



# About Advocacy

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## Contents

|                                                                   |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Advocacy .....                                                 | 2 |
| 1.1 The purpose of advocacy .....                                 | 2 |
| 1.2 Misunderstandings of advocacy .....                           | 2 |
| 1.3 Advocate's role.....                                          | 2 |
| 1.4 Understanding Human Rights .....                              | 2 |
| 2. Advocacy Assistance.....                                       | 3 |
| 2.1 Intake Process .....                                          | 3 |
| 2.2 Considerations for Intake Priority .....                      | 3 |
| 2.3 Rights and Responsibilities .....                             | 3 |
| 2.4 Advocacy Request .....                                        | 4 |
| 2.5 Advocacy Plan Development .....                               | 4 |
| 3. Privacy.....                                                   | 4 |
| 4. Is Leadership Plus a good service? .....                       | 5 |
| 5. Complaints.....                                                | 5 |
| 5.1 How to make a complaint.....                                  | 5 |
| 5.2 Other agencies that may be of assistance with complaints..... | 6 |

Leadership Plus is a community-based organisation providing advocacy assistance to people living with disability.

## 1. Advocacy

Advocacy is funded through the National Disability Advocacy Program and our advocacy work prioritises people living with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) as well as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community members living in the Dandenong, Kingston and Casey Local Government Areas.

### 1.1 The purpose of advocacy

Advocacy works to promote, enact and strengthen the human rights of people living with disability.

The final report of the Royal Commission into Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (known as the Disability Royal Commission) was published in late 2023. The Disability Royal Commission recognised the importance of the National Disability Advocacy Program providing people with disability access to effective disability advocacy to promote, protect and ensure full equal enjoyment of all human rights enabling community participation.

Leadership Plus works with people with disability to:

- be heard, by working to give people a voice
- develop an understanding of self-advocacy, human rights and empowerment
- have a say in the decisions of their lives
- address systemic issues

### 1.2 Misunderstandings of advocacy

Leadership Plus

- Advocates cannot act without client permission and client instruction.
- Cannot provide Case Management (e.g. Finding accommodation; coordinating services).
- Cannot be Administrators or Guardians.
- Is not a legal service and cannot provide legal advice.
- Advocates are not experts on everything; there may be other agencies that can better meet a person's needs. This may include other Disability Advocacy agencies due to their area of specialisation.

### 1.3 Advocate's role

The advocate's job is to make sure people living with disabilities understand their rights and choices. Working with people to build their skills in self-advocacy. The advocate also works to make sure that others understand the rights of people living with disability. The Disability Royal Commission found that independent advocacy is fundamental to defending human rights, preventing abuse, and supporting the inclusion of people with disability.

### 1.4 Understanding Human Rights

Human rights are universal: they are for everyone, everywhere, every day. Human rights are based on values such as freedom, equality and dignity and seek to protect our quality of life. The Australian Human Rights Commission has more information about human rights. <https://humanrights.gov.au/known-your-rights/rights-of-individuals/disability-rights>

The Disability Royal Commission found big problems in how Australia treats people with disability and Australia must do better. Everyone with a disability must be treated fairly and included in the community.

## 2. Advocacy Assistance

### 2.1 Intake Process

Call and leave a message for the intake worker on 9489 2999. You can also email [intake@leadershipplus.com](mailto:intake@leadershipplus.com). The intake worker will return your message on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday between 9:30am and 12:30pm.

**\*\*Please note:** We receive many calls and work hard to reply to each call. It generally takes a week or so to reply to each call.

The intake worker may:

- Suggest some things for you to try.
- Refer you to a more appropriate service.
- Ask you some questions and complete an Advocacy Request form.

### 2.2 Considerations for Intake Priority

- Advocacy Team capacity.
- People living with ABI.
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community members living in the Dandenong, Kingston and Casey Local Government Areas.
- Advocacy intervention is likely to deliver client outcomes.
- There is no conflict of interest in Leadership Plus advocating for the person.
- There is no other disability advocacy service providing advocacy assistance.
- There is no other more appropriate service that can assist the person.

### 2.3 Rights and Responsibilities

Rights refer to the way people should be treated. Some rights belong to everyone because they are human; these rights are called human rights. In Australia, it is your basic right to be treated fairly and with respect. Along with rights come responsibilities, responsibilities say how you are expected to act in order to have your rights protected.

#### Rights

- To be treated fairly and with respect.
- Some rights and entitlements are protected by laws. For example; the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013*
- Some rights address discrimination and unfair treatment for example; the *Disability Discrimination Act*.

#### Responsibilities

- You are responsible for your actions.
- Act in a way that respects the rights of others.
- To be reasonable with no yelling, no swearing and no abuse.
- To tell your advocate the truth about the work they are doing with you.
- To act in a lawful way.
- Understand that your advocate will act in a lawful way.

- To inform Leadership Plus if another advocate is working with you.
- To provide the requested permissions to ensure your advocate is able to complete the work needed.
- You and your Advocate will use the correct pronouns as identified.

## 2.4 Advocacy Request

Leadership Plus will respond to all advocacy requests through Intake. Our capacity to meet every individual advocacy request is limited. If we are unable to provide advocacy assistance we will explain why.

## 2.5 Advocacy Plan Development

The Advocacy Plan will have a description of the outcomes you are seeking. You can ask for a review of your Advocacy Plan. Your advocate may also review your Advocacy Plan with you.

# 3. Privacy

Leadership Plus will respect your privacy, dignity and confidentiality.

- Staff will always be sensitive to your rights to privacy.
- Conversations held with you are considered private.
- Information is passed on or discussed with others when you give permission. Your permission is recorded on a digital form and generally remains in place until your advocacy matter is closed – unless you withdraw your permission.
- You can withdraw your permission at any time.
- Please Note: There may be times when your Advocate will need Permissions in place in order to move the matter forward. Your Advocate will talk with you if this is the case.
- Leadership Plus keep your information as a digital file and it is stored securely. Digital files and records are password protected. Leadership Plus have multifactor authentication (MFA) for all electronic records. This means your digital file and information are stored securely.
- All files are kept for 7 years after the last contact and then destroyed.
- You have access to your Leadership Plus file. If you would like to access your file, please ask your advocate, or call Leadership Plus 9489 2999 or email [intake@leadershipplus.com](mailto:intake@leadershipplus.com).
- When using data for research or reporting all identification is removed, we do not use your name.

Leadership Plus takes your privacy seriously. Any breaches of your privacy by your advocate will be a matter for investigation by management and may result in formal disciplinary action.

Leadership Plus's policy and procedures on maintaining Privacy is in accordance with the Privacy Act that can be accessed at <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/the-privacy-act>.

## 4. Is Leadership Plus a good service?

Leadership Plus receives funding through the National Disability Advocacy Program and needs to comply with the **National Standards for Disability Services**; there are six National Standards that apply to disability service providers. We can provide you with more plain English information about the standards.

### 1. Rights:

The service promotes individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making and actively prevents abuse, harm, neglect and violence.

### 2. Participation and Inclusion:

The service works with individuals and families, friends and carers to promote opportunities for meaningful participation and active inclusion in society.

### 3. Individual Outcomes:

Services and supports are assessed, planned, delivered and reviewed to build on individual strengths and enable individuals to reach their goals.

### 4. Feedback and Complaints:

Regular feedback is sought and used to inform individual and organisation-wide service reviews and improvement.

### 5. Service Access:

The service manages access, commencement and leaving a service in a transparent, fair, equal and responsive way.

### 6. Service Management:

The service has effective and accountable service management and leadership to maximise outcomes for individuals.

Every three years Leadership Plus is audited twice against these standards. As part of that process, some people who have received advocacy assistance are asked to provide direct feedback to the auditors. The auditors will need your permission to look at your file. The auditors will not take any copies of your file. The auditors will respect your privacy.

Please let your advocate know if you would like to be involved in the next Audit or call Leadership Plus 9489 2999 or email [intake@leadershipplus.com](mailto:intake@leadershipplus.com).

## 5. Complaints

Leadership Plus will:

- Listen to your complaint and take it seriously.
- Work to resolve your complaint.
- Respect your privacy when you make a complaint.

### 5.1 How to make a complaint

- Talk to the person the complaint is about and see if it can be sorted out with your advocate.

- If you don't feel like you can talk to your advocate, you can email [intake@leadershipplus.com](mailto:intake@leadershipplus.com)
- Your advocate and the Operations Manager will try to address your complaint.
- The Operations Manager or CEO will contact the complainant within two working days. They will investigate the matter and provide a written response to the complaint within seven working days of the complaint being lodged.
- If the advocacy team can't work it out with you, then the complaint goes to the Executive Officer.
- If the Executive Officer can't work it out with you, then mediation may be offered to you.
- You can use an advocate of your choice to help sort out your complaint with Leadership Plus.

## 5.2 Other agencies that may be of assistance with complaints

### **Complaints Resolution and Referral Service (CRSS)**

Phone: 1800 880 052 (free call)

Email: [crss@glresolution.au](mailto:crss@glresolution.au)

[Online complaint form](#)

### **Department of Health, Disability and Ageing**

Phone: [1800 020 103](tel:1800020103)

Email: [enquiries@health.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@health.gov.au)

### **NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission**

Phone: 1800 035 544

Email:

[contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au](mailto:contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au)

[Online complaint form](#)

Mail: PO Box 210, Penrith NSW 2751

### **Australian Human Rights Commission (Complaints branch)**

Mail:

Australian Human Rights Commission

GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001

Email: [complaints@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:complaints@humanrights.gov.au)

Fax: 02 9284 9611

[How to make a complaint](#)

### **Australian National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline**

Phone: 1800 880 052

### **DARU find an advocate**

<https://daru.org.au/organisation-type/individual-advocacy/>