

Privacy Policy

Last updated: 12 November 2025

1. Purpose

This Privacy Policy explains how **Rural Psychiatry** ("we", "our", "us") collects, uses, stores, and protects your personal and health information. It also outlines your rights under the **Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)** and the **Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)**.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all patients aged **18 years and older** who engage with Rural Psychiatry for telehealth psychiatric services. We provide services only via telehealth and do **not** accept physical correspondence or in-person consultations.

3. Information We Collect

We collect personal and sensitive information necessary to provide safe and effective psychiatric care, including:

- Personal identifiers (name, date of birth, Medicare number, contact details).
- Medical and psychiatric history, including current and past medications.
- GP referral details and clinical correspondence.
- Family, social, and occupational background where clinically relevant.
- Information from third parties (e.g. GPs, allied health providers) with your consent.
- Administrative information (appointment records, billing details, correspondence).

We may also collect information from you electronically through forms or secure telehealth systems.

4. How We Collect Information

We collect information directly from you, your referring GP, or other health providers involved in your care. Information may also be collected through:

- Referrals and reports sent by healthcare providers.
- Online pre-appointment forms and secure emails.
- Notes made during your telehealth consultations.

We will always collect your information fairly, lawfully, and with your consent, unless otherwise permitted by law.

5. Use of Information

We use your information to:

- Provide psychiatric assessment, diagnosis, and treatment.
- Communicate with your GP and other health professionals for coordinated care.
- Manage clinical and administrative processes (e.g. Medicare claims, scheduling).
- Conduct quality assurance and audit activities.
- Comply with legal and professional obligations (e.g. documentation standards, reporting requirements).

We do **not** use your information for marketing or non-clinical purposes.

6. Disclosure of Information

Your information may be shared with:

- Your **referring GP** and other treating health professionals, for the purpose of coordinated care.
- Medicare or other government bodies when legally required.
- Regulatory authorities (e.g. AHPRA) when required under law.
- IT or administrative service providers who assist in practice operations, under strict confidentiality agreements.

We will not share your personal information with any third party without your consent, unless:

- There is a **serious or imminent threat** to your life, health, or safety (or that of another person);
- Disclosure is required or authorised by law (e.g. mandatory reporting); or
- Disclosure is required for legal or clinical governance purposes.

7. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Rural Psychiatry may use **AI tools** for administrative and documentation support, such as:

- Formatting reports or clinical letters.
- De-identifying data for audits or quality improvement.
- Workflow automation (e.g. appointment confirmations).

These tools are used **in compliance with the APPs**, applying strict data minimisation, encryption, and privacy safeguards. AI is **never used for autonomous clinical decision-making**, and all patient information remains under human oversight.

8. Storage and Security

We take reasonable steps to protect your information from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, or disclosure.

- Electronic records are stored on encrypted, password-protected systems with role-based access controls.
- Any physical documents (if held temporarily) are secured and destroyed once digitised.
- Access to patient information is limited to authorised staff who require it for legitimate clinical or administrative duties.

If a data breach occurs that is likely to cause serious harm, we will notify affected individuals and the **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)** in accordance with the **Notifiable Data Breaches Scheme**.

9. Access and Correction

You may request access to your health record or ask for corrections if you believe the information is inaccurate, incomplete, or outdated. Requests should be made in writing to admin@ruralpsychiatry.com.au.

Dr Brazel will usually provide a copy of the assessment report to the patient. In certain cases, including where there are clinical or safety considerations, a copy may be sent only to the referring GP.

We will respond within a reasonable timeframe and may require proof of identity before releasing information. In limited circumstances (e.g. where disclosure may cause harm), access may be restricted, in which case you will receive an explanation.

10. Overseas Disclosure

Rural Psychiatry does not routinely transfer personal information overseas. If we ever engage a secure technology provider outside Australia, we will ensure they meet **equivalent or stronger privacy protections** than those under the APPs.

11. Retention and Disposal

Health records are retained for at least **7 years after the last contact**, or longer if required by law. Records of patients under 25 years at last contact are kept until they reach 25 years of age. After this time, records are securely destroyed or permanently de-identified.

12. Complaints

If you believe your privacy has been breached, please contact us at admin@ruralpsychiatry.com.au. We take all complaints seriously and aim to resolve

them within **30 days**.

If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)**:

- Website: www.oaic.gov.au
- Phone: 1300 363 992

13. Updates to this Policy

This policy may be reviewed or updated periodically to reflect legal or operational changes. The latest version will always be available upon request.

Rural Psychiatry

Providing accessible specialist psychiatry to rural and remote Australia via secure telehealth.

Contact:

Email: admin@ruralpsychiatry.com.au
(Physical correspondence not accepted)

Policies

[Practice Policy](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[My Health Record Policy](#)

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