**DANA Members talking points - December 2023**

 **Endorsing the campaign**

* Without a significant increase in funding for independent disability advocacy, we simply cannot do the work we do.
* We are urging the Australian government to significantly increase funding for independent advocacy organisations who directly support people with disability.
* As a member of Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA), we endorse the Pre Budget submission made on 14 November 2023 calling for $91 million of additional funding.
* Additional funding will enable independent advocacy organisations to meet demand through to July 2025.
* This can further support Australia’s Disability Strategy and implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**Without advocacy funding, people with disability at risk**

* Advocates must prioritise urgent and critical cases, which means we can’t step in to help less severe cases before they reach a crisis point.
* Every second person with a disability is being turned away due to lack of available advocates. Yet, there is currently no dedicated investment in advocacy services.
* Lack of advocacy support is leaving people with disability in crisis, with their supports for housing, health, and disability daily living being at risk.

**Rural and remote support**

* Those of us who are operating in remote areas face severe limits about how much we can spend on travel, accommodation, and the vehicles necessary to meet with people and solve problems.

**Culturally safe advocacy**

* Key advocacy organisations are working together to develop proposals for building up a First Nations workforce to provide culturally safe advocacy support across different locations and communities.
* A pilot Community Hub is being proposed for Far North Queensland to increase advocacy services available. The hub will also explore the interactions between First Nations people with disability and government systems.

**Additional funding will benefit all systems**

* When every person with disability can get access to independent advocacy support, it lowers their risk of disadvantage or discrimination.
* Funding advocacy is a crucial part of making sure every other system, including public and private services, works for people with disability.
* Helps prevent NDIS exploitation by supporting people with disability to advocate for their rights and address unfair treatment.
* Increased advocacy support will keep mainstream services accountable and accessible for people with disability and reduce the times those supports need to be duplicated.
* Recent reports have estimated that for every $1 spent in advocacy, governments get back $3.5 in benefits across other areas such as health, housing, and justice.

**Additional funding will strengthen the rights of people with disability.**

* Having an advocate to turn to, supports people with disability to build their own capacity to self-advocate, building trusted relationships over time.
* With additional funding advocacy organisations can do more outreach and prevention work. This can help find and support people who may not be able to access advocacy supports themselves, such as those in group homes or boarding accommodation.
* The increased outreach and prevention work would also support the effectiveness of other bodies, such as the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.
* Supporting people with disability to build capacity to better use their NDIS funding.

**The funding asks**

* $43 million for NDAP providers to meet demand until mid-2025
* $25 million for non-NDAP providers in need of urgent support
* $20 million for rural and remote providers
* $5.225 million for capacity building in the sector, including for First Nations cultural safety, resourcing, pilot progress and increased awareness of Supported Decision Making.