

Advocacy Tasmania Inc. Strategic Plan 2009-2012

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Vision – what do we want for the future?

A fair, equitable, just and inclusive society for all.

Mission – what is our role in creating this future?

Advocacy Tasmania Inc, acting independently at all times, works to both empower and uphold the rights and interests of older people and people with disabilities.

Aims

1. To assist clients to understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities by providing information and support to self advocate and individual advocacy representation.
2. To identify and take action on systemic issues affecting our client groups.
3. To promote and enhance the rights and interests of our client groups through provision of information, promotion and education.
4. To promote best practice in community engagement in relation to our client groups.
5. To manage the human and financial resources of the organization efficiently and effectively, overseen by good governance.

Our Client Groups

- People with disabilities
- Older people - living in aged care facilities or living at home and receiving community care services
- Community members living with dementia and memory loss
- People living with a mental illness or mental health disorder
- Carers and relatives of people in these groups.

Our Values

We believe:

- in upholding and advancing fundamental human rights
- in advancing the wellbeing of individuals, communities and our society as a whole, and in ending disadvantage
- that all people should be treated with dignity and respect
- in the right of each person to have maximum control over their own lives and to make choices
- that all people are entitled to services and supports to live a dignified quality of life

- in the right of all people to have their voice heard and the right to an independent advocate if necessary in order to exercise this right
- in working to remove the barriers which exclude some people from participating in the life of the community
- that changing the way the community and the service system responds to our clients is fundamental to a humane, inclusive and just society
- that community engagement is an important element of respect for our client's capacities and abilities
- that we must model these values by working in a collaborative, open team which shares core values about client rights. Our team is made up of Board, staff and volunteers who act separately and jointly to progress the interests of our clients at an individual and systems level.

Action Areas 2009-2012

1. Individual Advocacy

Aim

To assist clients to understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities by providing information and support to self advocate and individual advocacy representation.

Rationale

Our client groups often have vulnerabilities which mean that their rights may not be recognized without support to exercise these rights.

Strategic Outcomes 2009-2012

Maintenance of individual advocacy as the core activity of the organisation.

A range of information resources available to assist clients to self advocate.

Equal access to individual advocacy services by members of the client groups in all three regions of the State.

Eligibility criteria have been reviewed to ensure priority access to those most in need.

The volunteer representation scheme is strengthened with ongoing funding secured.

A multi-skilling and team-based approach to individual advocacy is in use across the State to foster greater responsiveness and better use of the available skill base.

A quality assurance system based on the National Advocacy Service Standards is further developed to ensure consistent high quality advocacy practices across the organization.

2. Systemic Advocacy

Aim

To identify and take action on systemic issues affecting our client groups.

Rationale

Systemic advocacy is often the best, most cost-effective way to gain outcomes for clients, particularly if the issue impacts on a number of clients across programs or areas of the State. This is a time of significant change and systemic advocacy is most effectively used when new systems are being established.

Strategic Outcomes for 2009-2012

A clearly defined process for identifying and acting upon systemic issues is in place.

Internal casework data, and feedback from other sources (e.g. service providers, other consultations) is analysed to inform systemic advocacy.

The outcomes of systemic advocacy are documented and used to support a business case to fund this activity.

The ATI budget includes funding for a dedicated position to support systemic advocacy work.

Activity in relation to systemic issues undertaken by the Board individually and collectively and by staff is mapped and monitored to enable more effective use of available resources and better monitoring of outcomes.

Partnerships or coalitions are used to progress systemic advocacy issues where relevant.

3. Information, Education and Promotion

Aim

To promote and enhance the rights and interests of our client group through provision of information, promotion and education.

Rationale

Providing information and education about rights to our clients, their families, service providers and decision makers is important in supporting clients to self advocate but also in changing the way systems operate.

Promotion of the service to its stakeholders is critical to the organisation's credibility and effectiveness within the service sector.

Strategic Outcomes 2009-2012

A communication and promotions plan has been developed to promote the role of ATI with stakeholder groups.

New information products have been developed including: a range of self-advocacy materials for clients, promotional materials and information products for service providers on the role of ATI and what it has to offer other organisations.

Information and education products are copyrighted to protect intellectual property and generate additional income for the organisation.

Improved support for staff through better resourcing, including revision of educational materials.

Better use of our website to promote our services and inform the community of our work.

A dedicated information, education and promotion position has been created within ATI to coordinate these activities and provided leadership within the sector on best practice in promoting client rights.

4. Community Engagement

Aim

To promote best practice in community engagement in relation to our client groups.

Rationale

The involvement of clients in decision making in relation to their lives is a fundamental right which Advocacy Tasmania works to promote through all aspects of its work with clients individually, in systemic advocacy and information and education.

There is currently a high level of interest in how to do this effectively. Advocacy Tasmania offers a consultancy service to other organisations to fulfill this role and has one specific project which is developing a model of client engagement. This is an important area in which Advocacy Tasmania can provide leadership to others in the sector.

Strategic Outcomes 2009-2012

ATI facilitates effective consumer participation in the Area Advisory Groups as part of the Disability Services Reforms.

Community engagement is included as an activity undertaken by Advocacy Tasmania in new promotional materials and resources.

The staff team has opportunities to participate in skills development in relation to community engagement.

ATI is recognised as providing leadership in the sector in promoting client rights and engagement.

ATI actively participates in the development of the Department of Health & Human Services Consumer Engagement Strategy

ATI strengthens its own consumer engagement processes via establishment of regional governance structures and regular external client surveys.

5. Effective Management and Governance

Aim

To manage the human and financial resources of the organization efficiently and effectively, overseen by good governance.

Rationale

Effective management and governance is important to enable ATI to meet its contractual obligations with funders and to provide the best possible standard of service to our clients.

Strategic Outcomes 2009-2012

Improved outcomes measures which are consistent across the organisation and appropriate for our client groups are in use.

Measures to limit and monitor the workload of advocates are strengthened.

Staff communication, liaison, coordination, appraisal and development process that provide optimum support and accountability are in place

Succession planning has been undertaken for Board membership.

Regular professional development opportunities for staff and Board members are identified and provided.

ATI has a diversity of funding sources including State and Federal Governments, corporate, philanthropic and donations/bequests.

Information technology requirements have been reviewed in light of service growth and changes in communication methods.

Administrative support levels have been increased to a fulltime position.

ATI has determined a desired level of growth for the organisation which enables it to maintain the current operating philosophy and democratic, open approach to management.