**Disability Advocate** **and NDIS Appeals Officer Position Description**

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| **Position** | Disability Advocate and NDIS Appeals Officer |
| **Employer** | Rights Information and Advocacy Centre Inc. (RIAC) |
| **Award** | Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 and the National Employment Standards |
| **Classification** | Social and Community Services |
| **Manager** | Operations Manager |

**About the organisation**

The Rights Information & Advocacy Centre Inc. (RIAC) is a not-for-profit organisation operating throughout central and North-western Victoria, Geelong, and Southern New South Wales.

RIAC provides information, advocacy, and support to people with disability, older people, their families, carers, and communities.

RIAC are committed to employing people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and those with a lived experience of disability.

The Australian Government has provided funding for a National Disability Insurance Scheme Appeals Program which plays an important role in ensuring that National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) decisions are fair and robust.

RIAC provides this program in several local government areas.

There is a strong commitment to ensuring that the NDIS Appeals program is accessible and as non-adversarial as possible for people with disability and, as part of that commitment, all applicants seeking reviews by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) will be entitled to a support person.

**Position Objective**

The Disability Advocate and NDIS Appeals Officer is responsible for advocating for individuals with disability across a wide range of contexts.  The position has an emphasis on ensuring the rights of people with disability through representation and support.  The position requires a high standard of personal motivation and ethical conduct.

The Disability Advocate and NDIS Appeals Officer will play a key role in providing support and assistance to applicants to navigate the process of seeking an AAT review of NDIS decisions.

There will be a strong focus on fostering ‘self-advocacy’ where possible. Where self-advocacy is not appropriate, the Disability Advocate and NDIS Appeals Officer will, in partnership with the applicant, develop and implement a plan which will provide effective support.

The successful applicant will also have specific responsibilities for promotion and education within the community and a range of reporting and administrative responsibilities that are required for RIAC’s Quality Assurance and to meet funding body arrangements

This role involves both general advocacy and NDIS Appeals work.

**Reporting to NDIS Appeals and Systemic Advocacy Manager, you will be responsible for:**

**Individual Support and advocacy**

**The applicant will be required to:**

* Build client’s self-advocacy skills
* Provide individual advocacy support and foster self-advocacy skills by co-developing and implementing an individual advocacy plan with the client.
* Assist clients to navigate the process for seeking an AAT review of Agency decisions, including preparing documents, attending conferences and hearings
* Refer clients to Victoria Legal Aid where legal issues are highlighted, and a determination needs to be made as to whether legal assistance is warranted.
* Work with people with disability and/or their carers to ensure their access to services, and equitable treatment within services.
* Ensure that all relevant Disability Advocacy Standards and legislation are complied with.
* Adhere to RIAC’s policies, procedures & systems.
* Contribute to RIAC meeting advocacy service targets set out by the department.
* Maintain effective working relationships with relevant service providers, stakeholders and Government Departments.
* Ensure effective working relationships are developed and maintained with all other RIAC staff.
* Understand individual advocacy and its relationship to the lives of people with disability.
* Demonstrate commitment and a clear understanding of human rights and social justice
* Analyse, plan and implement advocacy strategies with, or on behalf of, people with disability.
* Have sound knowledge of the disability and human services networks at regional, state and national levels, and how they may impact on people’s lives.
* Understand or the ability to quickly acquire an understanding, of all Acts of Legislation relevant to the lives of people with disability.
* Have sound written and oral communication skills including the ability to prepare case notes, advocacy plans and other documents; liaise with stakeholders; promote RIAC and communicate well with clients, colleagues, and other agencies.
* Display excellent knowledge and skills in the use of Office 365 including, but not limited to, MS Word, MS Teams, SharePoint, and Excel.

**Training and Development**

* Assist in the development of skills in self-advocacy by conducting individual or group sessions.
* Attend relevant training to develop skills and knowledge relevant to the role.
* Network with other support persons in the NDIS sites and liaise with the AAT as necessary.

**Education and Promotion**

* Provide a community education role by providing information about the availability and role of RIAC and the NDIS Appeals Officer and advocate role.
* Contribute to podcasts, webinars, and other promotional and educational media for public use.
* Assist in the development of promotional materials in a range of accessible formats.
* Identify potential education and promotional opportunities for further professional development.

Attend regular meetings with other advocacy services to collaborate on issues, barriers and share effective information and strategies to overcome these barriers.

**Administration and Reports**

* Collect and maintain client information on databases.
* Collate data and draft reports as necessary

**Other functions including**

* Identify, record, and contribute to systemic advocacy issues and trends.
* Actively contribute to RIAC meetings and participate in staff development initiatives.

**KEY SELECTION CRITERIA**

To competently perform in this position, the person must possess the following knowledge, skills and experience outlined in the following:

**Key Selection Criteria:**

1. Relevant tertiary qualifications (examples only: law, legal studies, social work, psychology, social science, welfare studies, community services).
2. A current driver’s license or other reasonable method of transport to attend client visits when required (Work vehicles available for use).
3. Experience and skills relevant to advocating people from disadvantaged or vulnerable groups.
4. Demonstrated understanding and strong commitment to the rights and interests of people with disability and promote self-advocacy skills.
5. Demonstrated ability and experience in working effectively and collegially in partnerships and as part of a team
6. High-level skills in the following areas:

* oral and written communication,
* research,
* problem solving and negotiation.

1. Demonstrated knowledge and capacity to facilitate group information sessions to diverse groups.
2. Sound knowledge and skills in the use of Office 365 including, but not limited to, MS Word, MS Teams, SharePoint, and Excel.
3. Knowledge of key disability issues such as the NDIS and Disability Royal Commission.
4. Experience in developing and maintaining effective communication with clients who are experiencing complex matters and situations.
5. Experience in delivering an accessible and responsive service to clients and the ability to critically review and reflect on own practice.
6. Driven by integrity, responsibility, accountability, attention to detail and pride in work.

**Other position requirements prior to commencement:**

1. The completion of a satisfactory National Police Records Check.
2. The completion of a satisfactory Working with Children Check.
3. Various Statutory Declaration forms to be completed.
4. Fully Vaccinated against COVID-19

**Once position commenced:**

1. The incumbent must work in accordance with RIAC’s performance development system, the standards, and policies and procedures.
2. Travel throughout regional Victoria may be required.
3. Flexible working hours including overnight, or travel may be required

**RIAC currently has generous salary packaging arrangements available to its employees.**

**Performance Review**

A six-month probationary period applies to this position. RIAC has a Performance Development Policy which includes the development and review of an Annual Performance Review.