

Supporting people with disability to make decisions

We want to know what you think

An Easy Read paper



How to use this paper



The ACT Government wrote this document.

When you see the word 'we', it means the ACT Government.



We wrote this information in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Bold

Not bold

We have written some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 32.



This Easy Read paper is a summary of another paper.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other paper on our website under 'Decision-making'.

yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/act-disability-strategy/join-focused-conversation.



You can ask for help to read this paper.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

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What is this paper about?



All adults make decisions every day.

This includes people with disability.

These decisions can be:



- small, like what to eat for lunch



- big, like how you want to spend your money.



Rights are rules about how everyone should be treated equally.



People with disability have the right to make their own decisions.



Some people with disability can make decisions on their own.



But some people with disability need support when they make big decisions.

What is a substitute decision-maker?



When people with disability need lots of help to make a decision, a **substitute decision-maker** might be chosen for them.



A substitute decision-maker is someone the **ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT)** chooses to make decisions for you.



The ACAT is like a court.

They help people find ways to:

- work out problems
- make decisions.



Substitute decision-makers can make decisions about your:

- health and wellbeing
- money and housing.



They must make decisions that are good for you.

There are some decisions a substitute decision-maker can't make for you, like:



- voting for who you want to run a government



- adopting a child



- agreeing to get married.

Your substitute decision-maker can be someone:



- in your family



- that you trust.



The **Public Trustee and Guardian** is a part of our government that supports people who:

- can't make decisions on their own
- need support to make decisions.



Your substitute decision-maker can be from the Public Trustee and Guardian if there is no one else to be your substitute decision-maker.

How can you get a substitute decision-maker?



A **guardian** is a type of substitute decision-maker.



The law lets ACAT choose someone to be your guardian to make decisions for you about your:

- health
- wellbeing.



A **manager** is a type of substitute decision-maker.



The law lets ACAT also choose a manager to make decisions for you about:

- your money
- things you own, like a house.



There are other types of substitute decision-makers you can have.

But we don't talk about them in this paper.

Why do we want to change our laws?



It's important our government protects the rights of all adults.



This includes the right to:

- make decisions
- have other people respect those decisions.



It's important we help people find and use supports for decision-making if they need it.



It's important we help people who need support for decision-making to make choices based on:

- their rights
- what they want.



It's important we protect people who need support for decision-making from **abuse**.

Abuse is when someone treats you really badly.



It's important people who need support for decision-making can find and use good information.



We want to change parts of our laws so they include support for decision-making.

We have ideas about how we can change parts of our laws to support people with disability to:



- make their own decisions



- get support to make these decisions.

We talk more about our ideas on page 16.

What is support for decision-making?



When you have support for decision-making, you have help to make your own decisions.

This is different from having a substitute decision-maker because you:



- have support to make decisions.



- don't have someone making decisions for you.



You can get support for decision-making from someone you trust.

When you have support for decision-making, you can:



- reach your goals



- make choices about your life



- control things that are important to you.

Our ideas about support for decision-making



We researched how to include more support for decision-making in the ACT.

This included talking to:



- people with disability



- organisations that help people with disability.



We have 3 ideas based on our research.



1. Change laws about guardians and managers



2. Making support for decision-making official



3. Make new **systems** for support for decision-making

Systems are things that:

- connect with each other
- work together.

We talk more about our ideas on the following pages.

Idea 1 – Change laws about guardians and managers



We can change laws about guardians and managers.

If we change this, there might be more people with disability who can:



- get support from their guardian or manager to make decisions



- make decisions on their own.

How can we change our laws?



We can change our laws so ACAT must think about if a person can make a decision:

- on their own
- with support.



ACAT can think about these things before choosing a guardian or manager.



We can also change our laws so guardians and managers must try to support people to make decisions on their own.



But guardians and managers can still make decisions if a person can't make a decision with support.



These changes can:

- be quick to make
- happen soon.

Idea 2 – Making support for decision-making official



We can make laws that help more people with disability get support for decision-making.



This can help people with disability need less help from guardians and managers.



It can also help organisations know who to talk to so people with disability have support for decision-making.



These organisations include:

- banks
- hospitals
- government services.



Something like this is happening in Victoria now.

How can we change our laws?



We can change our laws so you can choose a person:

- to support your decision-making
- that organisations can talk to.



We can change our laws so ACAT can make a legal document that shows you need support for decision-making.



But ACAT can still choose a guardian or manager if you can't make decisions with support.



These changes will affect the laws we have now.

But they won't make new laws.

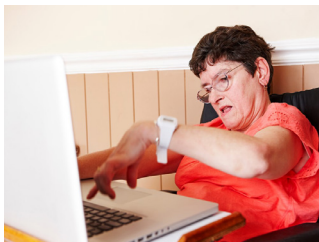


It will take more time to make these changes.

Idea 3 – Make new systems for support for decision-making



We can change our laws so we can make new systems for support for decision-making.



This will help people with disability have support to:

- do things on their own
- have control over their lives.



If we change this, ACAT wouldn't always need to choose someone to make decisions for people with disability.

How can we change our laws?



We can make new laws where everyone must respect:

- the rights of people with disability
- what people with disability want.



These new laws would let people with disability choose people to support their decision-making.

This includes:



- friends they trust



- people who speak up for people with disability.



They wouldn't need to talk to ACAT about who they chose.

But ACAT could help them choose someone if they can't do it themselves.



Different organisations would also have to include support for decision-making in how they do things.



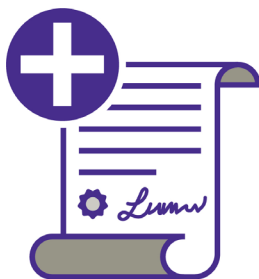
This includes:

- banks
- hospitals
- government services.



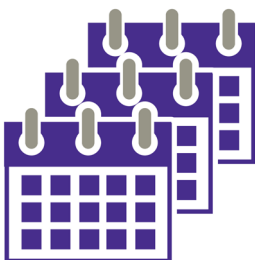
If we make these new laws, the guardian or manager would support your decision-making.

But this would only happen if you can't make decisions with support.



These changes will affect the laws we have now.

This includes making new laws.



This idea will take the longest to do.

How can you share your ideas with us?



We want to ask you some questions about our ideas.

You can answer:



- all of the questions



- some of the questions.



There is a box for you to share your answer.



You can email us your answers.

officefordisability@act.gov.au



You can send us your answers by mail.

GPO Box 158

Canberra ACT 2601



You can answer our questions online.

yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/act-disability-strategy



You can share a video of your answers on our website.

yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/act-disability-strategy

If you need support to share your answers you can:



- call us
(02) 6207 1086



- email us.
officefordisability@act.gov.au

Questions for you to think about

Question 1



Do you think it's a good idea to start with Idea 1 –
'Change laws about guardians and managers'?



What problems we will face if we start with Idea 1?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin purple border, intended for writing answers. To the right of the box, there is a vertical purple pencil icon with a white eraser at the top and a sharp lead tip at the bottom.

Question 2



What do you think about Idea 2?



What do you think about Idea 3?



Which idea do you like better?

A large, empty rectangular box with a purple border, intended for a user to write their response.

Question 3



Do you have support when you make important decisions?

For example, support for making decisions about your health.



What supports do you use to help you make important decisions?

Question 4



What supports do you want to help you make important decisions?



Question 5



What would you change about the way you make important decisions?



For example, what would make it:

- quicker?
- easier?
- better?

Question 6



Sometimes you might deal with government services like:

- hospitals
- services for families.



When you use these services, do they know how to support you to make decisions?



How can they help you to make decisions?

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Question 7



What else should we know about support for decision-making?

A large, empty rectangular box with a purple border, intended for the user to write their answer to the question.

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



Abuse

Abuse is when someone treats you really badly.

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT)



The ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) is like a court.

They help people find ways to:

- work out problems
- make decisions.

Guardian

A guardian is a type of substitute decision-maker.



The law lets ACAT choose someone to be your guardian to make decisions for you about your:

- health
- wellbeing.



Public Trustee and Guardian

The Public Trustee and Guardian is a part of our government that supports people who:

- can't make decisions on their own
- need support to make decisions.



Rights

Rights are rules about how everyone should be treated equally.



Substitute decision-maker

A substitute decision-maker is someone you choose to make decisions for you.



Systems

Systems are things that:

- connect with each other
- work together.

Support for you

There are services you can contact if you:



- experience abuse



- worry about other people who might experience abuse.



You can call the ACT Human Rights Commission.

(02) 6205 2222



You can call the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline.

1800 880 052



You can call the National Elder Abuse Hotline.

[1800 353 374](tel:1800353374)



You can call the Older Persons ACT Legal Service (OPALS).

[\(02\) 6243 3436](tel:(02)62433436)



You can also email OPALS.

opals@legalaidthact.org.au



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