that telephone messages are responded to within a specified period (for the Cancer Institute NSW all phone calls are to be responded to within **2 working days**):
- Where a call cannot be responded to within a reasonable time callers are to be advised;
- Cancer Institute NSW employees are to speak clearly and calmly to all callers at all times; and
- Relevant details of all significant calls are to be recorded in a file note (or electronic record) placed on the relevant file or saved within TRIM.

8. RECORD KEEPING

8.1 CANCER INSTITUTE NSW RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

All NSW government agencies are obliged to make and keep full and accurate records of their activities (*s. 12(1), State Records Act*). The Cancer Institute NSW is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the State Records Act and is implementing “best practice” in its records management practices and systems.

² See Cancer Institute NSW Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS). Where appropriate the Cancer Institute will use the services of the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service.

The Cancer Institute NSW records management arrangements are outlined in the *Cancer Institute NSW Records Management Policy for Records and TRIM* (issued in May 2005). This document establishes a number of “**Rules**” associated with the making and keeping of records that are to be adhered to by all Cancer Institute NSW employees, including rules that impact the way in which Cancer Institute NSW employees are to deal with correspondence, telephone calls etc. These rules include:

- all staff are to use the system (i.e. TRIM) to document all substantive official business, unless using an authorised specific purpose recordkeeping system e.g. Registries. Staff are not to maintain individual or separate files or recordkeeping systems or unmanaged electronic records;
- all formal documents generated within State Records, including **outwards correspondence**, should bear a file reference number;
- all staff have a responsibility to create records to document:
 - decisions;
 - oral decisions and commitments, including **telephone discussions**;
 - meetings, and
 - other events.
- all staff have a responsibility to capture records into official recordkeeping systems, except records that can be disposed of under normal administrative practice. This means that staff need to:
 - capture electronic documents they create (outgoing correspondence, presentations, file notes, reports etc.) when they become records, by attaching them electronically to file in the records management system, in accordance with the user guidelines;
 - capture **email messages** electronically into a file in the records management system, in accordance with the user guidelines; and
 - capture paper based records, such as **incoming correspondence**, into the records management system by physically attaching them to a file, in accordance with the user guidelines.

8.2 USE AND RETENTION OF EMAIL FOR GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS

Emails, including attachments, generated or received by a Cancer Institute NSW employee in the course of his/her duties **are official records**. Such emails must be kept and disposed of in accordance with the requirements of the *State Records Act* and “best practice” policy guidelines/ standards developed by the State Records Authority, including:

- *Policy on Electronic Record Keeping*;
- *Standard on Recordkeeping in the Electronic Business Environment*;
- *Policy on Electronic Messages as Records*; and
- *Managing the Message* (Guidelines on managing formal and informal communications as records).

Copies of these documents can be found on the *State Records Authority* website www.records.nsw.gov.au.

In addition, the Cancer Institute NSW Information Technology Unit, which is responsible for records management within the Institute, has developed **Records Management User Guidelines**, based on the above State Records Authority publications, that outline procedures for dealing with **electronic messages, correspondence** etc. Cancer Institute NSW employees are to ensure that procedures contained in these guidelines are applied on a routine basis.

Enquires regarding these guidelines should be directed to the Cancer Institute NSW Corporate Records Manager (currently the Information Technology Manager).

9. CANCER INSTITUTE NSW STRATEGIES FOR LIMITING THE EXTENT OF VERBAL AND WRITTEN REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND ADVICE

It is a core function of the Cancer Institute NSW to provide information to the community concerning cancer control in NSW, to inform the public about the role of the Institute and to communicate the government's strategies aimed at reducing cancer mortality, reducing cancer incidence and improving the quality of life for cancer patients and their carers. This function inevitably will cause the Institute to receive enquiries from cancer patients their families and friends, from researchers, health care professionals and others.

To limit the extent of such enquiries and therefore the need for Institute staff to respond either verbally, by Email or by correspondence, the Institute has implemented a number of communication strategies. An important element in the Institute's communication strategy is the provision of information via the Institute's website. This includes providing:

- information about how the public can contact the Cancer Institute and specific program areas within the Cancer Institute;
- details of the role, functions, activities and programs of the Cancer Institute NSW, in particular the NSW Central Cancer Register and NSW Pap Test Register;
- links to BreastScreen NSW and the NSW Cervical Screening Program websites;
- access to the *NSW Cancer Plan*;
- information about how specialist advice/information lines can be accessed e.g. - Quitline, Cancer Help Line;
- Fact Sheets and Media Releases that detail important information of interest to the public covering cancer related issues;
- information that is targeted at cancer patients, their families and carers, researchers and health professionals and others;
- information concerning "hot topics" that are likely to generate enquiries by the public e.g. - Complementary Therapies;
- information aimed at people from cultural and linguistic, diverse backgrounds (see section 9.1); and
- links to credible websites that may be accessed to obtain detailed information concerning cancer treatments etc.

The maintenance of the Institute's website will serve to reduce the number of enquires received by the Institute that would otherwise require a written or verbal response to be provided. For this and other reasons it is important that the Institute's website be constantly updated and that staff maintain an awareness of information posted to the site so they are better informed and are therefore more able to direct persons making an enquiry to such information.

9.1 MULTICULTURAL HEALTH COMMUNICATION SERVICE

NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service provides information and services to assist health professionals to communicate with non-English speaking communities throughout New South Wales. The Service is funded by the NSW Department of Health.

Multicultural Health Communication provides a number of services, including Information and Advice; Research Services; and Communication Services. An explanation of these services together with agency contact details can be found at the following web address <http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/health-public-affairs/mhcs/index.html>.

Where appropriate the Cancer Institute NSW will use the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service to assist in communication with people from cultural and linguistic, diverse backgrounds.

10. PROTOCOL FOR MANAGING “MINISTERIALS” AND MINISTERIAL BRIEFINGS

The Manager Policy and Executive Support is responsible for all matters associated with the preparation of briefings, Ministerial correspondence, responses to Parliamentary questions and the preparation of Cabinet documents on behalf of the Chief Cancer Officer (this now includes matters involving BreastScreen NSW and the NSW Cervical Screening Program). In this capacity the Manager Policy and Executive Support works closely with the Chief Cancer Officer, Directors, the Minister's Office, the Executive Support Unit (NSW Health) and the Cabinet and Parliament Unit (Office of the Director-General, NSW Health).

The Manager Policy and Executive Support has developed internal procedures for handling high level and Ministerial requests that are forwarded to the Cancer Institute NSW through the Executive Support Unit (ESU) Parliament and Cabinet Unit (PACU) - NSW Department of Health, or which are directly referred to the Institute by the staff of the Minister's Office. A brief outline of each process is presented overpage.

Ministerials / Briefings Received from Executive Support Unit	
Step 1	ESU Emails request for advice /information to Cancer Institute NSW.
Step 2	Manager Policy and Executive Support receives request and logs request into Records Management System (TRIM) which allocates the response to the appropriate Divisional Director for action [see procedure outlined in <i>How to Format a Ministerial E05/09184</i>].
Step 3	Manager Policy and Executive Support coordinates response with appropriate Divisional Head/s, Chief Cancer Officer. The draft response is to be provided to the Manager Policy and Executive Support in the 1 st instance.
Step 4	Chief Cancer Officer reviews and approves response, signs correspondence where required.
Step 5	Manager Policy and Executive Support notes outcome and approval, updates TRIM and forwards response to ESU who in turn advise Minister's Office.
Briefings Received Direct from Minister's Office	
Step 1	Briefing request is received from Minister's Office via phone, fax or Email.
Step 2	Manager Policy and Executive Support receives request and logs request.
Step 3	Manager Policy and Executive Support co ordinates response with appropriate Divisional Head/s, Chief Cancer Officer, and Minister's Office. The draft response is to be provided to the Manager Policy and Executive Support in the 1 st instance.
Step 4	Chief Cancer Officer reviews and approves response, signs correspondence where required.
Step 5	Manager Policy and Executive Support notes outcome and approval, and forwards response to Minister's Office.

It is beyond the scope of this policy document to detail the manner in which Ministerials and Briefings are to be managed. However, the Cancer Institute NSW has resolved to follow, where appropriate, relevant guidelines that have been prepared by the Department of Health – Executive Support Unit. These guidelines are ***The Easy Guide to Ministerials*** and ***The Easy Guide to Briefings***. These guidelines can be located on the ESU Website (listed below) and shortened, tailored versions for the Cancer Institute (“How to..” documents) are accessible through TRIM (E05/09184 and E05/10361). The NSW Health (ESU) link is <http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/ecsd/esu/>.

The ESU website also contains links to a number of useful documents that will be of assistance to the Cancer Institute NSW – including:

- Guidelines for appearing before Parliamentary Committees or making submissions to Parliamentary Committees;
- Dealing with Vexatious Complaints; and
- Various templates.

11. PROTOCOL FOR ANSWERING/ MAKING A PHONE CALL

11.1 GENERAL “BEST PRACTICE” REQUIREMENTS

The following general procedures are to be observed when making or answering a telephone call. These “best practice” arrangements are to be included, where appropriate, within telephone procedure guidelines covering the NSW Central Cancer Register, NSW Pap Test Register, NSW BreastScreen Co ordination Unit and the NSW Cervical Screening Program.

When making a call:

After your telephone call is answered, you should clearly announce yourself - **Good morning / Good afternoon this is (*your name*), from (*name of business unit*), the Cancer Institute New South Wales.**

For example: "Good morning this is Joan Smith from Central Cancer Registry, Cancer Institute New South Wales".

Answering a Telephone Call:

During business hours all Cancer Institute NSW staff are responsible for making sure telephone calls are answered. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that telephones in local areas are answered during these hours.

When answering a telephone, let the caller know who is answering the call by saying - **Good morning / Good afternoon - (*name of business unit*), the Cancer Institute New South Wales and then your *NAME*.**

For example: “Good morning, Central Cancer Registry, Cancer Institute New South Wales, Joan Smith speaking.

Assisting the Caller:

You can assist the caller in one of the following ways:

- respond to their request;
- transfer them to another staff member who can immediately act on the call;
- take a message; or
- note their queries, liaise with the relevant staff member for answers and then return the telephone call.

Note: - If the caller has been transferred one or more times, **you should make an effort** to assist the caller or to determine who can. Continuously transferring a caller is impolite and reflects badly on the Cancer Institute NSW.

Taking a Message:

To take a message, you can:

- Send an Email or leave a phone message on Voice Mail where the recipient is not available to take your call; or
- Complete a page from a "While you were out" message pad.

However, the preferred option is to send an Email, as it provides a record of the message and an indication of whether the staff member has received and read the message.

When you take a message, **make sure** you:

- have the caller's name;
- have the caller's telephone number;
- have the date and time of call;
- record a short message on the subject of the call; and
- provide instructions whether they want the call returned or require any other type of action.

Note: - When taking a written message, it is important you include your name on the message so if necessary, the recipient can ask you for further information.

Messages must be given to the recipient promptly.

Returning a Call in a Timely Manner:

Telephone calls **must** be returned or acknowledged **within 2 working days**.

Record Keeping:

Make a record of significant business you conduct via the telephone or face to face. Significant business can include:

- providing advice instructions or recommendations;
- giving permissions and consent; and
- making decisions, commitments or agreements.

Transcribe details of all significant calls and responses in a file note and capture the message directly into the Institute's records management system (TRIM) in accordance with the relevant *TRIM User Guideline*.

11.2 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR DEALING WITH PHONE CALLS RECEIVED AT CANCER INSTITUTE NSW RECEPTION

The following specific procedures are to be followed when dealing with phone calls received at the Cancer Institute NSW Reception, and more generally across the Institute:

- Reception is to refer phone enquiries to the relevant Division Head or their Executive Assistant;
- Reception is to refer all media enquires to the Media Unit;
- Where no one is immediately available to take the call Reception is to make a note of the call (as described above) in an Email and forward Email to the appropriate Division Head. Such Emails are to be flagged "high priority";
- Divisional Directors are to ensure that the call is responded to or at least acknowledged within **2 working days**. Where appropriate Divisional Directors should encourage callers to "put their enquiry in writing" either in a letter or Email.

- Divisional Directors are authorised to provide a written or verbal response to routine enquiries concerning matters that relate to their area of responsibility however, **matters that meet the criteria detailed in the table below are to be referred to the Manager Policy and Executive Support** who is responsible for co-ordinating a response (as discussed in section 2). In such instances outgoing correspondence is to be signed by the Chief Cancer Officer or delegate.

Matters to be elevated to the Chief Cancer Officer for consideration and co ordination of required response:

- matter is complex, contentious and/or politically sensitive;
 - matter requires a formal response to a government agency head, unless the matter is considered routine and has no resource implications;
 - matter relates to a complaint against the Institute, a staff member or the manner in which a function of the Institute has been exercised;
 - matter involves an allegation of corruption, misconduct etc;
 - matter is of strategic importance to the Institute's programs, functions and resources;
 - matter requires a co-ordinated response involving other Divisions or other agencies; and
 - matter has the potential to impact on the Cancer Institute NSW public image.
- Divisional Directors are to ensure that a "file note" is prepared of routine enquires received and responses provided where, in the judgement of the Division Head, a record of the enquiry should be retained for Records Management purposes. This record is to be captured within the Institute's Records Management system (TRIM) in accordance with the relevant *TRIM User Guideline*. A template is available in Microsoft Word.
 - Reception is to transfer phone enquires that relate to the operation of the NSW Central Cancer Register or NSW Pap Test Register to those units. Alternatively the caller is to be given the direct contact phone number for the relevant service;
 - Callers who may contact Reception with an enquiry concerning the operation of the BreastScreen Unit or Cervical Screening Program are to be given the contact phone number of the required service; and
 - Where Reception has doubt as to who is the appropriate person to respond to a phone call, details are to be noted in an Email that is to be forwarded to the Manager Policy and Executive Support. This officer will determine how and who will attend to the call. In the absence of the Manager Policy and Executive Support such notifications are to be sent to Executive Assistant to the Chief Operating Officer or Chief Cancer Officer. A template is available on Microsoft Word.

Managers of the NSW Central Cancer Register, NSW Pap Test Register, the BreastScreen Co ordination Unit and the Cervical Screening Program are authorised to respond either verbally or in writing to phone enquires that are routine in nature and which relate to their respective area of responsibility. However, **any matter that meets the criteria as outlined in the table above must be referred to the Executive Assistant to the Chief Cancer Officer** who is responsible for co-ordinating a response. In such instances outgoing correspondence is to be signed by the Chief Cancer Officer or delegate.

12. PROTOCOL FOR RESPONDING TO AND SENDING CORRESPONDENCE

The following procedures are to be observed when dealing with correspondence received at the Cancer Institute NSW Reception:

- All mail addressed to the Cancer Institute NSW is to be opened and date stamped at Reception with the exception of mail that is personally addressed to Professor Jim Bishop or Ms Beth Macauley, or which is addressed to an individual and is marked “Private and Confidential”;
- Reception is to forward “**opened**” mail, and any correspondence that may be received by **facsimile** (on the general fax number), to the Executive Assistant to the Chief Operating Officer or the Executive Assistant to the Chief Cancer Officer. These officers will review and forward correspondence to the appropriate Divisional Director or the Chief Cancer Officer, where the nature of the correspondence justifies this action;
- Reception is to forward “**unopened**” mail to the addressee;
- Mail that is received at Reception that is addressed to the **NSW Central Cancer Registry or the NSW Pap Test Register** is to be forwarded to the correct area unopened;
- **Cheques** that may be received in the mail are to be immediately delivered by hand, together with any supporting documentation, to the Finance and Administration Unit;
- **Suppliers invoices etc** that may be received in the mail are to be immediately delivered by hand, together with any supporting documentation, to the Finance and Administration Unit;
- **Tender or Expression of Interest** documentation that may be received in the mail or via courier is not to be opened. Such documentation is to be handled in accordance with instructions that will be issued at the time such documentation is due to be received;
- Divisional Directors are to ensure that correspondence requiring a response is promptly dealt with³. In this regard Divisional Directors are authorised to provide a written (i.e. sign letters responding to enquiries on behalf of the Chief Cancer Officer) or verbal response to routine enquiries concerning matters that relate to their area of responsibility. The response and initiating correspondence is to be captured within the Institute’s Records Management system (TRIM) in accordance with the relevant *TRIM User Guideline*. However, **matters that meet the criteria detailed in the table below are to be referred to the Manager Policy and Executive Support** who is responsible for co-ordinating a response (as discussed in section 2). In such instances outgoing correspondence is to be signed by the Chief Cancer Officer or delegate.

Matters to be elevated to the Chief Cancer Officer for consideration and co ordination of required response

- matter is complex, contentious and/or politically sensitive;
- matter requires a formal response to a government agency head, unless the matter is considered routine and has no resource implications;
- matter relates to a complaint against the Institute, a staff member or the manner in which a

³ Correspondence is to be acknowledged and a substantive response provided within a reasonable period of receipt. If a delay in responding is anticipated or occurs, an interim response is to be provided advising of the delay.

function of the Institute has been exercised;

- matter involves an allegation of corruption, misconduct etc;
- matter is of strategic importance to the Institute's programs, functions and resources;
- matter requires a co-ordinated response involving other Divisions or other agencies; and
- matter has the potential to impact on the Cancer Institute NSW public image.

Managers of the NSW Central Cancer Register, NSW Pap Test Register, the BreastScreen and the Cervical Screening Program are authorised to respond either verbally or in writing to written enquiries that are routine in nature and which relate to their respective area of responsibility. However, **any matter that meets the criteria as outlined in the table above must be referred to the Manager Policy and Executive Support** who is responsible for co-ordinating a response. In such instances outgoing correspondence is to be signed by the Chief Cancer Officer or delegate.

13. PROTOCOL FOR RESPONDING TO ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE (E-MAILS)

The following procedures are to be observed when dealing with electronic correspondence (Emails) received at the general Cancer Institute NSW Email address.

- Reception is to monitor the general Email address and forwarded new messages to the most appropriate Divisional Director with a "CC" to their Executive Assistant. Such Emails are to be flagged "high priority" and entered into the Information Request log (Excel Spreadsheet – Trim file **E06/25172**);
- Media enquiries via email are to be forwarded to the Communications Manager;
- Where Reception has doubt as to who is the appropriate person to respond to an Email the Email is to be forwarded to the Manager Policy and Executive Support. This officer will determine how and who will attend to the Email. In the absence of the Executive Officer, Emails are to be sent to the Executive Assistant to the Chief Cancer Officer or Executive Assistant to the Chief Operating Officer;
- Divisional Directors are to ensure that Email enquiries are responded to or at least acknowledged within **2 working days of receipt**. A copy of the email response should also be provided to the Manager Policy and Executive Support on request.
- Divisional Directors are authorised to provide a written or verbal response to Email enquiries concerning routine matters that relate to their area of responsibility however, **matters that meet the criteria detailed in the table shown in section 12 are to be referred to the Manager Policy and Executive Support** who is responsible for co-ordinating a response (as discussed in section 2). In such instances outgoing correspondence is to be signed by the Chief Cancer Officer or delegate; and
- Divisional Directors are to ensure that Emails (both sent and received) are retained for Records Management purposes. In this regard Emails are to be captured within the Institute's Records Management system (TRIM) in accordance with the relevant *TRIM User Guideline*. Executive Assistants are to enter the completion date into the Information Request log for their Division.

Managers of the NSW Central Cancer Register, NSW Pap Test Register, the BreastScreen Co ordination Unit and the Cervical Screening Program are authorised to respond either verbally or in writing to Email enquiries that are routine in nature and which relate to their respective area of responsibility. However, **any matter that meets the criteria as outlined in the table in section 12 must be referred to the Executive Assistant to the Chief Cancer Officer** who is responsible for co-ordinating a response. In such instances outgoing correspondence is to be signed by the Chief Cancer Officer or delegate.

ATTACHMENT 1

CONTACT ACCESS PORTALS

Access Point /Location	Contact Number & Hours of Operation
<p>Cancer Institute NSW – Reception</p> <p>Level 1, Biomedical Building, Australia Technology Park EVELEIGH NSW</p> <p><i>Reception is operated between the hours of 8:30am and 5:00pm each weekday.</i></p>	<p>Postal Address: PO Box 41 ALEXANDRIA NSW 1435</p> <p>Telephone Contact: Ph. 02 8374 5600.</p> <p>Facsimile Contact: A general facsimile number, (02 8374 5700), is operated by the Cancer Institute NSW. Any requests for information /advice received by fax will be forwarded by reception to the appropriate Divisional Director.</p> <p>Email Contact: A general Email address (information@cancerinstitute.org.au) is operated by the Cancer Institute NSW. Any requests for information /advice received at this address are to be forwarded by reception to the appropriate Divisional Director.</p> <p><i>The above contact points are prompted on the Cancer Institute NSW website. Cancer Institute NSW corporate publications, and letterheads etc also promote contact access number.</i></p>
<p>Media Liaison</p> <p>Level 1, Biomedical Building, Australia Technology Park EVELEIGH NSW</p> <p><i>Media enquires are to be directed to the Communications Director or Communications Manager.</i></p>	<p>Local / Postal Address: PO Box 41 ALEXANDRIA NSW 1435</p> <p>Telephone Contact: Inquiries should be directed to the Communications Manager Mr Adrian Grundy (Tel 8374 3547). <i>The Communications Manager may also be contacted by mobile phone (0422 005 928).</i></p> <p>Facsimile Contact: A general facsimile number, (02 8374 5700), is operated by the Cancer Institute NSW. Any media related requests received by fax are to be forwarded by reception to the Communications Manager.</p> <p>Email Contact: The Communications Manager can be contacted by Email. However, any media requests for information /advice received at the Cancer Institute NSW general Email address are to be forwarded by reception to the Communications Manager.</p> <p><i>The above contact points are prompted on the Cancer Institute NSW website.</i></p>

<p>NSW Central Cancer Registry</p> <p>Level 1, Biomedical Building, Australia Technology Park EVELEIGH NSW</p> <p><i>Enquires concerning the Central Cancer Registry are to be referred to the CCR main phone contact number.</i></p>	<p>Local / Postal Address:</p> <p>NSW Central Cancer Registry Cancer Institute NSW Locked Bag 1 Woolloomooloo NSW 2011</p> <p>Telephone Contact:</p> <p>Ph. 02 8374 5749.</p> <p>Facsimile Contact:</p> <p>The CCR has established a dedicated facsimile number (02 8374 5744) to be used in connection with CCR business.</p> <p>Email Contact:</p> <p>The CCR has established a dedicated Email Address (ccr@cancerinstitute.org.au) to be used in connection with CCR business.</p> <p><i>The above contact points are prompted on the Cancer Institute NSW website under NSW Central Cancer Registry.</i></p>
<p>NSW Pap Test Register</p> <p>Level 1, Biomedical Building, Australia Technology Park EVELEIGH NSW</p> <p><i>Enquires concerning the Pap Test Register are to be referred to the PTR main phone contact number.</i></p>	<p>Local / Postal Address:</p> <p>NSW Pap Test Register Cancer Institute NSW Locked Bag 9014 Alexandria NSW 1435</p> <p>Telephone Contact:</p> <p>Ph. 131 556</p> <p>In addition, the PTR operates a Toll free number (1800 671 693). This Information Line operates between 9:00am and 5:00pm each working day to take calls from health practitioners, laboratories and members of the public.</p> <p>Facsimile Contact:</p> <p>The PTR has established a dedicated facsimile number (02 8374 5695) to be used in connection with PTR business.</p> <p>Email Contact:</p> <p>The PTR has established a dedicated Email Address (nswpaptest@cancerinstitute.org.au) to be used in connection with PTR business.</p> <p><i>The above contact points are prompted on the Cancer Institute NSW website under NSW Pap Test Register.</i></p>

<p>Cervical Screening</p> <p>Cancer Institute NSW Australian Technology Park, Level 1, Biomedical Building, Eveleigh NSW 2015</p> <p><i>The CS provides information & resources to consumers & health service providers on issues relating to cervical cancer screening.</i></p>	<p>Local / Postal Address:</p> <p>Cervical Screening, Cancer Institute NSW, PO Box 41, Alexandria, NSW 1435</p> <p>Telephone Contact:</p> <p>Ph. 02 8374 5783.</p> <p>In addition, CS operates a Toll free number (131 556). This Information Line operates Office hours are 8:30am to 5:00pm.</p> <p>Facsimile Contact:</p> <p>Facsimile number (02 8374 5700)</p> <p>Email Contact:</p> <p>A dedicated email address (cervicalscreening@cancerinstitute.org.au) to be used in connection with general enquiries regarding cervical screening.</p> <p><i>The above contact points are prompted on the CS web site www.csp.nsw.gov.au.</i></p>
<p>Breast Screen NSW – State Co-ordination Unit</p> <p>Cancer Institute NSW Australian Technology Park, Level 1, Biomedical Building, Eveleigh NSW 2015</p> <p><i>The State Co-ordination Unit is responsible for planning, implementation and coordination of BreastScreen NSW according to national and state aims.</i></p>	<p>Local / Postal Address:</p> <p>PO Box 41 ALEXANDRIA NSW 1435</p> <p>Telephone Contact:</p> <p>Ph. 02 8374 5777.</p> <p>In addition, BSNSW operates a national toll free number (13 20 50) used to make a booking for screening mammogram with BreastScreen NSW.</p> <p>Facsimile Contact:</p> <p>BSNSW has established a dedicated facsimile number (02 8374 5699) to be used in connection with BSNSW business.</p> <p>Email Contact:</p> <p>BSNSW has established a dedicated Email Address (info@bsnsw.org.au) to be used in connection with BSNSW business.</p> <p><i>The above contact points are prompted on the BSNSW website www.bsnsw.org.au.</i></p>

<p>Cancer Institute Standard Cancer Treatments (website)</p> <p>Level 1, Biomedical Building, Australia Technology Park EVELEIGH NSW</p> <p><i>Enquires concerning Standard Cancer Treatments (website) are to be referred to the CI-SCaT main phone contact number.</i></p>	<p>Local / Postal Address:</p> <p>PO Box 41 ALEXANDRIA NSW 1435</p> <p>Telephone Contact:</p> <p>Ph. 02 8374 5653.</p> <p>Facsimile Contact:</p> <p>A general facsimile number, (02 8374 5700), is operated by the Cancer Institute NSW. Requests for information /advice received by fax concerning the CI-SCaT website are to be forwarded by reception to SCT staff.</p> <p>Email Contact:</p> <p>The SCT has established a dedicated Email Address, (sct@cancerinstitute.org.au) to be used in connection with SCT business.</p> <p><i>The above contact points are prompted on the SCT website www.treatment.cancerinstitute.org.au.</i></p>
<p>Cancer Helpline</p> <p><i>The Cancer Helpline is a free confidential service provided by The Cancer Council NSW. This service is designed to provide assistance to people with cancer, their family and friends.</i></p>	<p>Telephone Contact:</p> <p>Ph. 131 120.</p> <p>The service operates Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm.</p> <p><i>This service is promoted on The Cancer Institute NSW website under Information for Patients, Carers and Families.</i></p>
<p>Quitline</p> <p><i>Quitline is a free confidential service, managed by the Cancer Institute NSW) that helps smokers quit smoking (an interpreter service is available).</i></p>	<p>Telephone Contact:</p> <p>Ph. 13 78 48 or 13 QUIT.</p> <p>The service operates:</p> <p>Monday to Friday – 7:00am to 11:00; Saturday and Sunday (including Public Holidays) 9:00am to 5:00pm.</p> <p><i>This service is promoted on the Cancer Institute NSW website under Information for Patients, Carers and Families.</i></p>