



melba
support services

Read Me

I'm Your Plain English Melba Handbook

Revision August 2024

Table of Contents

Melba’s Vision, Values and Purpose.....	2
Our Values.....	2
The Melba Way.....	2
What services we offer.....	2
Your Personal Information: Privacy and Confidentiality	3
Keeping You Safe – Zero Tolerance Policy.....	5
Feedback – Compliments and Complaints	6
Your Service Agreement	8
Advocacy: the role of families and advocates	9
Your Rights and Responsibilities	10
Keeping Children and Young People Safe.....	12

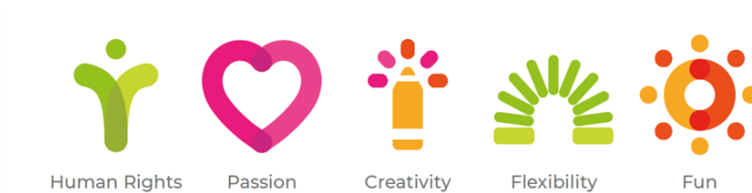
Melba's Vision, Values and Purpose

Our Vision

A society that values individuality and rights of all people.

Our Values

- Human Rights
- Passion
- Creativity
- Flexibility
- Fun



Our Purpose

To open up a world of opportunities for people to live a fabulous life.

The Melba Way

Melba supports people to live the lives they want. The Melba Way is how we do this.

This means we always listen to what you want in your life, and listen to your family, friends or advocate.

It means we support you to reach your goals and dreams.

We keep you safe. This is our priority!

We do everything possible to provide the best support so that you can reach your goals and enjoy a fabulous life.

We do this minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, every day. At

Melba, each and every person we support always comes first!

What services we offer

Here are some of our services:

- **Community Activities** – we support people to get out and about and do the things they like to do.



- **Individualised Support** – we support people through one-to-one supports any day, anywhere, any time.
- **Supported Independent Living** – we support people with everyday tasks at home - respecting their choices and supporting them to build skills to live as independently as possible!
- **Recreation and Leisure** – we support people to have dream holidays in ways that suit their needs.
- **Short Term Accommodation** (respite) – we support people to have short overnight stays away from home at one of our Short-Term Accommodation (respite) homes.
- **Support Coordination** – we help people put their NDIS Plan into action.
- **Positive Behaviour Support** – we support people who use behaviours that are harmful to themselves or other people, to be safe, to have their needs met and to get the right support so that they can live their best life, and achieve their goals.

Your Personal Information: Privacy and Confidentiality

We want you to feel confident knowing your information is safe at Melba .

We treat the information you give us with the utmost respect and always work to protect your privacy. We are committed to managing your information in a professional way and follow all of the privacy rules as required by the law.

What information is collected?

We need to collect personal and health information which is important to providing safe disability support services to you. Types of information we may collect include:

- Your name
- Your address
- Your date of birth
- What supports you need
- About your health
- Contact details of your support persons
- Other support providers that you use.

Information is added to your file throughout the time you purchase services from Melba.

We use the information in your file to help us assessing changes in your life and in discussing support options with you. Your history is an important part of the assessment process and is helpful to plan the support we provide to you.

Who can see my information?

Melba staff work as a team and our focus is to provide holistic, person-centred support. To do this, we need to share your information with all Melba staff who are involved in supporting you.

Your personal information will only be shared with external service providers after discussion with you and when your verbal or written permission has been obtained. Information will only be shared as needed, e.g. some may only require name and address, others may need health related information.

In a medical emergency or in circumstances where it is not possible to get your permission, Melba may need to share information in your file with external service providers directly involved in your care, without your permission.

Melba may also be required by law to share your information with:

- Treating medical staff or hospitals in case of medical emergency
- Enforcement entities such as the police or government departments
Courts when subpoenaed as evidence and
- Government bodies like the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and/or the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. Your service agreement with Melba states when we will share information to these government bodies.

You have the right to change or withdraw the permission you have given to us about your information. If you withdraw your permission for us to collect or share your information, we may not be able to continue to provide services or support to you.

How do I access my information?

If you require access to your file, you can ask your Outcome Lead or House Supervisor to see your information or you can call the Melba office on 1300 696 352. You can make changes to your file if you think the information is incorrect or misleading.

How do you keep my information safe?

Melba keeps your information safe by ensuring we follow all Government rules for the safe keeping of information. All paper files are kept safe in locked cabinets. Some of your information will be on the computer which has a secure password to protect your information.

If there is any type of unauthorised access to Melba's information systems, we will report this to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, or the Department of Families, Fairness or Housing and the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner, as required by the law.

What if I'm not happy with how my information is handled or I want clarification?

If you need help or have questions about the information contained in this document, or if you have a concern about how Melba has managed your information you can talk to any Melba staff member or you can call the Melba Office on 1300 696 352.

If you are unhappy with our response you can contact:

- **For NDIS funded services:**
 - **NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commissioner** on 1800 035 544
 - **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner** on 1300 363 992
- **For DFFH or TAC funded services:**
 - **Disability Services Commissioner** 1800 667 342
 - **Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner** on 1300 006 842

Keeping You Safe – Zero Tolerance Policy

Melba Support Services does not allow any acts of abuse, neglect, exploitation or violence towards any person with disability. It is Melba's responsibility to protect you and keep you safe when receiving our services.

The Melba Way philosophy and culture is built on a Human Rights framework. Melba understands that all people are equal and have the same human rights.

Our Zero Tolerance policy focusses on:

- upholding people's Human Rights
- People feeling safe and being safe
- People being respected
- People being viewed as equal and
- All people being afforded dignity and freedom of choice.

Abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence, bullying, harassment and intimidation are all violations of a person's human rights and will not be tolerated. Melba will take immediate action to protect you and ensure you are safe.

Melba will always believe the person the first time, every time. We encourage and support you, a family member, advocate, staff member or any other party to immediately report any alleged or suspected behaviour that may place or has placed any person we support at risk of harm.

Melba will immediately take action to protect people's human rights and undertake a full and detailed investigation. We will take all action necessary to protect and maintain every person's human rights. It is everyone's responsibility to be aware of abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence, bullying, harassment and intimidation and take action on any behaviour that impacts on the human rights of any other person.

People should always feel safe when receiving supports from Melba. If you do not feel safe, you should tell your Melba support worker immediately. If you do not feel comfortable talking to your Melba support worker, you can also talk to any other Melba staff member or call the Melba office on 1300 696 352.

If you do not feel comfortable telling a Melba staff member, you should tell someone else that you trust like a family member, friend, advocate or another service provider. You can also call:

- the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline on 1800 880 052, or
- the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission on 1800 035 544.

Feedback – Compliments and Complaints

At Melba, your feedback helps us improve our services.

We want everyone to have an easy way to share feedback. It really helps us when you let us know:

- if you have a complaint.
- if you have a compliment; or
- your observations about supports provided, services received; or
- your personal experiences.

This can help us make our services better for everyone.

Often the best ideas for improvements come from the feedback you share.

This could be when we hear from anyone directly receiving services and support, or their families or advocates.

Your feedback helps us to keep improving our services across our organisation.

We will address all feedback, including complaints quickly, fairly, respectfully and confidentially. We will ensure that anyone who makes a complaint:

- will be supported without fear of payback or harsh treatment.

- receives support when making a complaint.
- is listened to and treated with respect; and
- has their complaint addressed as soon as possible.

How to make a complaint

If your complaint is one that you think can be easily fixed at the service site or location, and if you are comfortable to do so, please speak to your Melba support workers.

If they cannot help you fix your complaint, please speak to the Outcomes Lead or House Supervisor who will write down your complaint and try to fix it as quickly as possible.

If your complaint is serious, or you do not feel comfortable speaking to the staff at your service site, you can also call the Outcomes Manager, General Manager of Outcomes of your region, Chief of Home, Living and Community Services, or Melba's Chief Executive Officer.

To contact them, please call the Melba telephone number: **Ph 1300696352**.

All people have the right to have help from an advocate if they wish to make a complaint.

An advocate can be someone a person knows and trusts or they can be an independent person.

To find an independent advocate, please contact the

- **Disability Advocacy Resource Unit**

Phone: (03) 9639 5807

Website: www.daru.org.au/organisation-type/individual-advocacy

Your Service Agreement

Melba is committed to ensuring all people supported have choice and control in their lives.

Any person who is supported by Melba will be given a Service Agreement. Melba will also explain the service agreement to you.

Your Service Agreement is a document that explains the supports you have agreed to receive from Melba. This includes:

- how you will be supported,
- how many hours of support you will get,
- how much the support will cost, and
- roles and responsibilities for you and Melba.

You can use the funding you have approved, such as NDIS, Disability Support for older Australians (DSOA), Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) or Transport Accident Commission (TAC), to pay for your supports at Melba.

Melba encourages people to access a range of services and supports from different service providers as this can help you achieve your goals. You can have Service Agreements with more than one service provider.

If you have any questions or concerns about your Melba service agreement, please contact Melba on **Ph 1300 696 352**

Advocacy: the role of families and advocates

At Melba, we believe that families, friends and other supporters of people we support play an important role in a person's life.

Everyone needs people they know and trust to help them feel safe, supported and cared about.

We know that families and friends have a great deal of knowledge and information to share with us.

When they do share this with us, we are able to better understand:

- how to support you to live the life you want; and
- how to provide quality services to all the people we support.

When decisions need to be made about your support, we will make sure that all important people are involved in these decisions. We will also make sure to inform all the important people about any issues.

We won't do this if you have told us that you don't want your family involved.

At all times when a decision is being made, we will be mindful of the potential impact the decision may have. We will always think about you, as well as your relationships with your family, friends and/or advocate.

Our staff will support you to keep strong relationships with your family and other support networks.

Independent Advocates

We strongly encourage and support people to access independent advocates at any time.

You can do this any time you feel it would be helpful. Our staff can help you connect to an advocate in your area.

Or you can contact:

- **Disability Advocacy Resource Unit**
Phone: (03) 9639 5807
www.daru.org.au/organisation-type/individual-advocacy
- **VALID**
Phone: (03) 9416 4003 www.valid.org.au
- **Office of the Public Advocate** Phone:
1300 309 337
www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au

Your Rights and Responsibilities

The fundamental principles of human rights and social justice underpin all Melba Support Services work. Melba seeks to ensure that the human rights of people we support are upheld. This includes your right to live your life the way you want to, and your right to be respected and valued. People supported are to be treated fairly and equally as full citizens of Australia and not subjected to discrimination.

Melba believes that diversity should be embraced and celebrated. Everyone should have the same opportunities to fulfil their dreams and to participate in the community.

Service Delivery

- You are entitled to have all Melba staff conduct themselves ethically and as professionals. You will be treated with courtesy, dignity and respect at all times. The service that you receive from Melba will be responsive to your individual needs and provided at times as agreed in your service agreement.
- You have a right to feel physically and emotionally safe, and Melba has a responsibility to protect and keep you safe, when you are receiving services from Melba. Abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence, bullying, harassment and intimidation are all violations of your human rights and will not be tolerated. Melba will take immediate action to protect you and ensure you are safe.
- You are entitled and encouraged to pursue your goals. This includes your right to participate and be meaningfully involved and included in the wider community.
- Melba will encourage and support you to access resources and services in your community (e.g. medical specialists) that you may require, to maximise your abilities and opportunities to make informed decisions.
- Melba workers will provide support using their full professional judgement uncompromised by conflict of interest, or personal values or beliefs

Service Participation

- Melba respects your right, and that of your legal guardian or advocates, to make decisions and choices for yourself. You are entitled to be provided with information in a manner that is accessible and clear to you, to help you to make decisions about your life and your services. Melba will explain things clearly to you and will support you to access interpreter or translator services when required or requested.
- Melba will ensure that you are kept informed of any changes that may impact on you or the supports you receive from Melba.
- You or your support group are encouraged to ask questions and raise any concerns you have. Melba will address your concerns promptly.
- You have the right and Melba will support you to give feedback or make a complaint about Melba's service at any time by following Melba's complaints, compliments and

feedback procedure. You also have the right to make complaints to an independent government organisation and to engage independent advocates.

Human Rights

- Melba will abide by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) and will ensure that your legal rights are upheld when receiving services from Melba.
- Privacy is valued by all members of society and Melba's engagement with you will be conducted in a confidential and person-sensitive manner. Melba will only obtain or share information about you that is needed to provide services to you. Melba will keep accurate and secure records of your information and the supports we provide to you. You have a right to see this information at any time.
- You will not be refused services provided by Melba on the basis of race, culture, colour, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin or disability.
- People with a disability have the same right as others to have the experience of meaningful relationships like making friends and having intimate relationships with members of the same or opposite sex. Melba supports you to be you, including your right to intimacy and sexual expression as defined by you.
- You have a right and Melba will support you to be involved in your community to the degree that you choose to do so.
- You have the right to have private space and time when you want and Melba will respect this.
- You have the right to access and control your own money when you are receiving services from Melba.
- Melba supports you to freely expressing your opinions and concerns, without fear of punishment or payback. You have a right to have those views respected and acted upon as appropriate.

Your Responsibilities

When receiving services from Melba, you have a responsibility to:

- Treat other people accessing services with respect.
- Keep Melba a safe place for other people supported and Melba staff.
- Give Melba accurate information about your support needs and tell Melba if your support needs change.
- Tell Melba if you want to change the services you receive from Melba, including changes hours of support or programs accessed.
- Participate in assessments and the development of your support plans.
- Give Melba permission to share your sensitive and personal information to meet mandatory reporting requirements.

- Give Melba notice (in accordance with your service agreement) to stop receiving services from Melba.
- Tell Melba if your NDIS, DFFH, DSOA or TAC funding changes or is stopped.
- Give Melba the details of your plan nominee/representative, plan manager and/or support coordinator and tell Melba if any of these people change.
- Ask Melba questions about your services if you are unsure.
- Give Melba the necessary notice (in accordance with your service agreement) if you want to cancel your planned supports on any day and pay for the supports if you do not give enough notice to cancel the support.
- You need to tell Melba if you want to stop receiving services from Melba.
- Melba will assist you to move to another service if this is what you choose to do.

Service Access and Exit

- If you want to access extra supports by Melba you can call the Melba Office on 1300 696 352 to talk about this and discuss how it can be arranged.
- If you want to change the services you access at Melba you can call the Melba office on 1300 696 352 to talk about this.
- If you want to end services and supports at Melba, you can call the Melba office on 1300 696 352.
- Melba will support you to move to another service.
- Melba may stop providing support if you do not have funding to continue accessing Melba.
- Melba may stop providing support if the service or support you access at Melba stops being provided.
- Melba will talk to you about any change to ensure your choice and control is supported
- Melba will work with you and your supporters to assist you to move to another service if Melba cannot support you anymore.

Keeping Children and Young People Safe

At Melba, we provide safe environments for all children and young people who receive our supports.

Melba has a zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to protecting children and young people from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation in any form.

Melba creates 'child safe' environments, where children and young people are respected, protected, empowered and active in their own protection. This includes making sure our staff are skilled, confident and competent, and well supported in meeting these responsibilities.



Everyone working at Melba is responsible for the support and protection of children receiving services from Melba and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Our staff members have a responsibility to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of children and young people in our services.

Our staff members also have a responsibility to ensure all children or young people are free to express their individual cultural differences in a safe and respectful environment. Melba will eliminate or reduce the risk of abuse to children and young people through:

- promoting and protecting the best interests and rights of children and young people at all times and in all positions, decisions and actions.
- embedding a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse, neglect and/or violence and meeting compulsory reporting requirements.
- putting in place thorough recruitment processes, safety screening and training for all staff.
- creating a culture of openness that supports anyone, including children and young people, to safely tell us of any risks and allegations of harm to children and young people supported by Melba; and
- making sure everyone has clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children through Melba's Code of Conduct Policy.