



DRAS
Disability Rights and Advocacy Service Inc

CLIENT HANDBOOK

Revised Edition — Nov 2010

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DRAS

Disability Rights and Advocacy Service Inc

ABOUT DRAS

Our Goal

"To enable people with disabilities to gain access to and participate in community life and to achieve and maintain their rights as citizens, involving their families wherever possible"

This is done through the promotion of our VISION, MISSION and CORE VALUES.

Our Vision

A Society where people of all abilities are valued citizens participating at all levels, making choices and exerting control over their own lives.

Our Mission

To provide individual advocacy support to people with disabilities living in the City of Greater Geelong and Borough of Queenscliff, aimed at achieving the vision of DRAS.

OUR CORE VALUES

Self Determination

DRAS asserts that it is a core human right to exert control and participate in the decisions affecting one's own life.

Choice

DRAS affirms the rights of each individual to choice and is committed to promoting meaningful choices that reflect the diversity of all people.

Justice

DRAS will work to promote a fair deal for all.

Quality

DRAS is committed to providing advocacy services that are skilled, ethical and reflect high of integrity.

Inclusion

Healthy societies exist when all people participate fully and are valued as equal citizens.

Human Rights

DRAS is committed to promoting the human rights of all to be free from abuse and to be treated with respect and dignity.



HOW WE CAN HELP

DRAS' role is to provide advocacy for people with the following disabilities who live in the City of Greater Geelong and the Borough of Queenscliff:

- Intellectual Disability
- Physical Disability
- Psychiatric Disability
- Learning Disability
- Sensory Disability
- Acquired Brain Injury
- Autism

to be assisted by DRAS the person with a disability must be under 65 years of age and be in receipt of, or eligible to receive, the disability pension. DRAS also assists the carers of people who have a disability.

Advocacy is the speaking, taking actions or writing on behalf of someone. Advocacy is carried out in a manner which is supportive, and the aim is to protect, promote and defend the welfare of each person and to make sure they are treated justly.

DRAS staff work according to the National Disability Standards and the agencies Policies and Procedures. The staff report to the DRAS Board of Management who ensure that the service is run according to best practice.

DRAS is funded by the Federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

A DRAS advocate may be able to assist you in various ways. For example, an advocate may come with you to a meeting or help you to write a letter. Your advocate will explain in detail how our service can help with your individual issue.

If the service that you want from DRAS is something that we have the expertise and resources to do we will work with you to try and resolve your issue.



The NATIONAL DISABILITY STANDARDS that apply to DRAS

STANDARD 1

SERVICE ACCESS AND EXIT

Each person with a disability who is seeking a service has access to a service on the basis of relative need and available resources.

You choose when you want to have help.

You can contact DRAS by phone to make an appointment.

You choose when you no longer need help and exit from the service.

STANDARD 2

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Each person with a disability receives a service that is designed to meet, in the least restrictive way, his or her individual needs and personal goals.

The advocate will ask what your needs are. Based on what you tell us, the advocate will then discuss how advocacy can be of assistance to you.

If your need can be met through an existing community, or specialist service, this will be the first option explored to address your individual needs and goals.

STANDARD 3

DECISION MAKING AND CHOICE

Each person with a disability has the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in making decisions about the events and activities of his or her daily life in relation to the services he or she receives.

DRAS will help you to become aware of your rights and responsibilities to assist you to make informed decisions and choices.

Your advocate will start working with you once you have decided on your advocacy goals. Your advocate will explain the options you have and the consequences of each option.

The advocate's aim is to uphold your rights and responsibilities. An advocate may not support your choices and decisions if they believe you may be a danger to yourself or others. If what you want DRAS to assist you with is difficult or impossible to get, we will tell you.



STANDARD 4

PRIVACY, DIGNITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Each service recipient's right to privacy dignity and confidentiality in all aspects of his or her life is recognised and respected.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The rules about confidentiality cover all the information you give to an employee of DRAS about a problem you have. If you get advice or assistance from DRAS, you have a legal right to confidentiality.

Any information a DRAS worker gets from you will not be given to anyone else unless we ask you first and you agree to it. You do not have to agree.

PRIVACY

The rules about privacy cover any information we have about you, including information that might come from other people and information that is not about an advocacy issue.

Everyone who contacts DRAS has a right to privacy.

We will not give anyone else information about you that they do not need to know. DRAS aims to treat you and your personal information with respect.

STANDARD 5

PARTICIPATION AND INTEGRATION

Each person with a disability is supported and encouraged to participate and be involved in the community.

People with disabilities should be able to access the community to the same degree as any other citizen. The community is where you live, who you live with, where you work, where you study or train and your friends.

If you choose to work with DRAS, we will help you access services that will support you being an active part of your community.



STANDARD 6

VALUED STATUS

Each person with a disability has the opportunity to develop and maintain skills and to participate in activities that enable him or her to achieve valued roles in the community.

[DRAS](#) encourages you to become a valued part of your community by teaching you skills to uphold your own rights.

[DRAS](#) also aims to improve the community's understanding and acceptance of people with disabilities by highlighting and celebrating people's individual strengths.

STANDARD 7

COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

Each service recipient is encouraged to raise and have resolved without fear of retribution, any complaints or disputes he or she may have regarding the service provider or the service.

If you are not happy with how [DRAS](#) does its job or about the decisions we make, you can tell us.

Please contact the [DRAS](#) office by phone or in writing to receive information on how to make an internal complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which DRAS handles your internal complaint you can contact the [Complaints, Resolution & Referral Service \(CRRS\)](#) Phone: [1800 880 052](#)

The CRRS is a service that helps people with a disability work through their complaint about an advocacy service.

CRRS is funded by The Federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.



STANDARD 8

SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Each service provider adopts quality management systems and practices that optimise outcomes for service recipients.

DRAS is a not for profit organisation and follows the Commonwealth government's guidelines to make sure that the service we provide upholds your rights. The DRAS Board of Management oversees the operational management of the service.

STANDARD 9

FREEDOM FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Each client has the right to be free from physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuse and neglect.

DRAS staff will treat you with respect and consideration at all times.

DRAS workers should not:

- Work with you in a way that makes you feel afraid or uncomfortable
- Disrespect you because of your disability
- Ignore your opinions or goals.

YOUR VIEWS

DRAS will welcome your comments on any part of our service.

For example:

- what has worked well for you?
- how can we improve our service?

If you would like to make some comments about our service please phone 5221 8033 during office hours.



PRIVACY STATEMENT

The staff at [Disability Rights & Advocacy Service Inc](#) collects information in order to provide advocacy services to people with disabilities and their carers.

While providing our services DRAS is required to operate according to state and federal privacy legislation. The Information Privacy Act (2000) governs the way we handle your information from collection through to disposal.

We respect the importance of your privacy and we are committed to safe guarding the confidentiality of your personal information.

Information collected by [DRAS](#) will only be used for the primary purpose intended.

[DRAS will:](#)

- identify the primary purpose for the collection of information from you
- collect only the information required for this purpose *
- not share this information without your consent * ** ***
- provide you with access to your file on request (see below),
- correct file information if it is established that file content is inaccurate,
- keep your file in a secure place,
- offer you the option of anonymity, if this is practicable, and you express your desire for this,
- eventually destroy your file in accordance with our statutory requirements.

We reserve the right given to us under the Act to restrict your access to information in your file when that access may:

- unreasonably affect the privacy of other individuals,
- pose a serious threat to the life or health of any person,
- expose information given in confidence by a third party,
- be unlawful because other legislation requires our agency to withhold information,
- prejudice a law enforcement function by a law enforcement agency.



* Statistical information will be collected to meet relevant funding body requirements and for research and analysis purposes as allowed for under the Acts. Importantly this information is maintained in a manner which ensures that it cannot be identified with you or your file.

** unless legally obliged to do so. DRAS records are not the subject of legal privilege, and may be accessed by others, for example in legal proceedings. In such circumstances, DRAS will take all possible steps to prevent release of sensitive, personal or health information.

*** from time to time, DRAS will use case studies to assist with systemic advocacy that draw from the real life experiences of DRAS clients. These case studies will not include the clients' real name or any other personal information.

Under Federal law, DRAS is required to provide information to statutory authorities in circumstances where this has been deemed necessary to safeguard the interests of the clients. Provision of this information is in accordance with our written policies and limited to the specific requirement.

By law, you are able to access your personal DRAS file.

If you would like additional information about our Privacy Policy, contact DRAS by email — info@dras.org.au or contact us by phoning — 5221 8033