

SOUTHWEST ADVOCACY SWAA INC.

DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARDS POLICIES & PROCEDURES

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SOUTHWEST ADVOCACY ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

MISSION STATEMENT

SOUTHWEST ADVOCACY ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED AIMS TO PROVIDE AN ADVOCACY AND INFORMATION SERVICE

- **THAT EMPOWERS AND GIVES A VOICE TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES;**
- **THAT STRIVES TO ENSURE THAT THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE RESPECTED AND ADVANCED; AND**
- **THAT FOSTERS POSITIVE AND FULL INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE COMMUNITY.**

INTRODUCTION

Southwest Advocacy Association Incorporated (“SWAA”) is an independent, not-for-profit, community based organisation that is primarily funded under the Commonwealth **Disability Services Act 1986**.

Membership of the SWAA is open to all members of the community who support the organisation’s mission and purposes and people with a disability are particularly encouraged to join.

SWAA is governed by a Committee of Management (“CoM”) consisting of up to 12 volunteer members. Membership of the CoM is open to all SWAA members through an election process set out in SWAA’s Constitution. SWAA endeavours to ensure that the CoM is representative of interested clients and communities throughout the region and that the majority of the CoM is comprised of People with disabilities.

People are not excluded from eligibility for membership on the CoM by reason of their affiliation with an organisation, agency or Department that is a service provider, considering that such persons can bring a wealth of knowledge, experience and support to an advocacy organisation. When issues which may involve conflict of interest arise for CoM members, the member can disqualify him or herself (or, if necessary, be disqualified by a majority vote) from participating in the discussion or vote on an issue. Organisations may apply for Associate General Membership of SWAA, but Associate General Members cannot serve on the CoM and do not have voting rights.

SWAA employs a Co-ordinator who co-ordinates and supervises the day to day activities of the organisation. The Co-ordinator is accountable to the CoM.

The Co-ordinator will usually have a role in the direct provision of advocacy as well as co-ordination duties, however, SWAA may employ other advocates who work under the supervision of the Co-ordinator.

The main duties of SWAA's advocates are to:

- (a) provide individual advocacy;
- (b) provide systemic advocacy;
- (c) provide community education;
- (d) assist support group development.

SWAA also employs an Administrative Officer from time to time and may employ operational volunteers, who act under direction of the Co-ordinator.

INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY SERVICE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

SWAA's *Disability Service Standards Policies & Procedures* are based on the Commonwealth and Victorian Disability Service Standards. These policies are regularly reviewed and developed by clients, staff and the SWAA CoM.

All service users are provided with a "plain English" summary of SWAA's *Disability Service Standards Policies & Procedures* at service entry and have access to the full document upon request. Copies are also available to any interested individuals or community groups and can be made available in large print, and audio formats.

DISABILITY SERVICE POLICIES

ENTRY & EXIT (COMMONWEALTH DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 1)

Every person seeking assistance has access to advocacy on the basis of relative need and available resources.

ENTRY POLICY

- People are deemed eligible for SWAA's assistance if they:
 - (i) have a physical, intellectual, sensory, psychiatric, neurological, or learning disability, or an acquired brain injury; and
 - (ii) need advocacy assistance to identify resources and entitlements, express their views, or resolve a problem.
- SWAA does not have a formal process for taking referrals.
- Clients may be placed on a waiting list, depending upon demand for service. Members of SWAA do not have priority of access.
- Each client seeking advocacy assistance has access to the service on the basis of their relative need and SWAA's available resources.
- All clients will have access to SWAA's *Disability Service Standards Policies and Procedure* document and will be provided with a "plain English" summary of the policies and procedures at service entry.
- Where SWAA is to provide representation to the client, they will also be provided with an SWAA Privacy Statement and a Client Authority form to sign.

PRIORITY OF ACCESS

- While provision of service is generally non-discriminatory, where there are competing claims for access to the service, priority of service will be determined by the Co-ordinator according to the following criteria.
 - i) Individuals who belong to the following groups will have priority of access.
 - People who have multiple disabilities.
 - Women.
 - People from indigenous communities.
 - People from non-English speaking backgrounds.
 - ii) People whose problems are more urgent will receive priority of access. Examples of urgent problems include those regarding basic accommodation and essential care needs, severe financial hardship, and abuse of any kind.
 - iii) People who have heightened vulnerability because of the nature or extent of their disability will also receive priority of access.

EXIT POLICY

- SWAA's services will be terminated:
 - i) at the service user's request; or
 - ii) when a resolution of issue/s occurs; or
 - iii) when agreement is reached between SWAA and client that a positive outcome is not obtainable.
- No individual case is ongoing although some cases may be long term and clients may access the service as often as necessary.
- After termination of service, where it is practical to do so, clients will be provided with, and invited to complete and return, a service evaluation form.
- SWAA will liaise closely with other regional support organisations and will actively encourage people with disabilities to access relevant services, including mainstream ones. On termination of service, client files will be kept by SWAA for a period of seven years. At this time, records will be destroyed or released to the client depending on their wishes. If SWAA is unable to contact the client at the last address recorded on file or receives no response from the client, the file will be destroyed.
- Where SWAA is unable to assist a client with their problem, SWAA will endeavour to provide information on alternative services that may be able to assist the client.

MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS
(COMMONWEALTH DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 2)

Each person with a disability receives a service which is designed to meet, in the least restrictive way, his or her individual needs and personal goals.

SWAA recognises and supports the right of clients to services that are responsive to their individual requirements and that are provided in the least restrictive way. The following will apply to SWAA's advocacy provision.

- Decision making regarding action will be made by the client.
- Action will only be taken with the full knowledge and consent of the client. Client files will reflect and document this process.
- Clients will, wherever possible, be actively involved in all aspects of the advocacy process, in an effort to facilitate development of self-advocacy skills.
- Client needs will be evaluated on an individual basis, taking into account their age, gender, ethnicity and cultural, family and religious background.
- To ensure the relevance of resolution strategies, evaluation will be ongoing.
- SWAA will provide information to the client on other community services and facilities that may be able to meet his or her needs.
- Advocacy assistance will take place within time frames agreed by SWAA and the client.
- Clients will be invited to provide input into the policies and procedures of SWAA and this input will be used as an ongoing evaluation of SWAA's policies and processes.

DECISION MAKING AND CHOICE
(COMMONWEALTH DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 3)

Each person with a disability has the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in making decisions about the events and activities of his or her daily life in relation to the services he or she receives.

- SWAA will advocate to further the participation of people with disabilities in community life. SWAA will assist the client to clearly identify and communicate their wishes and needs. SWAA will ensure that clients are encouraged to represent themselves as far as is practicable.
- SWAA will provide information on relevant issues, services and facilities in the community to enable clients to make informed decisions.
- Decisions about the nature and level of advocacy assistance provided by SWAA are made by the client in consultation with SWAA.
- Where adequate or reasonable instructions cannot be obtained directly from the client because of the client's incapacity to make informed decisions, instructions may, in some circumstances, be obtained from a client's parent, guardian or primary care giver.

- Clients are encouraged to become members of SWAA and involve themselves in the management of the organisation. It is the policy of SWAA to try to ensure that a minimum of 50% of membership on the CoM is made up of people with disabilities.
- Clients are encouraged to involve their support person, carer, or family members when they use services provided by SWAA and SWAA will take the client's family context into account. As long as no conflict of interest exists, SWAA will also involve any family members or significant others that the client nominates in the advocacy process.

PRIVACY, DIGNITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY
(COMMONWEALTH DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 4)

Each client's right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality in all aspects of his or her life is recognised and respected.

- SWAA has a comprehensive *Privacy Policy and Procedure* that complies with the requirements of Commonwealth and State privacy legislation. A Privacy Statement, summarising the main points contained in the *Privacy Policy and Procedure* is provided to and signed by each client at service entry. A copy of the signed Privacy Statement is provided to the client and the original is retained on the client's file.
- Only information directly relevant to the effective resolution of clients' problems will be sought by SWAA. The type of information kept about clients will include contact details and other information required to facilitate the resolution of the client's problem.
- All information provided by clients will be kept strictly confidential. Further information regarding the client will only be obtained from other agencies with signed authority from the client. Similarly, information will only be provided to others with a release form signed by the client.
- Original documents that belong to clients will not be held on file. Such documents will be returned to clients after they have been perused and photocopies have been made for the file with the client's consent. Photocopies of any documents generated by SWAA on behalf of clients and responses to such documents addressed to SWAA will be provided to clients as soon as practicable.
- Client files will be held in secure filing cabinets on SWAA premises and will only be accessed by SWAA staff as necessary for purposes of efficient and effective service delivery.
- In general, one advocate will have primary responsibility for the management of each case and will be the only person accessing the file. However, where that advocate deems it to be necessary, relevant information from a client's file may be shared with or made accessible to another SWAA staff member in the interests of efficient and effective service delivery.
- Clients will be able to access their own files by making an appointment with SWAA staff. SWAA will endeavour to provide access to the file as soon as practicable after the request has been made.

PARTICIPATION AND INTEGRATION
(COMMONWEALTH DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 5)

Each person with a disability is supported and encouraged to participate and be involved in the life of the community.

- A key principle underlying SWAA's philosophy is the importance of the development of community attitudes, infrastructure and resources to facilitate the involvement of persons with disabilities in all aspects of community life.
- SWAA will attempt to foster inclusion, participation and integration through the following activities.
 - Engagement in systemic advocacy and community development activities.
 - The conduct of community education and awareness raising activities.
 - Encouraging co-ordinated action and co-operation between government authorities, service providers and client groups.
 - Advocating for policies, programs and strategies that empower and advance the rights and interests of people with disabilities.
 - Supporting and assisting with the formation and development of self-advocacy groups for people with disabilities.

VALUED STATUS (COMMONWEALTH DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 6)

Each person with a disability has the opportunity to develop and maintain skills and to participate in activities that enable him or her to achieve valued roles in the community.

- Southwest Advocacy SWAA Inc. actively promotes the valued status of people with disabilities within the service and in the community.
- Within the service SWAA demonstrates its belief in the competence and ability of people with disabilities by :
 - encouraging people with disabilities to become General Members of SWAA and members of the SWAA CoM;
 - employing people with disabilities, where practicable;
 - working in partnership with clients to resolve issues, the client having the role of directing the resolution process.

- SWAA endeavours to provide its advocacy assistance from accessible premises and will make necessary modifications to enable all people regardless of disability to physically access the service safely and easily.
- SWAA has service evaluation & feedback mechanisms in place which facilitate ongoing client appraisal & input.

RESOLVING COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES
(COMMONWEALTH DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 7)

Each client is free to raise and have resolved, any complaints or disputes he or she may have regarding the agency or the service.

- People who have a complaint about or dispute with SWAA have the right to have the matter addressed fairly and promptly. Complaints can be made by anyone who has contact with SWAA. This includes SWAA clients, carers or support people, service providers, SWAA staff members, and SWAA Ordinary members and CoM members. Members of SWAA also have specific dispute resolution rights under the SWAA Constitution.
- People are encouraged to voice any concerns or complaints about SWAA without fear of retribution or other adverse treatment.
- Complainants have the right to be represented by an advocate or support person in complaint or dispute resolution processes.
- SWAA will maintain a complaints register and retain documentation relating to any complaints on file.

SWAA Complaint and Dispute Resolution Procedure
 (see flow chart immediately following this section)

Step 1. The complainant can raise the complaint with the Co-ordinator of SWAA for action and resolution.

Step 2. If the complainant does not wish to discuss the complaint with the Co-ordinator, or if the problem cannot be resolved by the Co-ordinator, they should ask for the complaint to be referred to the SWAA CoM₁ or address a written complaint marked "Private and Confidential" to -

The President
Committee of Management
Southwest Advocacy Association Inc.
P.O. Box 480
Warrnambool 3280.

Communications regarding complaints must not be addressed to individual SWAA CoM members and all communications must be channelled via SWAA.

SWAA will then attempt to resolve the matter by offering a meeting between the complainant and nominated senior members of the SWAA CoM as soon as possible. The complainant and the SWAA CoM may negotiate as to whether any member of SWAA who is the subject of a complaint may attend the meeting.

Step 3. If the matter remains unresolved, SWAA will offer to arrange a conciliation conference as soon as possible. The following people will be invited to attend the conciliation conference:

- the complainant and/or their nominated advocate or representative;
- any support person that the complainant requires to be present;
- nominated members the SWAA CoM;
- the Co-ordinator and/or any member of SWAA involved in the matter; and
- an independent conciliator agreed to by the client and SWAA.

The independent conciliator shall chair the conference. The aim of the conciliation conference will be to negotiate a settlement of the matter that is satisfactory to all parties. At the conciliation conference relevant information will be sought from the parties involved with full consideration to the confidentiality of information. Minutes of the proceedings of the conciliation conference will be taken and all parties to the conference will be provided with a copy of the minutes and informed in writing (or the appropriate medium) of the outcomes of the conference, including actions to be taken, if any, and time frames for action.

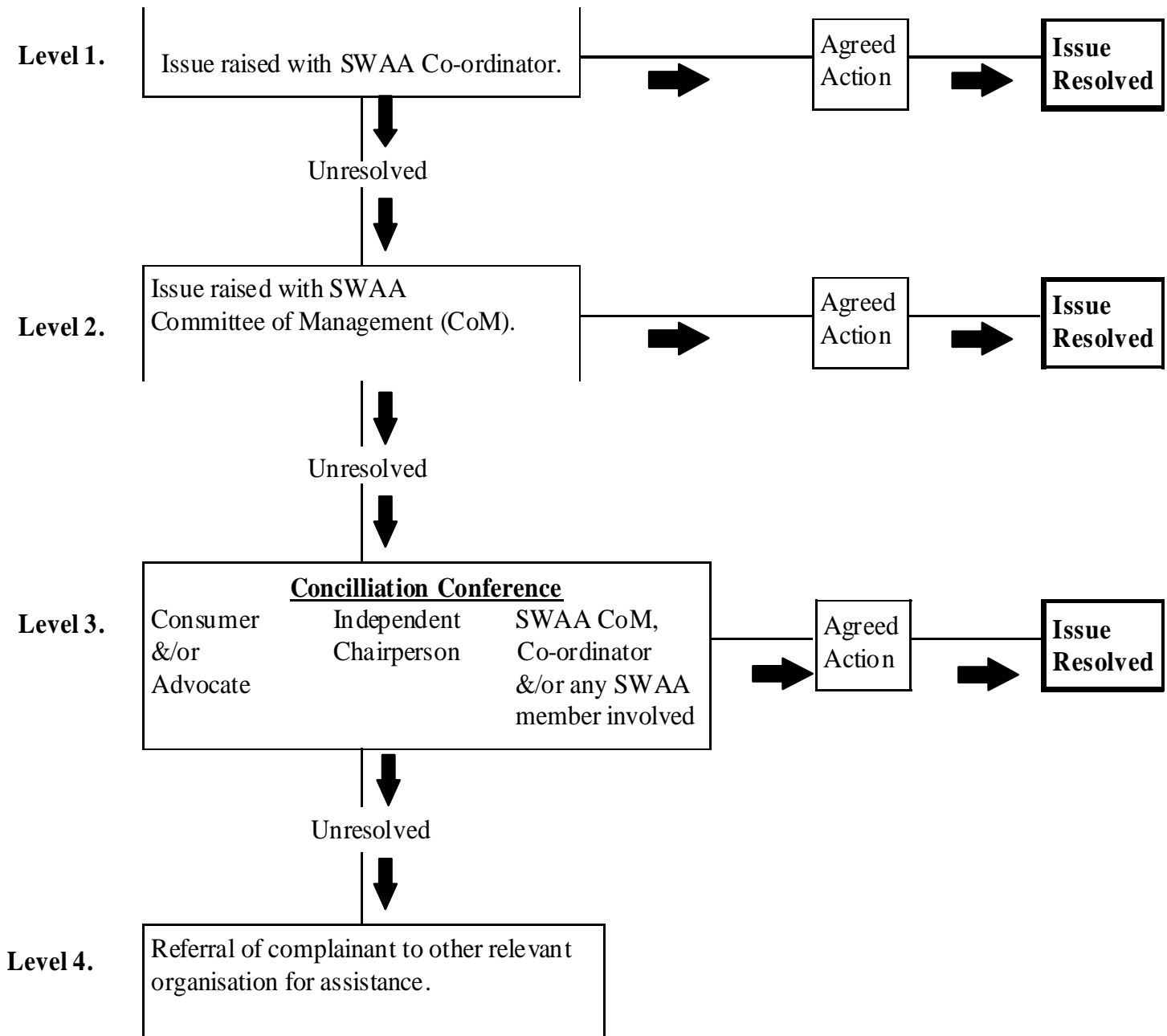
Also included with this information will be the names, contact addresses and telephone numbers of some of the major organisations that the complainant may contact if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the conciliation conference and wish to take the matter further.

Step 4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the conciliation conference, they will be advised of their right to seek further assistance from relevant organisations in order to resolve their complaint, including the following:

- Complaint Resolution and Referral Service Ph.: 1800 880 052
- Office of the Public Advocate Ph.: 1800 136 829

Southwest Advocacy Association Inc.

Complaint & Dispute Resolution Procedure



SERVICE MANAGEMENT
(COMMONWEALTH DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 8)

Each agency adopts sound management practices which maximise outcomes for clients.

The organisational structure of SWAA is designed to ensure that clients in need of advocacy are able to access the service and achieve positive outcomes.

SWAA has access to a comprehensive computer database of disability agencies throughout south west and greater Victoria. This enables SWAA to:

- link clients to services that are relevant to their needs;
- access relevant expertise and information;
- participate in co-ordinated activity with other agencies to advance the rights of disabled people in a local, regional or state-wide context.

- Clients are provided with the opportunity to have input into the evaluation of SWAA service provision. All SWAA clients are invited to complete an evaluation of service questionnaire at service exit. This information is provided by clients anonymously and independently of SWAA and is periodically discussed at CoM meetings.
- The Co-ordinator maintains a daily record of the nature of service requests along with relevant data providing a profile of clients. This information is used to identify strengths and weaknesses in service provision. All data gathering activities must comply with SWAA's policies on privacy and confidentiality.
- SWAA policies and procedures are reviewed regularly by the CoM, at least 50% of the membership of which should be comprised of people with disabilities.
- SWAA invites evaluative input from independent organisations, as it is recognised that an independent and objective view of any organisation can provide valuable insight and information to further improve the quality of services provided.
- The main features and roles and responsibilities of key positions in SWAA's organisational structure are outlined below.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

1. THE CoM

1.1 The CoM of SWAA is its governing body, is comprised of 12 members of SWAA, and is elected by the members of SWAA, in accordance with the Constitution. It is chaired by the President who, together with the other officer bearers, the Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary, form the "Executive Committee".

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COM

The CoM is, ultimately, the body responsible for ensuring that the Mission of SWAA is achieved. It is responsible for ensuring that SWAA is efficiently organised to carry out the Objects of the Constitution and the decisions of General Meetings. Members are expected to take an active and informed interest in the affairs of SWAA.

2.1 The CoM has legal responsibilities, including meeting the requirements of a range of federal, state and local government laws and regulations, in relation to a range of areas, including incorporation, insurance, permits, licences, copyright, defamation, employment, occupational health and safety, and taxation. The provisions of SWAA's Constitution and the *Incorporation Act 1981* must be complied with. The CoM is responsible for ensuring that the relevant legal records are maintained.

2.2 The CoM has financial responsibilities and must ensure that there are adequate funds available for the operation of SWAA. It is responsible for ensuring that financial records and systems are kept and that funds are appropriately accounted for. Other financial responsibilities include applying for funding, establishing and monitoring budgets, preparing financial statements and audits, negotiating funding and service agreements and reporting to the government and to SWAA Members on the use of all funds received. Members must avoid a conflict of interest and act in good faith at all times. Nominated individuals on the CoM are to be cheque signatories, along with the Co-ordinator.

2.3 The CoM is the employer of staff, responsible for ensuring the development of job descriptions, and that the appropriate policies and procedures are in place for staff recruitment and orientation, training, supervision and support, discipline and dismissal. The CoM also is responsible for the use of volunteers within SWAA, ensuring that appropriate policies exist to clarify their roles and responsibilities.

2.4 The CoM is responsible for the capital assets of SWAA, ensuring that premises, facilities, records and physical resources are provided and maintained so that services may be provided appropriately, safely and efficiently. This also includes responsibility for ensuring the provision of appropriate administration systems and practices (including financial provision for depreciation of assets).

2.5 The CoM has planning and policy development responsibilities, including ensuring that everyone in SWAA has a clear understanding of SWAA's direction, and that the policies, procedures and the underpinning philosophy are clearly understood by all. In order to ensure consistency and fairness, to provide clear processes for dealing with conflict and difficult issues, and to ensure a united approach to the achievement of SWAA's Mission, SWAA policies should be written so that both CoM and staff are clear about their responsibilities.

2.6 The CoM is responsible for the promotion and profile of SWAA. This includes the development of good community relations and ensuring that SWAA is as accessible as practicable to all people with disabilities in south west Victoria who are in need of advocacy.

2.7 The CoM reports to Government and to the members and supporters of SWAA, involving these parties in activities whenever possible. Internal accountability includes reports from staff. SWAA is accountable to its clients for the quality of the services provided. The CoM is accountable to Government and private funding sources. The Annual Report and the SWAA Newsletter are two other accountability mechanisms.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUAL CoM MEMBERS

Ordinary CoM members have the responsibilities carried by the CoM as a whole.

Each CoM member is expected to:

- ◆ attend CoM meetings and be punctual;
- ◆ read minutes, agendas, reports and papers for CoM meetings;
- ◆ assume responsibility for assigned tasks and report back to the CoM on those areas;
- ◆ take part in sub committees, working parties & planning days as required;
- ◆ participate in planning and evaluation processes;
- ◆ be open and frank with ideas and information;
- ◆ declare any conflict or potential conflict of interest;
- ◆ discuss and critique ideas and issues, but not individuals;
- ◆ listen to the views of the other CoM members;
- ◆ keep the discussions and deliberations of CoM meetings confidential;
- ◆ indicate their objection if unable to support important decisions made by the CoM (if they have continuing difficulties in supporting decisions, they should discuss their situation with the SWAA President or Co-ordinator);
- ◆ keep important information about issues which affect SWAA;
- ◆ take opportunities to inform members and others about the work of SWAA;
- ◆ act as an ambassador for SWAA and promote it within the community;
- ◆ work as part of a committed team with other CoM members; and
- ◆ act in the best interests of SWAA at all times.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESIDENT

1. General

The President is elected by the general members of SWAA from the elected members of the CoM.

The role of the President includes the management of CoM operations and meetings, the official representation of SWAA in meetings and functions, and participation in decision making and action in regard to urgent and important organisational matters. The latter role will be performed in consultation with the SWAA Executive Committee and, where appropriate, the SWAA Co-ordinator. The President should be reasonably available to SWAA staff, volunteers, and members and the community for information and guidance on organisational matters. Access to president shall generally be via the Co-ordinator as a first point of contact.

2. The President's Responsibilities and Authority

2.1 CoM Meetings

It is the responsibility of the President to do the following:

- ◆ develop and prepare the agenda (in discussion with the Co-ordinator);
- ◆ to open, manage and close meetings;
- ◆ to prioritise the business of the meeting, including adjourning the meeting or deferring items;
- ◆ to deal with any issues around a quorum;
- ◆ to keep the meeting focussed on the topic under discussion;
- ◆ to encourage participation from all members;
- ◆ to ensure the efficient time management of the meeting;
- ◆ to summarise discussion and bring it to a close;
- ◆ to deal with any conflict which is unproductive to the course of the meetings;
- ◆ to ensure that members are aware of the decisions being made; and
- ◆ to ensure the accuracy of the minutes.

2.2 Other Responsibilities and Authority

The President, as the official head of SWAA, also has the following responsibilities and authority:

- ◆ to sign official documents, such as funding agreements and property contracts, any documents which requires the affixing of the Common Seal, and the Minutes of CoM and Executive Committee meetings;
- ◆ to lead delegations to Government and key community organisations and individuals;
- ◆ to speak publicly about the philosophy and policy positions of SWAA; and
- ◆ to participate in the tasks assigned to the Executive Committee.

Please note that in practice the day to day performance of some of these responsibilities may be delegated to SWAA's Co-ordinator under the supervision of the President.

2.3 The President and Emergency Decision Making (Reserve Powers)

In a crisis, the President has the authority to make appropriate decisions or to take action on behalf of SWAA. It is expected however that this reserve power would be used lightly. It is expected that every effort would be made to consult with the Office Bearers, and, if possible, to call an extraordinary meeting of the Executive or the full CoM. Any decision which the President considers to require the use of the reserve power must be ratified by the full CoM at the earliest possible opportunity.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY

1. The Secretary is elected by the general members of SWAA from the elected members of the CoM.

The responsibilities of the Secretary are as follows:

- i) ensure that a Register of Members is maintained in accordance with the SWAA Constitution;
- ii) ensure that notices of all meetings are forwarded to Members in accordance with the SWAA Constitution;
- iii) record, in proper form, minutes of the proceedings and resolutions of all General Meetings, CoM Meetings, Executive Meetings and the reports and recommendations of any sub-committee; and
- iv) be responsible for dealing with correspondence of SWAA and for the proper custody of all books, documents and securities of SWAA, in accordance with any directions given from time to time by the CoM.

Please note that, in practice, the day to day performance of some of these responsibilities may be delegated to SWAA's Administration Officer under the supervision of the Secretary.

2. The Secretary also fulfils the role of the Public Officer of SWAA.

3. The Secretary has responsibility for the oversight of the CoM elections.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TREASURER

1. The Treasurer is elected by the general members of SWAA from the elected members of the CoM. The responsibilities of the Treasurer are as follows:

- i) oversee the preparation and implementation of annual budgets;

- ii) ensure that all monies received by SWAA are promptly banked, that all payments are properly authorised and that all payments, except petty cash, are paid by cheque;
- iii) ensure that all cheques are signed by two persons duly authorised by the CoM;
- iv) maintain proper accounting records of SWAA; and
- v) ensure that audited financial statements are presented to Annual General Meetings and that other financial statements are presented to General Meetings and CoM meetings as appropriate.

Please note that, in practice, the day to day performance of some of these responsibilities may be delegated to SWAA's Administrative Officer under the supervision of the Treasurer.

The Treasurer is not individually responsible for financial planning. The Treasurer should, however, ensure that this planning occurs.

While the Treasurer need not necessarily have accountancy qualifications, the Treasurer is expected to provide financial advice to the Committee.

COMMITTEE & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AGENDA, PAPERS AND MINUTES

1. Documentation and Decision Making

The agenda and attachments, together with the Minutes of the previous meeting, for the CoM meeting will be mailed approximately one week prior to the CoM Meeting, to enable Committee to read the papers and to seek clarification on any matter prior to the meeting.

SWAA will endeavour to provide CoM member's, particularly those members with disabilities, with appropriate support required to interpret documents and attend meetings. Any CoM member requiring additional support should discuss their needs with the SWAA President or Co-ordinator.

CoM members are expected to examine the papers and the recommendations, and, where possible, to come to the meeting having formed preliminary views on the Agenda items. It is in the interests of SWAA and the CoM to ensure that decisions are made in an informed and timely manner. Deferral of items should, therefore, not be made lightly.

2. Communication between Executive and Committee

The Minutes of each Executive meeting are provided to each member of the Committee along with their usual Committee Meeting papers. They are an item on the Agenda of the Committee and are presented for noting. The noting of the Executive Minutes constitutes approval by the full Committee of any motions passed at the Executive Meeting. Members of the Committee are free to question

any motion passed at the Executive Meeting. In the event that the Committee disagrees with a motion of the Executive, the view of the full Committee shall prevail.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Executive Committee is a standing committee of the CoM of SWAA. It is constituted only of Office Bearers of the CoM and reports directly to the full CoM, making recommendations for CoM's consideration and endorsement. The Executive does have the authority to act without the approval of the full Committee in special circumstances which must be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

2. Time and place of Executive Meetings

The Executive meets on a needs basis. Two members of the Executive, together with the Co-ordinator, constitutes a quorum. The Co-ordinator may request an Executive Meeting and attends all Executive Meetings, other than those, or parts thereof, convened for the purpose of discussing issues related to the employment conditions of the Co-ordinator and complaint and disciplinary matters directly concerning the Co-ordinator.

3. Responsibilities of the Executive

The Executive acts on issues referred to it from the CoM or the Co-ordinator and may act on behalf of the CoM in emergency situations.

3.1 Vacancies on the CoM

The Constitution empowers the CoM to appoint any eligible person to be a member of the CoM in certain situations and under certain conditions. The Executive must endeavour to ensure that any vacancies are filled promptly, and that nominations are considered by the CoM in a prompt and fair manner.

3.2 Policy Issues

The Executive may also consider significant policy matters, usually with a view to making recommendations to the CoM. On occasions, however, it may be necessary for the Executive to take actions which should be submitted for ratification at the following CoM Meeting. The Executive also handles matters which have been referred to it from the full CoM.

3.3 Staff Employment Issues

The Executive makes recommendations to Committee on the appointment of staff, including the Co-ordinator. The Executive is responsible for matters relating to the employment conditions of the Co-ordinator and other staff, including performance appraisal.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

1. The CoM may at any time appoint any sub-committee (consisting of members of the CoM) it thinks fit, and may prescribe the functions of any such sub-committee. The CoM shall have the power to co-opt persons to serve on a sub-committee in an advisory capacity, but no such co-opted member shall be entitled to vote. The President and Secretary shall be ex-officio members of all sub-committees. The quorum for meetings of any sub-committee shall be one-third of its members and not less than two people.

2. Any sub-committee appointment by the CoM should have a nominated Convenor or Chair, and the membership should be agreed to by the CoM. Proposed members should be approved by the CoM before a formal invitation is offered. Terms of Reference will specify the tasks of the sub-committee, together with any powers delegated from the CoM. Sub-committees will generally make recommendations for the consideration of the CoM. Sub-committees may be ongoing or time limited. This decision should be made early in the life of the sub-committee. The SWAA Co-ordinator or another appropriate member of staff will normally sit on any sub-committee to provide appropriate support, but shall not have voting rights.

3. Working Parties are limited in their life, are established to carry out a specific task, and may be comprised of people other than CoM members, although they should preferably be convened by a CoM member or the SWAA Co-ordinator.

Reports of any sub-committees and working parties shall be made regularly to the full CoM.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No member of the CoM shall be appointed to or retain any paid office of SWAA whilst he or she is a member of the CoM.

No member of the CoM shall directly or indirectly supply goods or services to SWAA where such goods or services can be satisfactorily obtained elsewhere locally.

Any member of the CoM who has a financial interest in any contract or arrangement made or proposed to be made with SWAA shall disclose his or her interest at the first meeting of the CoM at which the contract or arrangement is first taken into consideration. If he or she becomes interested in a contract or arrangement after it is made or entered into, he or she shall disclose his or her interest at the first meeting of the CoM after he or she becomes so interested.

Conflicts of interest and potential conflicts occur regularly in organisations. They are not necessarily bad in themselves, and the only danger is when people do not declare them.

To protect individual members of the CoM as well as SWAA, all CoM members should declare their interests in advance. If a potential conflict arises, it should be declared as soon as possible. If some financial, political or personal benefit is potentially involved, the member should do one of the following:

1. state that they are also involved in another organisation or activity and that the CoM should be aware of this fact; or
2. state their other involvement and ask that they not take part in discussion or decisions about the issues where there could be conflict; or
3. state their other involvement and ask that the CoM rule on whether they should remain involved, or how they can participate without compromise; or
4. state their other involvements and that they believe they should resign from the Committee because of this ongoing conflict.

Each member of the CoM is asked to complete a confidential "Declaration of Interests" form upon joining the CoM and to update it as necessary. The forms are kept securely, and may only be viewed by SWAA Office Bearers, the Co-ordinator and the Administrative Officer.

The most relevant issues arise in the answer to the following questions.

1. Do you own property or land which SWAA uses or is likely to use?
2. Do you derive income from activities which SWAA may wish to purchase or may also wish to pursue?
3. Are you involved with companies or trusts with which SWAA either does business or is likely to do business?
4. Are you a member of any other organisation, SWAA or group which work with or compete with SWAA?
5. Are you associated with any organisation which funds SWAA, or which competes with SWAA for funds?
6. Are you associated with any organisation which makes decisions directly affecting SWAA?
7. Do any of the above apply to any of your relatives or to those with whom you live?

A positive answer to any of these questions does not mean that a person should resign from the CoM, but that the person must be particularly sensitive to any potential conflict and take the appropriate action.

Roles & Responsibilities of SWAA Co-ordinator

- ◆ Work at the direction of SWAA CoM.
- ◆ Co-ordinate the activities of the SWAA generally.
- ◆ Provide supervision and direction to SWAA staff and volunteers
- ◆ Ensure that service providers uphold service user rights and comply with Disability Service Standards.
- ◆ Develop, co-ordinate and supervise the delivery of advocacy for people with disabilities in south west Victoria.
- ◆ Ensure that SWAA service provision complies with Disability Service Standards.
- ◆ Actively encourage service providers to develop and implement client rights policies.
- ◆ Participate in the regional, state and national planning and development of disability services, as appropriate.
- ◆ Consult with people with disabilities on the development of SWAA's role.
- ◆ Raise community awareness of SWAA's role and activities and promote SWAA generally.
- ◆ Co-ordinate and supervise SWAA's community education and activities.
- ◆ Co-ordinate and supervise the dissemination of information on disability issues.
- ◆ Co-ordinate and supervise SWAA's support and assistance to disability support groups in south west Victoria.
- ◆ Encourage the establishment of new disability support groups in south west Victoria.
- ◆ Invite people with disabilities and disability groups to become members of SWAA and participate in the management of SWAA.
- ◆ Prepare reports and other documents as directed by the CoM.

Roles and Responsibilities of SWAA Advocates

- ◆ Work under the direction and supervision of the Co-ordinator.
- ◆ Provide individual, group and systemic advocacy for people with disabilities in south west Victoria.
- ◆ Assist SWAA Co-ordinator to ensure that service providers uphold client rights and comply with Disability Service Standards.
- ◆ Undertake community education and awareness raising activities in regard to disability issues.
- ◆ Disseminate information on disability issues.
- ◆ Provide support and assistance to disability support groups in south west Victoria.
- ◆ Other duties as directed by SWAA Co-ordinator.

Roles and Responsibilities of SWAA Administrative Officer

- ◆ Work under the direction and supervision of SWAA Co-ordinator.
- ◆ Manage office systems and operations generally.
- ◆ Operate and manage computer and telecommunication systems.
- ◆ Assist SWAA Co-ordinator and Advocates in the preparation, production and distribution of documents and publications.
- ◆ Develop, manage and maintain all necessary recording and filing systems.
- ◆ Provide SWAA reception services.
- ◆ Assist clients who have a disability in accessing facilities within the building.
- ◆ Take appointments for the Co-ordinator and other staff.
- ◆ Purchase and manage SWAA equipment.
- ◆ Assist in the preparation of budget reports and accounts to profit and loss.
- ◆ Monitor and report on accounts payable.
- ◆ Undertake banking and payment and collection of SWAA accounts.
- ◆ Manage “petty cash” system, including purchases and recording.
- ◆ Collect, record and distribute SWAA correspondence.
- ◆ Attend CoM meetings and record minutes.
- ◆ Distribute CoM meeting agenda, minutes and other documents to Committee members and staff.
- ◆ Other duties as directed by the Co-ordinator.

Service User's Responsibilities

Each service user should:

- ◆ Accept responsibility for any decision they make.
- ◆ Respect the human rights and dignity of SWAA staff.
- ◆ Agree to work co-operatively with SWAA staff.
- ◆ Attempt to provide accurate information to SWAA staff.
- ◆ Be honest and act in good faith in dealing with SWAA Staff.
- ◆ Do their best to keep appointments with SWAA staff.
- ◆ Not engage in any act or omission which may place SWAA staff at risk.

FREEDOM FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT (VICTORIAN DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 9)

Each client has the right to be free from physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuse and neglect.

SWAA staff, members and volunteers are required to treat all clients, one and other, and everyone else who comes into contact with the organisation with respect and consideration at all times.

A person who has allegedly been subjected to abuse or neglect will be supported and encouraged to make a formal complaint to the organisation concerned or the appropriate authorities, including the police, and will be referred to relevant counselling and support services.

In the case of allegations of abuse and neglect made by someone against SWAA staff, members or volunteers, SWAA's complaints and grievance resolution policies and procedures will be adhered to.

Any allegation of abuse or neglect must be dealt with as a priority and as expeditiously as possible and must be reported at CoM level.

People will be encouraged and supported to report allegations of criminal conduct to the police.

If the person who has allegedly been subjected to abuse or neglect has a Guardian or Administrator, or if the person is under the age of 18, that person's Guardian, Administrator, parent or primary caregiver will be made aware of situation as soon as possible by SWAA.

Please refer to SWAA policy on resolving complaints and disputes for further information.