

## **Coastwide Eye Surgery – Erina and Tuggerah**

### **Privacy Policy**

Coastwide Eye Surgery, Erina and Tuggerah is committed to providing quality health care for our patients. As a fundamental part of our commitment, the Principals and Associate Doctors, together with all staff recognise the importance of ensuring our patients are fully informed and involved in their health care.

Coastwide Eye Surgery, Erina and Tuggerah, as a NSW Health Care Provider in the private sector, is bound by the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW) and the Privacy Act 1988, which includes both the Australian Privacy Principles and the NSW Health Privacy Principles. These principles set the standards by which we handle personal information collected from our patients.

A copy of the Australian Privacy Principles may be obtained from the website of The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner at [www.aoic.gov.au](http://www.aoic.gov.au).

### **What is Personal Information and why do we collect it?**

Personal information is information or an opinion that can reasonably identify an individual. Examples of Personal Information we collect include a patient's:

- Name; address; email address; phone and facsimile number/s; date of birth; Next of Kin (if applicable);
- Medicare number; DVA number (if applicable), Pension/Health Care Card number and Health Fund Member number (if applicable);
- Account history with our practice;
- Medical history, notes and diagnostic reports obtained during the course of your medical consultations; referrals and other relative documentation to and from other health professionals and health service providers and results and reports and other relative documentation received from other health professionals and health service providers.

This personal information is obtained in many ways including by telephone and facsimile; by email; by mail; via our website [www.coastwideeyesurgery.com.au](http://www.coastwideeyesurgery.com.au); in person and from third parties such as referring practitioners and other health care providers.

We collect your personal information for the primary purpose of providing quality health care to you. Our organisation does give you an option of receiving services from us anonymously or using a pseudonym, but only where practicable and lawful.

### **Security of Personal Information**

All reasonable steps are taken to prevent and protect any unlawful interference with your electronic records, from misuse and loss and from unauthorized access, modification or disclosure. Strict and password secured storage policies are observed by our organisation. Each member of staff is well versed in the principles and importance of doctor-patient

confidentiality. Any paper files will be kept in secured cabinets and only accessible by practice staff.

### **Handling of your Personal Information**

Your medical file is handled with the utmost respect for your privacy and will be accessed by your treating ophthalmologist and, where necessary in the absence of your regular treating ophthalmologist, by his/her colleague and Registrar within the organisation.

Your medical file will also be handled by our clinical team to assist your treating ophthalmologist in preparing you for your consultation and to assist with triage and by our clerical personnel to address administrative requirements of running a medical practice. Our staff are bound by strict confidentiality requirements as a condition of their employment and these requirements are observed at all times.

To ensure the functionality of our medical practice, there will be times where external organisations will require access to our practice and possibly, access to medical records. All external organisations who provide a service to our organisation will be bound by a strict confidentiality agreement.

**In addition, our organisation will participate in research and audit activities on occasions. These activities are to ensure patients and the community receive the most up-to-date standards of care and will allow our doctors to be at the forefront of medical innovation. We are seeking your consent to use clinical information from your records, if required, for the purpose of research and audit activities. Please inform our receptionist if you do not wish for your clinical information to be used in such activities.**

**Our organisation's main form of communication with patients, referring practitioners and all other health practitioners nominated by our patients in the management of their health is via mail, email, telephone and facsimile (efax). Please be aware that for those patients who nominate their mobile number will receive SMS phone reminders of upcoming appointments.**

### **Disclosure of Personal Information**

Our organisation will not disclose your personal information to overseas recipients.

Your Personal Information may be disclosed in a number of circumstances including the following:

- Third parties where you consent to the use or disclosure; and
- Where required by law

### **Access to your Personal Information**

You may access your Personal Information we hold about you and to update and/or correct it, subject to certain expectations. If you wish to access your Personal Information, we refer you to our handout titled ACCESSING YOUR MEDICAL RECORDS which is kept at reception. This handout is also available on our website, [www.coastwideeyesurgery.com.au](http://www.coastwideeyesurgery.com.au).

In order to protect your Personal Information, we may require identification from you before releasing the requested information.

### **Maintaining the Quality of your Personal Information**

It is important to us that your Personal Information is up-to-date. We will take reasonable steps to make sure that your Personal Information is accurate, complete and up-to-date. If you find that the information, we have is not up-to-date or is inaccurate, please advise our site Manager or Business Manager as soon as possible so we can update our records and ensure we can continue to provide quality health care to you.

### **Contact us**

Should you, at any time, have a query or concern in relation to the privacy policies of our organisation, please contact your treating Doctor or our Business Manager, who will address any concerns or queries you may have. We advise that our organisation has a practice policy for all queries or complaints to be made in writing and addressed to either your treating Doctor or Business Manager and marked Private and Confidential. We will endeavour to respond to your query or complaint within 30 days from receipt of your complaint.

Should you be unsatisfied with our response to your privacy query or complaint, you may lodge a written complaint to the NSW Privacy Commissioner or the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

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