

# Possability

**Working together:**  
Our policies and practices



**Nurturing  
potential.**

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# Welcome

Welcome to Possability.  
We have more than 30 years' experience working with people with disability to develop their skills and confidence, live the life they choose and achieve their goals.

Possability offers services across Victoria and Tasmania, tailored to meet individual needs and wishes. We aim to provide the very best service and hope your experience with us is positive and rewarding.

**If you have any questions relating to this booklet or your services, please contact your Service Planner or House Supervisor:**

Name .....

Phone .....

Email .....

## About this booklet

This booklet explains the rights of Possability Participants and carers, and what we are doing to protect those rights. It includes a summary of our policies that are designed to protect Participants and be responsive to their changing needs.

This booklet is also a guide for Participants and families on our processes and expectations to ensure that your time with Possability is a positive experience for everyone.

# How we support Participants

**Please keep this booklet so you can refer to it again.**

We support Participants to exercise choice, live with dignity and increase independence while:

- › Getting involved in their local community
- › Pursuing personal interests
- › Building relationships with others
- › Developing healthy lifestyles by being mentally and physically active
- › Maximising independence in household and daily activities such as shopping, preparing meals or paying bills.

We are committed to enriching peoples' quality of life and supporting skill development. We provide flexible, consistent and reliable support services that are responsive to the individuals' needs and express wishes.

Our practices are based on research and evidence-based best practice to promote the best possible outcomes.

These practices include providing person-centred support, active support and ensuring participation in decision-making processes.

Participants are encouraged and supported to make decisions and give feedback in relation to:

- › The management of the organisation and its services
- › The recruitment, induction and training of new employees
- › The development and review of policies and procedures.

## Person-centred support

Possability is committed to a 'person-centred' philosophy of service delivery. This means we ensure that Participants (and where appropriate, their families, carers, advocates and guardians) are in control of their own plans and are encouraged to make decisions that affect their lives.

We listen to, consult with and support Participants to live in their communities as they choose.

# Participation and inclusion

Possability works to ensure Participants are active and feel included in decisions about their support.

## Community participation and inclusion

Possability supports each Participant to make decisions about how to connect with their communities. We provide information, training and support for community participation in areas such as employment, social and recreational clubs, adult education facilities (e.g. TAFE), sporting facilities, and cultural/spiritual organisations.

We actively seek information about local community supports and services available to enable people to achieve their goals and minimise barriers to participation and inclusion.

We will do everything in our power to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Participants while accessing or participating in community-based activities.

## Community education about participation and inclusion

We undertake activities to help the community understand the issues surrounding disability. This helps reduce barriers to full participation and inclusion.

We use feedback from Participants and their families to help understand their needs to participate in the community. We make this information available to local planners (e.g. councils) to improve Participants' access to community facilities.

## Employee training

Possability recruits, trains, and develops a skilled and respectful workforce that will give the same opportunities and choices to people with a disability as experienced by other people in the community.

We train employees to understand, respect and support the interests and skill development of Participants.

## Disability Worker's Exclusion Scheme

In accordance with Victorian legislation, Possability conducts pre-employment checks against the exclusion list prior to making an offer of employment. This safeguard strengthens other pre-employment screening processes to better protect people with disability who access our services.

## Participants in the Criminal Justice System

We actively seek meaningful connections with the community for people at risk of entering or leaving custody. We will support them to develop their interests and activities, while assisting them to meet the requirements of legal orders that may be in place for the safety of themselves and/or others.

# Overview of Participant rights

Possability respects the rights of people with a disability. We embrace the principles and rights in the United Nations Conventions, Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, Australian, Victorian and Tasmanian Laws.

People who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments can face many barriers that hinder full participation in society on an equal basis with others. We support the promotion, protection and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and promote respect for inherent dignity.

The principles underlying the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework focus on human rights, and choice and control.

## Possability's guiding principles include:

- › Acceptance of people with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- › Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- › Respect for dignity, autonomy, independence and difference
- › Non-discrimination
- › Equality of opportunity; equality between men and women
- › Respect for the capacity and identity of children with disabilities.

# Anti-discrimination

Possability does not tolerate discrimination based on race, religion, age, national origin, language, sex, sexual orientation or disability. We treat all Participants fairly and in a non-discriminatory manner. This applies to our referral and intake processes as well as service delivery.

We do not tolerate harassment or vilification. We consider such behaviour to be unacceptable. We investigate and address allegations of discrimination, harassment or vilification promptly and in a confidential manner.



# Participant consultation and engagement

Communication is one of the most basic needs and rights of all people. We recognise that everyone communicates differently, and therefore provide alternative approaches for everyone to be able to have a say and be heard.

We support Participants' right to choice and control and offer opportunities for input into decisions about their life and goals.

By consulting inclusively, we enhance peoples' participation skills and their ability to receive and share information.

We use inclusive consultation, through a number of strategies, to influence decisions about our services.

## Individual meetings

One avenue to provide feedback and raise issues is through an individual Participant meeting with Possability's Service Planners.

In these meetings, the Service Planner explores any issues raised. Minutes are taken and any Participants and family/guardians involved are provided with a copy.

Where needed, the Service Planner works with the Participant to identify how they wish to proceed.

Possible outcomes include:

- Providing feedback to the House Supervisor for action, outcome or resolution
- Referral to a resident meeting or consumer forum for broader discussion
- Referral to an independent advocacy agency.

## Resident meetings

Another avenue for consultation and engagement is through Resident Meetings. These meetings are an opportunity for Participants to raise, discuss and resolve issues, and share information and ideas.

Resident Meetings are held at each supported accommodation site at least every three months, supported by an advocacy organisation.

Site employees support Participants to create an agenda before each meeting but are not involved in the meetings. Items for discussion may include things like holidays, upcoming events, housekeeping issues, household purchases, employee or service delivery issues.

The facilitator may also add items to the agenda, such as updated Possability information or policies for review.

Any issues that are not Participant-specific or cannot be resolved at the meeting are referred on to the next Consumer Forum. Where needed, issues raised at the meeting are passed on to the responsible supervisor for action. The facilitator will let Participants know the outcomes of any issues raised at the next scheduled meeting.

## Consumer Forums

Consumer Forums give Participants another opportunity to discuss matters of interest and raise concerns about service delivery, employees and other issues. They also help people to develop confidence and participate in decision making about how services are provided across the organisation. These forums are held at least four times a year and are organised by an independent advocacy group.

The forums strengthen the line of communication between Participants and Possability's Board of Directors. The advocacy group works with Participants to help them prepare reports to present to Possability's Board.

Consumer Representatives are elected each year by their peers and present a Consumer Report in-person to each board meeting during their term.

## Community Visitors Scheme

In accordance with Victorian legislation, Possability participates in the Community Visitors Scheme. Community Visitors are volunteers who visit Victorian disability accommodation services and supported residential services. They observe the environment and employee interaction with residents, make enquiries and inspect documents. Where possible, Community Visitors' communicate with residents to ensure they are being cared for and supported with dignity and respect, and to identify any issues of concern. The findings, observations and recommendations of Community Visitors are compiled into an annual report to Victoria Parliament.

Contact details for the Community Visitors Scheme are included at the back of this book.

# Feedback and complaints

Possability welcomes, and takes seriously, all complaints and feedback. Feedback and complaints can be raised by Participants, family members, friends, employees or another service provider. We deal with all complaints fairly, efficiently and confidentially. We ensure that anyone with an issue can make a complaint or provide feedback without fear of retaliation, disadvantage or services being discontinued.

We encourage you to make complaints or provide feedback whenever you have an issue or concern. We regularly discuss with Participants that it is their right to make a complaint and that complaints help us to make our service better. We ensure that Participants can easily access Possability's Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy and Procedure. We also provide complaints information for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

When we do receive a complaint, we make every effort to address it in a timely manner. We manage and investigate complaints in an open and accountable way, with a view to improve our services.

## Complaint process

### 1. Making a complaint

Complaints may be raised online, at a Resident Meeting, with your Consumer Representative, at an individual meeting with a Service Planner or through an independent advocate.

### 2. Gathering information

Once a complaint has been made, a supervisor or manager will review the complaint, will gather all of the relevant information and will determine the outcome or the decision.

### 3. Feedback

Outcomes or decisions are communicated back to the Participant. Participants can ask for reasons for decisions to be provided to them in writing.

## Decision reviews

If you disagree with the outcome of a complaint, you can ask for a review of the decision.

Options for decision reviews include:

- › Requesting an internal review of decisions made
- › Contacting a senior employee - this should initially be the Senior Manager of your region, and escalating to the General Manager, Victoria or Chief Executive Officer if you are still not satisfied with the outcome
- › Contacting an advocacy organisation
- › Contacting the Victorian Disability Services Commissioner
- › From 1 July 2019, contacting the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, which is an independent Commonwealth body.

We are happy to provide contact details for these people upon request.

Contact details for advocacy groups, the Disability Service Commissioner and the NDIS Commissioner are included at the back of this book.

# Preventing and responding to abuse

Possability takes all reports of abuse or suspected abuse very seriously. If Participants or family members become aware of, or suspect abuse, they are encouraged to report it to us. Employees must report suspected abuse promptly. We maintain strict confidentiality according to professional and legal obligations, as well as in accordance with Possability's *Serious Incident Notification and Management* policy. Notifications of abuse are required to be sent to the DHHS and NDIS.

In compliance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme, allegations of abuse and involving a Participant under the age of 18, will be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People.

Our focus is on supporting the interests of the alleged victim.

We will make every effort to prevent further contact between the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator, including possible relocation of one party, based on the best interests of the alleged victim.

We focus interventions on ensuring safety and protection from violence and abuse.

We will provide the alleged victim with information about their options, and encourage and support them to make their own decisions. If the alleged victim is unable to make their own decisions, we will ensure their views are still considered.

We will respect an alleged victim's choice of an independent advocate.

In the case of potential criminal offences (such as theft, violence, assault, threats, intimidation or harassment), and other situations where appropriate, we report the incident to the Police and/or pursue legal recourse.

## Child Safe

Possability is clear in its commitment to safeguard children and young people from abuse and neglect. In support of this commitment, and in compliance with legal requirements, we have implemented the Child Safe Standards.

In the Standards, Children are defined as anyone under 18 years old.

The principles of the 7 Child Safe Standards aim to:

- › Promote the safety of children
- › Prevent child abuse
- › Ensure organisations and businesses have effective processes in place to respond to and report allegations of child abuse.

# Restrictive practices

Restrictive practices involve the use of interventions and practices that have the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a person with disability.

There are different kinds of restrictive practices:

- Mechanical restriction
- Physical restriction
- Chemical restriction
- Seclusion.

Possability is morally, professionally and legally committed to providing an environment for Participants that is the least restrictive possible and free from any practices that punish people or impact on their human rights.

We apply Positive Behaviour Support and other evidence-based approaches to avoid restrictive practices. Decisions or actions that involve restrictive practices affecting a Participant will involve consultation, taking into account the wishes of the person, their best interests and safety of themselves and others. This will be undertaken, so far as practicable, with regard to the intellectual capacity of person with disability.

Restriction of the freedom of decision and action of Participants will be avoided as much as possible, and if at all, to the smallest extent that is practicable.

Any planned use of restrictive practices follows the requirements of the Disability Act 2006 and the Office of Professional Practice (OPP) including the requirement to have an approved Behaviour Support Plan (BSP). If a restrictive practice occurs in an emergency the matter is reported to the OPP and is investigated by a Senior Manager at Possability. Where employee actions are assessed to have breached policy, that employee will be subject to disciplinary action.

# Health and safety

Possability is committed to protecting the health, safety and well-being of Participants, employees and visitors to our offices.

We assess and manage risks for Participants by:

- › Assessing their lifestyle, health, safety and wellbeing
- › Developing a Risk Profile and Management Plan for all identified risks.

We provide employee training and have processes in place to ensure a safe working environment for all people at Possability sites and in the community.

Employees will work with Participants to assist and encourage a healthy lifestyle. Good nutrition and exercise is encouraged through education and informed choice.

Employees can support Participants to attend medical appointments.



# Medication management

Possability has a strong focus on ensuring Participant medication is stored, administered and disposed of in a manner that is safe, responsible and meets relevant legislative requirements.

Medication is defined as including prescribed and non-prescribed medication in the form of tablets, capsules, drops, ointments, lotions, sprays, inhalers and transdermal patches.

Employees required to administer oral or topical medication will have completed accredited training and deemed competent in medication management including first aid, healthy body systems and medication administration processes.

Employees are required to follow policies and procedures and *Guiding Principles for Medication Management in the Community and New Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017*.

Employees will only administer medication as directed by a health professional and where the Participant, guardian or person responsible, have provided written consent.

# Advocacy

Possability actively supports Participants' right to advocacy. People with a disability have the right to actively participate in decisions that affect their life. 'Advocacy' refers to a person or group speaking, acting or writing on behalf of a disadvantaged person or group to promote, protect and defend their welfare and justice.

We advise people of their right to have an advocate, and regularly remind them of this option. Participants can request an independent advocate to represent them at any time. A family member, carer, friend or an advocacy service can act as an advocate. Participants may choose to have an advocate present during planning processes, assessments, making complaints, meetings or for any other communication with Possability. We accept and respect advocates representing the interests of Participants.

Where someone is unable to independently request the services of an advocate, a Planner or House Supervisor will refer them. Information about advocacy agencies and contact details are included at the back of this booklet and explained at intake, formal assessments and reviews.

# Privacy and confidentiality

Possability collects personal and sensitive health information about Participants and is legally bound to ensure that it is kept confidential. The primary purpose for collecting personal information from Participants is to help us provide appropriate services as well as perform functions such as planning, funding, monitoring and evaluating our services.

## Internal use of personal information

Access to all Participants' information is controlled. Participant profiles and file notes are stored electronically and hard copy files are kept in a safe, locked place in our offices and only people who need the information can look at it. Participants are able to access personal information held about them, and may ask us to correct their personal information, if needed.

We usually collect personal information directly from Participants.

However, we sometimes collect personal information from a third party such as family members, carers, volunteers, employees, trustees, authorised representatives or from a publicly available source.

Information is only collected if you have agreed to such collection or would reasonably expect us to collect your personal information in this way, or if it is necessary for a specific purpose. All identifiable personal information is for use by Possability employees only and is not made available to external agencies, unless consent has been provided.

All employees sign a Confidentiality Agreement when they start work with Possability, and this document is indefinitely binding. Our employees are not allowed to disclose information that is given in confidence. Employees must respect the privacy and confidentiality of Participants at all times in their interaction with other employees and people outside the organisation. They should not share private information outside the organisation unless required for service purposes and with written agreement.

## External use of personal information

Where Possability does have responsibility to report on Participants, for example, to funding bodies, we use de-identified information. Personal information will not be disclosed to third parties without the Participant's permission, except where allowed or required under the Privacy Act. We take steps to protect all personal, sensitive and health related information held by Possability against misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification and disclosure.

## Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) Scheme

The purpose of the NDB scheme is to protect people whose personal information has been released without their authority. Under the Privacy Amendment Act, Possability must notify the Privacy Commissioner of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) and any affected individuals of any 'eligible' data breaches.

## Families

Possability protects a Participants' right to privacy and confidentiality concerning their personal relationships, such as with family members. We encourage Participants to keep in touch with their family but will also respect a person's wishes if they choose not to see their family. Employees will ensure that personal matters between the Participant and their family are kept private and confidential.

# Participant consent

Before providing a service we seek a Participant's consent to collect the personal information we need to provide the service and to report to funding agencies. If we need to release information to other people or service providers, we will seek consent and will not release information unless we have permission. We will also seek consent before taking photographs, making films, making recordings and/or publishing an image or voice in any written or electronic media.

If a Participant does not have the capacity to give informed consent, we will assist them to access other services that can help them to make informed choices and decisions. This includes accessing formal guardianship and advocacy services.

# Protecting property and money

Possability respects Participants' right to have their personal property and money protected. Where possible, we encourage Participants to have full control over their funds. We promote independence by supporting Participants to learn skills in money management, budgeting, shopping and bill-paying. We educate Participants in keeping their property safe.

For Participants living in a shared house, a housekeeping account is used for common expenses. The housekeeping account is used for the payment of regular bills such as groceries, electricity, phone, etc.

We also support Participants to keep track of their property by maintaining a register of their possessions. This register is audited and updated annually.

Where employees are directly involved in supporting Participants to manage their finances, we ensure the security of their money through a rigorous financial monitoring and auditing system. Possability operates a Participant expense management system that captures expenditure as it occurs and a detailed monthly reconciliation is completed and sent to Australian Unity (third party for review), who in turn send out detailed reports to Participant Administrators. These include current balances, and type of expenditure for the month.

We encourage Participants to seek additional advocacy and support if required.

# Continuous improvement

Possability is committed to achieving continuous quality improvement. We have a cyclic approach to management that involves planning, doing, checking (gathering feedback and input) and acting.

This enables us to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify and meet the needs and expectations of Participants and stakeholders in an effective and efficient manner
- To achieve, maintain and improve overall organisational performance and capabilities.

Continuous improvement mechanisms include the use of the quality policy, quality objectives, internal audit results, analysis of data, corrective actions and regular management reviews of the quality system.

# Quality compliance

Possability has a strong focus on ensuring the services we provide, and the governance of our organisation, meet legislative and quality compliance requirements.

To achieve this outcome, Possability has attained, and maintains, the following certifications: ISO 9001:2015; Attendant Care Industry Standards 2013 (to be updated to the 2018 Standards in 2019).

# Transferring service provider

There may be a number of reasons why a Participant may transfer from Possability. Either the Participant/guardian or Possability may choose to stop services. Possability respects a person's rights to choose to decline or exit a service provided by us at any time (unless leaving the service contravenes a lawful order). Any Participant who does decide to leave a service is welcome to request further services at any time.

Possability reserves the right to stop providing a service to an individual. Such a situation would only occur after consultation with the person and/or their person responsible or guardian. This situation could occur if the service being provided is no longer funded or no longer appropriate for the Participant and no longer meets their needs. It might also occur if the Participant (or their associates) placed themselves, other Participants or employees at unacceptable levels of risk, and where such risk could not be minimised to a manageable level within the resources available. We only cease a service in such circumstances as a last resort.

We will also consult with the Participant, family, advocate or guardian about any concerns they may have about risks associated with the exit. We will assist a person to leave a service by providing information about other service providers who may be able to help. We will assess, manage and keep records of any identified risks associated with the exit, discharge or transfer of a Participant to another agency.

## Notice required

For some Participants there is a requirement to give Possability notice before transferring or exiting a service.

Participants funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) are required to provide Possability with 28 days' notice to cease their service. Supported accommodation Participants must provide 90 days' notice under the terms of their Residential Statement.



# Reference list

Policies and procedures outlined in this Booklet are aligned to the following legislation and standards:

- › Australian Privacy Principles
- › Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- › Children Youth and Family Act 2005 (Victoria)
- › Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- › Commonwealth Disability Services Act 1986
- › Department of Health and Human Services Restrictive Intervention Guidelines 2012 (Tasmania)
- › Disability Act 2006 (Victoria)
- › Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- › Disability Services Act 1992
- › Freedom of Information Act 1991
- › Guiding Principles for Medication Management in the Community 2012
- › Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission Act (Commonwealth) 1986
- › National Disability Services Standards 1993
- › New Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017
- › Privacy Act 1988
- › Tasmanian Disability Services Act 2011
- › Tasmanian Guardianship and Administration Act 1995
- › The Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability 2008
- › The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
- › Victorian Guardianship and Administration Act 1986

## Acronyms

DHHS Department of Health and Human Services

NDIS National Disability Insurance Agency

# Advocacy and complaints organisations

## Guardianship and Administration Board / Advocacy

Phone: 1300 309 337

Email: [opa\\_advice@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:opa_advice@justice.vic.gov.au)

[www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au)

## Association for Children with a Disability

Phone: 03 9880 7000

freecall: 1800 654 013 (rural callers)

Email: [mail@acd.org.au](mailto:mail@acd.org.au)

[www.acd.org.au](http://www.acd.org.au)

## Citizen Advocacy

### North East (Melbourne)

Phone: 03 8407 3684

Email: [neca@citizenadvocacy.org.au](mailto:neca@citizenadvocacy.org.au)

[www.citizenadvocacy.com.au](http://www.citizenadvocacy.com.au)

### East (Melbourne)

Phone: 03 9877 7990

Email: [office@meda.org.au](mailto:office@meda.org.au)

[www.meda.org.au](http://www.meda.org.au)

## Disability Services Commissioner

Phone: 1800 677 342 (complaints hotline)

Email: [complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au)

[www.odsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.odsc.vic.gov.au)

## NDIS Commissioner (from 1 July 2019)

Phone: 1800 035 544 Monday – Friday (freecall from landlines)

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

## The Community Visitors Scheme

(Office of the Public Advocate-OPA)

Phone: 1300 309 337 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 4:45pm)

Email: [OPA\\_Advice@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:OPA_Advice@justice.vic.gov.au)

[www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/our-services/community-visitors](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/our-services/community-visitors)

## Ombudsman Victoria

Phone: 1800 806 314

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.vic.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.vic.gov.au)

[www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au)

## VALID (Advocacy)

Phone: 03 9416 4003

Email: [office@valid.org.au](mailto:office@valid.org.au)

[www.valid.org.au](http://www.valid.org.au)

## Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC)

Phone: 1800 626 078

Email: [info@adec.org.au](mailto:info@adec.org.au)

[www.adec.org.au](http://www.adec.org.au)

# Further information

For further information about our policies or procedures please contact one of our Service Planners.

Call: **1300 067 067**

or email: [welcome@possability.com.au](mailto:welcome@possability.com.au)



# Nurturing potential.

## **State Office**

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