



Meeting with your local Member of Parliament

A KIT FOR SUPPORTERS OF #STANDBYME
DISABILITY ADVOCACY ALLIANCE



How to Phone / Email and Meet with your local Member of Parliament (MP):

We are asking you to contact your State Member of Parliament (MP) because the State Government is removing all funding from disability advocacy services in NSW.

We need more MPs to understand this important issue if we are going to stop the NSW Government from closing down our important disability advocacy services.

1. Find out who your local State MP is:

Which electorate are you in?

If you don't know which electorate you are in you can go to <https://roll.elections.nsw.gov.au/areafinder> and type in your suburb or postcode. Then to find the name of your MP click on View District Profile.

What are the contact details for your local State MP?

You can find your [Local State MPs contact details here](#).

2. Send an email to your local MP:

Use the template and write a courteous email to your MP, including your name and address, requesting a meeting to discuss the new *The Gaps are Getting Bigger for People with Disability in NSW* report and why permanent disability advocacy funding is important.

3. Phone your local MP:

Wait 48 hours then phone your MPs' office and ask if they have received your letter and when a meeting can be arranged.

Explain why you are calling: "I am calling because I sent an email to [MP name] about meeting with them to discuss the loss of funding for disability advocacy services in NSW.

"I would like to speak to (MP's name) about (why disability advocacy services are important to me) which the Government wants to cut funding to.



4. Once the meeting is arranged:

- Send the MP the MP Briefing Paper and the Stand By Me report about a week before the meeting.
- Tell the MP who will be coming with you to the meeting.

5. At the meeting with your MP:

- Introduce yourself and anyone who has attended with you.
- If possible, have someone take notes.
- Explain why you have come / What the issue is / What you want the MP to do.
- Make requests of the MP (speech, write to the Premier etc).
- Talk about the report to the MP and the issues further if required.
- Ask if it's ok to take a photo with the MP.

6. Agree on a follow up to the meeting

- The MP will email you / write you a letter outlining what they have done following your meeting.
- You will phone the office to ask what the MP has done following the meeting.

7. Email/Write to the MP

Write to the MP thanking them for the meeting and outlining what the MP agreed to do (with a timeline).

8. Let us know how the meeting went

Tell us on social media or email us on admin@standbyme.org.au. Thank you for taking this important action to save disability advocacy services in NSW.

Twitter [@StandByMeNSW](https://twitter.com/StandByMeNSW)

Facebook [StandByMeNSW](https://www.facebook.com/StandByMeNSW)



Briefing paper – Stand By Me

Information for Supporter Meetings with MPs

Key points

- All disability advocacy funding will end on June 30, 2020
- The NDIS will not fund advocacy, either in individual packages or in the ILC (Information, Linkages and Capacity Building).
- The Federal Government will not fund NSW disability advocacy, representation or information services.
- There are 1.37 million people in NSW with disability, but only up to 140,000 who will get an NDIS package.

What's the issue?

The NSW government has shut down the disability services sector, closing down the Department of Ageing, Disability and Homecare (AHDC) in June 2018 and redirecting all funding to the NDIS, which will provide some support for 10% of people with disability in NSW. This leaves 90% of people with disability in NSW with no access to disability services.

In 2020, the NSW Government will no longer fund any independent and impartial disability services who can provide advocacy, representation or information to the [1.37 million people with disability](#) (Source: ABS) who live in NSW and face barriers to having an equal life. At the same time, the rollout of the NDIS means big changes for the 10% of people with disability who are eligible for a plan.

What do advocacy services do?

Organisations such as ours assist people on broader issues such as access to education, justice, finances, abuse and discrimination, health, accessing the physical environment, housing and employment, as well as assisting people to access the NDIS, and with their appeals and reviews of their NDIS plans.

Different organisations focus on different areas. Some organisations specifically support families, others support people with intellectual disabilities, or particular physical disabilities. Some focus on making the system better as a whole, while others primarily help individuals.

NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance

C/o St Helens Community Centre 3/184 Glebe Point Rd Glebe NSW 2037
admin@standbyme.org.au



What will happen on June 30, 2020?

The funding for our 22 member services from across NSW will come to an end in 2020, less than one year from now.

Without disability advocacy organisations, NSW Government departments will lose access to the input and expertise of disability advocates who participate in departmental and Parliamentary committees and help government get things right. Disability advocacy helps government understand the needs of people with disability and helps stem problems before they blow up into preventable tragedies.

We also provide input through face to face consultations and many written responses to parliamentary inquiries and state policy and regulation reviews and act as a crucial temperature gauge for government when things start to go wrong. All of this expertise will disappear in 2020 without permanent funding.

How much funding is needed?

The experience and expertise of our organisations can be retained for \$20 million per year. This figure takes into account the big increase in work from the NDIS, increased costs, such as rent and wages, and a higher population – there are more people with disability with increasingly complex problems that need the help of advocates.

FAQ

The NSW Government already spend money on the NDIS, so why do we need advocacy as well?

- The NDIS funds individual support packages, and won't help with problems with education, health, transport or employment.
- Only 10% of people with disability in NSW will get an NDIS package – advocacy helps them, plus the other 90% of people with disability in NSW.
- Advocacy CANNOT be funded in an NDIS package. 'Support Coordination' is a fundable item but is for people to get assistance to understand and implement their plans and find relevant services and supports to achieve their goals. Support Coordinators are NOT ALLOWED to undertake advocacy. Advocacy can't be funded through Core Supports or Capacity Building in plans either.



Won't the NDIS fund advocacy through the ILC program?

- No, the NDIS has explicitly said that advocacy won't be funded through the ILC program.

Why do you need to know now?

- Our services want to be able to make plans and have certainty. In less than 12 month's time we might have to close, so we need to be able to tell people with disability, their families and carers, and our staff.
- We need to plan, just like any other organisation, for the future. If the NSW Government cuts our funding, then we have to get ready to shut our doors.

It doesn't make economic sense to fund advocacy

- Economists found investing in independent disability advocacy leads to a range of benefits including:
 - improved educational and employment outcomes.
 - freeing up resources in the justice system, health and accommodation services.
 - helping to relieve the load on carers and service providers.
- The Net Present Value of independent advocacy is \$589,498,000 in 2017 dollars. This means that an estimated benefit of \$3.50 is returned for each dollar of cost.



[Date]

Dear [Name of MP including honorifics if applicable]

I am writing to request a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss the urgent funding cuts to disability advocacy, information and peak representative services in [where you live].

In 2020, less than a year away, the NSW Government will no longer fund any independent disability services that provide advocacy, representation or information to the 1.3 million people with disability who live in NSW who face barriers to having an equal life. At the same time, big changes associated with the NDIS are rolling out for the 10% of people with disability who are eligible.

Decades of expertise, built up across NSW, particularly in rural and regional areas, will no longer be available to the NSW Government, or to people with disability, to make sure that our state becomes truly inclusive of people with disability or that people with disability can access the services they need, including mainstream services.

[Detail impact of cuts on you and in your area eg "I have used our local disability advocacy service when I couldn't find an accessible place to live/needed help with my NDIS applications/wanted to find the right disability supports/was excluded from school/discriminated against at work. In your area, what are the issues for people with disability that need disability advocacy services to talk to government about? For example, inaccessible transport, a lack of disability services for people with disability not eligible for the NDIS.]

I would like to bring you a copy of the new report, *The Gaps Are Getting Bigger for People with Disability in NSW*, produced by the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance, and talk about what the loss of our disability advocacy information and peak representative services will mean for us in [where you live].

Many thanks for your consideration of my request, I look forward to hearing from you, and I can be contacted on XXXX XXXX to arrange a time to suit.

Kind regards

[Name]

[where you live]