

# **Illawarra Citizen Advocacy**

## **Policy and Procedures Manual**

Prepared for the web, September 2001

ILLAWARRA CITIZEN ADVOCACY INC.

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES DOCUMENTS

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## ILLAWARRA CITIZEN ADVOCACY INC.

### **REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Each year the Policy and Procedure Sub-Committee of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will meet and review all policy and procedure documents.

All proteges and advocates in the program are invited to come and have a say in the review. The review is held each year in July prior to the Annual General Meeting of the Program.

Also once a year, all proteges and advocates are invited to be part of our Service Standards assessment. The program will contact all involved in the program to let you know when the Service Standards will be held.

# ILLAWARRA CITIZEN ADVOCACY INC.

## **POLICY FOR COMMUNICATING IN LANGUAGE THAT IS EASILY UNDERSTOOD**

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy recognises the principle that people with disabilities have a right to make decisions that affect their lives and that, to exercise that right, they must be given information in such a manner that they can understand it; and they must have the opportunity to express their views by the best means of communication which they can manage.

People with an intellectual disability may have problems of comprehension and communication. None of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy endeavours are valid or have meaning for people with a disability unless members of the Board, the staff and advocates can make themselves understood and can understand the people with whom and for whom they are working.

1. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will write its policies and any other matter that must be brought to the attention of a person with a disability in language that is easily understood. Specialised language and jargon will be avoided. If necessary, documents which need to be brought to the attention of a person with a disability and which may not, because of the language used, be readily understood, will be translated or otherwise explained in language that is easily understood, or explained by any other means of communication.

2. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy recognises that, where information is written in the English Language, people from non-English speaking backgrounds have a right to receive and to give information. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will, whenever necessary, use the services of an interpreter.

3. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy recognises that some people cannot communicate by the spoken word alone. Where a person is not able to communicate by the spoken word, an interpreter conversant with the sign language of the deaf may be used, or the communication with the person may be by writing if that is sufficient and appropriate, or it may be by gestures or by any other endeavours.

4. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy recognises that some people with a disability require someone who knows them well and who is able to interpret their gestures or words. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will ensure that, whenever this is required, a person able to interpret will be available.

5. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy realises that those who cannot read and write, and that those who cannot use the telephone, may be neglected. Hence, Illawarra Citizen Advocacy recognises the importance of face-to-face communication.

# ILLAWARRA CITIZEN ADVOCACY INC.

## MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

1. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will recruit persons with an intellectual disability and persons with multiple disabilities where the disability has been acquired before adulthood. Persons recruited must reside or have roots in the Illawarra.

2. This policy applies to people regardless of ability, gender, religion, age or culture.

3. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will endeavour to make people with an intellectual disability in the Illawarra aware of its existence, its aims and its activities. In that regard, Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will clearly and persistently promote and explain its aims and activities.

4. To gain an understanding of the needs of people with an intellectual disability, and to meet those needs, Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will endeavour to involve people with an intellectual disability in its management by encouraging them to become members of the Board or of its sub-committees, and by encouraging members of the organisation to propose and to second members with an intellectual disability to become members of the Board or of its sub-committees.

5. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy abides by the principles of Citizen Advocacy as written in CAPE (Standards for Citizen Advocacy Program Evaluation: O'Brien and Wolfensberger). The staff of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will with the assistance of the Board of Management actively seek out and identify people with an intellectual disability or with multiple disabilities who may need a citizen advocate.

6. The effectiveness of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy is rated by an external evaluation team against the standards of CAPE. The standards which specifically apply to meeting the needs of proteges in protege/advocate relationship are:

R 1411, The protege's age

R 1412, The protege's capacity for relationship reciprocity

R 1413, The protege's need for spokespersonship to defend human and legal rights

R 1421, The diversity of advocacy roles

R 143, Avoiding social overprotection

R 21, Vision and creativity of protege recruitment

R 22, Advocate recruitment

R.23, Advocate orientation

R 24, Advocate-protege matching

R 25, Follow-along and support to relationships

R 26, Ongoing training for advocates

R 27, Advocate-associates emphasis

7. People with an intellectual disability have a great variety of needs for representation and relationships which can be met by citizen advocates. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will be flexible in its recruitment to establish and to support relationships which will best suit the persons and their changing circumstances. The staff of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy Inc. will get to know potential proteges, their needs, preferences and their characteristics on a personal level, and will consciously and systematically recruit citizen advocates to meet their needs.

8. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy recognises that, with present resources, only a small number of people with an intellectual disability can be matched. In order that as wide a range of advocacy needs as possible can be met, Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will ensure that proteges are recruited from both sexes and from a wide range of ages (birth to old age), living environment, ability, types of advocacy, duration of relationship, and the levels of demand that proteges make of their advocates.

9. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will take particular care to seek out people with intellectual disability who -

- are at risk of social exclusion
- have difficulties in forming reciprocal relationships
- have challenging behaviour
- are at risk of abuse of their personal and human rights
- are particularly vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and inappropriate or unethical treatment.

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will then carefully and systematically plan and implement recruitment, orientation, matching, support and follow-up to ensure that advocates likely to meet these needs are found and given every encouragement to meet each protege's individual advocacy needs and wishes.

10. Advocates will be given advice and assistance to locate and use the community and service resources necessary to meet their protege's needs and wishes, and assistance in campaigning to have these provided if they are not readily available.

11. Crisis advocates and advocate-associates with a wide range of knowledge and experience will be recruited so that the needs of people with an intellectual disability in crisis may be met, and so that advocates may be given professional advice by the advocate-associates.

12. For each protege and protege/advocate relationship, Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will have a written record of:

- The protege's life experiences, characteristics, aspirations, needs and the potential advocacy role.
- Strategies for and implementation of advocate recruitment and orientation to meet the needs of each protege.
- The orientation of advocates both generally, and for each protege's needs:
- The matching process, and the responsibilities and expectations explained to the protege and to the advocate, and any ideas given to stimulate each advocate to meet his or her protege's needs.
- The follow-along and the support, advice and help given to advocates to meet the needs of the protege as originally defined and as they change with time, and the progress of the relationship.
- The Annual Internal Relationship Review
- The regular review of all protege/advocate relationships by staff to evaluate, with the assistance of the Board, the strategies of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy.
- The review by staff and at least one Board member of any matches which have discontinued to ascertain the causes of the discontinuation and, if necessary, to amend policies and practices as indicated by the review.

All records and documentation will be confidential in accordance with the Privacy Safeguards Policy of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy.

# ILLAWARRA CITIZEN ADVOCACY INC.

## DECISION MAKING AND CHOICES

The lives of many people with an intellectual disability have been ordered by others. They have been given no choice and no opportunity to make their own decisions. Citizen Advocacy aims to open the lives of people with an intellectual disability to choices, and to encourage and help them to make decisions with the help of their citizen advocate.

1. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy welcomes proteges and advocates to have a say in its management, and endeavours to include proteges and advocates on its Board and on its committees (see page 3). This participation can enable proteges to be actively involved with planning, management and evaluation of the program. When a protege's disability restricts this participation, members of the Board or of committees will help and, should it be necessary, the help of an interpreter may be sought.

However, Illawarra Citizen Advocacy recognises that the protege/advocacy relationship is paramount. Neither the protege nor the advocate needs to feel an obligation to take part in the management.

2. The Annual General Meeting of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy shall give all members the opportunity to elect the Board of Management which shall be representative of people with an intellectual disability, advocates and members of the community.

3. Recruiting of proteges and advocates, their orientation, their matching, and the support and follow-along given Illawarra Citizen Advocacy Inc. will give advocates - and through them their proteges resources and opportunities, and so will empower the proteges to make decisions.

Advocate orientation will give a prospective advocate the means whereby the advocate can help the protege - who has an intellectual disability - to become informed of different choices and to make decisions.

4. In the development of a protege/advocate relationship, the prospective protege will be consulted - by whatever means of communication are necessary - to determine the protege's needs and roles which he or she wishes the advocate to fulfil. The protege must be given the opportunity to accept or to reject a particular advocate, and the decision shall be respected.

However, Citizen Advocacy recognises that some people with an intellectual disability have been so abused or rejected that they will not communicate with people and will reject a relationship. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy may form the opinion that a citizen advocate will benefit such a person, and may match a citizen advocate without the protege's consent.

6. Regular evaluation of the activities of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will be made by an external evaluation team against the standard written in Standards for Citizen Advocacy Program Evaluation (CAPE) - O'Brien and Wolfensberger.

The standards written in CAPE allow an evaluation of the extent to which people with an intellectual disability are represented on the Board of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy, and are a measure of the opportunities given to proteges to select choices and to make decisions.

Proteges and advocates will have the opportunity to meet the evaluation team and to give their opinion, and to make suggestions to improve the service that Illawarra Citizen Advocacy can provide.

7. Advocates and proteges will be notified of any proposals for changes in the principles of policies of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy. They will be asked for their comments, and these will be taken into account by the Board.



# ILLAWARRA CITIZEN ADVOCACY INC.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR RECRUITMENT OF PROTEGES**

This paper is divided into two sections:

1. Policy
2. Procedures

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will recruit individuals with an intellectual disability or multiple disability which has been incurred during development and prior to reaching adulthood. In order to achieve this, Illawarra Citizen Advocacy:

- will provide clear and consistent public and personal promotion and explanation of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy's function and procedures
- will have a variety of means to ensure the involvement of people with an intellectual disability in Illawarra Citizen Advocacy to provide direct input on the needs of people with an intellectual disability
- this policy and procedure will apply to all people regardless of ethnic or cultural background, gender, religion, age or level of disability.

### **1. POLICY**

#### **ACTIVE RECRUITMENT AND IDENTIFICATION**

According to the Principles of Citizen Advocacy as outlined in CAPE (Standards for Citizen Advocacy Program Evaluation, O'Brien and Wolfensberger Test Edition), Program staff (with the advice and assistance of the Board of Management) will actively seek out and identify individuals with intellectual disability or multiple disability who require/need a Citizen Advocate and who have a wide variety of needs for representation, spokespersonship and support.

#### **REFERRALS AND ENQUIRIES**

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will be able to recruit Citizen Advocates for only a limited number of Proteges in any one year. In order to ensure that Illawarra Citizen Advocacy adheres to Citizen Advocacy Principles, Illawarra Citizen

Advocacy will not accept referrals from individuals, families, agencies or others, nor create a waiting list or registration of interest list for people needing a Citizen Advocate.

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will, however, keep a "working list" of approximately 5 Protege's at any one time to whom it makes a definite commitment to recruit a Citizen Advocate.

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will accept and record appropriate enquiries from interested parties, but these records will in no way constitute a waiting list. Program staff will ensure that clear explanation of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy recruitment procedures are given to enquiries preferably in writing.

#### **FLEXIBLE AND PERSONAL APPROACH TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS**

People with an intellectual disability have a wide variety of needs for representation and

relationships which can be met by Citizen Advocates. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will ensure it undertakes to achieve sufficient flexibility in its recruitment procedure to define and support relationships which can fit the individual, emotional or practical protection needs of the person with a disability. Program staff will get to know potential Proteges and understand preferences and characteristics of their needs on a personal level and involve them personally in Illawarra Citizen Advocacy.

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will plan to create a wide variety of relationships in which Advocates will be focused on meeting one of more of the practical and/or emotional needs of the person.

### **BALANCED ORIENTATION TO PROTEGE NEEDS**

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy Inc. staff will ensure that it achieves a balance in the following criteria/characteristics of people with an intellectual disability and this balance will reflect the demography/needs of the individual as follows:-

1. **AGE:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will recruit persons of various ages, from birth onwards, and the age range will reflect the demography of the local community.
2. **GENDER:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will recruit individuals of both sexes and will aim for a balance of males and females.
3. **ETHNIC AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will recruit and will attempt to involve persons from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
4. **VARIOUS LIVING SITUATIONS:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will ensure that people living in different types of accommodation in the local area are sought out including:
  - large residential centres
  - boarding houses
  - hostels
  - family homes
  - nursing homes
  - supported accommodation
  - group homes
  - independent living
  - street shelters
  - remand centres
5. **LEVELS OF DISABILITY:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will ensure it includes people who have varying degrees of intellectual disability or multiple disability who have high, medium or low support needs.
6. **SEGREGATION OR COMMUNITY EXCLUSION:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will actively seek out individuals who are at risk of ostracism or segregation which could be a result of their level of disability, physical isolation, forced isolation, difficulties in communication and relationship reciprocation, or "behaviour problems".
7. **ACTIVE SPOKESMANSHIP:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will recruit individuals who have needs for vigorous defence or representation of their legal and human rights which may be at risk of being compromised.
8. **LENGTH OF RELATIONSHIP:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy recognises that relationships will vary in the length of commitment required by an Advocate to meet the individual needs of the Protege. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy Inc. will, over time, create a range of short-term and long-term relationships based on the needs of each person but will, however, aim to create a majority of relationships based on a long term, perhaps even life long, commitment

of both parties involved.

9. **CRISIS SITUATION:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will accept those persons who require immediate support and/or spokespersonship, according to the availability of Crisis Advocates, to meet the most immediate needs for representation or instrumental action of the person in crisis. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will recruit and support a number of stand-by crisis advocates.

10. **TYPES OF ADVOCACY ROLE REQUIRED TO MEET INDIVIDUAL NEEDS:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy Inc. will recognise the need of individuals for different types of relationships and will endeavour to achieve a balance in these areas according to the needs and interests of the person with a disability. Relationship types may be defined upon the following dimensions:-

**FORMAL** - requiring the due process of law for assistance: "instrumental" assistance e.g. conservator, guardian of property, or "instrumental-expressive" - adoptive-parent, or plenary guardian of a person.

**INFORMAL** - created by the choice of those who are party to them.

**EXPRESSIVE NEEDS** - for communication, relationship, support and love, and

**INSTRUMENTAL NEEDS** - to solve practical, material problems.

11. **VULNERABILITY:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will actively seek out individuals who are at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or inappropriate or unethical (professional) treatment.

12. **NEEDS FOR DIFFERENT FORMS OF ADVOCACY ROLES:**  
e.g. mentor, ally, friend, protector.

13. **CAPACITY FOR RELATIONSHIP RECIPROCITY:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will seek out and recruit people who may be limited in their ability to respond to others, including a Citizen Advocate.

### **TIMEFRAME AND NUMBER OF PERSONS**

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy staff and Board of Management will decide on the timeframe and number of persons to be accepted into Illawarra Citizen Advocacy at a given time according to individual need and this will be clearly explained to the protegee.

### **INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION**

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will ensure that information about the protegee obtained in order to understand their individual needs and life experiences and to create protegee profile will remain private and confidential. Only relevant and valid information such as date of birth, name, address, disabling conditions and impairments, work/day placement, life experiences to date, likes/dislikes, which define Protegees' needs, preferences and characteristics which are practical and useful for advocate recruitment, matching and orientation will be requested and kept.

Protegees will be informed of the reasons why the information is collected.

### **FEEDBACK AND REVIEW**

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will regularly review and obtain feedback on its recruitment policies and procedures to ensure it meets the needs of individuals who use or may use Illawarra Citizen Advocacy. Both Protegees and Advocates will be encouraged to be actively

involved in all reviews of policies as well as an external evaluation of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy to be held every approximately every two/three years.

### **FILE DISPOSAL**

At the conclusion of each financial year, all relationship files will be reviewed. For relationships that have been discontinued/completed for over 5 years the file will be disposed by shredding. A record of files disposed will be kept which will include the disposal date, and name of the protege and advocate.

## **2. PROCEDURES**

The following processes will comprise the procedures for the recruitment of people with an intellectual disability in our local community.

### **AWARENESS PROMOTION**

**1. Active Recruitment of Proteges:** Program staff will actively seek out people with an intellectual disability in the local community by seeking out families who have a member with an intellectual disability, visiting local service agencies, residential organisations, other accommodation services or centres (e.g. boarding houses), sheltered workshop and sources or places of "open employment", social clubs or interest groups, different cultural organisations homeless persons shelters, remand centres and groups, as well as other sources deemed appropriate by Illawarra Citizen Advocacy. e.g. local doctors/chemists etc.

**2. Publicity:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will promote Illawarra Citizen Advocacy in the local area by means of media and other publicity so that people from all cultural backgrounds with an intellectual disability are aware of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy.

Publicity of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy, including brochures and media releases, will at all times endeavour to project the most positive, honest image and interpretation of people with disability. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy Inc. will seek, through its publicity, to project the most highly positive and value-conferring image of people with intellectual disability possible.

**3. Accessibility:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will ensure that it has physical accessibility through both its internal and external layout and location within the local community and that all people involved with Illawarra Citizen Advocacy are able to visit at all times.

**4. Information:** All information provided about Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will aim to be easily comprehensible and will state its overall aims, objectives and operations.

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will ensure access to ethnic translation or interpreters if necessary.

**5. Involvement:** Program staff and the Board of Management will be available and approachable and will encourage people with an intellectual disability to be involved in Illawarra Citizen Advocacy , including on the Board of Management and on the policy sub-committee.

**6. Staff Roles:** The Board of Management will ensure the staff's role in recruitment of people with an intellectual disability is clearly outlined and regularly reviewed.

**7. Community Base:** Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will ensure it uses local community resources in all the above endeavours.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUAL IN NEED OF A CITIZEN ADVOCATE**

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will ascertain the population of people with an intellectual disability within the Illawarra by:-

\* regular review of statistics on people with an intellectual disability, accommodation and other related services, of demographic changes in community (e.g. closure of low-cost accommodation sources due to commercial sprawl etc).

\* program staff will over time attempt to get to know personally as many people with an intellectual disability as possible in the Illawarra area.

## **RECRUITMENT OF INDIVIDUAL IN NEED OF A CITIZEN ADVOCATE**

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will identify a limited number of people in need of a Citizen Advocate.

In doing so the following guidelines will be followed:-

1. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy Co-ordinator and/or Assistant Co-ordinator will make an arrangement to meet with the person with a disability at a time and location convenient to them;

2. (a) for those persons who are able to communicate, staff will ascertain, and try to understand, through discussion with the person, as well as observation of the person's environment, the person's needs, wishes, interests, expectations, life experiences and why the person needs a Citizen Advocate.

(b) for those persons who have difficulty in communicating and who may be unable to clearly express their wishes or needs, or who may be in a situation of segregation or isolation, Program staff may approach the person's family, relevant others or service providers to gain access/information and meet with these persons to discuss their (perceived) needs and wishes of the person with disability.

(c) Program staff will attempt to understand, through consultation with the Protege, family, and service providers; the situation of the Protege, their fundamental and over-riding needs, their life experiences, connections with others both paid and unpaid, their interests, hopes, abilities and likely future.

This information will form the foundation of the Protege Profile from which a profile of the potential Advocate will be drawn.

3. For a person under the age of 18 years, Program staff will attempt to obtain agreement from the legally appointed guardian or person responsible to recruit a Citizen Advocate for the individual.

4. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will, with permission being sought initially from the Protege (as much as possible), attempt to positively include others who are genuinely interested in the welfare of the person with disability so that Illawarra Citizen Advocacy processes may be assisted not sabotaged.

5. Illawarra Citizen Advocacy may engage the services of an interpreter if necessary so as to better understand the needs and wishes of the individual and so that this person may understand the functions of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy and advocacy.

## **CRITERIA FOR RECRUITMENT AND ACCEPTANCE INTO THE PROGRAM**

**Decision-making:** The Board of Management with discussions with the Co-ordinator will be responsible for deciding on priorities for the recruitment and acceptance of new proteges into Illawarra Citizen Advocacy. The protege recruitment plan will be the focus of the years work.

### **CONSULTATION/AGREEMENT PROCESS**

Once the decision has been made to accept a Protege into Illawarra Citizen Advocacy , the Co-ordinator and/or the Assistant Co-ordinator will discuss this with the person with disability and relevant others and obtain their agreement and willingness for involvement.

### **PROTEGE PROFILE - NEEDS AND INTERESTS**

Information obtained during meetings with the person with disability or any other person or agency will be recorded in the form of a Protege Profile. This information is recorded so as to assist in the recruitment of a suitable Advocate.

All information will be recorded from the perspective of the Protege and no other person or agency.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information about the person with disability including information recorded in the Protege Profile is taken for the sole purpose of assisting in finding an Advocate. All information is to remain private and confidential at all times.

Should any Board of Management member or any other individual request any specific information about any protege or Citizen Advocacy relationship, permission will be sought and received from the person/people involved before this information is released.

### **PERSONAL DIRECT INVOLVEMENT**

In order to get to know the person with a disability, Program staff will undertake to visit the person in home and work situations, involve them in interest groups or social activities, take them out on outings in local community settings on a one-to-one basis, involve them in Illawarra Citizen Advocacy by inviting them to visit the office, attend social events, meet with Committee, other Advocates and Proteges, and receive program information such as the Newsletter.

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM/PROCEEDING WITHOUT AGREEMENT**

If the person with a disability cannot communicate their agreement or expresses a wish not to be involved or to withdraw from Illawarra Citizen Advocacy, this will be respected if considered appropriate following analysis and discussion of reasons between Citizen Advocacy staff and the individual with an intellectual disability.

Citizen Advocacy staff may however decide to proceed with recruitment of the person, if the following are relevant:

- The reasons ascertained by Illawarra Citizen Advocacy staff are considered to be surmountable (e.g. such as shyness or paranoia).
- Where the person is at serious risk of abuse or restraint.
- Where a person is unable to express their agreement to be involved due to communication difficulties or the level of their disability.

In these cases, this will be on the following basis only:

- Where Citizen Advocacy staff have carefully assessed the needs of the person with an intellectual disability for an Advocate, and

- Where the benefits of this individual having an Advocate can be clearly demonstrated,
- Where agreement of the Board of Management to proceed has been recorded.

### **EXIT PROCEDURE**

Proteges and Advocates can withdraw from their relationship at any time - this being called a discontinuation or completion. The staff will meet with proteges and advocates either together or separately to establish each person's reasons for withdrawing from the relationship. The effectiveness of the support role of the program will be raised in this contact. These reasons are then recorded in the protege and advocate file and relevant feedback provided to the Board of Management.

### **RECRUITING AFTER DISCONTINUATION/COMPLETION**

In the event of a discontinuation or a completion the Board of Management committee will consider whether to recruit a new advocate for the protege. Until this decision is made, the protege will remain on the working file.

### **FEEDBACK AND ONGOING CONSULTATION**

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy staff will at all times explain to the person with a disability in language comprehensible to them what we are undertaking and the development of each stage of the Advocate recruitment process.

Staff will regularly consult with the person to ensure they are satisfied with Illawarra Citizen Advocacy processes and interaction.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

If there are any grievances or difficulties, the person with a disability (or relevant, genuine others) will be encouraged to approach the staff and use the Illawarra Citizen Advocacy grievance procedure.

### **EDUCATION AND INFORMATION WORKSHOPS**

\*Staff will regularly conduct workshops for advocates from the Illawarra Citizen Advocacy program. These workshops will cover issues such as understanding grievance procedures; legal rights; confidentiality.

\*Every endeavour will be made to ensure that all members are aware of every aspect of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy policies i.e. Grievance, Sexual Harassment etc.

# ILLAWARRA CITIZEN ADVOCACY INC.

## **DIGNITY & PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS POLICY**

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy will ensure that the dignity, privacy and confidentiality of all participants in its program are respected and safeguarded.

1. All information shall be secure appropriately and provided only on a need to know basis. If a government department, service provider, Citizen Advocacy Board member or member of the community wishes to access information of an existing or a potential advocate or protege, they will only be able to do so with the written permission of both the advocate and the protege in a relationship.

2. All participants involved in Illawarra Citizen Advocacy shall be informed at their initial orientation and throughout their association with Illawarra Citizen Advocacy of the issues relating to dignity, confidentiality and privacy, and they shall also be informed that they must not discuss personal details about their protege with anyone without the protege's consent.

3. If a protege feels that an advocate or any other person involved with Illawarra Citizen Advocacy has breached his/her dignity, privacy, the protege may use the grievance procedure. It is encouraged to resolve the grievance, in the first instance, by discussion with the advocate or the other person. If the grievance is not resolved, the parties can approach the Chairperson of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy. If the protege receives no satisfaction they are able to access outside agencies such as the funding body, (Dept of Family and Community Services), the Disability Complaints Unit, or the Intellectual Disability Rights Service. Both proteges and advocates shall be made aware of these avenues during their program orientation.

4. Permission, by both advocates and proteges, must be freely given in writing, and witnessed by a third person, before any personal details regarding their relationship may be used for any external or internal publicity or promotion. Anonymity must otherwise be maintained at all times.

5. All proteges and advocates have the right to access their personal file at any time. This practice is encouraged and supported by the Staff and Board of Management of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy.

6. When staff of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy collect personal information about proteges and/or advocates, they will do what they can to inform the proteges and/or advocates of:

\* the purpose of which the information is being collected;

\* who will have access to the information and in what circumstances.

Efforts to inform proteges and/or advocates will be made before collecting the information or as soon as possible afterwards.



# ILLAWARRA CITIZEN ADVOCACY INC.

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

### 1 - Definitions

1.1 A grievance is a real or imagined injustice suffered by a person and caused by another person or persons.

### 2 - Principles

2.1 The person who suffers a grievance has a right to justice and a right to have that grievance resolved or to have demonstrated to his or her satisfaction that the grievance is unfounded.

2.2 It is the responsibility of the Board of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy to resolve the grievance or to have it resolved or to demonstrate that it is unfounded by a procedure known as the Illawarra Citizen Advocacy Grievance Procedure (hereafter referred to as the Procedure).

2.3 It is the aim of the Procedure to resolve the grievance with the least possible upset to any person.

2.4 The procedure shall not favour the status of any person.

2.5 The procedure shall be simple and confidential by involving, for the resolution of the grievance, the least number of people possible. Any person who, by necessity, is made privy to the grievance shall not divulge any matter concerning it without the prior consent of the person who has the grievance.

2.6 The person who suffers the grievance shall have easy access to an appropriate person to explain the grievance and to have it resolved.

2.7 The Procedure shall be as informal as possible and shall allow the person with the grievance to be in control of the process of resolving the grievance. In that regard, the persons charged with resolving the grievance shall, as far as this is possible, avoid discussion of the matter in the absence of the person with a grievance who shall, in any event, be kept informed by those persons of any matter concerning the grievance.

2.8 A Conciliator and a Deputy Conciliator shall be appointed from the Board. The Deputy Conciliator shall act whenever the Conciliator is absent or is, for any other reason, unable to act.

2.9 The Procedure shall encourage the person with the grievance to attempt to resolve the grievance in the first instance directly with the person who is the cause of the grievance, and without the intervention of the Conciliator or of any other person.

2.10 The resolution of the grievance shall be fair and just. The person with the grievance will be notified of the attempts made for resolution within (5) working days. If the grievance cannot be resolved within this timeframe, the person making the grievance will continue to be informed of the steps being taken to resolve the grievance.

2.11 The grievance procedure shall be explained to all staff, advocates, proteges and members of the Board. In that regard, Illawarra Citizen Advocacy Policies for 'Communicating In Language That Is Easily Understood' shall apply.

2.12 All records and information of grievances heard shall be securely stored at the Illawarra Citizen Advocacy Office.

2.13 Where a grievance concerns sexual harassment, the Grievance Procedure - Sexual Harassment will be used. The Sexual Harassment contact person is the Chairperson of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy.

2.14 This grievance procedure gives guidance in the following circumstances:

Section 3 - A grievance between Advocate and Protege.

Section 4 - A grievance between a Protege or Advocate, and a member of staff or a member of the Board.

Section 5 - A grievance between members of the Staff, or between Staff and a member of the Board.

Section 6 - A grievance by a member of the public, or by members of services other than Illawarra Citizen Advocacy.

### **3 - Grievance Procedure - Advocate/Protege**

Where a grievance is suffered in an Protege - Advocate relationship, the person with the grievance may use the following procedure:-

3.1 The person with the grievance should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the advocate or the protege so that both have a clear understanding of the grievance and of its cause.

3.2 The advocate and protege should attempt to resolve the grievance.

3.3 If the advocate and protege cannot resolve the grievance, the person with the grievance should inform the Chairperson of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy. The person with the grievance may, in the first instance if they so choose, speak with the Chairperson alone and in total confidence. The Chairperson will make a time available for such a consultation within two weeks of being informed of the grievance or, by mutual agreement, arrange a meeting for a later time

3.4 The Chairperson will make a time available to meet and speak in confidence with the advocate and the protege together within two weeks of being informed of the grievance or within two weeks of any consultation undertaken in 3.3 or at later time by mutual agreement of all parties. At this meeting the Chairperson will attempt to resolve the grievance.

3.5 If the Chairperson together with the advocate and the protege cannot resolve the grievance, the person with the grievance may ask the Chairperson to inform the Conciliator of the matter.

3.6 The Conciliator will note the wishes of the persons concerned, whether the person with the grievance and the advocate or protege wish to discuss the matter alone in the first instance, or jointly.

3.7 The Conciliator shall use their best endeavours to resolve the grievance within one month and may, if that fails, by mutual consent of advocate and protege, dissolve the relationship.

specified in 3.3 to 3.5, the Chairperson or the Board of Management may select another Board member to act in their place.

#### **4 - Grievance Procedure - Protege or Advocate / Staff or Member of the Board**

In the event of a grievance between a member of the staff or a member of the Board of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy, and a protege, or an advocate, or a protege jointly with the advocate, the person with the grievance may use the following procedure-

4.1 Within two weeks of notification of the grievance, the member of staff or member of the Board who is a party to the grievance shall, if the advocate is not already involved, ask the protege whether they wish the advocate to be informed and to be present at a discussion. Within two weeks of notification of the grievance or two weeks of contacting the protege (if relevant), the member of staff or member of the Board who is a party to the grievance shall make a time available for a meeting at which, in the first instance, the parties should discuss the matter so that all have a clear understanding of the grievance and its cause. Any of the parties to the grievance may inform the Chairperson or ask them to take part in the discussion. The parties should, at this discussion attempt to resolve the grievance.

4.2 If they cannot resolve the grievance, the person with the grievance - or any of the parties - should inform the Chairperson of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy. The parties to the grievance may, in the first instance if they so choose, speak with the Chairperson alone and in total confidence. The Chairperson will make a time available for such a consultation within two weeks of being informed of the grievance or, by mutual agreement, arrange a meeting for a later time. The Chairperson will make a time available to meet and speak in confidence with the parties together within two weeks of being informed of the grievance or within two weeks of any consultation undertaken or at a later time by mutual agreement of all parties. At this meeting the Chairperson will attempt to resolve the grievance.

4.3 If the Chairperson is not able to resolve the grievance, then the person with the grievance - or any of the parties - may inform the Conciliator, or may ask the Chairperson to inform the Conciliator of the matter.

4.4 The Conciliator will note the wishes of the persons concerned whether they wish, in the first instance, to speak to the Conciliator alone, or jointly.

4.5 The Conciliator shall use their best endeavours to resolve the grievance within one month. If that fails, the person with the grievance - or any of the parties - may ask the Conciliator to have the matter raised at the next meeting of the Board. The Chairperson may, at their discretion, invite the parties to be heard at the meeting of the Board.

4.6 In its endeavours to resolve the grievance, the Board shall act according to the Constitution of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy Inc., and in the best interest of the protege.

4.7 If the Chairperson is unavailable, in a conflict of interest or otherwise not able to act as specified in 4.1 to 4.5, the Chairperson or the Board of Management may select another Board member to act in their place.

#### **5 - Grievance Procedure - Staff/Staff or Staff/Member of the Board**

In the event of a grievance between members of the staff of Illawarra Citizen Advocacy or between a member of the staff and a member of the Board, the person with a grievance may use the following procedure-

5.1 In the first instance the aggrieved person shall discuss the matter of dispute with the

person or persons directly concerned to identify what the aggrieved person believes would be a workable and courteous way of solving the grievance.

5.2 Should this not resolve the grievance, the staff member shall discuss the grievance , and what actions may resolve it with the Co-ordinator.

5.3 If the Co-ordinator does not satisfy the staff member that the grievance has been resolved, or if the grievance involves the Citizen Advocacy Co-ordinator, then the aggrieved member of staff may send a memo to the Conciliator, with a copy of the memo sent directly to the Citizen Advocacy Co-ordinator, outlining the grievance and recommending a course of action to resolve the situation. The Board shall be the final arbiter of the dispute.

5.3a The Board will deal with the grievance no later than its second meeting following receipt of a recommendation to this effect from the Conciliator.

5.4 The staff member or its Board may approach their respective industrial representatives or union and ask them to advocate on their behalf at any stage of the above Procedure.

## **6 - Grievance Procedure - Member of the Public or Members of Services other than Illawarra Citizen Advocacy Inc.**

Where concern or a grievance is expressed by a member of the public or by a member of a service, Illawarra Citizen Advocacy shall use the following procedure:-

6.1 The Chairperson will make a time available to discuss the grievance with the concerned person within two weeks of receiving it and, at this discussion, attempt to resolve the matter.

6.2 If the matter has been resolved, the Chairperson shall submit a written report, to the Board at its next meeting.

6.3 If the matter has not been resolved, the Chairperson shall request the concerned person to submit his/her concern in writing to Illawarra Citizen Advocacy (if that has not already been done).

6.4 The Chairperson may, if he or she chooses to do so, meet the concerned person and attempt to resolve the matter.

6.5 If the Chairperson and the concerned person cannot resolve the matter, the Chairperson shall have the matter heard at the next meeting of the Board or at a meeting of the Board convened specially for that purpose.

6.6 The Chairperson may, at their discretion, invite the concerned person to be heard at the meeting of the Board when the matter is addressed.

6.7 If the Chairperson is unavailable, in a conflict of interest or otherwise not able to act as specified in 6.1 to 6.6, the Chairperson or the Board of Management may select another Board member to act in their place.

## **ILLAWARRA CITIZEN ADVOCACY INC.**

### **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY**

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy supports the principles of anti-discrimination in the appointment and employment of staff. The Anti-discrimination act says that employers must provide any special facilities or services people with disabilities need to do a job, unless it would cause the employer 'unjustifiable hardship' to do this.

The Board will ensure that special efforts will be taken to encourage suitably qualified people from groups who have been disadvantaged in the past in gaining employment, to apply for positions. The Board will help them overcome any structural obstacles to employment. The Board will ensure that all employees have fair and equal access to benefits and opportunities within the workplace. Sexual harassment, gender harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated in the workplace.

Grievances about discrimination in appointment and employment or about harassment should be directed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management (or another Executive member in case of conflict of interest or unavailability). This policy will be communicate to all staff and board members.

## **ILLAWARRA CITIZEN ADVOCACY INC.**

### **WORKING WITH CHILDREN POLICY**

Advocates being recruited for child proteges will be expected to be screened through the Commission for Children and Young People, and in doing so will be required to sign a consent form. You will also be required to produce an original of either your passport / drivers licence or other equivalent identification.

# ILLAWARRA CITIZEN ADVOCACY INC.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Illawarra Citizen Advocacy accepts the responsibilities of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1983 and agrees to comply with the provisions in this Act.

### **PRIORITIES**

1. commitment to occupational health & a safety at all levels of the work force,
2. prevention of injuries and work-related illness,
3. ensuring safe conditions and environment for employees, (office, private homes, institutions, group homes, industries, hospitals, nursing homes, or in car whilst travelling as part of work) and Board Members or visitors at the place of work.
4. providing safe systems of work,
5. ensuring effective communication, consultation, provision of information and training on all occupational health & safety issues.

### **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Board will demonstrate commitment to occupational health & safety in the workplace by

1. implementing occupational health & safety policies and programs,
2. allocating occupational health and safety responsibilities and ensuring mechanisms for accountability are in place and
3. ensuring all health & safety rules are adhered to.

### **STAFF SUPERVISOR**

The Supervisor will ensure

1. all health & safety rules are adhered to,
2. identify hazards in your workplace(s), take prompt action to control them or report them to the Board,
3. report all accidents, incidents and mishaps to the Board.

### **EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Employees will

1. work in a healthy and safe manner,
2. take responsible care for the health & safety of others,
3. cooperate with any health & safety and welfare requirements, and
4. report accidents, incidents and mishaps to your supervisor.