



Voice at the Table

Engaging Consumer Advocates

Best Practice Guide

Sitting Fees

Paying a sitting fee or honorarium to consumer advocates is best practice.

Many people represent organisations and sit on committees as part of their employed position, but this is not always the case for consumer advocates. Paying a sitting fee ensures they're not the only ones at the table volunteering their time and expertise. Guest speakers and expert consultants are usually paid for their time. The same should apply for consumer advocates.

The rate you pay will depend on the role and responsibility of the consumer advocate and the sector your organisation is in. Rates range from the SACS Award (around \$35 p/h) to daily fees of between \$400 and \$800 per day for Government advisory boards. See www.fairwork.gov.au and <http://www.remtribunal.gov.au/offices/part-time-offices> for more information.

Reimbursement

It should be the responsibility of the organisation to reimburse consumer advocates for their access needs. This may include travel costs, accommodation, an interpreter or an inclusion support person.

Inclusion Support Person

Some consumer advocates request access to a paid one-to-one support person of their choosing. This can be an access need equivalent to an interpreter. The inclusion support person is employed to work alongside the consumer advocate and the role can be quite complex. It involves providing information, advice and support without unduly influencing the person. To avoid potential conflicts of interest it is important that the support worker is not a member of the organisation undertaking the meetings or consultation.



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POSITION DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

Position Title:	Inclusion Support Person
Employment Type:	Temporary / Permanent / Part-time / Casual
Tenure of Employment:	Include start and finish dates.
Award / Remuneration:	SCHADS Level 4.1 - 4.4 (\$38.79 to \$42.94 p/h casual)
Position reports to:	X (Consumer Advocate)
Police Check required?	Yes
Drivers Licence required?	Yes/No

Position Summary

The Inclusion Support Person is employed to work for X (Consumer Advocate) to assist their equal participation in XX (Event). It involves providing information, advice and support to X (Consumer Advocate) without unduly influencing them. In order to avoid potential conflicts of interest it is important that the Inclusion Support Person not be a member of XXX (Organisation).

Key Responsibilities & Duties

These responsibilities and duties should be designed in consultation with the Consumer advocate.



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1. Meet with the Consumer advocate as needed before the Event in order to:
 - Find out how the Consumer Advocate would like to be supported before, during and after the Event
 - Review the agenda and any written materials
 - Talk through and note any issues or questions that the Consumer Advocate wishes to raise
 - Prepare, practice and review any presentation and/or materials that the Consumer Advocate might need to present
 - Discuss concerns or answer any questions the Consumer advocate might have
 - Provide advice or relevant information to help with decision-making if requested.

2. Attend the event with the Consumer Advocate and:
 - Take notes for the Consumer Advocate if requested
 - Provide advice when requested
 - Clarify or explain information when requested
 - Remind Consumer Advocate of questions or issues they wished to raise
 - Provide discrete support (ie. try for your support to be 'invisible' to others)

3. After the Event:
 - Meet with the Consumer Advocate to debrief and review decisions
 - Write up notes in Easy or Plain English if required
 - Ask for feedback from the Consumer Advocate on the support provided
 - Respect confidentiality

4. Ensure that you do not:
 - Participate in the Event, or provide your personal opinion



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- Speak on behalf of the Consumer Advocate without their express permission

Key Selection Criteria

- An understanding of and demonstrated commitment to human rights conventions and legislation relevant to people with a disability.
- An awareness of the disability advocacy or self advocacy sector, and a demonstrated understanding of the principles of community inclusion, empowerment and consumer participation in planning and decision making.
- Knowledge of the needs of people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, acquired brain injury and complex communication needs.
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, acquired brain injury and complex communication needs.
- Knowledge of traditional governance structures and processes as well as inclusive meeting practice.
- Excellent communication skills.

Specialist Skills & Knowledge

- Experience in the development of accessible resources, including Easy English if required.
- An ability to use alternative communication devices and methods if required by the Consumer Advocate.

Interpersonal Skills

- Excellent communication skills, especially listening.



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- Self awareness - Ability to recognise and moderate own behaviours and ability to recognise and moderate any inherent power imbalance between the Consumer Advocate and their Inclusion Support Person.
- Ability to lead by example, coach, mentor and influence others to understand the access and inclusion needs of people with disabilities.

Qualifications & Experience

- Experience working with people with disabilities.
- Experience working as an Advisor, Inclusion Support Person or similar role is desirable.