



Position Description

Position Title:	NDIS Appeals Advocate
Reports to:	NDIS Manager
Department:	NDIS

About VMIAC

VMIAC is the peak Victorian non-government organisation for people with lived experience of mental health or emotional distress. We work from a rights based perspective.

Our vision is a world where all mental health consumers stand proud, live a life with choices honoured, rights upheld, and these principles are embedded in all aspects of society.

We undertake individual, group and systemic advocacy and our work includes research and evaluation, education and training, information provision and resource development, as well as limited specialist support programs. We have a strong and continuous focus on engagement with members, and in informing and supporting them in becoming empowered and having their voices heard.

VMIAC is owned, governed, managed and staffed by people with a lived experience. We aim to be an organisation in which the diversity of people with a lived experience can meaningfully and powerfully contribute, and to be the employer of choice for the mental health lived experience workforce. We know that by working well together we become a true force for systems change and reshaping consumer experience.

www.vmiac.org.au

Position overview

The NDIS Appeals Advocate provides a key role in providing information and advocacy support to people with a disability who are seeking to appeal decisions made by the the National Disability Insurance Agency enabling them to make their own choices and have their rights and interests respected.

THIS IS A LIVED EXPERIENCE CONSUMER POSITION.

Applicants must have lived experience of mental health issues or emotional distress.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA:

Essential:

- A lived experience of mental health issues is essential for this role.
- A deep commitment to social justice principles. This includes the full promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms held by people with a disability, and the promotion and respect of their inherent dignity
- Work experience within the community, mental health and/or disability sector/s, with understanding of what makes people vulnerable
- Demonstrated attention to detail and highly developed organisational skills to balance competing priorities within a set timeframe and maintaining best-practice service delivery

- Excellent Interpersonal and written communication skills with an ability to communicate sensitively and build rapport with clients and other people from diverse backgrounds
- Ability to work well independently and as part of a team.
- Good Computer skills including Office 365 and database skills
- A current Victorian driver's licence, Police and Working with Children check is essential.



Desirable:

- Individual advocacy experience (legal or non-legal), with demonstrated ability to reason and argue assertively on important issues on behalf of people with disability
- Tertiary education in Community Services, Community Development, Social Work, Legal Studies or equivalent fields
- An understanding of the issues faced by people with a disability in their engagement with the NDIS
- Knowledge of, or ability to quickly gain knowledge of, the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth), Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975(Cth) and related subordinate legislation

Key Responsibilities NDIS Appeals Advocate

- Provide advice and discrete task assistance to clients (reviewing or supporting the acquisition of new supporting evidence) when seeking to pursue either an internal or external review of an NDIA decision (typically to refuse access to the NDIS or refuse funding for supports).
- Provide ongoing assistance to clients to navigate through internal and external review processes, including when or if matters proceed to an external review at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) liaising with lawyers representing the NDIA and with AAT registry staff, and attending conferences and hearings before the AAT.
- Liaise and collaborate with Legal Aid NDIS Appeals lawyers in relation to escalated AAT matters for individual clients.
- Provide referral to other services within, and external to, VMIAC.

Organisational

- To ensure all staff comply with regulatory requirements of relevance and VMIAC policies and procedures.
- Support systems that provide safe, high quality care that increases consumer experience
- To comply with VMIAC Code of Conduct working to create a safe, supportive and happy workplace
- Demonstrate awareness and understanding of diversity, culture and human rights.
- VMIAC has a responsibility to maintain current policy; it is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of current policy.
- To actively participate in relevant meetings and consumer forums.
- Actively contribute to Workplace Health and Safety by taking reasonable care for personal health and safety and that of others in the workplace; raising suggestions and concerns as they arise to ensure a safe work environment for employees, consumers and visitors.
- Complete tasks as assigned and required by Management.



Professional

This funded project activity includes:

- Access information to support services, education and advocacy
- Assist applicants to self-advocate where possible, or provide individual advocacy support
- Develop and implement an individual advocacy plan in partnership with the consumer
- Assist consumers seeking review of National Disability Insurance Agency [NDIS] decisions at Internal Review and Administrative Appeals Tribunal [AAT] levels. This may include supporting preparation of an application for legal assistance and attending and on occasion representing NDIS Participants undertaking Appeals and Reviews
- Follow NDIS Appeals programme guidelines
- Identify access to language services to ensure cultural and linguistic diversity is not a barrier
- Complete project reporting requirements

Specific Responsibilities:

Program Activity and Service Delivery

- Provide individual support in information, brief intervention and/or short term advocacy to facilitate consumer navigation of NDIS Review & Appeals process within timeframe
- Link consumers with opportunities to access self-Advocacy Training; providing written or media information on self-advocacy
- Disseminate information to both service providers and consumers around the NDIS Appeals process roll out in both metro and rural locations
- Where consumers are unable to self-advocate provide representation at an individual level to support that issues and concerns are heard and addressed within timeframes.

Group - NDIS Projects - Advocacy

- Identify the needs of the participant consumer group around issues relating to the NDIS Review and Appeals Process;
- Identify, contact and network with services who provide support for consumer groups moving through appeals process;
- Provide support and advice to consumer groups, in particular communicating information about the NDIS Appeals process;
- Provide linkage information for self-advocacy training opportunities.



Support and development

VMIAC will provide regular supervision to the person in this role. All VMIAC roles include training and development opportunities, which can include the development of leadership and other required skills and attendance at conferences.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL:	Conducted annually as per schedule.
TRAINING:	Refer to Annual Training Calendar

I, _____ (**print name**) acknowledge that I have read (or have had read to me) and understand the requirements of this position. I agree to work in accordance with this position description and that I understand the implications if I don't follow the Quality Management System.

Signed: _____ **Date:** ____/____/____

Supervisor Signature: _____ **Date:** ____/____/____

cc: Personnel File