



01.05 Inclusion, Diversity and Choice Policy

Scope

Ensure clients are recognised as having individual rights to make decisions and choices in all aspects of their lives and encourage them to exercise them.

Responsibility

All Wallara Staff are responsible for adhering to this policy.

Policy

Wallara embraces inclusion, diversity, decision making and choice for people with disability, by following the principles of:

- Dignity and Self determination
- Equality
- Equity
- Valuing Diversity
- Anti- discrimination

Dignity and Self Determination

We recognise that clients have the right to make choices in all areas of their lives. They also have right to be represented and/or involved in the decision-making process of the organisation. Where relevant and appropriate, the wishes and choices of family members and personal networks that are significant to the person with a disability are considered in the decision-making process.

Wallara understands that some choices made by clients may involve a degree of risk. Wallara applies the principles of Dignity of Risk. Accordingly, as appropriate to each individual's circumstances, Wallara will facilitate and document, discussions with clients and others involved in specific decision-making events, to ensure that the client's self-determination is optimised, and risk is minimised or managed.

Choice and decision-making can occur at many levels, and clients are encouraged to participate to the full extent of their abilities. Wallara will always support the right of advocates and guardians to represent the interests of the clients we support. People with disability have the same right as other members of Australian society to be able to determine their own best interests, including the right to exercise choice and control, and to engage as equal partners in decisions that will affect their lives, to the full extent of their capacity. (NDIS Act 2013: Ch1, Part 2, Sect 4 (8) p6).

Wallara will provide clients with information regarding:

- Legal rights, entitlements and obligations under the Disability Act 2006 (Vic), (Vic) and NDIS Act 2013 (Cth)
- Making a complaint to Wallara or to the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commissioner or Disability Services Commissioner for TAC or other non-NDIS funding agreements
- Support options offered by Wallara and conditions that may apply to the services being provided
- All fees, charges and other costs applicable to the service
- Access to advocacy supports
- General community facilities, activities and services
- Access to health and wellbeing services

Equality

We recognise that all people, irrespective of their backgrounds, are entitled to respect and equal opportunities to participate in the social, economic and political life of society.



Equity

Fairness is embedded into the core business of each working area

Valuing Inclusion and Diversity

We promote acceptance in the process of building an inclusive society that recognises and values individual differences

Anti-discrimination

We recognise that all people have a right to live their lives free from discrimination and we do not tolerate racial discrimination.

Some of the ways we support these principles;

Communication and Understanding

- Language should not be technical or complicated
- Recognise that people who are using English as their 2nd or 3rd language can experience frustration and isolation from not being able to express themselves fully in English and listen carefully
- Staff will endeavour to learn about culturally specific non-verbal communication of co-workers & people they support
- Culturally specific humour is expressly prohibited
- Make it a regular practice to check for understanding
- Encourage people to be comfortable in saying, 'I do not understand' give the listener the opportunity to repeat what you have said to check their understanding
- Make a point of speaking 1:1 to find out what you can do to improve understanding of what is read or heard

Training

- Wallara will acknowledge & provide opportunities for Staff & people supported to experience celebrations & cultural events
- Every Staff member will take responsibility for his/her own active learning about people's culture
- Recommend that sensitive cultural issues to be discussed be included at every formal meeting i.e. Staff meetings

Respectful relationships

- Respecting diversity entails more than tolerance. The term 'tolerance' implies that something must be endured, or 'put up with'. When genuine acknowledgement, appreciation of, and interest in diversity is experienced, respectful relationships develop.
- Apart from avoiding the occurrence of disrespectful behaviours, engaging in respectful relationships means demonstrating a positive appreciation of people and their cultural values.

Within the prevailing legal, ethical and operational parameters, Wallara will support clients to:

- Make decisions and choices about their lives,
- Identify, choose and exercise as much control as possible over their own daily life and lifestyle routines
- Exercise as much control as possible over their finances
- Access technology, aids, equipment and services that increase and enhance their independence and decision-making capacity
- Choose, own and maintain their own possessions
- Have their changing needs, aspirations and choices addressed
- Actively participate in all significant major decisions affecting the service
- Involve family members and friends to assist with making decisions and choices
- Actively participate in key organisational decision-making, strategic planning and client-directed Committees
- Access advocacy or other independent supports to assist with making decisions and choices
- **Participation in Meetings** - Clients will be given the opportunity to participate in Representative meetings, site meetings, house meetings and advocacy network meetings;



- **Rights Training** - Training about rights and responsibilities will occur for all stakeholders, using the least restrictive approaches to limiting a service user's ability to act on an individual decision or choice;
- **Recognition and promotion of independent advocates**
- **Involvement** in Decision Making and meetings that directly affects them;
- **Skill Development** - Training around participation, support and decision making;
- **Encouragement** - Clients will be continually encouraged to make choices within the range of options available in their planning;
- **Involvement** in Staff, student and volunteer selection panels.

Relevant Legislation and Standards

- Disability Act 2006 (Vic)
- NDIS Act 2013 (Cth)
- NDIS Core Practice Standards:
 - 1. Rights and Responsibilities
 - Person Centred Supports
 - Independence and Informed Choice

Date Created	Date Approved	Date Revised	Version control	Approved By	Amendment details
	31.03.2025		1	The Board	New policy to replace existing