

# VALID

## Client and Members Handbook

Version 2.0 July 2019



**Empowerment of people with  
intellectual disability and  
their families**

**VALID**

Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability Inc



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Richmond 3121



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Having a Say Conference	<a href="mailto:havingasay@valid.org.au">havingasay@valid.org.au</a>
Registrations - training/workshops	<a href="mailto:booking@valid.org.au">booking@valid.org.au</a>
Network Meetings	<a href="mailto:rick@valid.org.au">rick@valid.org.au</a>
Keys to Success Self Advocacy	<a href="mailto:jon@valid.org.au">jon@valid.org.au</a>
Families info and training	<a href="mailto:christine@valid.org.au">christine@valid.org.au</a>
Peer Action Groups	<a href="mailto:david@valid.org.au">david@valid.org.au</a>



We are happy to contact you using an interpreter ph: 13 14 50  
or other relevant communication method like the National Relay  
Service ph:133 677



Please request this (or have another person on your behalf) if you  
require this.

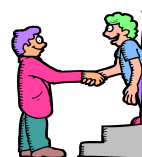


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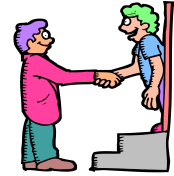
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# 1. WELCOME TO VALID

VALID is an advocacy group for adults with intellectual disabilities and their families.



VALID is funded by the State Government and managed by an independent Committee made up of people with disability, family members and concerned citizens.

## The VALID Committee of Management 2016 - 2017



Dot Leigh  
President



Peter Dibbs  
Treasurer



Deb Johnson



Janice Castledine



Elaine Robb



Thea Calzoni



John Handley



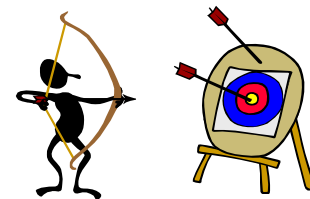
Luke Nelson



Lisa McLeish

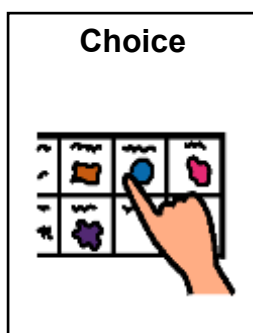
## 1.1 Vision

VALID is committed to the vision of an Australian nation in which people with a disability are empowered to exercise their rights – as human beings and as citizens – in accordance with the United Nations Declarations on Human Rights and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



## 1.2 Mission

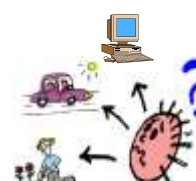
VALID's mission is to protect and defend the human rights of people with an intellectual disability and to champion their rights as citizens to:



## 1.3 Aims

VALID aims to empower people with intellectual disability to:

- Exercise their human rights and citizenship status within their local communities
- Inform and influence the policies and practices of disability service agencies, governments and other authorities
- Have control and influence over the decisions and choices which affect their lives



## 1.4 Principles

VALID's advocacy is guided by the mission and aims of the VALID organisation, and the principles of the Disability Act 2006

## 2. MEMBERSHIP

### 2.1 Individual Members

VALID's advocacy support services are free. People *do not* need to be members to get VALID's assistance or to attend VALID training. However, VALID relies on the support and participation of its members to carry out its work.

VALID members are individuals who are:

- Committed to the aims of the organisation
- Passionate about the rights of people with disability
- Dedicated to working collaboratively



### 2.2 Member Entitlements

Members are entitled to:

- Vote within the VALID Inc. Association
- Take part in working parties and sub-committees
- Nominate for the VALID Committee of Management
- Receive the VALID newsletter and other correspondence
- Receive 10% discount on VALID resources, materials and conference registrations.
- Receive a free Having a Say conference DVD



(Three year memberships are available)

### 2.3 Associate Membership

Associate Membership is available to organisations and support groups wishing to support and be informed about VALID's work. Associate members are welcome to participate in VALID activities and receive the VALID Newsletter and other correspondence.

Members of Associate Member organisations or groups are also eligible to receive 10% discount on all VALID Conference registration fees.





### 3. BEQUEATH



#### 3.1 Making a Bequeath

VALID is a not-for-profit organisation, funded to provide individual advocacy support to adults with Intellectual Disability who are eligible for services from Disability Services, Department of Health and Human Services, under the Disability Act 2006.

By leaving a bequeath in your will you can help VALID to continue in its mission to protect and defend the human rights of people with disabilities.

It is important when making your gift that you use the correct legal terminology.



#### Leaving a bequest to VALID Inc

Please use the following wording to leave a bequest to VALID Inc:

"I bequeath to the Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability Inc.



- a. The whole of my Estate of whatsoever kind and wheresoever situated
- b. .... % of my Estate
- c. And/or the sum of \$ ..... Free of all duties and taxes at my death and I declare that the receipt of the Treasurer or other Proper Officer shall be sufficient discharge for my trustees."

**Note:** choice a, b and c should be followed by a statement, *"after the payment of all my debts, taxes and charges payable on my Estate at my death."*

By the Wills Act, all Wills and Codicils must be in writing, signed by the Testator and attested by two witnesses in the presence of the testator and each other.

#### 3.2 Donations

VALID is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient. Donations to VALID over \$2.00 are tax deductible.



## 4. INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

### 4.1 About VALID's Individual Advocacy Support

VALID is funded by the Victorian Government to provide a free individual advocacy support to adults with an intellectual disability and their families. Individual advocacy supports people to exercise their rights and to be included within their local communities.



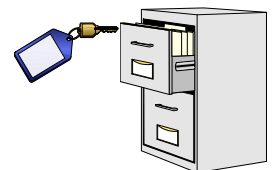
VALID's individual advocacy support:

- is available to adults with an intellectual disability who are considered eligible to receive Victorian disability support services.
- is usually on a short term basis.
- can be provided in a range of ways including, information, advice, referral, direct support (ie. attending meeting) and representation (*see next page*)
- is provided in a manner that is consistent with the 'To Stand Beside' method. (*see top of the next page*)
- assists people to address specific issues and challenges that they may be facing with either specialist or community-based services.



### PRINCIPLES

1. VALID provides free Advocacy support to people who are eligible under the Victorian Disability Act 2006.
2. VALID respects the right of people who use its services to privacy and confidentiality
3. VALID works with individuals/families in a manner which seeks to empower them
4. VALID's advocacy service is provided to people in a non-discriminatory manner
5. VALID works with individuals/families in the least intrusive way as possible e.g. only ask the info we need



### 4.2 Priority criteria for Individual Advocacy

VALID has to **manage demand** (ie. more people than we have staff for) for its services. To do this VALID will respond first to people who are either:

- at risk of harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation, and/or;
- without any alternative form of advocacy support or representation.





## 4.3 Forms of Support

### DIRECT



#### ***Standing Behind***

VALID provides advice and guidance to support people with intellectual disability to assert their rights and achieve their goals.



#### ***Standing Beside***

VALID works alongside people with intellectual disability to assist them in raising and addressing their issues effectively.



#### ***Standing Before***

VALID provides representation to defend and promote the rights and interests of people with intellectual disability.

### INDIRECT

#### **Family Advocacy**

VALID provides advice and assistance to support the natural role played by families advocating for a family member with a disability. However, we do not advocate for the needs of the family itself, and our advocacy is always directed towards the VALID Mission, and guided by the principles of the Disability Act 2006.



#### **Advocacy Support**

VALID provides advice, where sought, to assist advocates who are representing or supporting people with intellectual disability. Where an advocate is actively engaged with a person with intellectual disability, our advice is provided to the advocate rather than to the person, to avoid potential confusion or conflict.



#### **Training**

VALID offers training in advocacy and empowerment skills to people who have a role in supporting, assisting or representing people with intellectual disability. For information on the *To Stand Beside: Advocacy for Inclusion Training Program*, contact the VALID office.

#### **Referral**

Where VALID is unable to provide advocacy support we will refer people to other relevant services. For example, families of children are referred to Association for Children with a Disability and people with legal issues are referred to a legal advocacy service like Villamanta.



## 5. SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

VALID provides systemic advocacy representation on behalf of people with intellectual disability and their families. Systemic advocacy informs and influences the policies and practices of disability service agencies, governments and the broader community.

### 5.1 Roles



#### **Champion**

VALID champions the vision of a community that includes and celebrates the diversity of disability.



#### **Defender**

VALID defends the rights and interests of people with intellectual disability and their families across Victoria.



#### **Ally**

VALID works in collaboration with services, departments and governments to improve their policies and practices.

### 5.2 Representation

#### **State Government**

We provide representation to the Victorian State Government through a broad range of policy and planning forums and committees.



#### **Federal Government**

We work with the Inclusion Australia (formerly NCID) to provide national peak representation to the Federal Government on behalf of people with intellectual disability and their families.



#### **Inclusion Australia - NCID**

Inclusion Australia - NCID is the national association representing people with intellectual disability and their families in Australia. It was established over 30 years ago by parents and friends as the National Council on Intellectual Disability (NCID) to make the Australian community one in which people with intellectual disability are involved and accepted as equal participating members.

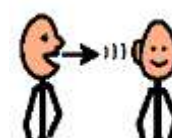


#### **Consultation Processes**

VALID's systemic advocacy is driven and informed by its active individual advocacy role. Our policies and positions are determined by the VALID Committee of Management, formed by the VALID Self Advocacy Forum.



Specific issues are also canvassed through Members Forums and the Advocacy Stream of the annual Having a Say Conference, which brings together people with disability, family members, advocates and supporters from across the country.



## 6. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

VALID's community development work supports people with disabilities to become more engaged in the life of their communities



### Peer Action Groups

VALID's Peer Action Groups (PAG's) are led by volunteers and meet monthly in a local community house or library to provide peer support and encouragement for people with disability, their families and supporters to:

- Network with other people experiencing the same situations, needs and issues for mutual support
- Learn to make good decisions and lead in your own life
- Learn how to make disability supports work for you in achieving personal goals
- Create relationships that empower and make people safer and more confident
- Meet in community venues to increase opportunities for community connections
- Develop self-advocacy skills and learn how to access advocacy support



### Working Together Partnerships

PAG's often design and lead projects in communities in partnership with local council, business and community services to make lasting and positive change in communities, e.g. address barriers to inclusion.



### Choice Mentors

Choice Mentors are volunteers recruited, trained and supported by VALID to partner with people with disabilities who need someone independent who can encourage them to become more confident in making their own decisions and building relationships with people in the community who share similar interests and passions.



### Dulcie Stone Writing Awards

VALID holds an annual writing award for writers with intellectual disability to promote the voice and talents of people who have a talent for writing.



### Inclusive Community Development Network

This network of community groups, workers and advocates meets bi-monthly for people interested in promoting inclusion of people with disabilities through community development work.



## 7. FAMILIES TRAINING

The Family Team are parents supporting parents. They conduct the Families as Planning Partners course and workshops that are designed to assist parents/families of people with disability to learn about how to use the system to develop a 'good life' for their family member.

Topics are tailored to the group but include:

- Planning - for now and the future in light of the NDIS
- Understanding and using funding effectively
- Rights and opportunities through the NDIS and in the community



## 8. SELF ADVOCACY

The Self Advocacy team supports adults with a disability to maximise their ability to influence plans and decisions that affect their lives and the lives of others

This is achieved through:

- Four Metro Networks (Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western)
- Self Advocacy Forums
- Consultative Groups
- Projects with other organisations
- Workshops
- Advisory group meetings



### 8.1 Forums and Networks

VALID supports a range of self advocacy forums and networks that assist people to assert their rights and speak up for themselves.

#### VALID Self Advocacy Networks

The four Metro Networks focus on inclusion. Guest speakers deliver information specific to local communities. Monthly meetings provide a valuable forum for social empowerment.

Participants develop skills to:

- speak up about rights and things that are important
- assist others to develop advocacy skills
- talk about issues in order to create change
- assist others to learn new things and gain information
- meet and socialise with people from other services
- speak up and give feedback to government or other services or community groups.



#### The VALID Self Advocacy Forum (SA Forum)

The VALID Self Advocacy Forum is a bi-monthly meeting of people with intellectual disability. The SA Forum supports people to have a say in government and mainstream services. The SA Forum also has a valuable role in VALIDs governance process discussing issues and providing recommendations to the VALID Committee of Management.



#### VALID Self Advocacy also:

- Facilitates consultations and co-design projects with government and mainstream services
- supports participation in quality assurance processes such as group home assessments and reviews

## 8.2 Other Self Advocacy programs

We support people in both non-government and government services to promote self-advocacy and self-determination by:

### Strengthening Resident Empowerment in Disability Accommodation Services

We provide support to:

- group homes to promote empowerment and self-determination through the establishment of Resident Meetings and assistance with pictorial information
- Involve residents in service decision making via SUFY/Resident Focus groups
- residents to participate in organizational governance via representation on Advisory groups



### Strengthening Self-Determination in Community Service Organisations (CSOs)

We support Day Services with strategies that promote participant involvement in both individual and organisational decision-making by:

- promoting empowerment and self-determination through Advisory Group Meetings
- developing pictorial resources of organisational policies and procedures
- developing and facilitating participant surveys/reviews to ensure feedback is provided to service management



## 8.3 Self Advocacy Training - My Life Keys

The Keys to Success Program (KSP) 'My Life Keys' offers a series of personal empowerment courses that will equip you with the keys to enable you to make your own plans and lead your own life.

**Topics covered in the training include:**

- Key 1 - Rights & Responsibilities
- Key 2 - Self Advocacy
- Key 3 - Preparing for Planning



## 8.4 Having a Say Conference (HaS)

VALID conducts the Annual VALID Having a Say conference, bringing together self advocates and adults with disabilities from across Australia and internationally. (see back page for more information)





## 8.5 Resources

VALID provides a variety of resource materials aimed at assisting people to become strong self advocates. Poster are available to download from the website: [www.valid.org.au](http://www.valid.org.au)



### Pictorial Dictionary

The pictorial dictionary's main aim is to create consistency in the use of pictures for KEY items/issues.



This will assist people with literacy needs to start to become familiar with the same pictures for the same item or concept. The dictionary is NOT meant to provide pictures for every item, but for KEY items and issues that often come up in planning and meetings.

### Pictorial Posters

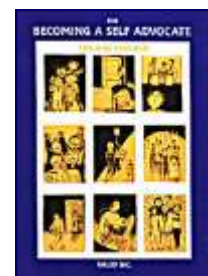
Posters can be downloaded free of charge from the VALID website or ordered from the VALID office in A3 or A4 size. Posters are provided in full colour and laminated for a low cost.

If you need a custom designed poster contact the VALID office to see if we can tailor one to your requirements.



### Becoming a Self Advocate

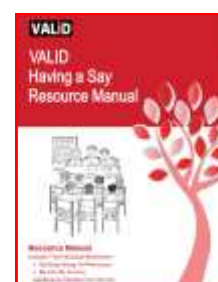
The Becoming a Self Advocate Training Program is a curriculum resource for staff assisting people with intellectual disability to develop Self-Advocacy skills. It is aimed directly at staff working with intellectual disability in an Day Service or community participation environment.



### Having a Say Resource Manual

The VALID Having a Say Resource Manual builds on the success of the Becoming a Self Advocate Program and offers three new, unique resources:

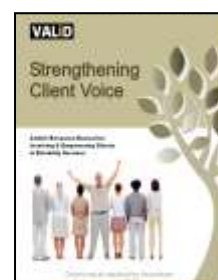
- Building Strong Self Advocacy workbook
- My Life, My Service workbook
- VALID-8 Empowerment Self Assessment



### Empowering Clients: A Staff Resource Manual

A guide to starting and conducting client meetings.

Please contact the VALID office (03 9416 4003) or visit the website [www.valid.org.au](http://www.valid.org.au) for the current resources list.





## Six Powers of Strong SELF ADVOCACY

### SELF EXPRESSION

*I express my feelings & assert my opinions*



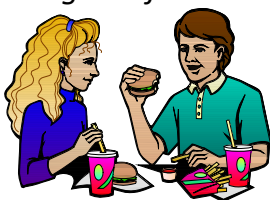
### SELF DETERMINATION

*I make decisions for myself & make for my own life*



### SELF CONFIDENCE

*I take responsibility for asserting my rights & the rights of others*



### SELF RELIANCE

*I do things for myself whenever I can*



### SELF DEVELOPMENT

*I have goals & dreams I'm going to achieve them*



### SELF ESTEEM

*I feel good about myself & believe I can make a difference*



**This is a sample of pictorial poster** it is also VALID's approach to supporting individuals and families by empowering them to develop greater 'powers' of self-advocacy

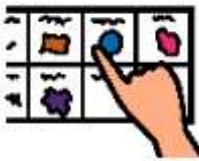
## 9. POLICIES

### 9.1 Rights and Responsibilities Policy

When you use VALID's support

**You have the RIGHT to....**

**Make your own  
choices**



**Have a Say**



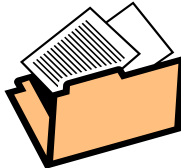
**Be listened to**



**Feel safe**



**Access  
information  
about you**



**Be respected**



When you use VALID'S support

**You need to be RESPONSIBLE by...**

**Keeping  
Appointments**



**Working  
together**



**Being polite**



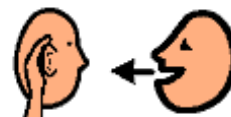
**Respecting  
Confidentiality  
(not gossiping)**



**Respecting  
Privacy**



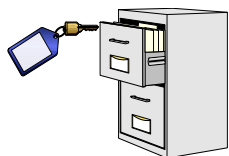
**Listening  
to others**



## 9.2 Privacy & Confidentiality Policy



VALID does keep some information about you, but we will not tell other people your private information.



Information you give to VALID will be kept secure and confidential.



In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act you may access your file.



The only exception to this policy is where staff are *bound by a law* to report (e.g. physical abuse) information to the police or government.

## 9.3 Consent to Referral Policy



VALID will not accept referrals for service, if the individual or family have not given consent for the referral to be made.



The only time we will vary this is where a guardian/ carer of a person who is unable to give informed consent due to illness (e.g. dementia) or disability (e.g. intellectual, psychiatric, brain injury) requests assistance for that person.



VALID will still seek to respect the individual privacy and rights of all concerned.

## 9.4 VALID Complaints Policy Easy English version

**If you**



**have a problem**

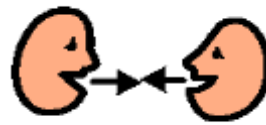
**OR**



**are unhappy  
with VALID**



**it is ok**



**to talk to**



**advocate**



**family or friend**



**manager**

**or the**



**to sort it out, so you are happy**

**Note: Some of the key advocacy services are listed on next page**

## 10. USEFUL NUMBERS

### Department of Health and Human Services



Statewide Info and Referral 1800 783 783



### NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme)

Phone: 1800 800 110 TTY: 1800 555 677 and ask for 1800 800 110

Website: [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)



Carelink Services - Regional 1800 052 222

Centrelink 1800 050 004

### Statewide Advocacy Organisations:

Association for Children 03 9818 2000  
*Advocacy for children under 18 yrs old* toll free 1800 654 111



Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service 03 5229 2925  
*Legal advocacy* toll free 1800 014 111



Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS) 03 9267 3733  
*Advocacy for young people 12 - 25 yrs old* toll free 1300 727 176



**NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission** T: 1800 035 544

*Complaints about any service purchased with NDIS funding*

E: [feedback@ndiscommission.gov.au](mailto:feedback@ndiscommission.gov.au)

W: [www.ndiscommission.gov.au](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)



NDIS Quality  
and Safeguards  
Commission

Disability Services Commissioner 1800 677 342



For a full list of advocacy services visit the VALID website: [www.valid.org.au](http://www.valid.org.au)

## Having a Say Conference (HaS)

VALID conducts the Annual VALID Having a Say conference in February each year.

The conference brings together self advocates and adults with disabilities from right across Victoria and Australia. HaS is the largest conference in Australia for people with disabilities and has welcomed international participation from New Zealand, Singapore, United Kingdom, Japan, Malaysia, Germany, Canada, Fiji, Vanuatu and China.



With an annual attendance of over 1000 HaS is an opportunity for people with disabilities to participate in an event where they can celebrate achievement, learn from peers, gain information and skills. The majority of presentations and performances delivered by people with disabilities.

The conference is an experience of empowerment in action and a celebration of diversity and achievement; and includes presentations, workshops, performances, Come and Try activities and lots of fun.

# VALID

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