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| AGENDA ITEM | 4.1 |
|-------------|-----|

**Council Working Group**  
**Agenda Paper**

Subject: **EMPLOYEE ADVISORY AND RESOLUTION SERVICE (EARS) PRESENTATION – WAYNE MARRIOTT (HEAD OF EARS) AND BETH BUNDY (GROUP DIRECTOR, PEOPLE AND CULTURE)**

Date: [INSERT]

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

*THAT COUNCIL WORKING GROUP RECEIVE THE EMPLOYEE ADVISORY AND RESOLUTION SERVICE (EARS) PRESENTATION FROM WAYNE MARRIOTT (HEAD OF EARS) AND BETH BUNDY (GROUP DIRECTOR, PEOPLE AND CULTURE)*

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**Background / Executive Summary**

AUT’s EARS service began operation in August 2021. It was enacted by agreement between the Vice-chancellor and the Head of EARS. The agreement in the form of a charter was developed in collaboration of AUT staff. The Head of EARS reports operational matters to the Vice-chancellors office via the Group Director – People and Culture. The service has oversight by an independent committee that meets quarterly.

The EARS provide AUT staff a safe place for to discuss concerns and create options to address unwelcome behaviour. By enabling people to find solutions, their concerns can be addressed at a pace appropriate to the situation and the needs of the visitor.

The EARS inform the AUT Vice-chancellor's office with an early warning system of inappropriate behaviour, emerging policy violations or ineffective leadership. This function maintains visitor anonymity so reducing the possibility of retaliation against them for raising important issues.

All over the world, programmes such as this create better workplaces where employee satisfaction leads to higher morale and retention, by addressing issues early. AUT’s programme is based on the codes of practice developed by the International Ombuds’ Association [IOA] and is one of the first programme of its kind in New Zealand. The tenets of the IOA code of practice include Confidentiality, Impartiality, Informality, and Independence.

The term *visitor* is used to describe any person making contact with the EARS office.

**Qualitative analysis:**

Analysis of feedback from visitors is not yet available.

### Quantitative analysis:

The EARS reporting process collates information based on universally accepted parameters for organisational ombuds. The following data is generalised to maintain anonymity of individual visitors. Cases are opened when one person contacts the office. Additional people may be added to case where their involvement may and benefit to the situation. During the period August 2021 to February 2022:

|                          |    |         |
|--------------------------|----|---------|
| Cases opened             | 79 |         |
| Cases closed             | 37 |         |
| Cases referred to Tier 3 | 0  |         |
| Current cases            | 42 | Table 1 |

### Referral source

|                           |     |         |
|---------------------------|-----|---------|
| A colleague               | 25% |         |
| People and culture        | 20% |         |
| AUTi                      | 20% |         |
| Upline manager            | 18% |         |
| Repeat client             | 8%  |         |
| Respect in Action contact | 3%  |         |
| Union delegate            | 3%  |         |
| Internal media            | 3%  | Table 2 |

### Issues raised

EARS collate various types of issues raised by visitors. These are broken down by the following parameters, each with sub-categories:

1. Employment agreement
2. Evaluative relationships [for issues pertaining to power differentials]
3. Collegial relationships
4. Career development
5. Statutory compliance
6. Physical environment
7. Services/administration
8. Organisational mission
9. Organisational ethic/values/standards

In summary, all cases opened appeared with attributes contained within relationships that have some power component. These cases are summarised in chart 1.

## Evaluative relationships Counts

Report Period: 01/08/21 Thru 18/02/22

15/02/22

All Cases: 79 cases within date range

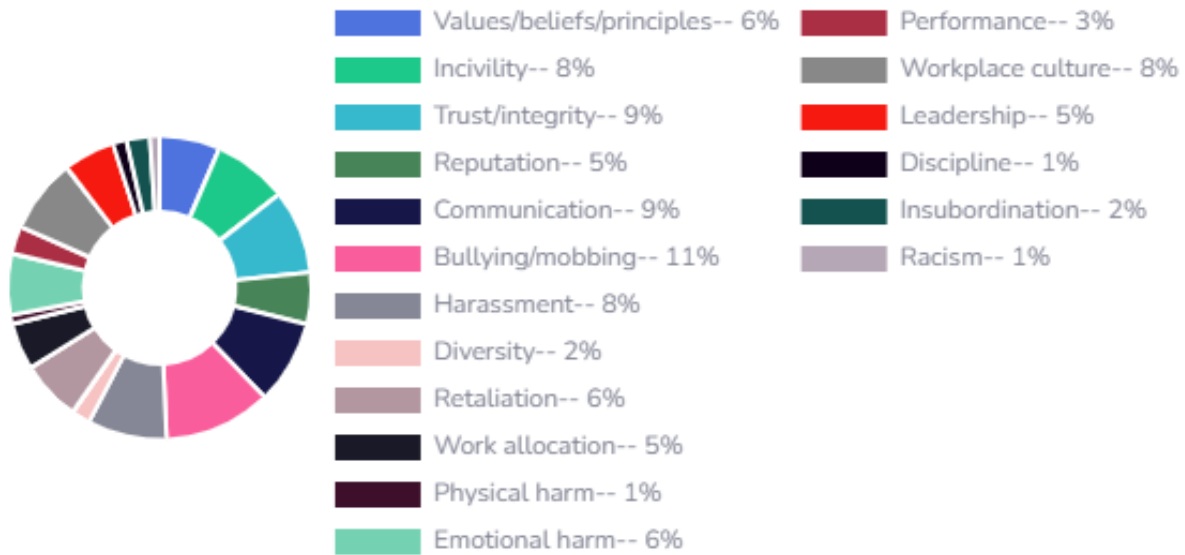


Chart 1.

### Activity type [support provided to the visitor]

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Coaching             | 51% |
| Service promotion    | 18% |
| Facilitation         | 13% |
| Training             | 6%  |
| Well-being checks    | 4%  |
| Mediation            | 3%  |
| Emergency escalation | 1%  |

Table 3

### Service administration

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Oversight committee        | 1 |
| Respect in action training | 1 |
| Bystander training         | 1 |

Table 4.

### Emerging issues

COVID-19 control and vaccination mandates: Clarity of messaging in dynamic environment  
 Bullying and Harassment: EARS is engaged with several historical complaints

Appointment, recruitment processes:

Disclosed instances of poor or non-existent recruitment process leading to staff dissatisfaction.

Staff isolation:

There is an increasing disclosure of isolation of staff owing to the CoVid response environment.

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Prepared by:

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AUT

18 February 2022