

**Constitution
of the
Disability Discrimination Legal Service Incorporated
(Victoria)**

1. Name

The name of the Incorporated Association is the **Disability Discrimination Legal Service Incorporated**.

2. Definitions

2.1 In these Rules, unless the contrary intention appears –

“The Association” means the Disability Discrimination Legal Service.

“DDA” means the *Disability Discrimination Act (Cth 1992)*.

“EOA” means the *Equal Opportunity Act (Vic. 1995)*.

“Committee” means the Committee of Management of the Association.

“General Meeting” means a general meeting of members convened in accordance with Rule 13.

“Member” means a member of the Association

“Ordinary Member of the Committee” means a member of the Committee who is not an officer of the Association under Rule 22.

“The Act” means the Associations Incorporation Act 1981.

“The Regulations” means Regulations under the Act.

“Relevant documents” has the same meaning as in the Act.

“Service Provider Organisation” means an Organisation providing services to people with a disability where that organisation is neither managed nor controlled by a majority of people with a disability.

“Disability” means a disability as defined by the DDA.

“Disability Organisation” means an organisation managed by or controlled by people with disabilities working for people with disabilities.

2.2 In these Rules, a reference to the Secretary of an Association is a reference –

- (a) where a person holds office under these Rules as Secretary of the Association –
to that person; and
- (b) in any other case, to the Public Officer of the Association.

3 Alteration of the rules

These Rules and the statement of purposes of the Association must not be altered except in accordance with the Act.

4 Aims and objectives

4.1 To, promote the objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (hereafter referred to as 'the Acts') in relation to disability/impairment which are:

- The elimination of discrimination on the basis of disability;
- That people with disabilities have a right to equal treatment before the law and;
- To promote community understanding that people with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

4.2 To provide free and readily accessible legal advice, referral and casework services to people with disabilities and to people/organisations who assist or work for people with disabilities in relation to issues relevant to the Acts.

4.3 To initiate and participate in the development of education outreach and information distribution to promote further awareness of the Acts to consumers and the community.

4.4 To initiate, and participate in reviewing Federal, State and International legislation relevant to the needs of people with disabilities.

4.5 In the event of dissolution or winding up of the Association, any remaining monies will only be distributed to an organisation or organisations approved by the Commissioner of Taxation under sub section (i) or (ii) of section 78 (1) (a) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936, as amended, or which are exempt, from sales tax under item 81 (1) c in the first schedule of the Sales Tax (Exemption and Classification) Act 1935, as amended.

5 Membership, entry fees and subscriptions

5.1 All persons and organisations present at the Inaugural general meeting subject to these Rules shall be deemed to be foundation members of the Association provided that they desire to be such members.

- 5.2 All interested persons and organisations who accept the aim, objectives and rules of the Association and comply with them, are eligible for membership.
- 5.3 Service Provider Organisations are eligible for associate membership (non-voting) only.
- 5.4 A person who applies and is approved for membership as provided in these Rules is eligible to be a member of the Association on approval of their membership at the next Committee meeting.
- 5.5 A person who is not a member of the Association at the time of the incorporation of the Association (or who was a member at that time but has ceased to be a member) must not be admitted to membership unless
- (a) he or she applies for membership in accordance with sub-rule 5.6;
 - and
 - (b) the admission as a member is approved by the committee
- 5.6 A nomination of a person or organisation for membership of the Association –
- (a) shall be made in writing or audio tape in the format set out in Appendix 1;
 - and
 - (b) shall be lodged with the Secretary of the Association or delegate.
- 5.7 As soon as practicable after the receipt of an application, the Secretary or delegate must refer the application to the committee.
- 5.8 The committee must determine whether to approve or reject the application.
- 5.9 If the committee approves an application for membership, the Secretary or delegate must, as soon as practicable-
- (a) notify the applicant in writing of the approval for membership,
- 5.10 The Secretary must, within 28 days of membership being approved, enter the applicant's name in the register of members.
- 5.11 An applicant for membership becomes a member and is entitled to exercise the rights of membership when his or her name is entered in the register of members. However a new member has no voting rights until 12 months from the date of membership being approved.
- 5.12 If the committee rejects an application, the committee must, as soon as practicable, notify the applicant in writing that the application has been rejected.
- 5.13 A right, privilege, or obligation of a person by reason of membership of the Association -

- (a) is not capable of being transferred or transmitted to another person;
and
- (b) terminates upon the cessation of membership whether by death or resignation or otherwise.

6 Register of members

- 6.1 The Secretary or his/her delegate must keep and maintain a register of members containing -
- (a) the name and address of each member;
 - and
 - (b) the date on which each member's name was entered in the register.
- 6.2 The register is available for inspection free of charge by any member upon request.
- 6.3 A member may make a copy of entries in the register.

7 Ceasing membership

- 7.1 A member of the Association may resign from the Association by giving notice in writing to the Secretary of his or her intention to resign.
- 7.2 The Secretary or his/her delegate must record in the register of members the date on which the member ceased to be a member.
- 7.3 If a member of the Association ceases to be able to be contacted by the Association, the member must advise the Association of their new contact details, failing which, the Association is under no obligation to afford the privileges of membership to that person.

8 Discipline, suspension and expulsion of members

- 8.1 Subject to these Rules, if the committee is of the opinion that a member has refused or neglected to comply with these Rules, or has been guilty of conduct unbecoming a member or prejudicial to the interests of the Association, the committee may by resolution-
- (a) suspend that member from membership of the Association for a specified period;
 - or
 - (b) expel that member from the Association.
- 8.2 A resolution of the committee under sub-rule 8.1 does not take effect unless -
- (a) at a meeting held in accordance with sub-rule 8.3, the committee confirms the resolution;

and

- (b) if the member exercises a right of appeal to the Association under this rule, the Association confirms the resolution in accordance with this rule.

8.3 A meeting of the committee to confirm or revoke a resolution passed under sub-rule 8.1 must be held not earlier than 14 days, and not later than 28 days, after notice has been given to the member in accordance with sub-rule 8.4.

8.4 For the purposes of giving notice in accordance with sub-rule .3, the Secretary must, as soon as practicable, cause to be given to the member a written notice-

- (a) setting out the resolution of the committee and the grounds on which it is based:

and

- (b) stating that the member, or his or her representative, may address the committee at a meeting to be held not earlier than 14 days and not later than 28 days after the notice has been given to that member;

and

- (c) stating the date, place and time of that meeting;

and

- (d) informing the member that he or she may do one or both of the following-

- (i) attend that meeting;

- (ii) give to the committee before the date of that meeting a written or audio taped statement seeking the revocation of the resolution;

and

- (e) informing the member that, if at that meeting, the committee confirms the resolution, he or she may not later than 48 hours after that meeting, give the Secretary a notice to the effect that he or she wishes to appeal to the Association in general meeting against the resolution.

8.5 At a meeting of the committee to confirm or revoke a resolution passed under sub-rule 8.1, the committee must-

- (a) give the member, or his or her representative, an opportunity to be heard;

and

- (b) give due consideration to any written statement submitted by the member;

and

- (c) determine by resolution whether to confirm or to revoke the resolution.

8.6 If at the meeting of the committee, the committee confirms the resolution, the member may, not later than 48 hours after that meeting, give the Secretary a notice to the effect that he or she wishes to appeal to the Association in general meeting against the resolution.

8.7 If the Secretary receives a notice under sub-rule 8.6, he or she must notify the committee and the committee must convene a general meeting of the Association to be held within 21 days after the date on which the Secretary received the notice

8.8 At a general meeting of the Association convened under sub-rule 8.7 -

- (a) no business other than the question of the appeal may be conducted;
and
- (b) the committee may place before the meeting details of the grounds for the resolution and the reasons for the passing of the resolution;
and
- (c) the member, or his or her representative, must be given an opportunity to be heard;
and
- (d) the members present must vote by secret ballot on the question whether the resolution should be confirmed or revoked.

8.9 A resolution is confirmed if, at the general meeting, not less than two-thirds of the members present vote in person, or by proxy, in favour of the resolution. In any other case, the resolution is revoked.

9 Disputes and mediation

9.1 The grievance procedure set out in this rule applies to disputes under these Rules between -

- (a) a member and another member;
or
- (b) a member and the Association.

9.2 The parties to the dispute must meet and discuss the matter in dispute, and, if possible, resolve the dispute within 14 days after the dispute comes to the attention of all of the parties.

9.3 If the parties are unable to resolve the dispute at the meeting, or if a party fails to attend that meeting, then the parties must, within 10 days, hold a meeting in the presence of a mediator.

9.4 The mediator must be-

- (a) a person chosen by agreement between the parties; or
- (b) in the absence of agreement –
 - (i) in the case of a dispute between a member and another member, a person appointed by the committee of the Association;
or
 - (ii) in the case of a dispute between a member and the Association, a person who is a mediator appointed or employed by the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (Department of Justice).

9.5 A member of the Association can be a mediator.

9.6 The mediator cannot be a member who is a party to the dispute.

9.7 The parties to the dispute must, in good faith, attempt to settle the dispute by mediation.

9.8 The mediator, in conducting the mediation, must -

- (a) give the parties to the mediation process every opportunity to be heard;
and
- (b) allow due consideration by all parties of any written statement submitted by any party;
and
- (c) ensure that natural justice is accorded to the parties to the dispute throughout the mediation process.

9.9 The mediator must not determine the dispute.

If the mediation process does not result in the dispute being resolved, the parties may seek to resolve the dispute in accordance with the Act or otherwise at law

10 Annual general meetings

10.1 The committee may determine the date, time and place of the annual general meeting of the Association in accordance with the Act.

10.2 The notice convening the annual general meeting must specify that the meeting is an annual general meeting.

10.3 The ordinary business of the annual general meeting shall be -

- (a) to confirm the minutes of the previous annual general meeting and of any general meeting held since that meeting;
and
- (b) to receive from the committee reports upon the transactions of the Association during the last preceding financial year;
and
- (c) to elect officers of the Association and the ordinary member of the committee;
and
- (d) to receive and consider the statement submitted by the Association in accordance with section 30(3) of the Act.

10.4 The annual general meeting may conduct any special business of which notice has been given in accordance with these Rules.

11 Special general meetings

- 11.1 In addition to the annual general meeting, any other general meeting may be held in the same year.
- 11.2 All general meetings other than the annual general meeting are special general meetings.
- 11.3 The committee may, whenever it thinks fit, convene a special general meeting of the Association.
- 11.4 If, but for this sub-rule, more than 15 months would elapse between annual general meetings, the committee must convene a special general meeting before the expiration of that period.
- 11.5 The committee must, on the request in writing of members representing not less than 5 per cent of the total number of members, convene a special general meeting of the Association.
- 11.6 The request for a special general meeting must -
- (a) state the objects of the meeting;
 - and
 - (b) be signed by the members requesting the meeting;
 - and
 - (c) be sent to the address of the Secretary.
- 11.7 If the committee does not cause a special general meeting to be held within one month after the date on which the request is sent to the address of the Secretary, the members making the request, or any of them, may convene a special general meeting to be held not later than 3 months after that date.
- 11.8 If a special general meeting is convened by members in accordance with this rule, it must be convened by the committee and all reasonable expenses incurred in convening the special general meeting must be refunded by the Association to the persons incurring the expenses.

12 Special business

All business that is conducted at a special general meeting and all business that is conducted at the annual general meeting, except for business conducted under the rules as ordinary business of the annual general meeting, is deemed to be special business.

13 Notice of general meetings

- 13.1 The Secretary of the Association, at least 14 days, or if a special resolution has been proposed at least 21 days, before the date fixed for holding a general meeting of the Association, must cause to be sent to each member of the Association, a notice stating the place, date and time

of the meeting and the nature of the business to be conducted at the meeting.

13.2 Notice may be sent-

- (a) by prepaid post to the address appearing in the register of members;
or
- (b) if the member requests, by facsimile transmission or electronic transmission.

13.3 No business other than that set out in the notice convening the meeting may be conducted at the meeting.

13.4 A member intending to bring any business before a meeting may notify in writing, audio recording, or by electronic transmission, the Secretary of that business, who must include that business in the notice calling the next general meeting.

14 Quorum at general meetings

14.1 No item of business may be conducted at a general meeting unless a quorum of members entitled under these Rules to vote is present at the time when the meeting is considering that item.

14.2 Five members personally present (being members entitled under these Rules to vote at a general meeting) constitute a quorum for the conduct of the business of a general meeting.

14.3 If, within half an hour after the appointment time for the commencement of a general meeting, a quorum is not present -

- (i) in the case of a meeting convened upon the request of members, the meeting must be dissolved;
and
- (ii) in any other case, the meeting shall stand adjourned to the same day in the next week at the same time and (unless another place is specified by the Chairperson at the time of the adjournment or by written notice to members given before the day to which the meeting is adjourned) at the same place.

14.4 If at the adjourned meeting the quorum is not present within half an hour after the time appointed for the commencement of the meeting, the members personally present (being not less than 3) shall be a quorum.

15 Presiding at general meetings

15.1 The Chairperson, or in the Chairperson's absence, the Deputy-Chairperson, shall reside as Chairperson at each general meeting of the Association.

15.2 If the Chairperson and the Deputy-Chairperson are absent from a general meeting, or are unable to preside, the members present must select one of their number to preside as Chairperson.

16 Adjournment of general meetings

16.1 The person presiding may, with the consent of a majority of members present at the meeting, adjourn the meeting from time to time and place to place.

16.2 No business may be conducted at an adjourned meeting other than the unfinished business from the meeting that was adjourned.

16.3 If a meeting is adjourned for 14 days or more, notice of the adjourned meeting must be given in accordance with rule 14.

16.4 Except as provided in rule 14, it is not necessary to give notice of an adjournment or of the business to be conducted at an adjourned meeting.

17 Voting at general meetings

17.1 Upon any question arising at a general meeting of the Association, a member has one vote only.

17.2 All votes must be given personally or by proxy.

17.3 In the case of an equality of voting on a question, the Chairperson of the meeting is entitled to exercise a second or casting vote.

17.4 A member is not entitled to vote at a general meeting unless they have been a member for more than one year.

18 Poll at general meetings

18.1 If at a meeting a poll on any question is demanded by not less than 3 members, it must be taken at that meeting in such manner as the Chairperson may direct and the resolution of the poll shall be deemed to be a resolution of the meeting on that question.

18.2 A poll that is demanded on the election of a Chairperson or on a question of an adjournment must be taken immediately and a poll that is demanded on any other question must be taken at such time before the close of the meeting as the Chairperson may direct.

19 Manner of determining whether resolution carried

If a question arising at a general meeting of the Association is determined on a show of hands –

- (a) a declaration by the Chairperson that a resolution has been -
 - (i) carried;
or
 - (ii) carried unanimously;
or
 - (iii) carried by a particular majority;
or
 - (iv) lost;
- and
- (b) an entry to that effect in the minute book of the Association is evidence of the fact, without proof of the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour of, or against, that resolution.

20 Proxies

20.1 Each member is entitled to appoint another member as a proxy by notice given to the Secretary no later than 48 hours before the time of the meeting in respect of which the proxy is appointed.

20.2 The notice appointing the proxy must be-

- (a) for a meeting of the Association convened under rule 8.7, in the form set out in Appendix 2;
or
- (b) in any other case, in the form set out in Appendix 3.

21 Committee of Management

21.1 The affairs of the Association shall be managed by the committee of management.

21.2 The committee –

- (a) shall control and manage the business and affairs of the Association; and
- (b) may, subject to these Rules, the Act and the Regulations, exercise all such powers and functions as may be exercised by the Association other than those powers and functions that are required by these Rules to be exercised by general meetings of the members of the Association;
and
- (c) subject to these Rules, the Act and the Regulations, has power to perform all such acts and things as appear to the committee to be essential for the proper management of the business and affairs of the Association.

21.3 Subject to section 23 of the Act, the committee shall consist of no less than 5 and no more than 13 members of the Association. The emphasis on membership will be people with life experience of disability, either by:

- a) having a disability themselves;
- b) having an understanding of disability through friends/family;
- c) working in the field of disability.

In addition, one nominee of the staff of the Association shall have a right of attendance and participation on the management committee but will be a non-voting member thereof. This right of attendance shall exclude 'in camera' sessions of the Management Committee where appropriate.

21.4 Service Provider organisations or their nominees are not eligible or entitled to hold a position on the Committee.

22 Office holders

22.1 The officers of the Association shall be-

- (a) a Chairperson;
- (b) a Deputy-Chairperson;
- (c) a Treasurer;
- and
- (d) a Secretary.

22.2 The provisions of rule 23, so far as they are applicable and with the necessary modifications, apply to and in relation to the election of persons to any other offices referred to in sub-rule 22.1.

22.3 Each new officer of the Association shall hold office until the annual general meeting next after the date of his or her election but is eligible for re-election.

22.4 In the event of a casual vacancy in any office referred to in sub-rule 22.1, the committee may appoint one of its members to the vacant office and the member appointed may continue in office up to and including the conclusion of the annual general meeting next following the date of the appointment.

23 Ordinary members of the committee

23.1 Subject to these Rules, each ordinary member of the committee shall hold office until the annual general meeting next after the date of election but is eligible for re-election.

23.2 In the event of a casual vacancy occurring in the office of an ordinary member of the committee, the committee may appoint a member of the

Association to fill the vacancy and the member appointed shall hold office, subject to these Rules, until the conclusion of the annual general meeting next following the date of the appointment.

24 Election of officers and ordinary committee members

- 24.1 Nominations of candidates for election of officers of the Association or as ordinary members of the committee must be –
- (a) made in writing, signed by two members of the Association and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the form of nomination); and
 - (b) delivered to the Secretary of the Association not less than 7 days before the date fixed for the holding of the annual general meeting.
- 24.2 A candidate may only be nominated for one office, or as an ordinary member of the committee, prior to the annual general meeting.
- 24.3 If insufficient nominations are received to fill all vacancies on the committee, the candidates nominated shall be deemed to be elected and further nominations may be received at the annual general meeting.
- 24.4 If the number of nominations received is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, the persons nominated shall be deemed to be elected.
- 24.5 If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot must be held.
- 24.6 The ballot for the election of officers and ordinary members of the committee must be conducted at the annual general meeting in such manner as the committee may direct.

25 Vacancies

The office of an officer of the Association, or of an ordinary member of the committee, becomes vacant if the officer or member –

- (a) ceases to be a member of the Association;
or
- (b) becomes an insolvent under administration within the meaning of the Corporations Law;
or
- (c) resigns from office by notice in writing given to the Secretary.

26 Meetings of the committee

- 26.1 The committee must meet at least 6 times in each year at such place and such times as the committee may determine.

26.2 Special meetings of the committee may be convened by the Chairperson or by any 4 members of the committee.

27 Notice of committee meetings

27.1 Written notice of each committee meeting must be given to each member of the committee at least 2 business days before the date of the meeting.

27.2 Written notice must be given to members of the committee of any special meeting specifying the general nature of the business to be conducted and no other business may be conducted at such a meeting.

28 Quorum for committee meetings

28.1 A quorum for the conduct of the business of a meeting of the committee is constituted where:

(a) any 4 members of the committee are present;

or

(b) half of the number of incumbent committee members are present, being any 5 members of the committee where all committee positions are filled;

whichever is the greater number.

28.2 No business may be conducted unless a quorum is present.

28.3 If within half an hour of the time appointed for the meeting a quorum is not present-

(i) in the case of a special meeting, the meeting lapses;

(ii) in any other case, the meeting shall stand adjourned to the same place and the same time and day in the following week.

28.4 The committee may act notwithstanding any vacancy on the committee.

29 Presiding at committee meetings

29.1 At meetings of the committee-

(a) the Chairperson or, in the Chairperson's absence, the Deputy-Chairperson presides;

or

(b) if the Chairperson and the Deputy-Chairperson are absent, or are unable to preside, the members present must choose one of their number to preside.

30 Voting at committee meetings

- 30.1 Questions arising at a meeting of the committee, or at a meeting of any subcommittee appointed by the committee, shall be determined on a show of hands or, if a member requests, by a poll taken in such manner as the person presiding at that meeting may determine.
- 30.2 Each member present at a meeting of the committee, or at a meeting of any sub-committee appointed by the committee (including the person presiding at the meeting), is entitled to one vote and, in the event of an equality of votes on any question, the person presiding may exercise a second or casting vote.

31 Removal of committee member

- 31.1 The Association in general meeting may, by resolution, remove any member of the committee before the expiration of the member's term of office and appoint another member in his or her place to hold office until the expiration of the term of the first-mentioned member.
- 31.2 A member who is the subject of a proposed resolution referred to in sub-rule 31.1 may make representations in writing to the Secretary or Chairperson of the Association (not exceeding a reasonable length) and may request that the representations be provided to the members of the Association.
- 31.3 The Secretary or the Chairperson may give a copy of the representations to each member of the Association or, if they are not so given, the member may require that they be read out at the meeting.

32 Minutes of meetings

The Secretary of the Association or his/her delegate must keep minutes of the resolutions and proceedings of each general meeting, and each committee meeting, together with a record of the names of persons present at committee meetings.

33 Funds

- 33.1 The Treasurer/delegate of the Association must -
- (a) collect and receive all moneys due to the Association and make all payments authorised by the Association;
and
 - (b) keep correct accounts and books showing the financial affairs of the Association with full details of all receipts and expenditure connected with the activities of the Association.

- 33.2 All cheques, drafts, bills of exchange, promissory notes and other negotiable instruments must be signed by –
- (a) two members of the committee;
 - or
 - (b) one member of the committee and one staff member as delegated by the Treasurer.

- 33.3 The funds of the Association shall be derived from entrance fees, annual subscriptions, donations and such other sources as the committee determines.

34 Seal

- 34.1 The common seal of the Association must be kept in the custody of the Manager at the Association's office, on behalf of the Secretary or his/her delegate.

- 34.2 The common seal must not be affixed to any instrument except by the authority of the committee and the affixing of the common seal must be attested by the signatures either of two members of the committee or, of one member of the committee and of the public officer of the Association.

35 Notice to members

Except for the requirement in rule 13, any notice that is required to be given to a member, by on behalf of the Association, under these Rules may be given by –

- (a) delivering the notice to the member personally in writing or on audio recording;
- or
- (b) sending it by post addressed to the member at that member's address shown in the register of members;
- or
- (c) facsimile transmission, if the member has requested that the notice be given to him or her in this manner;
- or
- (d) electronic transmission, if the member has requested that the notice be given to him or her in this manner.

36 Custody and inspection of books and records

- 36.1 Except as otherwise provided in these Rules, the Secretary or his/her delegate must keep in his or her custody or under his or her control all books, documents and securities of the Association.

36.2 All accounts, books, securities and any other relevant documents of the Association must be available for inspection free of charge by any member upon request.

36.3 A member may make a copy of any accounts, books, securities and any other relevant documents of the Association.

37 Establishment, operation and limits of gift fund

37.1 The Association must maintain for its principle purpose a gift fund -
(a) to which gifts of money or property for that purpose are to be made;
and
(b) to which any money received by the organisation because of such gifts is to be credited;
and
(c) that does not receive any other money or property.

37.2 The Association must use the following only for its principle purpose -
(a) gifts made to the Gift Fund;
(b) any money received because of such gifts.

38 Winding up of gift fund

38.1 At the first occurrence of -
(a) the winding up of the Gift Fund;
or
(b) the organisation ceasing to be endorsed as a deductible gift recipient under Subdivision 30-BA of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997; any surplus assets of the Gift Fund must be transferred to a fund, authority or institution -
(i) which is charitable at law;
and
(ii) gifts to which can be deducted under Division 30 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

38.2 The identity of the fund, authority or institution must be decided by the management committee.

38.3 Where in respect of a fund, authority or institution section 30-15 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 provides that gifts to it are deductible only if, among other things, the conditions set out in the relevant table item in sub-division 30-B are satisfied, a transfer under this clause to that fund, authority or institution must be made in accordance with or subject to those conditions.