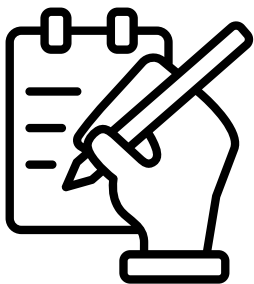


Independent Advocacy Statement

What is this statement about?

This document explains how MRC North West provides independent advocacy support to individuals and communities.

It covers:



- What advocacy is
- What you can expect from MRC North West
- Your rights during advocacy
- How to raise concerns or make a complaint

Who is MRC North West?

MRC North West has been serving communities in the north-west region of Melbourne since 1989. Our mission is to empower people, promote social inclusion, and support community development.

We work with people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to:



- Promote human rights
- Foster fairness and equality
- Ensure people are heard and respected
- Support community participation

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is about:



- Standing up for your rights
- Supporting you to have your voice heard
- Helping you make informed choices
- Ensuring you are treated fairly and with respect

Advocacy can assist individuals or groups to achieve positive change.

Our commitment to you

MRC Northwest pledges to deliver advocacy that is:



- Independent and impartial
- Respectful and confidential
- Safe and non-judgmental
- Fair and focused on your needs
- Empowering you to take control



Who is this guide for?

This information is for:

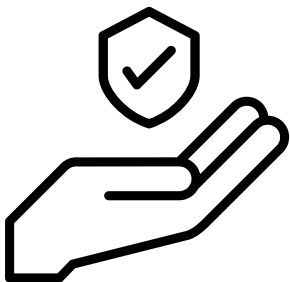


- Community members seeking advocacy support
- People receiving services through State or Commonwealth programs
- Individuals and families engaging with MRC North West advocacy services
- Our staff and volunteers

What does independent advocacy mean?

Independent advocacy means:

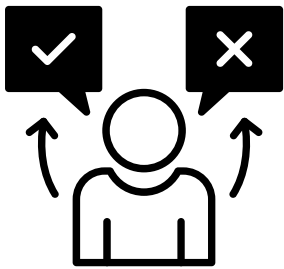
- The advocate works only on your behalf
- The advocate does not make choices for you but supports your decision-making



Your advocate will:

- Listen carefully to your concerns
- Respect your wishes and goals
- Support your right to make your own choices
- Connect you with other services or supports if needed

Important information about independence



MRC North West provides advocacy separately from NDIS or other service supports to maintain independence.

This means:

- If you receive advocacy support from us, you cannot access NDIS services from MRC North West at the same time
- If you receive NDIS supports from us, you cannot access advocacy support from us at the same time



We will help you find other advocates if needed to ensure your support remains impartial.

Your rights in advocacy

1. Your rights are our priority



- You have fundamental human rights
- MRC North West advocates will respect and protect these rights

2. You lead the process

Advocacy is about you and your goals



- You decide what matters most to you
- Your advocate will support your decisions, not influence them

3.You can make your own choices

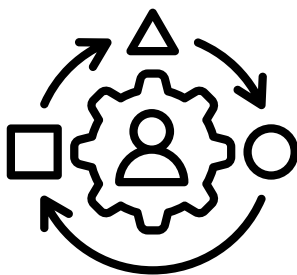
You have the right to make decisions about your life

You can take risks and explore options



Our advocates will:

- Explain information clearly
- Support you to understand your options
- Respect your decisions, even if they change over time



4.We believe in your capacity

- We assume you can make your own decisions
- We understand that decision-making may evolve
- We support you before making any judgments about your ability

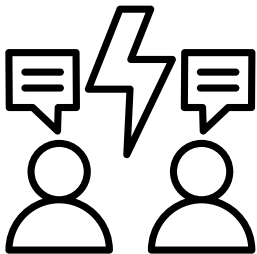
How MRC Northwest advocates support you

1. Open and honest



- Your advocate will tell you what they are doing
- They will explain why and what might happen next

2. No conflicts of interest



- They work only for your best interests
- They tell you if there is a problem or conflict
- They follow fair and honest rules

3. Helping, not replacing



- We help you speak for yourself
- We build your confidence
- We step back when you are ready to do things on your own

4.Keeping you safe



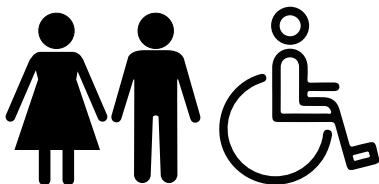
- Your safety is important
- We act if we see any harm or abuse
- We follow laws about reporting concerns

5.Your privacy



- Your personal details are kept private
- We share information only if law requires or if you are in serious danger

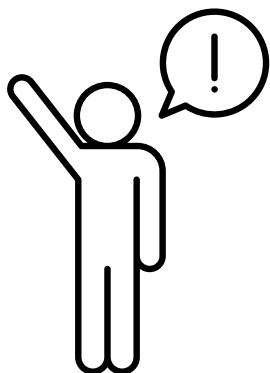
6.Everyone can access advocacy



- Our advocacy supports people from all backgrounds and languages
- We respect and include all people with disabilities
- We make sure advocacy is safe, respectful, and fair

How to make a complaint

You can:



- Make a complaint without fear
- Say no to a service or support
- Disagree with your advocate or the process

Our advocates will:



- Explain how to complain clearly
- Help you if you want to make a complaint

Who can you complain to?

About advocacy services

Please contact:



- Victorian Disability Services Commissioner:
1800 677 342
- Complaints Resolution and Referral Service:
1800 880 052

About NDIS supports

For concerns about NDIS services, contact:



- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission:
1800 035 544
- NDIS Fraud Reporting and Scams Helpline:
1800 650 717

For more information, visit:

MRCNWR's website at

www.mrcnorthwest.org.au

The Victorian Disability Services Commissioner
at <https://odsc.vic.gov.au/>