

# Service Statement

## Systems advocacy

Advancing positive change for people with impaired decision-making capacity

Office of the Public Advocate

# Service Statement

## Our purpose

We deliver statutory systems advocacy to promote improved life opportunities and outcomes on behalf of people with impaired decision-making capacity. *The Guardianship and Administration Act 2000* provides the legal authority for our work.

## Our vision

To realise a just and inclusive society for all citizens.

## Our approach

We are committed to evidence-based systems advocacy. We are continuously exploring and extending our knowledge and influence on inclusive policy, programs and practices for people with impaired decision-making capacity.

## Our values

We engage collaboratively with our stakeholders by building goodwill, sharing knowledge and expertise, and fostering trust and confidence in our work.

We are committed to research and analysis that informs social policy debate to progress inclusive and sustainable responses for people with impaired decision-making capacity.

We work with clear purpose and commitment to systems advocacy, within a culture where accountability and respect is paramount.

## How we do systems advocacy

Our work involves collecting evidence, undertaking analysis, and fostering collaboration with government policy makers and other stakeholders to influence change. We do this by:

- creating and using knowledge acquired through research and consultation
- contributing to and advocating for policy and service environments that foster rights promotion in a sustainable and transparent way
- encouraging the development of systems that are inclusive, accessible and equitable
- communicating about systems barriers.

## Our role within the community

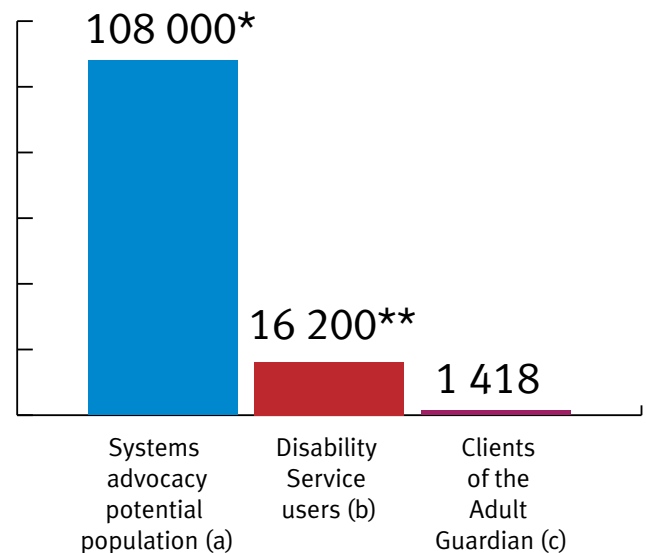
Systems advocacy promotes and protects the rights and interests of all vulnerable Queenslanders living with impaired decision-making capacity. This is estimated to be approximately 108,000 people and increasing (see below).

Our work is relevant to a diverse group of people, ranging from young adults to the elderly. This includes, but is not limited to, people who may live with:

- intellectual disability
- mental illness
- acquired brain injury
- dementia.

Our focus is broader than those people who receive a government-funded or government-provided support service (for example, people who receive a disability service), or people who are under a formal guardianship or administration order (for example, clients of the Adult Guardian). In fact, most of our potential population falls outside of these formal services or systems, as illustrated below.

## Queenslanders with impaired decision-making capacity



(a) Australian Bureau of Statistics 2005, Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, Basic CURF, Australia (Reissue), cat no. 4430.0.30.002, ABS, Canberra

(b) Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2011, Disability support services 2008–09, Cat. no. DIS 58. Canberra: AIHW

(c) Office of the Audit Guardian 2009, 2008-09 Office of Adult Guardian Annual Report, OAG, Brisbane

\* Potential population estimate based on projected Queensland population for June 2009

\*\* Estimate based on primary disability and age distribution (0-14 years and physical and sensory primary disability excluded)

## Context of our work

Our work concentrates on broad issues affecting the lives of people with impaired decision-making capacity, often referred to as systems advocacy.

Our primary focus is to make an impact at the strategic and structural level of government policy, programs and practices to ensure the rights and interests of people with impaired decision-making capacity are understood, promoted and safeguarded. This encompasses all aspects of life, including personal, community, social, economic and civic participation.

We do not have a direct role in individual advocacy. However individual matters can inform our work by drawing attention to concerns and barriers within existing support systems which may be responsive to a systems advocacy approach.

## Our role within government

Our systems advocacy function operates within a statutory framework. This provides an important layer of protection for the rights and autonomy of people with impaired decision-making capacity in Queensland.

## Tracking our performance

Our work is guided by the *Systems Advocacy Framework 2010-2012*. This important blueprint provides clarity and transparency in relation to our priorities. We will measure our outcomes against the following four Key Result Areas:

### 1. Knowledge and Evidence

We will use an evidence based approach to all research and information gathering activities and translate this to knowledge.

### 2. Communication and Influence

We will provide accurate, reliable and timely information on priority systems advocacy matters and develop effective communication strategies.

### 3. Advocacy and Inclusion

We will promote and protect rights, interests and wellbeing against a social inclusion agenda.

### 4. Business Processes

We will operate within sound corporate governance principles and practice.

## The impact of statutory systems advocacy

Statutory systems advocacy has relevance to the work of a broad range of groups:

- government policy makers
- people with impaired decision-making capacity and their carers
- guardians and administrators
- service providers (government, non-government and private sectors)
- informal networks and support groups
- peak bodies, advocacy groups and legal bodies.

## What we can't do

Our systems advocacy work does not involve:

- undertaking advocacy on individual matters
- making recommendations about appropriate services for individuals
- providing legal advice or legal services
- investigating complaints about services or about the treatment of individuals
- regulating the quality or delivery of services.

## Feedback

Feedback on our services, policies, procedures or the conduct of our staff is always welcomed and will be used to identify opportunities for improvement in our work. Complaints are managed in line with the complaints process of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. Every effort will be made to resolve complaints locally and informally. If a resolution cannot be made, a formal complaint process will be initiated with the complainant.

Each of our publications is also accompanied by a reader survey to seek feedback on its content and usability.

## More information

Visit: [www.publicadvocate.qld.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.qld.gov.au)

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An answering service is available if your call cannot be responded to immediately. Your call will be returned by the next working day.

Correspondence (email, facsimile or mail) will be responded to within 10 working days.