



**Multicultural Disability Advocacy
Association of NSW Inc.**

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**Information Package for
Individual Advocacy
Consumers**

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Attachments:

- MDAA Brochure
- General Authority Form
- Individual Advocacy Action Plan
- Complaints Form
- Membership Form
- List of other Disability Advocacy Organisations

This Kit is to support you in understanding MDAA better. If you have any ideas on how to make things better please call us.



9891 6400 or 1800 629 072 or NRS 133 677

ABOUT MDAA



What is MDAA?

We are an Advocacy organisation. This means we support you in getting your needs met.

Who does MDAA support?

We can support you if:

You are from a non-English speaking background (that means either you or at least one of your parents or grandparents were born in a Country where the main language spoken is not English)

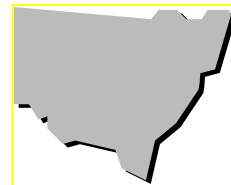


AND

You have a disability or you are a carer or a family member of a person with a disability.

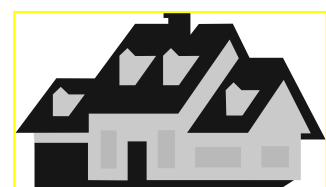
AND

You live in New South Wales



AND

You have difficulties in getting your needs met.

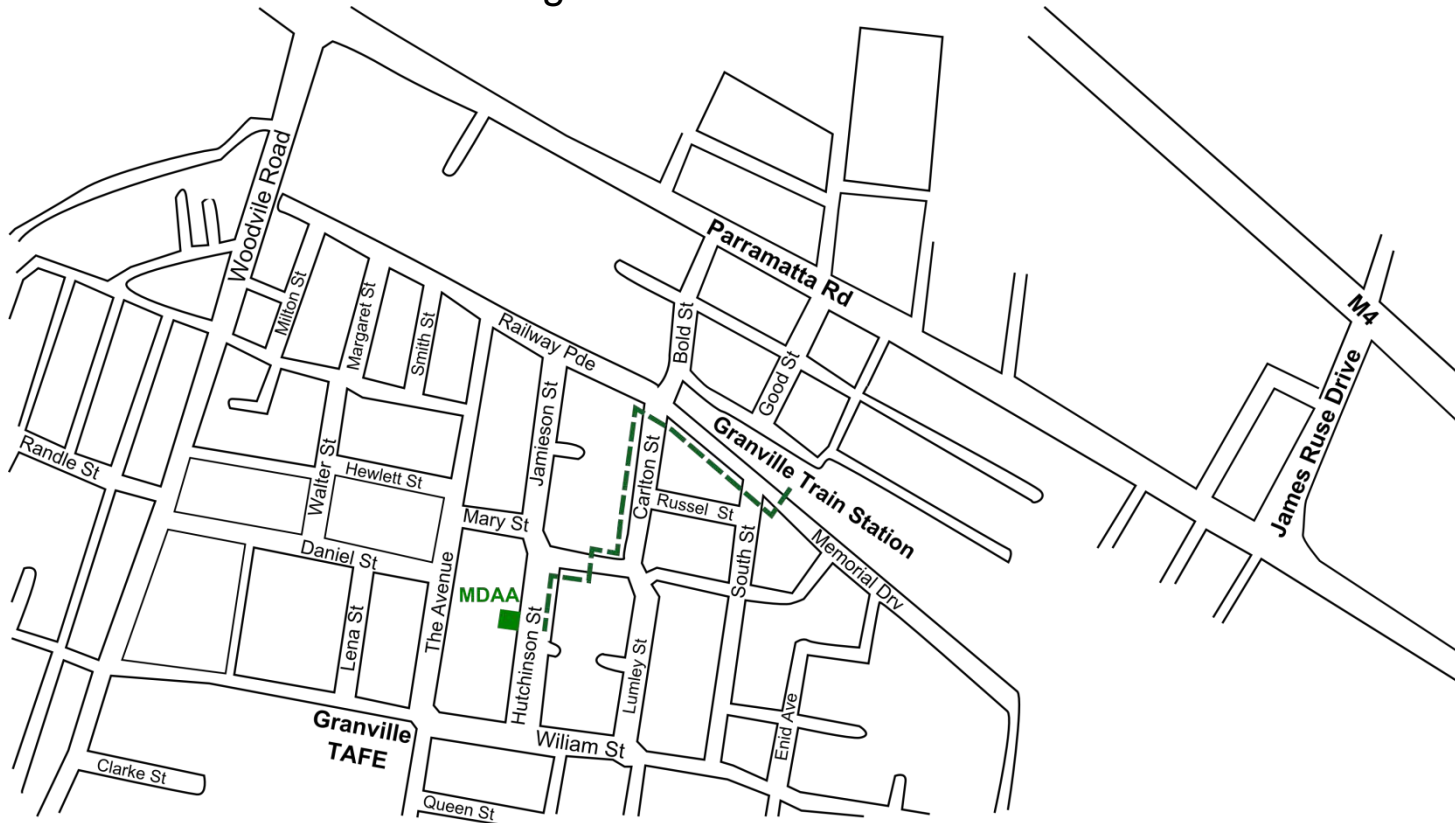


WHERE ARE WE?

10-12 Hutchinson St, Granville

Telephone: (02) 9891 6400 Fax: (02) 9897 9402

Web site: www.mdaa.org.au

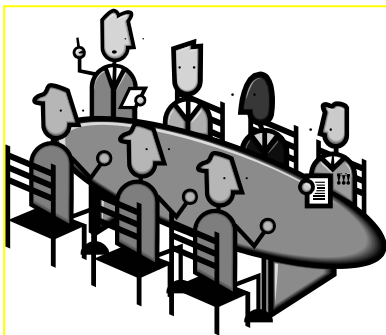


WHO is WHO at MDAA ?

Members:

Members are the most important people at MDAA. You can become a member. There should be a membership form in this folder. Being a member means you support MDAA. You get a Newsletter every two months and we inform you about other things that are going on. Once a year, we hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM). All the members get together, have a party and elect their representatives on the Board.

Board



The Board is responsible for leading MDAA into the future and for making sure MDAA meets all its legal and funding responsibilities. The members elect members of the Board for a two year period. There are up to 13 members on the Board and at any time at least 50% of the members on the Board must be people from a NESB with disability

and 15% are carers or family members of people from NESB with disability. If you are interested in being on the Board talk to a staff member and find out more about it.

Volunteers

At times MDAA uses the skills and experiences of volunteers. In return MDAA provides volunteers with a safe place to learn/ work and share their expertise.



Staff



MDAA employs a number of staff. They have different jobs, but each one of them will direct you to the right person.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY:

- Advocacy:** Active support for someone or together with a person or a whole lot of people.
- Advocate:** An MDAA worker who will 'stand beside' you and support you so you make your own decisions and get your needs met.
- Consumer:** You or any other person using a service, for example, someone using MDAA services is an MDAA consumer.
- Carer:** A person who takes care of someone with a disability. This can be a husband, wife, partner, parent, son, daughter, relative or good friend.
- Disability:** Includes an intellectual, physical, psychiatric or sensory impairment, brain injury, HIV/Aids or any combination of these.
- Non-English Speaking Background:** A person who is born or whose parents or grandparents were born in a country where the main language is not English.

HOW WILL MDAA SUPPORT YOU?

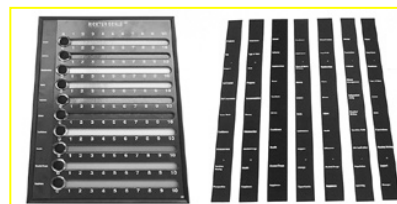
You can come to MDAA's office or if that is not possible, an advocate can come to you.

The advocate will ask you questions about the support you need and will listen to your answers. If you need an interpreter the advocate can arrange one or you can invite anyone you like to the meeting to help you.

After that you and the advocate will plan together what to do. This plan is called an Individual Advocacy Action Plan (IAAP). This plan is your list of instructions for the Advocate of what you want her/ him to do. It also sets out what actions you have agreed to take yourself.



Talk to your advocate if you want to change your IAAP at any time.



WAYS WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

We can support you:

- By giving you information about your rights, what services are available in the community and where you can get help
- By talking to you about ways you can solve your problem or what choices are available to you
- By working with you to solve your problems

We work with you by:



Writing a letter for you



Calling on your behalf



Speaking on your behalf



Sitting in a meeting with you

AS AN MDAA CONSUMER

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:

- To be listened to
- To be told about what is going on at MDAA
- To make your own decisions
- To have your information kept confidential
- To have a say about what MDAA does
- To become involved with MDAA
- To feel safe
- To make a complaint about MDAA

YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY:

- To respect the rights of other people
- To work together with your advocate on your Individual Advocacy Action Plan (IAAP)
- For any decisions you make
- For letting your advocate know all the circumstances relating to the issue you want assistance with and if you change your address or phone number

CONFIDENTIALITY

All the information you give us about yourself and your circumstances is kept confidential. This means we won't tell anyone anything about you that you don't want us to:

1. The only things we ask about you will be things important, so we can do the best advocacy job for you.
2. You can read any information we keep about you on your file. Your file is in a locked cabinet. Your advocate and their supervisor are the only people from MDAA who can read your file, unless you give us written permission.
3. The only time we will discuss your information with anyone without your permission is if:
 - you are at risk; that means if you are in a situation where you are in danger of losing your life.
 - if there is a child involved and the child is at risk.
 - if there is a risk that your actions could cause harm to others.
4. If you cannot tell us what you want and what we should do (that is called informed consent), we will ask your guardian what we should do and to allow us to disclose information if we need to.
5. If we use an interpreter, we will record the name of the interpreter and the agency the interpreter came from.

To sum up, you have the right to:

- **Know what information we keep about you.**
- **Ask for a copy of your file.**
- **Know who else has access to your file.**

COMPLAINTS



MDAA believes that it is okay to complain and responding to complaints is one way for MDAA to become a better service.

What can you complain about?

You can complain about anything you think MDAA or a staff member of MDAA has done which makes you unhappy, you believe is unfair and/or you believe is not what MDAA said they would do.

Who can complain?

Anyone in contact with MDAA or an advocate of somebody who is in contact with MDAA can complain.

1. How to complain?

Tell somebody at MDAA that you want to make a complaint.



- You can speak to somebody at the office.
- You can ring (02) 9891 6400.
- You can write a letter PO BOX 884, Granville NSW 2142

2. Whom to complain to?

Below is a list of people you can contact. If possible, start at the beginning of the list. You can have someone help you (an advocate) any time you wish. (There is a list of advocacy services in this Folder)

- If you feel comfortable, speak to the person directly involved with your problem.
- If you do not want to do that, you can speak to MDAA's the Chief Executive Director.
- If you do not want to speak to the Chief Executive Director you can contact the Board Chairperson. Ring MDAA and they will ask the Chairperson to contact you.

3. How will MDAA respond?

- If your complaint is in writing:
MDAA will write back to you within 14 working days explaining what you can do next. MDAA will also take note of your complaint by recording it in the complaints register.
- If your complaint is in person or by phone:
we will make a record of your complaint and explain to you in detail what you can do next.



4. What next?

If the complaint is dealt with between you and the staff person concerned, no-one else from MDAA needs to get involved, if you feel happy with how your complaint has been dealt with.

If you involve the Chief Executive Director, the complaint becomes a formal one and we will register it in our complaints book. The Chief Executive Director will respond within 14 working days to your complaint. The Chief Executive Director will talk with you about any support/ assistance from outside MDAA which could be available (such as an advocate).

If you are not happy with this, you can complain to the Chairperson, who will try to resolve the complaint within 10 working days.

If the complaint has not been resolved MDAA will provide you with information on other options. These options could include the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, a Community Justice Centre, the NSW Anti Discrimination Board, etc.

5. What else should you know?

- You can stop the complaints process any time you like.
- You can ask MDAA to find you an independent advocate.
- Your complaint will be handled confidentially.
- MDAA will make all efforts to resolve the complaint within one month of receiving it.

SERVICE STANDARDS

At MDAA we work according to the Disability Services Standards. These are rules about how we should work.



Service Access

Everyone who needs a service should be able to get one.

Individual Need

MDAA should give you what you need without any problems.

Decision Making and Choice

You have the right to choose what you want to do and how you want to do it. You can say what you want to do with your life.

Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality

You have the right to have your own space and things. Nobody else can touch them unless you say it's OK. You have the right to be treated like everyone else. We won't tell anyone anything about you that you don't want us to unless we believe that it will cause harm to others or if it is illegal or criminal activity.

Participation and Integration

You should be able to do things everyone else does.

Valued Status

We will support you to learn and show other people that you can do many things and that you are important.

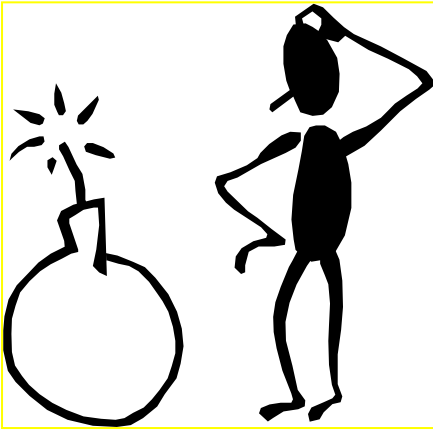
Complaints and Disputes

You can tell us what's wrong with our service and we will try to fix it.

Standard 8 Service Management

We will do our best to give you the best service we can.

If you feel that MDAA is not meeting all these rules please tell us so that we can make MDAA better.



You can either speak to one of our staff, or write us a letter, or ask someone else to speak to us for you, or join the consumer forum and raise your issues.

We will take all your suggestions and/or complaints seriously and act upon them together with you.

If you would like to look at our rules in more detail please call us and we will be happy to show you our policy manual and answer any questions.

You should receive this Kit when you first come to MDAA.

It also includes:

- MDAA fridge magnet
- Pamphlet about MDAA
- Membership form
- List of other advocacy services
- Complaints form

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