



**Read Me**

**I'm Your Plain English  
Melba Handbook**

# Table of Contents

Melba's Vision, Values and Purpose.....	2
The Melba Way .....	3
Your Personal Information – Privacy and Confidentiality .....	4
Keeping You Safe – Zero Tolerance Policy.....	6
Feedback, Compliments and Complaints .....	7
Your Service Agreement .....	9
Advocacy.....	10
Your Rights and Responsibilities .....	11
Keeping Children and Young People Safe .....	13

# 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 listen to what a person wants in their life, and also listen to their family, friends or advocate.

It means we support a person to reach their goals and dreams.

We keep the people we support safe. This is our priority!

We do everything possible to provide the best support so that each and every person can reach their goals and enjoy a fabulous life.

We always listen to what each and every person wants from their own lives.

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 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.
- **Supported Trips and Holidays** – we support people to have dream holidays in ways that suit their needs.
- **Individualised Support** – one-to-one supports any day, anywhere, any time.
- **Independent Living** – a person's home - their choice, their independence!
- **Supported Trips and Holidays** – we support people to have dream holidays in ways that suit their needs.
- **Short Term Accommodation & Assistance** – for short overnight stays away from home
- **Support Coordination** – we help people put their NDIS Plan into action.
- **Positive Behaviour Support** – supporting people to realise their life, their goals and their wellbeing.

## **Your Personal Information:**

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

### **How we protect your privacy**

We want you to feel confident knowing your information is in safe hands.

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 principles contained within the legislation.

### **What information is collected?**

We need to collect personal and health information which is relevant to providing disability support services to you. Information is added to this file throughout the time you are involved with Melba.

We use the information in your file to guide us when assessing changes in your life and in discussing support options with you. Your past history is an important part of the assessment process and is helpful for considering support options.

### **Who can see my information?**

Melba staff work as a team and our emphasis is on holistic, person centred support. As a result, it will be necessary to share information amongst the team. Your personal information will only be shared with external service providers after discussion with you and when your verbal or written consent 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.

Information such as age, gender, disability type, living and support arrangements may be reported to funding bodies as part of funding agreements and future service delivery planning. All identifying details are removed from this data.

In a medical emergency or in circumstances where it is impractical or impossible to seek your consent, Melba may need to share information in your file with external service providers directly involved in your care, without your consent.

Melba may be required by law to release your information to:

- Treating medical staff or hospitals in case of medical emergency;
- Enforcement entities such as the police or government departments; and
- Courts when subpoenaed as evidence.

### **How do I access my information?**

If you require access to your file, you can make an appointment with our office to view your information. You can make changes to your file if you think the information is incorrect or misleading.

## How do you keep my information safe?

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

If Melba's information systems were ever breached, under the Australian Government's Information Commissioner Notifiable Data Breach Scheme, we must report and attempts of hacking or other types of unauthorised access.

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

If you require clarification about the information contained in this document, or if you have a concern about how Melba has managed your information you can contact your House Supervisor, Operations Manager or General Manager Outcomes or the Chief Outcomes Officer.

If you are unhappy with our response you can contact:

- **Victorian Privacy Commissioner** on 1300 666 444
- **Office of the Australian Privacy Commissioner** on 1300 363 992
- **Disability Services Commissioner** 1800 667 342

## Keeping You Safe – Zero Tolerance Policy

Melba Support Services has a zero tolerance to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence toward any person supported.

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

- Being treated with dignity and respect and to be valued for who they are.
- Feeling physically and emotionally safe in all environments and situations.
- Having all information about them treated as confidential.
- Choosing activities.
- Having relationships.
- Participating in the community to the degree that they choose to do so.
- Having private space and time as desired.
- Freely expressing their opinions and concerns, without fear of retribution, and to have those views respected and acted upon as appropriate.
- Accessing and controlling their own money.

Our Zero Tolerance focusses on:

- Individual 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 people and ensure they are safe.

Melba will always believe the person the first time, every time. We encourage any person, 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 thorough 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.

If you have any concerns, please contact your House Supervisor, the Operations Manager, the General Manager of Outcomes, or the Chief Outcomes Officer.

## Feedback – Compliments and Complaints

At Melba, your feedback helps us improve our services.

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

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

This can lead to better services and support for all.

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

- will be supported without fear of payback or harsh retribution;
- 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 house, and if you are comfortable to do so, please speak to the direct care staff.

If they are unable to help you fix your complaint, ask to speak to the 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 the house, you may choose to call the General Manager of Outcomes of your region, or Operations Manager, or Outcomes Manager, or our Chief Outcomes Officer, or our Chief Executive Officer.

To contact them, please call the Melba telephone number: 1300 696 352

If you feel that we have not done enough to fix your complaint, please contact any of the following:

Organisation	Phone	Website
<b>Disability Services Commissioner</b>	1800 677 342	<a href="http://www.odsc.vic.gov.au/making-a-complaint">www.odsc.vic.gov.au/making-a-complaint</a>
<b>Mental Health Complaints Commissioner</b>	1800 246 054	<a href="http://www.mhcc.vic.gov.au">www.mhcc.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>Office of the Public Advocate</b>	1300 309 337	<a href="http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au">www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>Victorian Equal Opportunity &amp; Human Rights Commission</b>	1300 292 153	<a href="http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au">www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au</a>

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

An advocate can be a 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](http://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 have a Service Agreement.

Your Service Agreement is a document that explains the supports you have agreed upon with 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.

There are different types of funding in your NDIS plan to pay for your supports.

For example:

- **Core Support** can be used for access to the community and assistance with daily living,
- **Supported Independent Living (SIL)** is used for supports within a Melba home, and
- **Specialised Disability Accommodation (SDA)** funding is used to help fix things in your home (maintenance) and make any necessary changes (modifications).

If you live in a Melba supported home, you may be provided with an additional agreement called a Residential Statement. This agreement explains any additional responsibilities for you and Melba, it shows both shared and private spaces within the home and outlines any additional costs that may occur.

Melba encourages people to access a range of services and supports 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 service agreements, please contact the General Manager of Outcomes for your area on 1300 696 352.

## Advocacy: the role of families and advocates

At Melba, we believe that the families, friends and advocates of the 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 a person to live the life they want; and
- how to provide quality services to all the people we support.

When making decisions about an individual we 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 a person we support has told us that they don't want their families 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 the person we are supporting, as well as their relationships with their family, friends and/or advocate.

Our staff will support people to keep strong relationships with their families and other support networks.

### Independent Advocates

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

You can do this at 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](http://www.daru.org.au/organisation-type/individual-advocacy)
- **VALID**  
Phone: (03) 9416 4003  
[www.valid.org.au](http://www.valid.org.au)
- **Office of the Public Advocate**  
Phone: 1300 309 337  
[www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://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 their right to self-determination, and their right to diversity. People supported are to be treated fairly and equally as full citizens of Australia and not subjected to discrimination.

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

### Service Delivery

- People supported are entitled to have all Melba staff and volunteers conduct themselves ethically and as professionals. People will be treated with courtesy and consideration at all times. The service that people receive from Melba will be responsive to people's individual needs.
- People supported are entitled and encouraged to pursue their own private goals in the same manner that any other member of the community may do so. This includes the right to participate and be meaningfully involved and included in the wider community.
- Melba will endeavour to provide and encourage people supported to access relevant resources and services (e.g. medical specialists) that they may require to maximise their abilities and opportunities to make informed decisions.
- Melba workers will provide support using their full professional judgement uncompromised by any conflict of interest.

### Service Participation

- We respect the right of people supported, or their legal guardians, to make decisions and choices for themselves. People supported are entitled to be provided with information in a manner that is accessible and clear to them, in order to encourage meaningful participation in the decision-making process.
- Melba will ensure that people supported are kept informed of any changes that may impact on them.
- People supported or the person's support group will be encouraged to ask questions and raise any concerns they have. Any concerns raised will be addressed promptly.

## Human Rights

- Melba will abide by the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) and will do its utmost to ensure that the legal rights of people supported are maintained.
- Privacy is valued by all members of society and Melba's dealings with people supported should be conducted in a confidential and person- sensitive manner.
- People supported will not be refused services provided by Melba on the basis of race, creed, colour, religion, sex, 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 loving relationships with members of the same or opposite sex. Relationships fulfil a number of needs for people including the need for affection, social contact, physical contact and the need to develop a sense of self-esteem and confidence.
- People supported have the right to make a complaint about Melba's service according to Melba's established complaints and grievances procedures. People supported also have the right to make independent complaints and to engage independent advocates.

## Participants' Responsibilities

- Participants' responsibilities are outlined in detail in each service agreement.

## 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 in receipt of 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;
- putting in place thorough recruitment processes, safety screening and training for all staff;
- creating a culture of openness that supports anyone 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.