

North East Citizen Advocacy Incorporated

Quality Framework

Note: This is a CONTROLLED Document as are all quality system files.

standby me



North East Citizen Advocacy Inc

National Standards for Disability Services

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1 INTRODUCTION

North East Citizen Advocacy Incorporated (NECA) is a community based program that builds long-lasting one-to-one relationships between ordinary citizens (citizen advocates), who are unpaid and independent, and people with intellectual disability (protégés.)

This quality system relates to the full range of organization activities.

The North East Citizen Advocacy quality system aims to establish a consistent level of quality against agreed Standards to achieve a culture of quality and continuous improvement.

The values and commitment of NECA, combined with the Goal of the NECA quality strategy is to operate an effective performance framework for the organization that will:

- Provide our program participants, our community and our funding provider with assurances about the quality of the support being delivered.
- To comply with a set of measurable performance requirements via the legislated Disability Advocacy Standards and Key Performance Indicators.
- To operate a range of processes and control components of a quality system ie. plans, policies and procedures.
- Ensure that a cyclical, consistent and coordinated approach to measuring, monitoring and improving the program is implemented.

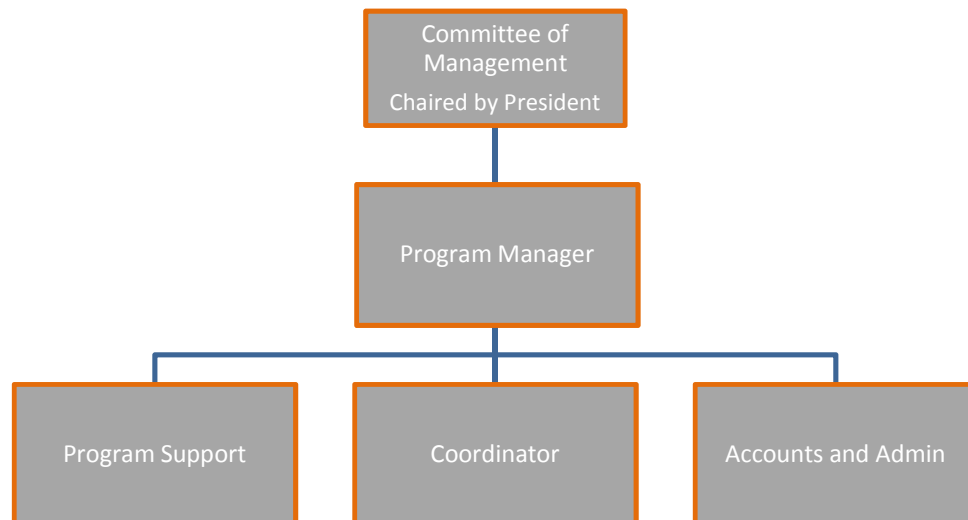
Key features of the QA system include:

- Compliance with a set of 6 National Disability Service Standards
- A Quality System Framework which includes the organizations plans, policies and procedures, as well as documentation of processes and practices such as position descriptions, compliance with legislative and statutory requirements, meeting minutes and system controls.
- Certification of NECA's compliance with the Standards and KPI's on the basis of assessments undertaken by an independent, accredited Certification Body.

2 Organizational Profile

2.1 Organizational Chart

North East Citizen Advocacy Incorporated under the Victorian Associations Incorporation Act and is managed by members elected to the Committee of Management.



2.2 Committee of Management

The Committee of Management is made up of people elected by the general membership of the North East Citizen Advocacy program. Except for casual vacancies, the Victorian Associations Incorporation Act prohibits appointments (non-election) of committee members. However there is an exception in the case of the position of secretary (see Victorian Incorporations Act.). It is necessary for all elected members of the Committee of Management to be members of the association. (See North East Citizen Advocacy Incorporated Rules). The Act places some restrictions on eligibility for election to the Committee of Management, for example bankruptcy or conviction for an offence on indictment precludes election.

North East Citizen Advocacy Incorporated Committee of Management shall comprise of 3 offices of the Association (President, Secretary and Treasurer) and six ordinary members plus a further nil, one, two or three ordinary members co-opted at the discretion of the Committee from members of the association.

As a member of a Committee of Management, the following responsibilities are shared with all Committee members:

- **Planning** – establishing and reviewing strategic and operational plans.
- **Policy and decision making** – establishing policies/procedures and record decisions and actions on matters concerning the organization.
- **Management** – making sure everyone does their job, that the organization is properly administered, and that the Committee is actively involved in the activities of the group.
- **Legal** – ensuring the organization is incorporated, keeps proper records, and complies with any relevant legislation and the organization's constitution

- **Financial** – ensuring that all finances are properly managed, that records are audited annually and that accountability requirements of funding providers are fulfilled
- **Evaluation** – monitoring all activities by the organization with feedback contributing to the continuous improvement in governance and service delivery.
- **Advocacy** – the Committee of Management is the primary link between the organization and the broader community. Members represent the interests of the organization to the broader community, and assist the staff team with feedback views on the organization.
- **Attend regular meetings** - as required within the constitution.

Members of the Committee of Management are required to:

- act honestly and in good faith
- ensure the organization carries out activities in accordance with its intended purpose
- act in the best interests of the organization
- exercise powers for their proper use
- respect privacy and confidentiality of information obtained in the course of the operation of the organization
- disclose potential conflicts as they arise and remove themselves from that particular discussion or decisions.
- adhere to the organization's Code of Conduct.

2.3 President

The President of North East Citizen Advocacy has an important role as a leader within the organization, as well as the legal duty of ensuring orderly and correctly conducted meetings. The President can give paid and unpaid workers a great deal of support and practical help. Where good communication exists, the organization is stronger and better. The President will also take the chair at meetings of the association and be responsible for good meeting procedure. Sometimes the President is also the organization's spokesperson. The role of spokesperson can be played by any member of the committee as long as everyone is clear who it is, and what the role means.

It is important to remember also that under the Act, every member of the management committee who is acting in the association's proper business or operations is considered to be an agent of the association. In the role of representing the organization, the President signs all official letters concerning changes in policy and letters to workers, committee members, and government departments and so on. Such official correspondence is held on record and tabled at the subsequent management committee meeting.

The President is required to:

- act as a spokesperson for the organization
- ensure the Committee of Management provides leadership for the organization, including fulfilling accountability requirements, e.g. service agreements, funding requirements, etc
- stay in touch with other Committee of Management members
- be familiar with the constitution, key aspects of service delivery, strategic and operational plans of the organization

- monitors and review organizational progress
- maintain an effective working relationship with the Manager, other staff and other organizations
- represent the organization at significant community events
- maintain an effective relationship with the community
- chair Committee of Management meetings and acts the final decision maker when voting is tied
- ensure meetings of the Committee of Management are held and develops the meeting agenda with the Manager/Secretary
- prepare an annual report for the Committee of Management.

2.4 Program Manager

2.5 Coordinator

2.6 Payroll Accounts & Administration Officer

2.7 Program Support

As per Job Descriptions

3 Program Goals and Mission Statement

North East Citizen Advocacy quality policy is to achieve our stated mission, operating under Citizen Advocacy principles and guided by the practice of Social Role Valorization. We will consistently satisfy the requirements of both our program participants and funding bodies. The Goal of North East Citizen Advocacy is to reduce the vulnerability and/or risk for the people identified as the primary target group, by establishing independent advocacy relationships with competent, resourceful, committed and valued citizens through recruitment and orientation to promote, protect and defend their welfare, rights and best interests. The Citizen Advocacy model will be used to maximize the potential of making many good and potent matches for those who have been identified by this Program as those who are among the most vulnerable and/or at risk. North East Citizen Advocacy will facilitate supportive relationships between Citizen Advocates and Protégés who live in the geographic area serviced by the Program.

This level of quality is achieved through adoption of a system of procedures that reflect the competence of NECA to existing program participants, potential program participants, and independent auditing authorities.

Achievement of our mission statement involves all staff and Management Committee members, who are individually responsible for the quality of their work, resulting in a continually improving working environment for all. This Policy and Mission Statement is provided and explained to each employee and Management Committee member by the Quality Manager.

To achieve and maintain the required level of assurance the Quality Manager retains responsibility for the Quality System with routine operation carried out by all staff.

North East Citizen Advocacy Incorporated is a community based program that builds long-lasting one-to-one relationships between ordinary citizens (citizen advocates), who are unpaid and independent, and people with intellectual disability (protégés).

Vision

“A community where every person’s life has inherent value and worth”.

Mission

We will promote, protect and defend the personal well being and interests of vulnerable people with intellectual disabilities who have unmet needs, by establishing and supporting a range of individualized, unpaid personal relationships between such persons (Protégés) and valued, competent citizens (Citizen Advocates) in independent one-to one relationships.

Principles

The operation of a Citizen Advocacy program is based on the following principles:

- Advocate Independence
 - Advocates must be free to develop a primary loyalty to the person with whom they are matched and be able to act as independently as possible.
 - A Citizen Advocacy program should support Citizen Advocates as unpaid, independent volunteers to an individual person.

- Program Independence
 - A Citizen Advocacy program must be independent and free from conflict of interest in how it is administered and funded. The office must be administratively and physically separated from agencies which operate direct service programs involving (potential) Protégés.
- Clarity of Staff Functions
 - Citizen Advocacy staff understands the nature and possibilities of Citizen Advocacy and communicate this understanding by:
- Supporting, not supplanting, Protégé/Advocate relationships.
- Directing their energies toward building and maintaining the office as a whole.
- Balanced Orientation to Needs of People requiring Advocates.
 - People with an intellectual disability have a wide variety of needs for representation and relationships which can be met by Citizen Advocates. A Citizen Advocate program must work to develop plans for recruiting and supporting a range of relationships.
- Positive Interpretations of People with a Disability.
 - The Citizen Advocacy program model provides a positive interpretation of people with disabilities. The program will always seek the most highly positive, value conferring and yet valid possible associations which support developmental growth potential, citizenship role and individual personhood of people at risk of social devaluation.
- Non-Discriminatory Advocacy
 - North East Citizen Advocacy will promote to Citizen Advocates, sensitivity towards the social and cultural values, beliefs and practices of the Protégés.

4 Quality System

4.1 Structure

Level 1: Quality Manual

This document details the NECA quality policies and structure of the organization and references appropriate operational procedures.

Level 2: Procedures

These documents describe the actual process, and controls applied, to all activities concerned with the attainment of a certified organization.

A list of procedures is given in the Index Section of the Quality Manual.

The Objectives of the Quality System are:

- a) To maintain an effective Quality Assurance System complying with National Standards for Disability Services
- b) To achieve and maintain a level of quality which enhances the organization's reputation with all stakeholders.
- c) To ensure compliance with relevant statutory and safety requirements
- d) To endeavor, at all times, to maximize stakeholder satisfaction with the program services provided by North East Citizen Advocacy Incorporated.

4.2 Definitions

The terms and descriptions used in this Manual are generally defined within the Disability Service Standards.

4.3 Quality Planning

NECA operates only one type of program service – Citizen Advocacy.

Stakeholder satisfaction and quality are achieved by operation in accordance with the documented quality system.

5 Target Group of the Program

The primary target group of North East Citizen Advocacy are:- People with an intellectual disability as defined under the Disability Services Act who are vulnerable, who have unmet needs (Protégés), and who would benefit from independent advocacy to promote, protect and defend their welfare, rights and best interests.

The needs of the target group include:

- To have their basic fundamental and instrumental needs met.
- To be free of, and protected from abuse, exploitation and neglect.
- To live in a safe and secure environment which supports their needs for personal fulfillment.
- To have friendships and other positive supportive unpaid relationships with family members and other valued citizens in the community in which they live.
- To be personally valued as a citizen who has gifts and experiences which contribute to the overall social wealth of the community.
- To have ordinary people prepared to defend the above in the long term and remain firmly on the side of the person with the disability.

6 Program Management Plan

6.1 Continuous Improvement

The following processes have been implemented to operate, control and continuously improve working Citizen Advocacy:

- Strategic Plan
- Annual Plan
- Governance Plan
- Financial Plan
- Risk Management Plan
- Protégé Participation Plan
- Staff Planning – Key activities
- Collaborative Partnerships

6.2 Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan provides our organization with direction and purpose. It is a clear statement of our organization's vision, mission, and the specific changes or outcomes we want to deliver in 2012-2017 time period. The Strategic Plan clearly states NECA's priorities and key strategic goals, including a work plan, milestones and indicators of success.

6.3 Annual Plan

The Annual Plan is the overall Program Plan which incorporates all of the proposed activities and the timeframes for the organization for the forthcoming twelve months, this includes the dates of the:

- Management Committee Meetings
- Annual General Meeting
- Review of all of the organization's literature, Policies and Procedures.
- Annual Service Agreement with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.
- Mid Year Budget Review
- Adoption of the Annual Budget
- Internal Relationship Review.
- Development of the Protégé Recruitment Plan
 - Self Assessment, Continuous Improvement and Reviews.
- FaHCSIA Data Collection.
- Advocate Get Togethers (ongoing training sessions), Annual Advocate/Protégé Lunches, Information Sessions.
- Program building activities (e.g. Joint CA program meetings and events, CA Quality meetings, Annual Christmas BBQ, training for staff, Training for MCOMM members, production of the Annual Report of the organization.
- Production of the twice yearly Newsletter.

6.4 Governance Plan

The Governance Plan includes:

- Administration of the program
- Management Committee, roles and responsibilities,
- Staff Recruitment – including the development of Position Descriptions and Selection Criteria for the Manager, Coordinators and the Administrative Assistant.
- Membership Register
- Privacy and Confidentiality Pledges.
- Register of Incoming and Outgoing Correspondence.
- Constitution.
- Service Agreement with Funding Body.
- Staff Training and Development record.
- Development of Policies and Procedures.
- Development of Feedback from External Consultation.
- Implementation of Feedback from External Consultation.

6.5 Financial Plan

The Financial Plan includes:

- Monthly financial reports
- Quarterly statements of income and expenditure.
- Annual Financial statements.
- Annual Audit of Financial Records.
- Budget Variance Report.
- Schedule of Depreciation.
- Asset Register and Inventory.
- Annual Budget
- Mid-Year Budget Review.

6.6 Management Plan

The Management Plan Includes:

- Seven Key Office Activities:
 - Protégé Recruitment
 - Advocate Recruitment
 - Orientation of Advocate
 - Match of Protégé and Advocate
 - Follow Along and support
 - Involvement of Advocate Associates
 - Ongoing training
- Annual Report of the Association
- Annual Internal Relationship Review
- Annual Protégé Recruitment Plan
- Annual Advocate Associate Review
- Annual Review of Crisis Advocates.
- Analysis and report on Discontinuations.
- Coordinators reports (monthly)
- Policies and Procedures directly relating to the National Standards for Disability Services and KPI's.
- CAPE – Periodical – External review of the Program
- Analysis of the CAPE report.
- Implementation of the Recommendations of the CAPE report.

6.7 Protégé Participation Plan

Protégé Participation Plan includes:

- Survey of Advocates
- Consultation of Protégés
- Development of Feedback from external consultation
- Implementation of Feedback from External Consultation.

6.8 Collaborative Partnerships

NECA works in both a national and state network with other programs providing Citizen Advocacy, to address problems and deliver outcomes that are not easily or effectively achieved by working alone. Collaborative practice is important to the way NECA works, and helps to produce innovations.

NECA proactively engages in a Citizen Advocacy Network, encompassing regular meetings, to build and maintain a network where good practices and methods can be shared and developed.

Partnership working has occurred in the area of development of Quality Assurance systems, with regular phone and face to face meetings conducted.

Neca also networks and develops partnerships with service providers in our geographical areas of operation including:

- Volunteer centres
- Health Services
- Community Programs & services
- Housing services
- TAFE's and educational programs

7 Geographical Areas of Operation:

7.1 Banyule



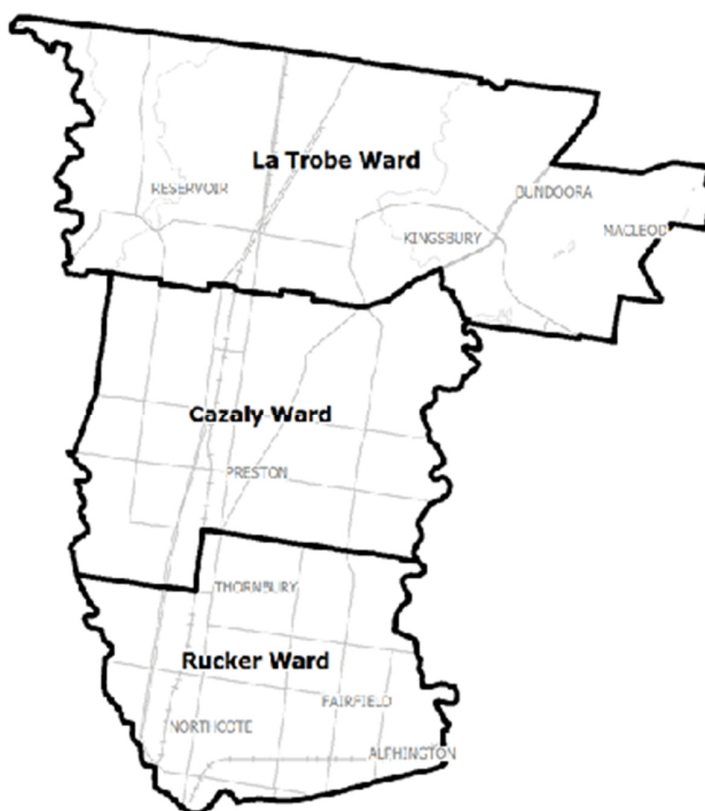
Banyule Municipality Profile

The 20 suburbs of Banyule City lie between 7 and 21 kilometres north-east of central Melbourne. The Yarra River runs along the City's south border while the west is defined by Darebin Creek. The city is primarily a residential area, renowned for its open spaces and plentiful parklands, especially along the Yarra and Plenty River valleys. There are industrial areas in Heidelberg West, Greensborough/Briar Hill and Bundoora, as well as institutions such as the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre and Simpson Army Barracks. Banyule also has a range of educational, health and leisure facilities.

Banyule Localities

Bellfield, Briar Hill, Bundoora, Eaglemont, Eltham, Eltham North, Greensborough, Heidelberg, Heidelberg Heights, Heidelberg West, Ivanhoe, Ivanhoe East, Lower Plenty, Macleod, Montmorency, Rosanna, Saint Helena, Viewbank, Watsonia, Watsonia North and Yallambie

7.2 Darebin



Darebin Municipality Profile

Darebin City is bounded by the Merri Creek to the west and the Darebin Creek to the east. It is a large, diverse municipality to the north of the central business district that incorporates a mix of residential, industrial and retail areas. The city includes La Trobe University and Northland Shopping Centre. The main industries include paper and paper products manufacturing. More than 35% of Darebin's residents were born overseas and more than 40% can speak a language other than English. One in five is over 60.

Darebin Localities

Alphington, Bundoora, Coburg, Coburg North, Fairfield, Keon Park, Kingsbury, Macleod, Northcote, Preston, Regent West, Reservoir and Thornbury

7.3 Whittlesea



Whittlesea Municipality Profile

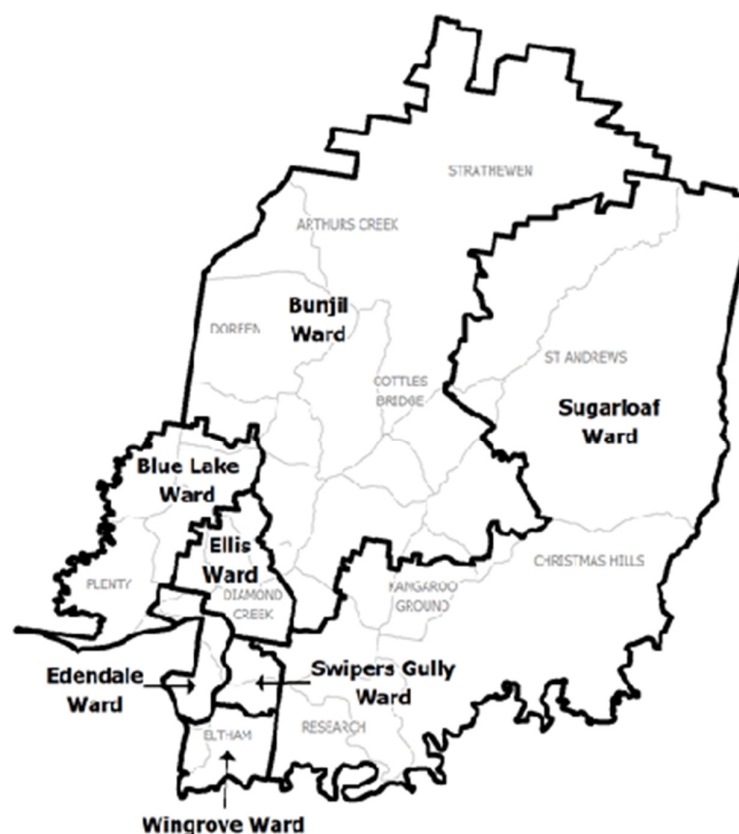
The southern parts of the City of Whittlesea are well established urban areas, while the north remains rural in character. The city incorporates important facilities such as the RMIT campus at Bundoora, the Epping Hospital and Epping Plaza Shopping Centre.

Residents of the City come from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, with a very high percentage of residents born in other countries, particularly Macedonia, Italy, and Greece. Demographically, over half of the residents are from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Whittlesea Localities

Beveridge, Bruces Creek, Bundoora, Donnybrook, Doreen, Eden Park, Epping, Humevale, Kinglake West, Lalor, Mernda, Mill Park, Morang South, Thomastown, Whittlesea, Wollert, Woodstock and Yan Yean.

7.4 Nillumbik



Nillumbik Municipality Profile

Nillumbik Shire is located 25 kms north-east of Melbourne and the southern boundary is the Yarra River. The south of Nillumbik is predominantly urban, with commercial centres at Eltham and Diamond Creek. The north of the municipality includes significant natural features like Kinglake National Park and Sugarloaf Reservoir. The main industries include building construction, installation trade services and building completion services.

Nillumbik Localities

Arthurs Creek, Bend of Islands, Briar Hill, Christmas Hills, Cottles Bridge, Diamond Creek, Doreen, Eltham, Eltham North, Greensborough, Hurstbridge, Kangaroo Ground, Kinglake, Kinglake Central, Kinglake West, Nutfield, Panton Hill, Plenty, Research, Smiths Gully, St Andrews, Strathewen, Warrandyte North, Watsons Creek, Wattle Glen, Yan Yean and Yarrambat.

8.1 Location of Office

8.2 Site Map

Existing Conditions
Scale 1:200

Gabonla Avenue



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9 History of the Program

North East Citizen Advocacy has a history dating back to our incorporation in September of 1987, and our inaugural meeting as North East Citizen Advocacy Incorporated on the 14th December 1987.

Some background events of direct and indirect significance.

9.1 The Concept of Normalization

- 1959 Neils E. Bank-Mikkelsen, head of the Danish Mental Retardation Service, was instrumental in having the principle written into Danish law of "letting the mentally retarded obtain an existence as close to normal as possible", and was thus the first for all practical purposes to promulgate the concept of normalization [W.W. 1980 - see references below]
- 1969 Bengt Nirge, then executive director of the Swedish Association for Retarded Children authored the first systematic written statement in English of normalization [W.W. 1980]
- 1972 Wolf Wolfensberger published as a text the most extensive elaboration of the principle which tried to North Americanize, [W.W. 1980] sociologies and universalize the Scandinavia formulations, so that they would be applicable to all human services, and be consistent. Since further elaborated and systematized by Wolf Wolfensberger and others with the use of the term Social Role Valorization to replace Normalization.

9.2 International including U.N.

- 1976 The United Nations Declaration of The Rights of Disabled Persons.
- 1980 Publication by the International League for the Mentally Handicapped. While it was mainly about the different needs of people with psychiatric problems and people with intellectual disabilities it also dealt with the needs of the latter very much in line with the concept of their having "an existence as close to normal as possible".
- 1981 The U.N. declared The International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) "served to direct community focus at people's abilities rather than their disabilities".
- '83-'92 The Decade of Disabled Persons declared by the U.N.

9.3 Some Commonwealth & State Legislation etc.

- '80-'81 The Victorian Government set up a Consultative Council on Intellectual Disability (CCID) which included discussion of state funding for citizen advocacy.
- 1986 Enactment of the Commonwealth Disability Services Act (DSA) and of the Victorian Intellectually Disabled Persons Services Act (IDPSA). Both provided for the encouragement of advocacy, included citizen advocacy, and its financial support by the governments.
- 1986 Victorian Guardianship and Administration Board Act and setting-up of the Office of the Public Advocate (O.P.A.).
- 1992 Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act.

9.4 Citizen Advocacy - U.S. Background

1966 Initially C.A. had its birth when the United Cerebral Palsy Association, after years of concern, held a nation-wide conference in the United States in which several groups and about 25 people were involved.

The key question at this conference was, "What will happen to my child when I'm gone?" It is in response to that concern at that conference that C.A. was first formulated in a somewhat primitive version. "In other words, C.A. was intended to be such a strategy of optimizing the likelihood that an impaired person would be protected if and when there was no family that could or would do it." [W.W. 1983]

1970 The first Citizen Advocacy Office was opened in Lincoln, Nebraska in February 1970.

9.5 Citizen Advocacy - Australian Background

1972 Ethel Temby of STAR Victorian Action on Intellectual Disability Inc. first read about such developments as Wolf Wolfensberger's elaboration of the principle of normalization and determined to find out more.

1975 Ethel, on a Churchill Fellowship, travelled to the U.S.A. & the U.K. to investigate the developments there of services for people with intellectual disabilities and was most impressed by the concepts of citizen advocacy. On her return she spoke about the concept to many interested persons and groups from Sydney to Perth.

About the same time Patricia O'Brien, then working at the Burwood campus, Faculty of Special Education and Paramedical Studies of Victoria College, also visited the U.S. and was inspired by the concept of citizen advocacy [H.H. 1992]

Late 1970's Barbara Page-Hanify, of Sydney, also visited the U.S. where she attended a workshop by Wolf Wolfenberger.

Bill Morris of Perth also went to the U.S.A. on a Churchill Fellowship. Having heard Ethel speak about developments there he was keen to learn more and to promote Citizen Advocacy in W.A.

1980 In February, a citizen advocacy program began in W.A. as one of the "support services" of the (then) Slow Learning Children's Group, a parent-organization which provided services. It was not, however, until March 1986 that it received government funding and became separately incorporated.

1981 The original Victorian citizen advocacy program began at Burwood Campus.

1982 Citizen advocacy programs began in Canberra and Western Sydney (Wescap).

1984 Towards the end of this year the N.S.W. office began to operate as did what was the Citizen Advocacy Victoria Resource Unit (CAVRU).

1986 Citizen advocacy program started in Adelaide.

9.6 Citizen Advocacy - Victorian Background.

- 1981 The program at Burwood campus auspice by STAR which managed the funds - initially \$6,000 from the Lance Reichstein Foundation on the recommendation of the Victorian Committee of I.Y.D.P.
- 1985 Federal funding enabled Citizen Advocacy Inner East to develop from the beginnings at Burwood campus.
- Verbal promises given by Office of Intellectual Disability Services (O.I.D.S.) of funding to establish programs to steering committees/groups - Southern, Norplan, Western and Caloola.
- These promises resulted from a working party organized by O.I.D.S.
- Barwon Steering Committee was established later in the year.
- 1986 C.A. Inner East incorporated.

9.7 North East Citizen Advocacy Inc.

- '85-'86 While in 1985-86 a Community Services Victoria/Office of Intellectual Disability Services (C.S.V./O.I.D.S.) working party discussed the allocation of \$200,000 for the establishment of citizen advocacy programs in Victoria and there was quickening of efforts of various working groups like that formed by Norplan to be in a position to receive funding, there had been discussions as early as 1980-81 by the Consultative Council on Intellectual Disability set-up by the State Government (Lib - Country Parties) and chaired by (Chris?) Borthwick on developments needed in services for people with intellectual disability including the concept of funding citizen advocacy.
- There were also State/Commonwealth consultations taking place on the same subject at this time.
- Norplan, predominantly a parents' organization, which had been active in furthering the establishment of day training centres and other Services under community management in the north-east region commissioned a group as early as about 1983 which would lead to the establishment of a citizen advocacy program in the region.
- June \$17,000 establishment grant and \$40,000 for recurrent expenses for the year 1986-87 from O.I.D.S.
- Nov.-'86 Employment of a Coordinator (30 hours per week) and administrative assistant for one day a week and move to the "shop front" building in Watsonia.
- Apr.-'87 New staff as part-time (20 hours per week) assistant coordinator.
- May '87 Efforts to recruit advocates began in earnest - presentations to various groups, articles in local newspaper and talk on local radio.
- May-Sept At about this time, ten potential advocates had been recruited and commenced orientation.

Sept-'87 The program had been variously called Norplan Citizen Advocacy, Northern Citizen Advocacy and Citizen Advocacy North-East Region. It was incorporated as North East Citizen Advocacy Inc. in September 1987 and at the inaugural meeting on 14 December 1987.

North East Citizen Advocacy commenced program operation in October of 1987 with the appointment of a Coordinator. NECA operates under a Management Committee structure and employed a Manager (12 Hrs per week), a Senior Coordinator (22.6 hrs per week, a Coordinator (18 hours per week) and an Administrative Assistant (8 hrs per week). The program operated according to the Citizen Advocacy Model which targets people with an intellectual disability who are at risk or most vulnerable in the communities of Banyule, Darebin, Whittlesea and Nillumbik.

The Coordinators work within these communities to identify people most at risk. This is achieved by personally visiting facilities such as boarding houses, hostels, hospitals, nursing homes, shopping centres, day placement services, emergency/respite accommodation, mental health units, refuges, shelters, drop in centres, community centres, police stations, community residential services and supported residential services, and by establishing contact with people who have contact with or who may have knowledge of people who are vulnerable and/or at risk who have a disability. Service providers and agencies, respite services and centres, support groups, accommodation providers, therapists, community health workers, counselors, politicians and Members of Parliament are contacted in relation to the work of North East Citizen Advocacy. This program has contact with all of the above agencies and individuals in our geographical area of operation, but strives to maintain its independence from all parties.

North East Citizen Advocacy does not accept formal referrals for people with an intellectual disability to be matched with an Advocate. Each year the organization develops a Protégé recruitment plan in line with the priorities as established through the findings from the analysis of the data contained in the Internal Relationship Review Document. This document is a snapshot of every relationship matched by North East Citizen Advocacy and informs the longevity of relationships, the geographical locations, the type of Protégé and Advocate recruitment and the type of role requested of the Advocate.

The Internal Relationship Review also highlights the areas for attention in the coming year. If Protégé recruitment is confined to a narrow group of people it will make the development of an adequate range of advocate role options difficult or reliant on significantly over or under serving some Protégés. (Refer: Standards for Citizen Advocacy Evaluation by John O'Brien & Wolf Wolfensberger).

The program is supporting 32 advocacy matches as at 30 June 2014.

Each relationship is independent of, but supported by the NECA program. Regular follow along contact is maintained with every relationship so that assistance, guidance and advice can be offered to each advocate if this type of support is required. Connection to an Advocate Associate (people with particular experience, skills or knowledge), can be organized for the Advocate should the circumstances require more specific knowledge and experience. File notes are maintained on each of the contacts made with each of the Advocates and Protégés so that a history of the progress of each relationship is held.

As the program continues to grow and the number of relationships increases there is a viability concern for North East Citizen Advocacy in being able to meet the follow along and support required to maintain the effectiveness and potency of each relationship while continuing with the key office activities of Protégé Recruitment, Advocate Recruitment, Orientation, Advocate/Protégé Matching,

Ongoing training, Advocate Associate assistance as well as community development, community networking, and staff training. As time passes, longer term relationships require less direct assistance (Matches of 20 plus years continue strongly) but North East Citizen Advocacy still needs to be proactive to ensure that the relationships remain effective.

In 2012, North East Citizen Advocacy commenced regular information sessions to ensure that Advocates have opportunities to keep up to date with legislative changes, critical sector news, resources, and external training opportunities. Training for Advocates assists them to have a full and contemporary understanding of Citizen Advocacy principles and practice.

10 2015 Self-Assessment against the National Standards for Disability Services

(Please see attached document - North East Citizen Advocacy Incorporated Self-Assessment Workbook)

11 Accountability

11.1 General

Being accountable means being responsible to someone else for the activities of North East Citizen Advocacy Incorporated. This includes how NECA behaves (service accountability) and what the organization spends (financial accountability). NECA has developed and adopted reasonable and appropriate methods of showing accountability to individuals and bodies to ensure that our organization demonstrates accountability, e.g. workers are accountable to their employers and people on management committees are accountable to the group that elected them.

In general, North East Citizen Advocacy is accountable to:

- Clients who use the organization (consumers)
- The community we aim to serve
- Ordinary members of the organization who elected the committee
- The Funding body who contributes financial resources
- Employees who work for that organization

11.2 Evidence Of Accountability

Some forms of accountability are fixed by our funding body as a condition of the service agreement, whereas other forms of accountability have been decided by the organization itself. Evidence of NECA's efforts in any particular role can be demonstrated in a way which suits the needs of that person or group.

The Associations Incorporation Act applies to our organization. The legislation requires:

- Provision of all accountability documents relating to the Annual General Meeting
- Any alteration of the rules of the organization to be made by special resolution and then be submitted to the Office of Fair Trading for registration
- Any changes to holders of the offices of President, Secretary or Treasurer through resignation, death, etc, to be advised to the Office of Fair Trading within 1 month

- Numerous other requirements in relation to financial records, accounting and auditing, and business registrations of various types.

11.3 Accountability to Consumers

NECA is accountable to its consumers and is open about providing information, seeks feedback and involves users of the service in decision-making. Consumers are encouraged to attend open review and planning meetings so they can understand what is happening in the organization, and records of decisions made at meetings can be provided to consumers as required. Clear policies have been developed and mechanisms to deal with complaints from consumers. (Refer Program Forms and Documents where Consumer Participation provides more detailed information about consumer rights).

11.4 Accountability to The Community And Members Of The Organisation

Some of NECA's obligations to the general community and the members of our organization are to hold well-advertised Annual General Meetings, to publish annual reports and audited accounts, and to hold some open events or functions so ordinary members of the organization and the public can attend. NECA has developed clear policies to deal with complaints from the public, members or consumers, objectives by which the performance of the organization can be measured and a regular evaluation process. NECA also provides information and news releases to the media, so the community or target group knows what our organization is doing.

11.5 Accountability to Funding Bodies

NECA demonstrates accountability to our funding body by:

- Completing a Service Agreement
- Providing annual reports
- Providing annual audited accounts
- Providing quarterly financial reports of income and expenditure
- Providing data returns (details of the service provision)
- Participating in the monitoring and evaluation of the service when required
- Meeting the requirements of funding program guidelines

11.6 Accountability Of Management Committee To Employees, And Of Employees To Management Committees

In relation to accountability between employees and their management committees, the organization is responsible for:

- Accepting responsibility for negotiating acceptable work conditions, including job descriptions, job contracts, good worker selection processes, grievance procedures and methods of dealing with complaints and disputes
- The organization has developed clear written policies, sound staff management practices and the Management Committee is both supportive and accessible to staff - staff are supported to contribute to this process both initially and then in an ongoing developmental way to ensure that good practices continue

- NECA Employees are accountable to the organization to perform the job they were employed to do and stay accountable by providing regular reports, participating in staff assessments and regular whole-of-service evaluations

12 Financial Management

12.1 Financial Management System

NECA operates a highly accountable financial management system. The Treasurer of the Association has key responsibilities in terms of budgeting, cash flow management, meeting all association financial reporting obligations including: presentation of accurate and timely reports to the Management Committee (Monthly), presentation of annual accounts (yearly at the Annual General Meeting), external audit, and acquittal of funded monies.

NECA operates to a financial year.

The Treasurer, in consultation with the Management Committee and Senior Coordinator, develops and oversees a budget based on the planned activities for the year developed by the management committee and staff. The budget is approved by the Management Committee.

All Management Committee members receive orientation and a Management Committee information folder to ensure that they have a broad understanding of NECA's programs and priorities as an essential component of their duty of care. This knowledge provides a sound basis for their financial decision-making, fundraising and further advocacy to the broader community.

12.2 Financial Auditing

NECA appoints a qualified firm to conduct an annual audit of the organization's financial statements. This Chartered Accountants firm is appointed annually at the Annual General Meeting.

13 Taxation and Concessions

13.1 General

NECA, along with other nonprofit organizations is subject to state and federal taxation requirements including Income Tax, FBT, GST, Payroll Tax and Stamp Duty. A number of exemptions are available to the association for these taxes or duties, and in each case the organization has formally applied for exemption from the relevant authority. The Income Tax Assessment Act affects both the income of the organization and the donations made to it. NECA has been granted exemption by the Tax Office.

As an employer, NECA is obliged to take tax from the salary of their employees before the wage is paid, as well as account for superannuation contributions. This is sent to the Tax Office. NECA has also adopted a salary sacrifice policy, and no further obligations under FBT have been imposed.

13.2 Charitable Institution

In 2000, the federal taxation law was amended to require charitable institutions and funds to be endorsed by the Tax Office. NECA has a certificate of currency endorsed by the Tax office stating that

the organization is a charitable institutions as Tax Concession Charities (TCC). To be endorsed as a TCC, NECA holds an Australian Business Number (ABN). This must be the ABN of NECA itself.

- The organization is nonprofit (i.e. it does not distribute, and is constitutionally prohibited from distributing, its surplus to anyone or any purpose, other than its stated exempt objectives)
- The organization has an appropriate dissolution clause which transfers any surplus to a similar tax-exempt organization, not its members or controllers

If the Tax Office endorses an entity as an income tax exempt charity then:

13.3 Deductible Gift Recipient

‘Deductible Gift Recipient’ (DGR) is a term used in taxation law. The main purpose of the definition is to identify organizations, funds or authorities to which a gift may be tax deductible by the donor. Classes of organizations and specifically named organizations described in Division 30 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 can be the recipients of tax deductible gifts, some subject to further conditions. The main category is a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) and includes some but not all community organizations.

Funds or gifts to NECA are tax deductible.

13.4 Other Income Tax Requirements

NECA has been required by taxation law to appoint a public officer of the organization for the purposes of the income tax provisions. A written notice of appointment and a change in particulars of the public officer is required by the Act. The person so appointed must be over 18 years and resident in Australia. The appointment is minuted by the management committee.

NECA keeps complete records of all business-related transactions within the books of account. These records are kept electronically.

The Income Tax Assessment Act requires NECA to keep sufficient records to explain all transactions and acts that may be relevant to the income tax legislation over a specified period, usually five years. These records must be in English.

14 Legal Framework

14.1 General

NECA has specific legal responsibilities and liabilities. A number of ethical and legal duties are undertaken and the organization's board members are familiar with relevant areas of law.

Some of the organization's legal responsibilities are covered by insurance. NECA holds the following insurance policies:

- Public Liability
- Public Indemnity
- Volunteers Insurance
- Contents Insurance

- Workcover Insurance

14.2 Key legislation and Regulation.

The Program's Management Committee structure, the values, strategies, objectives and practices demonstrate effective compliance with all relevant legislative requirements. NECA complies with the following key legislation and regulation:

- The Disability Services Act 2006 and Regulation promotes the rights of people with a disability, increasing their wellbeing and encouraging their participation in the community.
- State Disability Plan (Victoria)
- The Victorian Department of Justice key legislation for fair and safe work and industrial relations with which NECA complies.
- Charter of Rights and Responsibilities (Victoria)
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- Anti-discrimination legislation promotes equality of opportunity for everyone by protecting them from unfair discrimination in various situations, including employment.
- Environmental Protection legislation defines organizations' obligations to ensure 'ecologically sustainable development'.
- Victorian Taxation and the Australian Tax Office re GST and other tax matters.
- The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations - occupational health and safety requirements.
- WorkCover Victoria - workers' compensation insurance to Victorian employers.
- The Information Privacy Act 2000
- The Equal Opportunity Act.

14.3 Confidentiality

NECA understands the importance of privacy and confidentiality. Persons providing personal information have the right to expect disclosed information will be treated as confidential.

NECA ensures confidentiality by:

- Using all information obtained in a proper manner.
- Protecting confidential information; and
- Acting in accordance with the relevant legislation and policies relating to confidential information.

Personal Information is defined in Section 6 of the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth Privacy Act) and means information that identifies or could reasonably identify an individual.

NECA controls information by:

- Collecting only the information that is required. Each piece of information is necessary for the function of the program.
- Collecting only information that is necessary at the time of collection.
- Having a policy in place that tells people how we handle their personal information

- Advising people when we collect their information why we are collecting the information, how we plan to use the information, auditing process and access, how they can get access to their personal information and the storage of this information.
- Not disclosing personal information without consent.
- Keeping information secure. Keeping hard copy files in properly secured cabinets.
- Ensuring adequate IT security.
- Training staff in security procedures.
- Not retaining information for longer than is required. If the information is not required, and the destruction of the information is legally permissible, the information is shredded, or electronically deleted so that it cannot be retrieved.
- Information is kept accurate and up to date.

NECA Advocates are orientated to understand the importance of privacy and confidentiality. Advocates are required to:

- Use all information obtained in a proper manner.
- Protect confidential information
- Act in accordance with the relevant legislation and policies relating to confidential information.

15 Information Systems

NECA operates an Information system that is a mix of manual (paper-based) system and electronic (computer-based) system.

- **Consumer data:** Information collected on each individual client on intake and then during the period of program participation that provides statistics about numbers of program participants, demographic data on program participants, and referrals. This information is collected manually on hard-copy forms, and is then transferred to an electronic database once a program match is made.
- **Service data:** Information collected about service provision (as required by funding body, and provided in format by funding body), eg. Number of consumers, type of consumer, referrals, group sessions and presentations and waiting list information, consumer demographics eg. Cultural background and disability; consumer issues, type of advocacy provided (limited individual advocacy; citizen advocacy) . Data such as client feedback, complaints and critical incidents is kept in separate hard-copy systems.
- **Staff data:** This consists of several different systems collecting information about employment history and work performance (personnel records), staff development and training, hours worked and how time is used (time sheets), and occupational health and safety incidents.
- **Finances:** The financial accounts are a self-contained system using an electronic accounting package. This is managed by the Manager and Administrative Assistant, overseen by the Treasurer.

- Decisions and plans: Most of the decisions that guide the activities of the organization are generated in meetings and/or planning sessions. The records of decisions made are kept in minutes of meetings or in documented plans.
- Operational and other activity information: NECA maintains records of correspondence, meetings with external agencies and other actions of staff (recorded in Staff Activity Sheets).
- Records, resources and files: Documents (electronic and hard copy) are stored in a series of hard-copy filing cabinets for paper files and a computer filing system for electronic files. These two systems are integrated via the Quality System, to reduce duplication of effort and to reduce time take to enter and retrieve information.

16 Information storage and Management System

16.1 General

NECA predominantly utilises a computer information storage and management systems.

There is a system for naming and filing records and documents. Consumer, service, administrative and financial information is stored so that it is accessible to all others authorised to access that information. Staff are internally trained to maintain order within the amounts of data they deal with in the course of their work, so that enhanced electronic communication remains valuable and does not become a pressure, a diversion or a hindrance.

16.2 Word processing and spreadsheets

NECA predominantly utilises Word files (typed documents), Adobe PDF files (published documents) and MYOB and Excel spreadsheets (for working with numbers). Files are individually named. The program used to create a file is indicated in the structure of the name by the letters appearing after the dot: doc, pdf and xls. This enables the file to be searched for and identified.

NECA also maintains a well-designed and well –maintained manual filing system.

16.3 Emails

All staff are responsible for an email in-box, whether for email addressed specifically to them as individuals or to the organization or team, This system enables staff to :

- respond to and act on messages that have come in
- remember messages that have been sent and expect a response
- putting messages and attachments away neatly if they are to be kept
- deleting those that do not have to be kept.

An Email system has been established with different sections and options for sorting emails.

16.4 Database

NECA staff maintains a program database (A Client Management System), recording names, contact details, match records, and support notes. Information entered into a database can be sorted by

using the fields as the basis. The system has been developed and implemented in-house to manage program participant record, data collection and reporting. The system utilises the Microsoft Office program Access. The purpose of the system is to make the job of storing, retrieving, collating and reporting program participant and program information more efficient and effective.

16.5 Website

North East Citizen Advocacy Incorporated has an approved website. Content can be viewed at **www.citizenadvocacy.com.au** Content is controlled and updated by the Coordinators. A Social Media Policy defines use and responsibility.

17 Workplace Health and Safety

17.1 General

NECA has processes in place to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of our staff. On this basis, NECA consistently works to ensure that the work health and safety of each of the staff and other persons (including members of the public) is not affected by the conduct of the program. NECA is aware that the organization's obligations including:

- Ensuring employees are not exposed to risks to their health and safety
- Providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment
- Ensuring safe systems of work
- Providing and maintaining safe equipment
- Providing information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure health and safety
- Putting in place effective health and safety management practices which protect visitors to the workplace
- Ensuring that all others who enter into the workplace, including volunteers, contractors and members of the public are not exposed to risks to their health and safety

NECA employees are advised of their obligations to the organization in terms of workplace health and safety via Policies and an OHS manual and undertake to comply with the instructions about work healthy and safety. Other people such as visitors, volunteers or contractors also have a legal obligation to comply with the directions for work health and safety given by the Management Committee or staff.

17.2 Recording and notifying events

The Regulation requires that a record of the particulars of every work injury, work caused illness or dangerous event that occurs at the workplace be documented within three (3) days after the person required to make the record becomes aware of the event. The record must be made in the approved form and must be kept for one year after it was made. NECA maintains a Register of Injuries as legally required.

NECA is aware of the requirement to ensure that documentation is completed in the event of such injury, illness or dangerous event. All records are maintained at the workplace on the staff file and will be made available for inspection by, or production to, an Inspector from Workplace Health and Safety Victoria, if required.

NECA is aware that the Department must be advised of every serious bodily injury, work caused illness or dangerous event that happens at the workplace. This notice must be provided to the chief executive within 24 hours after the employer becomes aware of the event. The notice must be in the approved form.

Where the injury, illness or event causes death, immediate notice must be given to the chief executive. Notice must also be given in the approved form within 24 hours after the employer becomes aware of the death.

There must be no interference with the scene of a workplace incident until permitted by an Inspector from Workplace Health and Safety Victoria or a police officer. However, it is acceptable to interfere with the scene where it is necessary to prevent damage to property, injury to persons, or to save life or relieve suffering

18 Risk Management

NECA has the appropriate insurances to mitigate risk in the conduct of its governance and program activities. A risk management plan and risk schedule have been developed and will be reviewed annually. A Risk Management policy contains all of the necessary details.

19 Human Resources

19.1 General

NECA has a legal obligations towards its employees. The Management committee is responsible for providing employees with clear terms and conditions of employment. The organization acts in accordance with Federal and Victorian legislation. NECA complies with National Employment Standards. Each employee receives orientation, training and an appropriate job description.

19.2 National Employment Standards

The NES, set out in the Act, outline ten minimum workplace entitlements and conditions. The NES applies to all employees covered by the national workplace relations system (however, only certain NES entitlements apply to casual employees) regardless of any applicable modern award, agreement or contract of employment that may apply. The NES includes:

- A maximum standard working week of 38 hours for full-time employees, plus ‘reasonable’ additional hours.
- A right to request flexible working arrangements to care for a child under school age, or a child (under 18) with a disability.
- Parental and adoption leave of 12 months (unpaid), with a right to request an additional 12 months.
- Four weeks paid annual leave each year (pro rata for part time employees).
- Ten days paid personal/carer’s leave each year (pro rata for part time employees), two days paid compassionate leave for each permissible occasion, and two days unpaid carer’s leave for each permissible occasion.
- Community service leave for jury service or activities dealing with certain emergencies or natural disasters. This leave is unpaid except for jury service.

- Long service leave.
- Public holidays and the entitlement to be paid for ordinary hours on those days.
- Notice of termination and redundancy pay.
- The right for new employees to receive the Fair Work Information Statement.

The NES applies to all National system employees and cannot be reduced or eroded by an enterprise agreement, modern award or contract of employment. When entering into an employment relationship, an employer cannot provide an employee with an agreement where the entitlements are less than the NES. The NES is considered a guaranteed minimum standard for an employee.

19.3 Modern Award

NECA has transitioned from the current SACS Award to a new modern award, which came in to effect as of 1 July, 2012. The Modern award contains terms regulating minimum wages, penalty rates, types of employment relationships, flexible working arrangements, ordinary hours of work, rest breaks, employment classifications, allowances, leave and leave loading and superannuation requirements. A modern award may also include requirements for workplace consultation, representation, dispute settlements and any relevant industry specific redundancy entitlements.

Amounts that may be included in determining an employee's guaranteed annual earnings include:

- employee's wages;
- amounts that are dealt with at the direction of the employee (for example salary sacrifice); and
- agreed money value for non-monetary benefits (for example car parking, motor vehicle, mobile phones).

Amounts that are excluded from an employee's guaranteed annual earnings are:

- payments the value of which cannot be determined in advance (for example consultancy work)
- compulsory employer superannuation contributions;
- reimbursements.

Attachments

Policies and Procedures; Forms and Documents; OHS Manual; Strategic Plan; Risk Management Plan; Self Assessment Booklet.