

VILLAMANTA DISABILITY RIGHTS LEGAL SERVICE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2021

Mission

Villamanta is a Community Legal Centre operating throughout the state of Victoria on disability related legal and justice issues. Our focus is on working for people who have an intellectual disability.

Villamanta's mission is to protect and advance the rights of Victorians with a disability by advising, informing and representing them and acting as an advocate on disability related legal and justice issues, and by providing community legal education and carrying out policy and law reform work.

Vision

Villamanta's vision is to be recognised as a leading provider of legal and justice related services for people with a disability, especially an intellectual disability, and through our work significantly contribute to creating an environment in Victoria in which people with a disability are acknowledged, recognised and respected equally with other Victorians and do not face discrimination.

Core Values

The following core values guide Villamanta as we pursue our mission and conduct our operations:

Inclusivity: facilitating the full and effective participation of people with disabilities in our governance and activities

Accessibility: ensuring that our services are accessible to all those who need and can benefit from them

Excellence: pursuing excellence in all that we do

Accountability: being open and transparent with clients and potential clients and those bodies that make our operations possible

Professionalism: being ethical, honest and courteous in all our internal and external dealings

Improvement: striving to continuously improve the effectiveness of the services we provide and our efficiency

Part 1

Advice, information and referral service

Goal: To provide free advice, information and referral services for people with a disability who have a disability related legal or justice problem.

Continue to provide a high quality and up-to-date toll-free telephone advice, information and referral service that responds to queries about disability related legal matters

Strategies In a manner that facilitates the effective involvement of people with a disability and those employed by or associated with the Service, we will -

1. Maintain a free telephone information, advice and referral services for people with a disability
2. Comply with the Disability Services Standards prescribed by the Commonwealth *Disability Services Act 1986* and the terms of our Service Agreements
3. Respond to the need for advice, information or referral assistance generated by issues affecting our constituents, including the NDIS
4. Regularly review and update where necessary, our legal resources manual.

Targets and performance indicators

1. Retention of our free telephone advice, information and referral service
2. A positive response to each audit of our compliance with Disability Services Standards prescribed by the Commonwealth *Disability Services Act 1986* and the terms of our Service Agreements
3. Absence of any unmet demand for advice, information or referral assistance generated by issues affecting our constituents, including the NDIS
4. By 30 December each year, review and update, where necessary, our legal services manual.
5. Whether a free telephone advice, information and referral service has been maintained and operated between 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm each working day
6. By 30 June each year, review and revise the legal resources manual used by telephone advice service staff
7. Meet with telephone advice staff at least once per month to provide them with advice and training relevant to the service
8. At least once per week review all telephone service contact sheets and determine if further action is required

Part 2 Policy and Law Reform

Goal: To contribute to policy and law reform debates relating to disability issues

Strategies In a manner that facilitates the effective involvement of people with a disability and those employed by or associated with the Service, we will -

1. Continue to note the work of policy and law reform activities of the Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria), the National Association of Community Legal Centres, the Law Institute of Victoria, Disability Advocacy Victoria Inc., DANA, VicDAN, the Victorian Legal Assistance Forum, and other relevant networks.
2. Monitor and evaluate the operation of the Victorian *Disability Act 2006* and the work of the Disability Services Commissioner, the NDIS, and other legislation and bodies affecting our constituents, and respond to any perceived deficiencies
3. Conduct a survey of clients and others to provide advice concerning whether any area of law is in need of reform to protect and enhance the rights of people with a disability.

Targets and performance indicators

1. Where appropriate we participate in the activities of the Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria), the National Association of Community Legal Centres, the Law Institute of Victoria, Disability Advocacy Victoria Inc., DANA, VicDAN, the Victorian Legal Assistance Forum, and other relevant networks.
2. By 30 December each year, conduct a survey of clients and others to identify any area of law that is in need of reform to protect and enhance the rights of people with a disability.

Part 3 Community Legal Education

Goal: To assist people with a disability to know and understand their rights and increase the awareness of the general public of those rights and associated issues

Strategies In a manner that facilitates the effective involvement of people with a disability and those employed by or associated with the Service, we will --

1. Participate in community legal education activities for people with disabilities, members of the legal and other professional groups, and the general public
2. Distribute to relevant bodies and organisations material informing them of our services
3. Continue to produce and distribute, in print or online, publications that inform people about the rights of people with disabilities and associated issues

Targets and performance indicators

1. Review by 30 June each year and publish free online:
 - *The Villamanta Information Booklet*
 - *Your Rights Your Choices*
 - *People who have an Intellectual Disability and the Criminal Justice System*
2. By 30 June 2020 conduct (if possible in collaboration with other interested parties) a seminar or conference evaluating and framing recommendations about the operation of NDIS.

Part 4 Legal Casework

Goal: To provide high quality legal services to people with a disability.

Strategies In a manner that facilitates the effective involvement of people with a disability and those employed by or associated with the Service, we will -

1. Continue to undertake casework about disability related legal issues
2. Fulfill Villamanta's obligations under its funding agreements regarding both the NDAP and the NDIS AAT Appeals Projects.
3. Provide all staff with the opportunity to undertake relevant professional development

4. Conduct a client satisfaction survey at least once each year.

Targets and performance indicators

1. Undertake each year at least 80 active files
2. Whether Villamanta has met its obligations under the NDAP and the NDIS AAT Appeals Project agreements.
3. At least once per month, review the IVO database and ensure that it is operating effectively
4. By 30 March each year, ensure that Villamanta's lawyers have completed their legal practice requirements and have undertaken any necessary professional development
5. Receive a client satisfaction survey rating of at least 90%, in total, on the scales of 'Good', 'Very Good' or 'Excellent'.

Part 5 Governance and management

Goal: To conduct the Service effectively, inclusively and efficiently, thereby maximising its ability to meet the needs of our clients

Strategies In a manner that facilitates the effective involvement of people with a disability and those employed by or associated with the Service, we will -

1. Conduct regular meetings of the Service's Committee of Management and its Risk Management sub-committee and minute those meetings so that they are available to all those associated with the Service
2. Conduct annual performance satisfaction surveys of the Committee of Management and the Risk Management sub-committee and respond to the results
3. Conduct annual performance and planning reviews of all members of staff that set individual performance targets and review performance against those targets
4. Improve the efficient and effective use of the Service's resources
5. Develop an effective training and professional development plan for staff and volunteers
6. Conduct regular health and safety audits and respond to them to ensure that the Service's premises and practices provide a safe and secure working environment
7. Improve the quality and effectiveness of our communications to external audiences and their feedback
8. Maintain efficient and effective internal communications for the dissemination and receipt of information and advice

Targets

1. Conduct each year an Annual General Meeting and at least six meetings of the Committee of Management and its Continuous Improvement Sub-Committee and make the minutes of those meetings available to staff and others associated with the Service
2. Each year, the Committee of Management and the Continuous Improvement sub-committee achieving in its annual performance satisfaction survey a rating totalling at least 90% on the scales of 'Good', 'Very Good' or 'Excellent'
3. Complete by 30 December each year of a performance and planning review for each member of staff and the setting of performance targets for the following year

4. By 30 December each year, where practical, conduct a health and safety audit of the premises occupied by the Service and its practices and address any issues raised
5. By 30 June each year, review the Service's web site, determining its usefulness as a means of external communication and of providing assistance to persons with a disability
6. Conduct at least six staff-management meetings each year that provide for the dissemination and receipt of information to and from staff and report the outcomes to the Committee of Management

Part 6 Resources and infrastructure
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Goal: To maximise the efficient use of our resources and secure the long term viability of the Service

Strategies In a manner that facilitates the effective involvement of people with a disability and those employed by or associated with the Service, we will -

1. Ensure that the Service operates in a manner aligning with the prescriptions of its principal funder, the Australian Government
2. Identify and pursue ways of reducing expenditure without reducing the quality, range or extent of the services we provide
3. Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers are clear and accepted and they are given every reasonable opportunity to undertake professional development thereby improve the quality of the services we provide and their career opportunities
4. Identify and pursue avenues for efficiently securing additional income

Targets

1. By 30 June each year, review the operation of the Service and ensure that this aligns with the funding prescriptions of the Australian Government
2. By 30 December each year, review the expenditure of the Service to identify potential means of reducing expenditure that does not involve reducing the quality, range or extent of the services we provide
3. Each year, as part of their annual performance review, assess and respond to the reasonable professional needs of each member of staff
4. By 30 June each year explore additional funding and grant opportunities and make submissions/applications as required