



Opportunities for People with Disability to Contribute to Governance and Policy Development

This document outlines the opportunities for people with disability to contribute to the governance of AWEN Case Management & Advocacy and have a direct role in shaping organisational policy and processes. Our commitment is to ensure that the lived experience of people with disability is central to our decision-making, in line with the principles of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) Code of Ethics, and the AASW Code of Conduct.

Guiding Principles

Our approach is guided by the following principles:

- **Human Rights:** We recognise the inherent right of people with disability to participate in decisions that affect their lives. This is a fundamental human right, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- **Co-design and Co-production:** We are committed to a co-design and co-production model where people with disability and their support networks are equal partners in the design, development, and implementation of our policies, processes, and services.
- **Empowerment:** We aim to empower people with disability by providing them with the necessary support, information, and resources to participate effectively and with confidence.
- **Ethical Practice:** Our engagement processes align with the AASW Code of Ethics, which prioritises the dignity and worth of the person, social justice, and professional integrity. We are committed to ethical decision-making that respects the autonomy and self-determination of people with disability.
- **NDIS Principles:** Our initiatives are consistent with the NDIS Act 2013, which focuses on providing supports that enable people with disability to exercise choice and control, pursue their goals, and participate as equal citizens in society.

Opportunities for Contribution

We offer the following avenues for people with disability to contribute to our governance and policy development:

1. Policy and Process Co-design Discussions

- **Role:** We will establish dedicated co-design discussions for the development and review of key organisational policies and processes. These discussions will bring together people with disability, staff, and other stakeholders to collaboratively create policies that are effective, accessible, and rights-based.
- **Topics:** Discussions will focus on critical areas, including but not limited to:
 - Development of support plans and service agreements
 - Participant rights and responsibilities
 - Complaints and feedback mechanisms
 - Safeguarding and incident management
 - Transition and exit from supports
- **Process:** The co-design process will be transparent and well-resourced. The process will be supported by facilitators who are skilled in inclusive communication and collaborative design.

2. Reference and Advisory Groups

- **Role:** Ongoing reference and advisory groups may be consulted to provide feedback on the implementation of our policies and the quality of our supports. These groups may serve as a feedback loop between the organisation and the people we support.
- **Inclusion:** Inclusion will be open to all people with disability who receive our supports, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives.

3. Individual and Group Feedback Mechanisms

- **Role:** We will continue to strengthen our formal and informal feedback mechanisms to ensure that the voices of people with disability are heard.
- **Mechanisms:** These mechanisms include:

- Regular one-on-one meetings with Social Workers, support coordinators and team leaders
- Accessible online surveys
- A robust, confidential, and easily accessible complaints and feedback system
- Facilitated focus groups on specific topics

Support for Participants

To ensure meaningful and equitable participation, we commit to providing the following supports:

- **Reasonable Adjustments:** We will provide all necessary reasonable adjustments to enable people with disability to participate fully. This includes but is not limited to: accessible venues, communication aids, Auslan interpreters, and support workers.
- **Training and Mentoring:** We will offer training and mentoring opportunities to people with disability who wish to participate, to build their skills and confidence.
- **Clear Communication:** All information related to these opportunities will be provided in clear, accessible language and in multiple formats.

Commitment to Ethical Practice (AASW Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics)

Our commitment to providing these opportunities is deeply rooted in the AASW Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct.

- **Code of Ethics:** We uphold the core values of Social Work, including the dignity and worth of the person, social justice, and professional integrity. These values mandate that we actively seek to empower people with disability and challenge discriminatory practices by ensuring their direct involvement in our governance.
- **Code of Conduct:** We will act with integrity, respect, and fairness in all our dealings with people with disability. Our processes will be transparent, and we will avoid conflicts of interest. We will ensure that participant information is handled with the utmost confidentiality and respect for privacy. Our staff will be trained to facilitate these opportunities in a way that is respectful and empowering.

How to Get Involved

If you are a person with disability who receives our supports and are interested in contributing, please contact us at support@awencma.com.au. We welcome your interest and look forward to working with you to shape our organisation's future.

AWEN Case Management & Advocacy
0434 151 864
support@awencma.com.au
www.awencma.com.au

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