

Mildura Disability Support Services| **Participant Money and Property Policy**

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of the Mildura Disability Support's Participant Money and Property Policy is to ensure the security and autonomy of Participant's financial resources and personal belongings. This policy aims to ensure each Participant can use their own money and property as they determine, maintaining their independence and dignity in line with the Participant Money and Property NDIS Standard.

1.2. Scope

This Policy is applicable to all Workers affiliated with Mildura Disability Support. It is the responsibility of every individual, regardless of their employment status, to fully comprehend and comply with the commitments outlined in this policy. All Workers must acknowledge that they have read, understood and will comply with the contents of this Policy.

1.3. NDIS Indicators (Objectives)

Participant Money and Property

Outcome: Participant money and property is secure and each participant uses their own money and property as they determine. To achieve this outcome, the following indicators should be demonstrated:

- a) Where the provider has access to a participant's money or other property, processes to ensure that it is managed, protected and accounted for are developed, applied, reviewed and communicated. Participants' money or other property is only used with the consent of the participant and for the purposes intended by the participant.
- b) If required, each participant is supported to access and spend their own money as the participant determines.
- c) Participants are not given financial advice or information other than that which would reasonably be required under the participant's plan.

2. Policy Statement

Mildura Disability Support Services is committed to effectively managing, protecting, and accounting for participants' money and property. We have established robust processes that are regularly reviewed and communicated to ensure transparency and trust. Our focus is on promoting participants' financial autonomy and security, empowering them to make decisions about their own money and property.

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We prioritise the confidentiality and security of participants' financial information through strict protocols and training. By upholding these commitments, we create an environment where participants can confidently rely on us to safeguard their financial resources and personal belongings.

2.1. Relevant legislation

All relevant legislation to this Policy is outlined in the Legislation Register.

2.2. Related documents

- a) Participant Money and Property Declaration
- b) Participant Cash Reconciliation Register

3. Responsibilities and Roles

- a) Narelle Margaret Fraser is responsible for the development and review of this policy. It is expected that Narelle Margaret Fraser ensures this Policy remains compliant with all applicable laws, regulations and standards.
- b) Key Management Personnel play a vital role in ensuring the effective implementation of this Policy throughout Mildura Disability Support. It is the responsibility of all Key Management Personnel to not only assist Workers in understanding and complying with this policy but also to comply with it themselves. By leading by example, they demonstrate the importance of adherence to the policy and foster a culture of compliance within the organisation.
- c) Workers are responsible for understanding the contents of this policy and complying with all procedures applicable to them.

4. Definitions

Mildura Disability Support Services means AUS DISABILITY SUPPORT PTY LTD ABN 61 684 083 574.

Key Management Personnel means Narelle Margaret Fraser and other key management personnel involved in Mildura Disability Support Services from time to time.

Director means Narelle Margaret Fraser.

Worker means a permanent, fixed term or casual member of staff, a contractor or volunteer employed or otherwise engaged by Mildura Disability Support Services and includes the Director.

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5. *Procedures*

5.1. **Promoting Financial Autonomy**

- a) Mildura Disability Support Services will actively promote financial independence among Participants to have the capacity to manage their own resources.
- b) Upon induction, an initial assessment will be conducted to ascertain the level of support required by each Participant in managing their money and property.
- c) If Mildura Disability Support Services has access to a Participant's money or property, we will:
 - 1) Encourage Participants to take control and ownership of their own assets.
 - 2) Act as advocates to ensure Participants enjoy the full benefits of all their entitled income, including those under the NDIS.
 - 3) Encourage responsible financial behaviour, while respecting their right to decide how their money is spent, unless such spending may pose a risk to their safety or the safety of others or is unlawful.
 - 4) While preserving Participants' rights of self-determination, choice, and control over their finances, Workers will report any concerns about misuse or inappropriate spending to their Supervisor.
 - 5) In circumstances where a Participant requires temporary support or training, our Workers may have access to the Participant's account security details under specific conditions:
 - (i) the Participant has provided written consent;
 - (ii) the training period does not exceed six months; and
 - (iii) post-training, all security controls/passwords are changed or cards are cancelled.
- d) Tailored assistance will be offered based on individual needs to ensure Participants understand how to access and utilise their financial resources effectively. This support might include, but is not limited to, guidance in:
 - 1) Everyday expenditure management;
 - 2) Utilisation of debit or credit cards;
 - 3) Using banking services and ATMs;
 - 4) Establishing and managing a bank account; and

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- 5) Creating and implementing effective budgeting and spending plans.

5.2. Financial Advice

- a) Mildura Disability Support Services does not provide financial advice to Participants.
- b) We are committed to providing the necessary information under the Participant's plan to support their decision-making, but we will not influence or direct Participants' financial decisions.

5.3. Preventing and Identifying Financial Abuse and Exploitation

- a) Mildura Disability Support Services is actively committed to preventing and eliminating any risk of financial abuse or exploitation and will promptly respond to any such instances.
- b) Prior to employment, Workers undergo thorough background checks, and once employed, they will receive regular training on the signs of financial abuse and exploitation, as well as the appropriate, ethical handling of Participant's finances and property.
- c) To prevent misuse, we have established clear guidelines for managing Participant's finances and property and regularly update these procedures.
- d) We will closely monitor all transactions involving Participant's money for signs of financial abuse or exploitation.
- e) Internal and external audits will be conducted to ensure all financial activities adhere to our policies.
- f) We encourage Participants to be active in the management of their finances, understand their financial situation, and voice any concerns or discrepancies.
- g) A safe, confidential mechanism for complaints and reporting suspected financial abuse or exploitation has been established.
- h) In cases where financial abuse or exploitation is suspected, we will support the Participant ensuring they have full knowledge of their right to make complaints and access the criminal justice system.
- i) All reports of any breach involving Participant's property or financial rights due to the acts of Mildura Disability Support's Worker will be treated seriously, confidentially, and investigated thoroughly in accordance with our Incident Management Policy.
- j) Where allegations of financial abuse or exploitation have been made, we will encourage and support Participants to access legal or advocacy services. We will provide relevant information

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and assist them in connecting with such services to ensure they receive the necessary support and guidance.

- k) Relevant persons in the Participant's support network will be informed of alleged or suspected instances of financial abuse or exploitation, except when a person in the support network is the alleged perpetrator.
- l) We will inform all Participants there will be no negative consequences for any person who reports financial abuse or exploitation.

5.4. Participant Consent

- a) Before any action is taken in relation to a Participant's money or property, Mildura Disability Support Services will obtain explicit written consent from the Participant or their chosen representative/legal guardian.
- b) This consent will clearly state the purposes for which the Participant's assets are to be used.
- c) Consent can be withdrawn at any time by the Participant.

5.5. Identification of Participant's Assets

- a) The initial identification of a Participant's assets will be carried out under the supervision of a Key Personnel.
- b) This will involve the creation of an inventory of all monetary and physical assets that the Participant wishes to be managed by Mildura Disability Support.
- c) This inventory will be updated periodically or whenever there is a significant change in the Participant's financial status or possessions.
- d) During this process, we will also ensure that all bank documents, cheque books, credit cards, debit cards, and other ATM cards are kept secure.

5.6. Transparent Record-Keeping

- a) All transactions involving Workers handling Participant's money or property will be meticulously recorded in their individual Participant Money and Property Register. This includes all inflows and outflows, the date, the nature of the transaction, and any relevant notes.
- b) These records will be kept securely and made available to the Participant or their authorised representative upon request

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- c) Workers are strictly instructed not to reveal or discuss any details about the Participant's financial information or transactions outside of official contexts, ensuring confidentiality in accordance with the Mildura Disability Support's Privacy and Information Management Policy.

5.7. Regular Reporting

- a) Participants will receive regular reports summarising the transactions and status of their money and property.
- b) The frequency of these reports will be determined in consultation with the Participant, but will be no less than every 3 months.

5.8. Worker Training and Ethics

- a) All Workers who handle Participants' money or property will undergo specific training in financial management and ethical handling of personal assets.
- b) They will also be made aware of the legal consequences of misuse of Participants' assets.
- c) Workers are not permitted to accept gifts, tips, or any form of remuneration from Participants.

5.9. Payments made to Mildura Disability Support

- a) Payments made to Mildura Disability Support Services for services and support are bound strictly by the terms outlined in the Participant's Service Agreement.
- b) All financial transactions must adhere to the applicable legislation and rules stipulated by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

5.10. Complaints and Dispute Resolution

- a) In the event of a disagreement or complaint regarding the management of a Participant's money or property, it will be managed in accordance with the Mildura Disability Support Services Feedback and Complaints Policy.

6. Policy Review and Updates

This Policy is to be amended and updated according to the requirements to comply with the applicable law.

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Approval Authority: Narelle Margaret Fraser

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