

# #AdvocacyMatters

Advocacy ensures that the human rights of vulnerable people with disabilities are protected, defended and their voices are heard.

# ADVOCACY MATTERS

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## #AdvocacyMatters

is a statewide campaign to fight for continued funding of independent advocacy organisations.

### What does this mean for Queenslanders?



“ Without it I would be living in an aged care home ”

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### What is independent disability advocacy and what are its benefits?

Independent advocacy enables people with a disability to:

- enjoy the same rights as others
- have choices about decisions that affect their lives
- pursue their goals and live independent lives
- participate fully in their communities
- address discrimination and barriers they face in everyday life
- negotiate appropriate and equitable access to service delivery in government departments such as housing, health, criminal justice, child safety, transport, guardianship and many more settings.

Independent advocacy makes positive and sustainable difference to the lives of people with disabilities removing pressure on government agencies and services. It strengthens the capacity of people to fully participate in family and community and has improved the lives of thousands of people with disability and the wider community.

### What's the issue?

Queensland State funding for independent advocacy for people with disabilities is to be withdrawn from July 2019.

The Department of Social Services has completed a review of the National Disability Advocacy Program and released a consultation report in July 2017. In response to this report the Commonwealth Government has stated clearly that State based independent advocacy is the responsibility of State governments.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman reported to the review that, “any safeguarding system in the disability environment cannot operate optimally in the absence of a robust, dynamic and well resourced advocacy system....”

### COMBINED ADVOCACY GROUPS QUEENSLAND (CAGQ)

- AMPARO Advocacy Inc.
- Capricorn Citizen Advocacy Inc.
- Gold Coast Disability Advocacy Inc.
- Independent Advocacy in the Tropics Inc.
- Ipswich Regional Advocacy Services Inc
- Mackay Advocacy Inc.
- People with Disability Australia Inc.
- Queensland Advocacy Inc.
- Rights in Action Inc.
- Speaking Up For You Inc.
- The Advocacy and Support Centre Inc.



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## What is the solution?

That the Queensland State Government maintain, at a minimum, the current level of funding to independent advocacy agencies representing Queenslanders with disability from 1 July 2019.



“ some people do not have a voice and need help to get what they need ”

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## The NDIS will not fund independent advocacy

Demand for advocacy has increased with the rollout of the NDIS as people struggle to navigate the complex system.

The Productivity Commission recognised the critical role of independent advocacy to the NDIS. Advocates will play a crucial role in protecting the rights of individuals, and contributing to systemic improvement of the NDIS.

It is estimated that the majority of people with disabilities will NOT be part of the NDIS. Therefore, Independent advocacy remains instrumental in addressing the inequities and injustices experienced by people with disabilities in other service systems and domains, for instance education, health, justice and housing.

## Increased demand on Government for protection

“There is a real risk that inadequate funding of advocacy could lead to the unintended consequence of an increase in appointments of substitute decision-makers for some people with impaired capacity.”

(Qld Public Guardian submission to the National Review of Advocacy)

## Increased cost to Government and taxpayers

Every dollar used by Australia's independent disability advocacy agencies delivers \$3.50 in benefits. Withdrawing funding will mean the loss of this huge cost benefit.

(A Cost Benefit Analysis of Australian independent disability advocacy agencies- Professor Anne Daly, Greg Barrett, Rhiân Williams)

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## CONTACT PEOPLE

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