



WHAT ARE ADVOCATES AND HOW CAN THEY HELP ME?

MAY 2018

What is a disability advocate?

A disability advocate is someone who acts to promote, defend and protect the rights of a person with disability.

This may involve:

- Listening to the concerns and views of people with disability
- Supporting a person with disability to understand their rights
- Making sure that the person with disability has the opportunity to express their opinions, arguments and choices
- Providing information to assist the person with disability to make decisions or resolve issues
- Encouraging the person with disability to express their concerns or opinions
- Putting forward the person with disability's perspective, verbally or in writing

What sorts of things might a disability advocate help with?

Some areas of your life in which disability advocates might be able to help include:

- Housing: e.g. exploring more appropriate accommodation if you are living in, or at risk of living in, residential aged care

- Disability services/support: raising a complaint with a service provider, or navigating access to the NDIS
- Accidents and injury: e.g. claiming insurance or compensation after an accident
- Health: e.g. understanding all options in a major medical decision
- Transport: e.g. supporting use of accessible taxis
- Physical access: e.g. working with local councils to improve access to buildings
- Employment: e.g. voicing a human resources concern in the workplace
- Child custody: e.g. understanding and negotiating care proceedings
- Consumer affairs: e.g. discussing a faulty product purchase with the manufacturer
- Education: e.g. accessing learning support for a university student with disability
- Finances e.g. challenging a pension debt
- Legal infringements e.g. dealing with a charge of parking infringement or assault
- Relationships e.g. support so you can participate in family court mediation

We value your feedback about this resource – please contact the Summer Foundation at info@summerfoundation.org.au, or 1300 626 560.

What can't disability advocates help with?

Disability advocates have strict limits on the level and type of involvement that they can have in your life.

This is to protect your rights, and to make sure that you have access to the most appropriate or qualified person in each situation.

Disability advocates cannot help you with:

- Making decisions for you
- Providing mediation or counselling services
- Providing case management services (such as managing your disability supports, sourcing accommodation for you)

Who can be a disability advocate?

Family and friends can advocate for you in many instances, but sometimes you might need to turn to someone you trust in your community for more formal, independent advocacy. There are also disability advocacy organisations where you can get support from someone especially trained to advocate on your behalf, or to help you advocate for yourself.

National information & resources

ADVOKIT: [🌐 advokit.org.au](https://www.advokit.org.au)

BELONGING MATTERS: [🌐 belongingmatters.org/](https://www.belongingmatters.org/)

BRAIN INJURY AUSTRALIA:
[🌐 braininjuryaustralia.org.au](https://www.braininjuryaustralia.org.au)

DISABILITY ADVOCACY NETWORK AUSTRALIA (DANA)
[🌐 dana.org.au](https://www.dana.org.au)

NATIONAL DISABILITY SERVICES: [🌐 nds.org.au](https://www.nds.org.au)

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY INCORPORATED
[🌐 pwd.org.au/library/australian-advocacy-directory.html](https://www.pwd.org.au/library/australian-advocacy-directory.html)



This project has been funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Information by state

VICTORIA

Rights Information and Advocacy Centre Inc:
[🌐 riac.org.au](https://www.riac.org.au)

Disability Services Commissioner (VIC):
[🌐 odsc.vic.gov.au](https://www.odsc.vic.gov.au)

NEW SOUTH WALES

Disability Advocacy NSW: [🌐 da.org.au](https://www.da.org.au)

Information on Disability and Education Awareness Services (IDEAS): [🌐 ideas.org.au](https://www.ideas.org.au)

Ability Incorporated Advocacy Service:
[🌐 abilityincorporated.org.au](https://www.abilityincorporated.org.au)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Brain Injury Network of SA: [🌐 binsa.org](https://www.binsa.org)

Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service SA:
[🌐 dacssa.org.au](https://www.dacssa.org.au)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Advocacy South West Inc: [🌐 advocacysouthwest.com](https://www.advocacysouthwest.com)

Midland Debt and Legal Advocacy Service:
[🌐 midlas.org.au](https://www.midlas.org.au)

Citizen Advocacy Perth West: [🌐 capw.org.au](https://www.capw.org.au)

QUEENSLAND

Independent Advocacy Townsville:
[🌐 independentadvocacy.org.au](https://www.independentadvocacy.org.au)

Queensland Advocacy Incorporated: [🌐 qai.org.au](https://www.qai.org.au)

ACT

ACT Disability and Aged Carer Advocacy Service:
[🌐 adacas.org.au](https://www.adacas.org.au)

Public Advocate of the ACT: [🌐 publicadvocate.act.gov.au](https://www.publicadvocate.act.gov.au)

Advocacy for Inclusion: [🌐 advocacyforinclusion.org](https://www.advocacyforinclusion.org)

TASMANIA

Advocacy Tasmania Inc: [🌐 advocacytasmania.org.au](https://www.advocacytasmania.org.au)

Speak Out Association of Tasmania:
[🌐 speakoutadvocacy.org](https://www.speakoutadvocacy.org)

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Disability Advocacy Service: [🌐 das.org.au/](https://www.das.org.au/)

Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC)
[🌐 adec.org.au](https://www.adec.org.au)