Villamanta
DISABILITY RIGHTS LEGAL SERVICE

MEDIA STATEMENT

Major Funding Cuts Threaten Disability Advocacy Services and Client Safety

10 November 2026

Villamanta has been advised that it will no longer receive advocacy funding through the Department of Health Disability and Ageing open tender process.

We are devastated by this decision and deeply concerned about what it means for people with disability across Victoria who rely on independent advocacy to protect their rights, safety, and access to justice.

The loss of this funding represents approximately **30% of Villamanta's total funding** and around **50% of our core funding**. The impact will be immediate and significant, resulting in substantial job losses and a dramatic reduction in the advocacy support available to people with disability.

Independent advocacy plays a critical role in safeguarding people from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, and unlawful practices. This funding decision will leave many people without access to support when they need it most.

As Villamanta CEO **Annie Nash** said:

> *"This is a win for every dodgy provider unlawfully evicting an NDIS participant from their home.*
>
> *It is a win for every person using guardianship or administration powers to commit family violence against a person with disability.*
>
> *It is a win for every disability service that has caused a loss to an NDIS participant or is pursuing them for an unlawful debt.*
>
> *Independent advocacy exists to ensure that people with disability are not left to face these situations alone. Cutting advocacy funding weakens protections for some of the most vulnerable members of our community."*

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This decision stands in direct contradiction to the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission, which recognised independent advocacy as a vital safeguard for people with disability and called for stronger and more accessible advocacy services.

Demand for advocacy continues to increase as people navigate increasingly complex disability, legal and service systems. Reducing access at this time places people with disability at greater risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and exclusion.

The decision is particularly difficult to understand given recent independent reviews recognising Villamanta as a leader in best-practice disability advocacy and community legal support.

Immediate Impact

Effective immediately, Villamanta is unable to accept new advocacy clients.

Our immediate priority is to continue supporting our existing clients while managing the consequences of these funding cuts and supporting affected staff.

At the same time, Villamanta will be launching a public campaign calling on decisionmakers to reverse this decision and protect access to independent disability advocacy.

Independent advocacy saves lives, protects rights, and gives people with disability a voice when they need it most.

We call on governments, supporters, sector partners, and community members to stand with us in defending the rights and safety of people with disability.

All support is welcome and deeply appreciated.

Quote Attributable to Board Chair, Zane McKenzie

> *"These cuts will have real and immediate consequences for people with disability.*
>
> *At a time when governments should be strengthening advocacy services in line with the Disability Royal Commission, they are instead reducing access to the very supports that keep people safe, uphold their rights, and help them navigate complex systems.*
>
> *Villamanta will continue to fight for our clients, our community and the future of independent advocacy."*

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