



AGENDA ITEM	
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EARS Oversight Committee Activity Report

Subject: **EMPLOYEE ADVISORY AND RESOLUTION SERVICE (EARS) PRESENTATION – WAYNE MARRIOTT (HEAD OF EARS)**

Period: January to March 2023

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE RECEIVE THE EMPLOYEE ADVISORY AND RESOLUTION SERVICE (EARS) PRESENTATION FROM WAYNE MARRIOTT (HEAD OF EARS)

Executive Summary

Ea, the employee advisory and resolutions service goes from strength to strength as it continues to provide AUT staff with the opportunity to raise concerns and seek informal remedies. During the past quarter, we have strengthened the depth of the resolution team by ensuring that a cadre of local practitioners enables staff with coaching, mediation, and facilitation.

General observations of AUT

The financial recovery process [FRP] initiated by AUT in September 2022 continues to be important to people as they navigate change in their work area. Ea has become a significant link for people as they prepare to exit the university, those deemed as surplus to requirements and then reappointed, and a third category of staff that feel a level of grievance associated with what they witnessed happen to their peers. People commonly tell me that AUT's reputation as an employer and an educator is diminished by what they describe as traumatic change.

Highlights

Capability building – panel training well-being circle process.

Following the delivery of group healing circles for several schools recovering from traumatic change, Wayne is bringing together members of the resolution panel on the delivery of the two-hour workshop that will be offered to staff groups over the coming months.

Ea process reset.

The process to rebrand the service as Ea has begun again with a fresh consultation with Dr Valance Smith. A hiatus in the branding process occurred with the exit of key staff assisting with it. Valance has provided fresh encouragement and guidance.

Satisfaction surveys.

The return of visitor surveys remains low, although results with the net promoter score have improved. Wayne and Olinda have begun polling visitors to gain further insight into the efficacy of the service offering.

Conflict coaching for the respect in action team.

Wayne has contacted the Resolution Institute [RI] regarding providing conflict coaching training. The plan to offer this training to the Respect in Action Contact team will take shape once RI can confirm the availability of the trainers.

Quantitative analysis

The EARS team worked engaged with:

	2022 Q one	2023 Q one	Variance
New cases	50	48	-2
Visitor count by individual	34	38	+4

During the quarter, we continued promoting the service and creating systems that support the work:

Operational activity	2022 Q one	2023 Q one	Variance
Service promotion	8	12	+4
Respect in Action team	1	36	+35
Resolution panel training	0	4	+4

Resolution Panel referrals

2022 practitioner hours total	2023 Quarter one Practitioner hours
54.20	52.45

Future reports to the oversight committee will include statistical data on activity by faculty.

Qualitative analysis

Satisfaction survey

The net promoter score evaluation showed that 100 % of visitors would use the service again and refer others to EARS. This score is up 50 points on the same period last year, and an increase on the end of 2022 tally at 84%.

We received five survey responses from closed cases during the reporting period.

Verbatim responses

“Thank you [name] for your time and patience”.

Popcorn poll

In the first quarter of 2023, we began trialling polling visitors on satisfaction. The survey collection began in earnest in April. The poll is done over the phone or in Teams, on open or closed cases.

The questions asked:

- Which member of the Team did you mainly deal with?
- What did we do well?
- What could we do better?
- Would you use the service again?
- What would you have done to fix your problem if you hadn't called EARS?

Background

The Employee Advisory and Resolutions Service [EARS] is an independent, impartial, confidential, and informal method that assists staff in raising issues and resolving conflict [[Employee Advisory & Resolutions Service | EARS \(sharepoint.com\)](#)].

The EARS provide AUT staff with a safe place to discuss concerns and create options to address unwelcome behaviour. By enabling staff [the visitor] to find solutions, their concerns can be addressed appropriately to the situation and the visitor's needs [[What we do \(earsaut.org\)](#)].

AUT's EARS service began operation in August 2021. It was enacted by agreement in the form of a charter developed in collaboration with AUT staff, as a recommendation of the Davenport Report.

The Head of EARS reports operational matters to the Vice-chancellors office. Wayne Marriott leads a team of a full-time coordinator, six external dispute resolution practitioners and 20 Respect in Action volunteers from across AUT [[Respect In Action Network | AUT Employee Advisory and Resolutions Service \(earsaut.org\)](#)].

To coincide with the beginning of 2023, the Head of EARS and the Vice Chancellor signed a fresh Charter that sets out the terms of service [[Our Charter | AUT Employee Advisory and Resolutions Service \(earsaut.org\)](#)].

Prepared by:

Wayne Marriott

May 2023