

	Policy Number	POL079
	Introduced on	19/12/2011
	Endorsed on	01/12/2012
	Last review	V.3 10/01/2016
	Next review	10/10/2019

ADVOCACY PROCEDURES

VIWA recognises a consumer's choice of advocate when written notice or completed and signed Advocate Authority Form is received;

VIWA provides advocacy for consumers when:

- a) The Executive Officer has approved the advocacy role after:
 - Considering the possible consequences for the consumer, the staff member, the organisation, and other stakeholders;
 - Ensuring that the advocacy is solution focused; and
 - Identifying that it fits with our mission and vision.
- b) The consumer has provided written, signed and dated authority for the service and/or a particular staff member to act as advocate (see the [Advocate Authority Form](#));
- c) VIWA is satisfied that it has been informed of all of the relevant contextual issues for the consumer;
- d) The consumer identifies that it is in their best interests;
- e) The consumer is fully aware of the potential consequences of pursuing an issue and using the service as an advocate;
- f) The consumer is kept up to date on any issues and developments resulting from the advocacy and is invited to provide feedback on the process, any changes in their circumstances, and any concerns they have about these changes;
- g) The service is prepared to relinquish the role of advocate should the consumer wish this.
- h) VIWA will act as advocate, representing the interests of a consumer to an external service when:
 - The consumer has difficulty communicating their needs or issues;
 - The consumer's general state of health or situation would make it difficult or impossible for the consumer to represent themselves; or
 - The consumer's concerns about another service are of a serious nature, such as a breach of human rights.

The advocacy role of the service, in representing the interests of a consumer to an external service, may simply be to negotiate the passing on of the consumer's concerns to a more appropriate advocacy service. Information about the Health and Ageing Services Complaints Scheme and its role in consumer advocacy are made available to the consumer at.

Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner

Telephone: 8226 8666

or

Aged Care Complaints Commissioner

Telephone: 1800 550 552

1. A staff member may act as advocate in internal cases, such as a complaint against another staff member, when the consumer has difficulty relating their concerns or complaints;

If the internal advocacy role is in relation to a complaint from a consumer the service Consumer Complaint Policy applies.
2. A staff member may act as an advocate in a system advocacy case, such as when a significant number of consumers have raised concerns about a particular issue, when:
 - There is a sound evidence base to the issue, i.e. that a clear recording process on the issue of concern reported by consumers;
 - Permission has been sought from consumers reporting their concerns for an issue;
 - A report on the issue, with de-identified information has been prepared; and
 - Systemic advocacy then requires the report findings being presented to the relevant governmental and/or controlling bodies (eg politician, government bodies, peak bodies, funding body, local government, community groups, specific services, etc)