

# Participant Handbook

Our life's purpose is to **Empower Yours** 

Registered NDIS provider located in Geelong, Colac and Mildura



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#### **Document Control**

Document Name	Amendments	New Document Version & Revision	Effective Date
Participant Handbook	Creation	Version 1, revision 1	2018
Participant Handbook	Content update and style revision	Version 2, revision 1	2022
Participant Handbook	Revision of layout and content to meet NDIS Practice Standards	Version 3, revision 0	Approved 28 September 2023

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# **Welcome to Access Your Supports (AYS)**



Thank you for selecting AYS for your NDIS services.

This **handbook** outlines your rights and responsibilities when you engage with AYS, the responsibilities of AYS, what reporting obligations we have, what information AYS requires, how we manage this information, and the scope of our services on what we can or cannot provide.

#### **About AYS**



The **AYS** team is passionate about empowering eligible NDIS participants to achieve their goals whilst providing choice and control. **AYS** provides services in Geelong, Colac, and Mildura.

Contact Details		
	18 Myers Street Geelong VIC 3220 – Intake, Peer Mentors, Support Coordination 229 Moorabool Street Geelong VIC 3220 – Plan Management 1 Malone Street Geelong VIC 3220 – Therapy Clinic 144 Murray Street Colac VIC 3250 154 Langtree Ave Mildura VIC 3500	
19	Geelong – 03 4222 7479 – Intake and general service enquiries Geelong – 03 4242 4188 – Plan Management enquiries Colac – 03 5129 3000 Mildura – 03 5039 5400	
	intake@ays.com.au – Intake and general service referrals and enquiries pm@ays.com.au – Plan Management referrals and enquiries	
<b>F</b>	quality@ays.com.au – Feedback and Complaints	

#### **AYS Values**



As disciplined leaders and experts in our services we have these values:

•	·
Empowering	We believe this because of our people-centred practices that builds capacity, empowers choice and opportunity. We will bring this to life through our organisation by continuing to do what we do.
Integrity	We believe this because we will do what we say we will do. We will bring this to life through our organisation by being truthful, open and honest when communicating.
Respect	We believe this because we value the diversity in others. We will bring this to life

through our organisation by multi-mode communication and diversity through our

actions.

# **Registration and Certification**



AYS has been a registered NDIS provider since 2016 maintaining certification during this period.

Having **Achievement of Certification** to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Service Standards provides you the confidence that AYS have effective systems in place that are regularly reviewed.





AYS is HDAA Australia Pty Ltd certified

# **Access and Entry Requirements**



To be **eligible** for the **NDIS**, you must:

- Have a permanent and significant disability or a developmental delay
- Be an Australian citizen, hold a Permanent Visa or a Protected Special Category Visa
- Be under 65 years of age
- Require support from a person or equipment to do everyday activities

#### To be **eligible** for **AYS services**, you must:

- Meet the NDIS eligibility criteria
- Have a NDIS Plan that requires services that are provided by AYS
- Have funds available in your NDIS Plan to pay for AYS services

Services are provided for specific fees in line with the NDIS pricing rules. A Service Agreement will be entered into between yourself and AYS that outlines these fees. Any out-of-pocket costs that are made during your services will be invoiced outside of your NDIS Plan funding.

**Note:** Not enough NDIS funds? We do offer a fee for service. Please contact us for full fees.

# **Words We Use and What They Mean**



Keyword	Meaning	
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme	I ndis
Participant, You	You, your family, your carer, or your advocate	
Registration or Certification	Certified to provided NDIS services to you	
Environment	Places we deliver services, including AYS sites, your home, during transport, community places	<b>^</b>

Keyword	Meaning
AYS, we, us and our	Access Your Supports Pty Ltd
Staff or Worker	AYS employee, contractor or volunteer
Service	Services or supports that we deliver based on your plan
Risk Management	Safe practices put in place to reduce risk for you, us and others



# Your Rights and Responsibilities

AYS wants to always respect and uphold the rights and responsibilities of participants.



It is your responsibility to be familiar with this Participant Handbook and act accordingly.

## **Your Rights**

As a person accessing AYS services you have the right to:



Be treated in a professional, courteous, and caring manner



Respect of your culture, ethnic, religious, and linguistic background



Respect of your gender or gender identity



Freedom of expression



Privacy and dignity



Freedom from abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation



Your information to be protected in line with Privacy laws



Access to your personal information in line with Privacy laws



Clear and current record-keeping of your supports provided by AYS



Choice and control in accessing or exiting AYS services



Access services that are not delivered by AYS



Information and support in accessing an advocate



Involve an advocate of your choice (family, friend, professional) to be present at any AYS service meetings



Access to an interpreter



Request a change of worker



Access to feedback and complaint processes



Access to incident management and reporting processes



Opt-out of giving information as required by the NDIS for auditing purposes or emergency management planning

# **Your Responsibilities**

As a person accessing AYS services you have the responsibility to:



Be respectful of other's rights



Provide current and relevant personal information to AYS and update this information should it change



Complete and return all required documentation to AYS



Abide by the terms stipulated in your Service Agreement with AYS



Work cooperatively and be actively involved in decisions regarding your support needs



Acknowledge that needs change and negotiate modification to care and services where necessary



Allow safe, reasonable access for AYS to your home at times specified in your support plan or otherwise by agreement



Provide reasonable notice should you wish to make changes to your services



Provide reasonable notice if you do not require a service or wish to cancel a service



Raise any concerns you may have in a timely manner



Seek a fair resolution of any complaints



Accept responsibility for personal actions and choices which may contain an element of risk to yourself



Inform AYS, when asked, if you wish to Opt-Out of providing your information for auditing purposes or emergency management planning



# **AYS Responsibilities**



**AYS** has responsibilities to ensure we provide high quality of services. We do this through the following ways.

#### 1. NDIS Practice Standards



We continuously work to meet compliance against the NDIS Practice Standards, as outlined by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

This handbook address many of the NDIS Practice Standards in communicating both your rights and responsibilities and the responsibilities of AYS.

# 2. Quality Management System



We have systems in place to ensure we can provide high-quality services to meet your individual needs. AYS is committed to quality management and to building and maintaining a culture of continuous quality improvement.

## 3. Commitment to NDIS Code of Conduct



All workers have made a commitment to the NDIS Code of Conduct when commencing employment with AYS. This is evidenced by their completion of the mandatory online NDIS Worker Orientation – Quality, Safety and You course.

We support an environment where you and our staff are treated with dignity and respect and where staff always conduct themselves professionally.

Remember the NDIS Code of Conduct is in place to protect you. AYS must:



I'm protected by the NDIS Code of Conduct

- and conventions - Respect the privacy of people with disability
- Provide services in a safe and competent manner, with care and skill

- Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, selfdetermination, and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws

- Act with integrity, honesty, and transparency
- Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of services provided to people with disability
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and response to all forms of violence against, and exploitation, neglect and abuse of, people with disability
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct

You can submit a complaint with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission about AYS or our workers if you feel we breach the Code of Conduct. Email contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au or call 1800 035 544.

#### **Zero Tolerance to Abuse Approach** 4.

AYS recognises your right to feel safe and to live in an environment where you are protected from assault, neglect, exploitation, or any other form of abuse.

Our reporting processes contains any kind of abuse, including financial, emotional, social, psychological, sexual, physical abuse or neglect.

You can make a report to whomever you feel comfortable and safe with, this may include one of your AYS workers.

We have documented policies and procedures in place to ensure that our services are free from any form of violence, harassment, bullying or discrimination.

Please see the sections on Incident Management and Complaints Management on how to report.

#### 5. **Mandatory Reporting**

AYS has mandatory reporting requirements for:

- Police (criminal activities)
- Victorian Commission for Children and Young People Child Protection (child abuse/neglect)
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commissioner (use of unauthorised restrictive practice, serious injury, death, abuse or neglect of participant)
- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (privacy data breach)
- WorkSafe (serious injury to staff member or major incident in workplace)
- Disability Services Commissioner
- Commonwealth Ombudsman
- Australian Human Rights Commission







# 6. Incident Management



We have incident management processes in place that are compliant under NDIS requirements and workplace health and safety requirements.

An incident is when something goes **wrong** and something **bad** has happened to you or someone.

Incidents can occur onsite at our premises, at other businesses, in your home or out in the community.

#### How we respond to incidents



- Once an incident is identified your worker will make sure everyone is okay. If there is any immediate danger or someone requires medical attention, your worker or someone nearby will call Emergency Services on 000
- We will respond as quickly as possible to any incidents. Your worker or an AYS supervisor will report the incident and may need to ask you or others about what happened
- Incidents that are less serious (no-major impact) will be resolved by AYS
- AYS may also let your family or carer know about the incident

However, incidents that are more serious, AYS will need to involve other organisations to make sure everyone is safe, this may include the Police, Child Protection, and the NDIS Commission.

#### **Emergency First Aid**



Many AYS workers have basic first aid skills to assist with an injury or emergency. However, Emergency Services will be called if required.

Should you require emergency medication for Epilepsy, Diabetes, Asthma and any other episodic conditions please ensure you provide a current Management Plan for AYS for our records to ensure we can communicate your needs to Emergency Services if you are not able to administer this emergency medication yourself. AYS workers **are not able** to administer these medications.

We are committed to manage, investigate, and report any incidents or allegations of incidents. See Mandatory Reporting section.

#### Reportable Incidents are where someone:

- dies
- is seriously injured
- is hurt or treated badly, or is not helped or given care in the way they should be
- experiences inappropriate sexual or physical contact, or is threatened
- experiences unwelcome sexual behaviours, or is there when someone else experiences unwelcome sexual behaviours
- forms a trusting relationship with someone and the person they trust then abuses them
- uses a restrictive practice where it has not been approved

Incident management is important. Below are the timeframes we follow:

Impact to You	AYS Timeframe	Who AYS Reports to
No Impact	24 hours 48 hours	Report to team leader – Complete report  AYS Management follow-up
Non-Major Impact Has potential to cause an impact to you	Same day 24 hours	Report to team leader – Complete report  AYS Management follow-up
Major Impact Has impacted you (NDIS Reportable Incident)	Immediately 2 hours 24 hours 48 hours 5 days	Verbal notification to AYS Management Written report to AYS Management AYS reports to NDIS Commission AYS Management follow-up Detailed report to NDIS Commission

We review our incidents so that we can identify trends and put in risk strategies to reduce the likelihood or serious impact happening in the future.



## 7. Feedback and Complaints Management

We have feedback and complaint management processes in place that are compliant under NDIS requirements. These processes inform AYS's continuous improvement.

A complaint is when a problem is happening, and someone says that they are unhappy.

Feedback or suggestions are welcome, and we often ask you if there is more we can help you with or could do better.

#### How to make a complaint

- Talk with one of our staff who you know and trust about your complaint
- Ask someone you trust to contact AYS to share your complaint
- Writing it down and send it to us
- Remember to provide as much detail on what happened or what you expected to happen and who were involved
- If you need help to make a complaint, please ask one of our staff

#### How we respond to complaints

- We will listen to all complaints and treat them fairly
- We will handle complaints quickly
- We will keep your complaint confidential
- Complaints are fixed if they can be, and we will communicate with you about how it can be fixed and how long it will take
- We will apologise when things have gone wrong





Who to complain to		
	Your AYS worker or their supervisor	
	AYS Quality and Compliance Officer  quality@ays.com.au  03 4222 7479	
	Ralph Menchise, AYS Director or any of the AYS Management Team <a href="mailto:quality@ays.com.au">quality@ays.com.au</a> 03 4222 7479	
	Anonymously over the phone 03 4222 7479, in the mail, dropped off at one of our sites, or through our feedback link on our website  18 Myers Street Geelong VIC 3220  www.ays.com.au/contact/	

# Other complaint or advocacy supports



If we have not been able to help you or you don't want to talk to us, you can contact:

if we have not been able to help you or you don't want to talk to us, you can contact.		
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission	If you are not satisfied with the standard of services provided by AYS, you are welcome to contact the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.  1800 035 544 or www.ndiscommission.gov.au	
Australian Human Rights Commission	If you feel AYS or another party does not respect your human rights, contact the Australian Human Rights Commission to complain about discrimination and human right breaches.  1300 369 711 or <a href="https://www.humanrights.gov.au">www.humanrights.gov.au</a>	
COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN	Contact the Ombudsman to complain about the actions and decisions of Government agencies if you believe they are wrong or unfair.  1300 362 072 or <a href="https://www.ombudsman.gov.au">www.ombudsman.gov.au</a>	
your rights, your voice	Contact RIAC if you need help with advocacy at meetings or to build your capacity to self advocate.  03 5222 5499 or referrals@riac.org.au	
VALID	VALID works with adults with intellectual disabilities who live in Victoria who have a current advocacy issue.  03 9416 4003 or <a href="mailto:intake@valid.org.au">intake@valid.org.au</a>	



## 8. Service Agreement

Once AYS is selected as your service provider we will develop a Service Agreement with you.

This Service Agreement will list the schedule of services, AYS responsibilities, your responsibilities (as a participant), terms and conditions and our service cancellation process.

You, your family or your advocate need to sign the Service Agreement. If you **do not want** to sign the Service Agreement, we will record the reasons on your file for future reference. However, AYS **will need** either a written or verbal consent from you to engage in services.



#### 9. Consent



When you provide consent, you give your permission or say that it is okay for something to happen. By signing a Service Agreement you are consenting to AYS undertaking the following:

- accessing your personal information
- collecting data relating to you
- asking others involved in your supports some questions or to attend meetings
- assisting you to attend appointments where personal information may be shared

Please refer to your Service Agreement for additional information.

At any time, you wish to withdraw your consent you need to let us know.

If you feel that you can not consent for yourself, we can talk to your family or advocate and ask them to assist you make any decision.

# 10. Person-Centred Planning – Support Planning



You are at the centre of our services. Services are planned to complement your strengths, needs and current supports.

We complete a comprehensive assessment, then an individualised person-centred support plan will be developed in consultation with you, your carer, your family and any other required support professionals designed to meet your needs.

We will try and match your worker to your personal needs.

#### 11. Plan Reviews



AYS will review your support plan at regular intervals as required by the NDIS to track your progress against your goals and to ensure that the services being delivered are continuing to meet your needs.

## 12. Continuity of Support



When you sign a Service Agreement with AYS, we will arrange a support schedule with you so you know when to expect contact. We will provide you with a worker who has the skills and knowledge you require and who you feel comfortable with.

If your worker is not available, the following will occur:

- If agreeable, your services will be postponed until your worker returns
- If your worker is no longer available, AYS will find another worker with relevant skills and knowledge as a suitable replacement
- We will gather your approval and feedback on the replacement worker
- If no suitable replacement worker is available we will discuss your options and timing with you



#### 13. Transport



If transport is required to meet your needs, and is part of your NDIS plan, we will discuss how this will be arranged as either part of your package or as an additional fee for service.

#### 14. Worker Screening

Workers employed by AYS undertake:



- Thorough recruitment and induction processes
- Assessment on whether their role is risk-assessed and will be working with you
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Worker Screening (for risk-assessed role)
- National Police Check (for non-risk assessed role)
- Working with Children Check (where necessary for role)
- Referee checks

#### 15. Worker Induction

The induction process at AYS includes completion of:

- NDIS Mandatory Worker Orientation
- National Disability Services e-learning
- Health and safety awareness including infection control
- Cultural awareness
- Incident and complaints reporting
- Understanding restrictive practice



#### 16. Conflict of Interest

AYS requires all workers to declare their involvement in external worker-related activities and declare any personal connections with participants, so we can manage any potential conflicts.

As a participant, please let us know if you feel a conflict of interest is present within your service delivery team. Email quality@ays.com.au.

#### 17. Referrals and Conflicts of Interest between AYS service delivery areas

A requirement of the NDIS is that you are provided with choice in what services you engage in.

The best services for you may be separate to those available by AYS. That is perfectly fine. We want to support you to access the best services for you. All our **Support Coordinators** and **Plan Managers** are impartial and are knowledgeable in the wide range of NDIS services available to meet your needs.

Remember, it is your choice as to the service provider you engage with.

To manage the different NDIS service delivery areas at AYS, we have different systems and access permissions in place to ensure that staff within the different service areas cannot access your records if not working with you.

## 18. Specialist Services



We employ qualified and experienced staff, ensuring we verify qualifications and professional registrations. Specialist service team members have all been appropriately trained and have experience in their work area.

#### 19. Behaviour Support and Restrictive Practice



Our Behaviour Support Practitioners are approved as suitable by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

Our Practitioners follow the NDIS guidelines for preparing and implementing Behaviour Support Plans. The use of restrictive practice outside of an authorised Behaviour Support Plan is reported immediately to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

**Restrictive Practice** can be when someone makes you do something you don't want to do or stops you from doing something you want to do. It may also involve reducing your freedoms, such as locking you in a room, using strong medication to control your behaviours or actions, restricting your movement with equipment or aids.



#### 20. Participant Files/Records



AYS stores your data on centralised data management systems that are password protected and stored on secure online platforms.

Access permissions to different sections are in place to ensure the confidentiality of your data.

#### 21. Access to Personal Records



Any time you, wish to access your personal records kept by AYS you can do so. You do this by:

- Requesting access verbally or in writing, email quality@ays.com.au
- The Quality and Compliance officer will review your request
- A reply to your request will be provided within 2 weeks
- Information will be provided to an agreed person when consent is received or already obtained

On occasion, access to your records may be declined if AYS receive legal advice to withhold.

#### 22. Service Withdrawal or Periods of Leave



You may withdraw from our services for any reason and at any time, or you may request to suspend your services or take leave.

Should you wish to stop your AYS services please contact our Intake team or your AYS worker immediately for this to be arranged. Phone 03 4222 7479 or email <a href="mailto:intake@ays.com.au">intake@ays.com.au</a>

However, you will need to provide AYS with the length of notice outlined in your individual Service Agreement.

AYS has the right to stop providing services to you if you do not meet your responsibilities to AYS. We will contact you and discuss the reasons for any withdrawal of service.

Where you agree, AYS will support you to transition to another service provider.

#### 23. Service Transition



Your needs and interests may change while receiving services from AYS, which may mean you need to move to another provider.

AYS will assist and support you during this process.

We will work with the other service providers to ensure your transition is smooth and meets your needs.

If you do leave AYS services and want to return, we would be pleased to look at your options and service requirements with you.



#### 24. Participant Money and Property



Your money, or other property, will only be used with you and for the purposes you request.

AYS cannot guarantee that your property will not be damaged or lost whilst receiving AYS services. AYS prefers that workers **do not handle** participant money or personal property. If requested to handle money, then all receipts and change shall be provided to you by your worker.

AYS workers are **not permitted** to provide you with financial advice or information other than what is required under your support plan.

#### 25. Risk Taking



You have the right to participate in lawful activities that may involve a degree of risk. We will always allow you a dignity of risk, our role is to look at the activity and not you. We will discuss this with you if you wish to undertake the activity. We assume that you can make your own choices.

In some circumstances, though you may choose to undertake an activity, AYS also needs to consider the risk to our staff and our business reputation. We will undertake a risk assessment on a case-by-case basis to determine the suitability of our staff undertaking the activity.

Please contact your worker to discuss any activities that may involve risk and they will seek advice from Management Team whether appropriate for AYS staff to be involved.

#### 26. Communication with You



We are committed to communicating with you openly, honestly, and promptly.

AYS will seek your communication method preferences, with options for email, phone call, text message or in person when you commence with us. Where appropriate, AYS will provide information in an Easy Read style or support the content with pictures. If you need assistance to understand any information provided to you by AYS, we are happy to assist you.

AYS has a participant newsletter available on a quarterly basis. Please email <a href="mailto:intake@ays.com.au">intake@ays.com.au</a> to Opt-In or Opt-Out of receiving the newsletter.

# 27. Interpreter Services



If you need assistance to understand any information provided to you by AYS we are also happy to organise an interpreter service. Please let us know your needs.

#### 28. Your Voice in AYS Processes



Your input into our services and practices is valued. Please let us know if you want to have an influence into our policies and practices. Please let our Quality and Compliance Officer know if you wish to participate. Email <a href="mailto:quality@ays.com.au">quality@ays.com.au</a>.

#### 29. Gifts



AYS recognises that you may, on occasion, like to give a gift to your AYS worker.

If you wish to gift, we prefer that it is something that can be shared with others, for example flowers, cake, or chocolates. Please **never** offer or give money to an AYS worker.

# 30. Site Accessibility



AYS operates out of several business office sites in Geelong, Colac and Mildura.

To enable disability accessibility, we have aids in place such as ramps, railings, or alternate entrances, or we have readily available temporary ramps.

We also have designated meeting rooms that are accessible.

Should you have accessibility needs please contact the site you are visiting to determine the best access point and meeting room needs.



#### **Safe Environment**

AYS abides by the Health and Safety Act and has practices in place to ensure your safety and the safety of others during service delivery.



This includes providing:

- An environment that is free of racial, sexual, physical or emotional abuse
- A safe workplace for our workers and others who visit with appropriate emergency equipment
- Appropriately maintained equipment for workers to undertake their roles
- Amenities for our workers, bathrooms with sanitary disposal units
- First aid kits at all sites
- Access to personal protective equipment and infection prevention products
- Professional cleaners to keep our work environments safe and clean
- Baby change facilities at our therapy clinic site

#### 31. Personal Care Assistance



AYS **does not** help with your personal care needs including toileting, meal-time assistance, or household cleaning.

AYS workers **cannot assist** you with complex personal care such as bowel care, wound management, or other invasive procedures. A medical service will need to be engaged.

Speak with your Support Coordinator or Local Area Coordinator if assistance is required.

#### 32. Handling or Assistance with Medication



AYS workers are **not permitted** to assist you with taking any prescribed or over the counter medication.

# 33. Smoking, Vaping, Drugs or Alcohol





If you smoke, vape, take recreational drugs, or drink alcohol, we ask that you **please not engage** in these activities while AYS workers are performing their role.

AYS is committed to providing a safe work environment for our team.

Additionally, AYS workers are **not permitted** to undertake these activities whilst providing you services.

# 34. Risk Management



Your risk will be assessed when you first engage with us.

This will include an assessment of your home environment and personal safety needs. If you or we feel another assessment is required because your circumstances have changed, we will talk with you to review your assessments.

# 35. Emergency and Disaster Planning



AYS will create an emergency and disaster plan with you. This will enable AYS and yourself to know what supports you need in case of an emergency.

This will be adjusted with you as needed, or if the cause of emergency or disaster changes.

You have the rights to Opt-Out of having a plan created.

# 36. Privacy Statement



Your privacy is important to us. When you engage our services we will collect, use, disclose and store information about you. This information is known as personal or sensitive information.

AYS only collects, uses, discloses, and stores information that is necessary to provide services to you. This is done in compliance with the Privacy Act and the Australian Privacy Principles.

Our Privacy Policy is available on our website.

#### **AYS Services and Costs**

#### **NDIS Service Costs** 37.



AYS will inform you of the cost of services being provided as part of your Service Agreement.

AYS abides by the NDIS Price Guide.

Please note, there are annual changes to the NDIS Price Guide, these will automatically adjust your costs.

#### 38. **Payment of Costs**

The payment of AYS invoices is through online electronic fund transfer payment or through plan management.

Invoices will be provided to you or your nominated plan manager for payment.

Please **never** pay an AYS worker directly.

If you are using the National Disability Insurance Agency to manage your funds, AYS will work

directly with the NDIA.

#### 39. **AYS Services**

The best way to receive information about all the AYS services available to you is to speak to your AYS contact person or check out our website www.ays.com.au

Here is a snapshot of AYS services.

An Easy-Read version of AYS Service Guide is available on our website.

There may be a waitlist and eligibility requirements for the different services.



