



Frequently asked questions about disability advocacy

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is the process of supporting an individual to speak up for their rights and needs. An ADA Australia advocate is someone who is by your side, working with you, to give you a voice and help you to resolve issues.

Who is eligible to receive disability advocacy from ADA Australia?

- You are a person living with disability, or
- You are the carer or representative of the person above, and
- You live in one of the following areas:
 - Gold Coast
 - Beenleigh
 - Logan
 - Redlands
 - Central Queensland.
- ADA Australia is able to provide advocacy support to people with disability who are under the age of 18 in some locations and will provide information and referrals to other services where we are unable to assist.

Do I have to pay for ADA Australia's services?

No, our services are free.

How can a disability advocate assist me?

We can provide you with free and independent information and support with the following:

- NDIS applications, planning and Plan review
- Accessing other disability support services
- Working through issues with your service providers
- Disability Pension applications
- General information and referrals to relevant services
- Unfair treatment and disability discrimination.

Please note we cannot recommend which services or providers you should choose or provide financial or legal advice. ADA Australia is not funded to provide support for NDIS Appeals at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

What should I expect from a disability advocate?

When you are assigned a disability advocate they will make contact with you to talk through the issue and get a full understanding of the problem. They may ask a range of questions and ask you for copies of relevant paperwork.

They will be by your side as you step through the process to resolve an issue. This may include:

- providing you with information and options
- support to express your views and wishes
- support with application paperwork
- support at meetings and with phone calls
- building your confidence to speak up for your rights and needs.

Our advocates work for you - we don't talk to anyone or take any action unless you ask us to.

While we cannot guarantee the outcome you hope for, such as access to the NDIS or other services, or that your provider or service will take a specific action to resolve an issue, we will support you to make applications or raise your concerns and work with you to try and address the issue.

If your issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, we can also refer you to the relevant complaint bodies.

Are ADA Australia's services confidential?

Yes, our services are confidential. Our advocates will always seek your permission before discussing your situation or concerns with anyone else.





Can ADA Australia help people who need support with decision making?

It is not our role to assess a person's capacity. All people regardless of capacity have the right to have a say about the things which impact their life. We follow a process that ensures people do not have this right compromised.

We will look at whether the person is able to make a decision regarding the particular issue. For example, a person's capacity to make financial decisions may be limited, but they may still be able to give clear direction about other decisions such as the types of activities they enjoy, or who they would like to provide their support.

Our Community Legal Service, **ADA Law**, provides specific advocacy support, legal advice and representation to adults whose decision-making capacity is impaired or in question, in relation to guardianship and administration matters.

To contact ADA Law, FREECALL 1800 232 529.

Can ADA Australia work with carers, family members and friends?

With your permission, family members, carers and friends can contact us on your behalf to raise and address concerns.

However, we will also need to discuss the issue with you. Your directions and wishes will guide the work that we do. Family members, carers and friends can be included in discussions and the process to support you.

We can also work with formal decision makers such as your Enduring Power of Attorney. However, again we will always ensure that your views and wishes direct anything we do.

How does ADA Australia support people with diverse needs?

ADA Australia embraces diversity and provides inclusive disability advocacy services to people from diverse backgrounds including:

- people from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait

Islander communities

- people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- people who live in rural or remote areas
- people who are financially or socially disadvantaged
- people who are veterans of the Australian Defence Force or an allied defence force including the spouse, widow or widower of a veteran
- people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless
- people from lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender and intersex (LGBTQI+) communities.

To ensure that our services remain accessible and responsive we provide free access to interpreting services and employ advocates from diverse backgrounds.

Side by Side First Peoples Advocacy

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people with disability and their supporters can access Side by Side First Peoples Advocacy service. Side by Side is fully staffed by Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander advocates, and can provide disability advocacy support to anyone who resides in Queensland.

To contact Side by Side First Peoples Advocacy you can call their FREE CALL number **1800 718 969** at any time between 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday. You can also contact them by filling in an online form at www.atsidnq.com.au or email info@atsidnq.com.au.

How can I contact ADA Australia?

To access advocacy support you can call our FREE CALL number **1800 818 338** at any time between 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

You can also contact us via our website by filling in an online form at www.adaaustralia.com.au or email info@adaaustralia.com.au.