# DISABILITY ADVOCACY STAKEHOLDER MESSAGING

DARU is a state-wide service established to resource the disability advocacy sector in Victoria by:

* Providing resources to support disability advocacy organisations
* Disseminating relevant and up-to-date information
* Organising forums around the state so that there is a coordinated approach to issues of concern
* Providing professional development opportunities and undertaking capacity building projects on behalf of the sector.

DARU is delivered in consortium by the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) and Disability Advocacy Victoria (DAV).

Disability advocacy helps ensure the human and legal rights of people with disability are promoted and protected so that people with disability can fully participate in the community.

The work of disability advocacy organisations is not always well understood nor valued highly enough. It is important that the sector develops and uses consistent messaging across all stakeholder groups from Government to people with disability to the general public to connect with the people that matter and above all, have important core messages ‘heard’ in a meaningful and effective way.

DARU has set up a working group of representatives from disability advocacy organisations which has created some preliminary messages for further development and discussion and they form the content of this document.

The strategic objectives for stakeholder communications in the disability advocacy sector are:

1. To maintain government funding for disability advocacy organisations.
2. To promote the achievements of disability advocacy in an understandable way so the sector is valued by key stakeholders; people with disability, the government and the general public.
3. To raise awareness of the ways in which disability advocacy organisations assist the Government to achieve it’s objective of a fairer Victoria.

The communication objectives in using the following messages are:

1. To encourage disability advocacy organisations to use consistent messaging so that the value of disability advocacy is easily understood by all.
2. To have the messages heard, understood and acted on.
3. To have stakeholders, such as the media, come to the sector as the “go-to” resource for disability advocacy related media interviews.
4. To enable disability advocacy organisations to promote themselves as informed, available, and smart spokespeople who are available and engaging communicators.

The messages have been developed in the PUSH© model of key messaging as a framework that all disability advocacy organisations can learn to further contribute and develop key messages.

## What is PUSH?

PUSH© is a media (and general) communications model to construct influential messages which will give media (and other stakeholders) messages and quotes that really work.

* POINT - a simple statement that should be the essence of what you are saying

***(because/how….***

* UNDERPIN - with proof so that sceptics (incl. media) and the audience in general believe the point you have made. Can be statistics, examples, research or evidence backing up the point. The underpinning should have approximately three points of backing ‘evidence’

***(So what that means is*** ….

* SO WHAT - the part where you go the extra step – it’s the wrap up or summary of the Point and the Underpinnings and do the interpretation for the audience. Reinforce the aims you’ve identified and bring the data and the point to life.
* HAMMER IT HOME - relevant to the delivery of messages and skillful performance doing that. It refers to repetition and is about repeating the parts of your message – your point, your underpinnings and the So What? so they are continually reinforced. It is useful when doing media interviews or engaging in public or stakeholder forums. Repetition is the best way of maximising the opportunity presented to cut through and be heard.

**Tip:** When starting to use **PUSH©**, try inserting the word ‘***because***’ or ***‘how’*** between the ‘point’ and the ‘underpin’ and the words ***‘so what that means’*** between the ‘underpin’ and the ‘so what’ as a reminder of the way it works.

## PUSH® Examples

|  |
| --- |
| Point Ethical values influence our board decisions  because … Underpin  * Research has shown companies with strong corporate governance achieve better returns over 3 and 5 years * We are responding to our shareholders who demand transparency * We have established an ethical committee that has a tracking and reporting system   So what that means. So what We are doing everything we can to achieve long term success for this company and its shareholders |
| Point This new plant is a significant step forward for our company  because. Underpin  * We are spending $10 million * We will employ an additional 800 people * We will establish the latest, world-class technology * We will increase our productivity by 25% and our exports by 35%   So what that means So What This will make us one of Australia's largest manufacturers and allow us to successfully compete in the global markets. |

## Why should the Government fund disability advocacy?

### Point

The Victorian Government must continue to fund disability advocacy.

### Underpin

* Over one million Victorians with a disability need a voice.
* The investment from Government is negligible – around $2 per person! The Victorian Government currently invests $2.4 million on disability advocacy.
* 45% of people with a disability in Australia live in or near poverty. This is more than double the OECD average of 22%
* 90% of women with an intellectual disability have been sexually abused: Two thirds of those aged under 18 have experienced physical abuse, according to VicHealth estimates

### So what

Funding disability advocacy is a small investment for government but it has a large impact on the daily life of a person with a disability.

### Hammer it home

The investment from Government for disability advocacy is a small cost for such a large return.

## Why are people with a disability under represented in the workforce?

### Point

People with disability experience discrimination when trying to get a job.

### Underpin

* In Victoria, 48 % of people with a disability are employed compared to 78% of the population.
* Australia ranks 21 out of 29 OECD countries in employment participation rates of people with a disability.
* Since 2003 to 2014, the rate of employment of people with a disability in federal, state and local government departments has declined from 6.3% to 2.8%
* People with a disability are under employed as well as unemployed
* Employers make assumptions that people with a disability are not as capable as others.
* Many buildings are not accessible to people with physical disabilities, and do not meet the Disability Access to Premises Standards.
* Many workplace environments use information and communications technology
* which is not accessible – is not compliant with W3C accessibility guidelines.

### So what

People with a disability need disability advocates to support them so they can help employers to understand their obligations under the Disability Discrmination Act.

People with a disability need advocates to assist them to recognise and understand their rights so they can speak up for themselves.

### Hammer it home

In Victoria, 48 % of people with a disability are employed compared to 78% of the population.

People with a disability need disability advocates to support them so they can help employers to understand their obligations under the Disability Discrmination Act.

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## How are women with disability disadvantaged in Victoria?

### Point

On all measures of social and economic participation, women with disabilities are disadvantage

### Underpin

* Nearly one in every five Victorian women has a disability.
* The numbers of women with disabilities are higher in culturally diverse communities, in rural and regional Victoria, and among Indigenous people.
* Women with disabilities are:
* more likely to be poor and unemployed
* less likely to get a good education and access to vocational training and employment programs
* less likely to receive appropriate health and health promotion services
* more likely to be homeless, live in insecure or unsafe housing, and pay most of our gross income on housing
* more likely to experience physical, psychological and sexual violence, in settings such as custodial, residential and health care
* perceived as more vulnerable and targeted for violence, and less likely to secure protection or see justice delivered
* exposed to practices which qualify as torture or inhuman or degrading treatment such as interventions to control fertility, forced medication, and chemical restraint.

### So what

Disability advocacy makes sure the stories of women with a disability are told.

### Hammer it home

On all measures of social and economic participation, women with disabilities are disadvantaged compared not only to people without disabilities but also to men with disabilities.