

**Enhancing independence and opportunity for people with spinal cord injury and all other disabilities.**

Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA) is a for-purpose organisation that has supported people with spinal cord injury (SCI) and all other disabilities for more than 50 years.

Our community-based programs and services help people overcome barriers, achieve their goals and live fulfilling, independent lives.

We were founded by people with a spinal cord injury and 25% of our staff live with a disability, including the majority of our Board.

Our members and clients include people living with disability, their families, carers and professionals in the sector. We work collaboratively and deliver our services with integrity, quality and empathy.

SCIA recently merged with Ability Advocacy and will continue to provide advocacy support in Northern Rivers area.



**Advocacy:  
Supporting your Voice**



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## What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is the act of supporting, pleading or arguing in favour of a cause, an idea or a policy. It is also speaking, acting or writing with minimal conflict of interest on behalf of the interests of a group, in order to defend the welfare of and justice for either the person or group by:

- Being on their side and no-one else's
- Being primarily concerned with their fundamental needs
- Remaining loyal and accountable to them in a way which is emphatic and vigorous.

## An Advocate

- Listens to the person so they can accurately reflect their views and act fairly on their behalf
- Acts in the best interest of the individual at all times and aims to increase the person's independence and confidence.

Spinal Cord Injuries Australia is funded to advocate and support people with disabilities, their families and carers.

**We advocate for people with** physical disability, intellectual disability, sensory disability, acquired brain injury (ABI), neurological disability (eg Epilepsy) and psychosocial.

Any person with a disability, family member or carer whose fundamental needs are not being met can **access our services**.

## Types of Advocacy Services

### Individual Advocacy

Seeks to uphold the rights of people with all types of disability on a 1:1 basis by addressing instances of discrimination, abuse and neglect. Individual advocates work on a short term and issue specific basis.

### Self Advocacy

Is about developing the personal skills and self confidence of people with disability to enable them to advocate on their own behalf. We offer group training sessions.

### Family Advocacy

Works with parents and family members to enable them to act as advocates on behalf of a family member with a disability. Family advocates work with family members on a short term and issue specific basis.

Please note: We do not offer legal representation.

## How we can help with the NDIS?

### Access

Our advocates can assist people experiencing problems entering the NDIS. This includes help to communicate with the NDIA.

### Planning

Our advocates can support you to make sure you get the plan that you need. They can help you to understand your plan and what is in it.

### Complaints

You have a right to complain about the NDIA and NDIS service providers.

You can complain if you are not happy with the way a planner, reviewer or worker treats you.

You can make a complaint at any time. Spinal Cord Injuries Australia can support you with the complaints process.

### Plan Reviews and Appeals

Some decisions made by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) are 'reviewable' decisions, meaning that if you are not happy with the decision, you can request a review. SCIA have a dedicated Appeals and Reviews support team member to assist you in this process.

