



Financial, Legal and Advocacy Matters

As a result of your SCI, you may be finding that you and your family need to manage on reduced finances. Financial, legal and advocacy assistance may be available to you (*please see the resource list at the end of this sheet*).

Commonwealth assistance

The Commonwealth Government provides financial assistance through several departments. Staff at your local Centrelink office can advise you on the income support and other benefits that you may be eligible for such as:

- Youth Disability Allowance
- Pensioner Education Supplement (PES)
- Sickness Allowance
- Disability Support Pension
- Health Care Concession
- Mobility Allowance
- Carer's Allowance and/or Payment
- Rent Assistance
- GST Exemption on Cars
- Workplace Modification Scheme
- Newstart Allowance
- Financial Information Service (FIS) (Offers an independent, free and confidential information service assisting people to make informed decisions about investment and financial services. NB: FIS officers are not financial planners)
- The Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Federal and State assistance

Some Federal and State Government offices provide additional financial assistance including:

- Workcover (Office)
 - Compulsory Third Party Insurance Claims (Office)
 - Pharmaceutical Allowance (Centrelink)
 - Pensioner Concession card (Centrelink)
- See 'Further Information' Financial at the end of this fact sheet.*

Compensation/legal advice

If you or someone in your family has a spinal cord injury you may wish to seek advice from a solicitor concerning:

- What to do about your changed circumstances?
- Details of your Will
- Power of Attorney.

It is a good idea to consult a solicitor who is experienced in personal injury and understands the specialised laws associated with your injury whether it is work related, a motor accident or other.

Public Trustee

You may need to discuss services of the Public Trustee including Power of Attorney, for further information contact **02 9252 0523** or visit www.publictrustee.nsw.gov.au

Advocacy

Advocacy organisations deal with issues that affect individuals and groups with the goal of securing equal rights and improving opportunities and conditions in a range of areas.

An advocacy group may be able to help you with complaints, problems or issues that you have not been able to resolve through normal complaint processes. Most government agencies and organisations have processes set up to deal with complaints which will help resolve the majority of problems.

However, advocacy groups can also be an avenue for you to get involved in advocacy work in an area that you feel strongly about.

There are a number of community services available for information, support and assistance relating to financial, legal and advocacy matters, please find information on these overleaf.



Financial – income and benefits

Centrelink – Disability Info **13 2717** (for people receiving DSP, Sickness and Carers allowances)

- Disability Support Pension
- Mobility Allowance
- Carer Payment/Allowance
- Sickness Allowance
- Remote Area Assistance
- Pharmaceutical Allowance
- Rent Assistance

Assistance for Isolated Children — **13 2318**

- ABSTUDY — **13 2317**

Family Assistance Office — **13 6150**

- Health Care Card
- Parenting Payment

Employment Services — **13 2850**

- Newstart Allowance

Retirement Services — **13 2300**

- Pensioner Concession Card

Youth and Student Services — **13 2490**

- AUSTUDY
- Pensioner Education Supplement (PES)
- Youth Disability Allowance
- Department of Veterans' Affairs **13 3254** or **1800 555 254** or www.dva.gov.au – Disability Pensions and Allowances for Ex-Serviceman and Women.
- Australia Tax Office – GST Exemption on Cars/Parts (Certificate NAT 3417) **13 2478**

Legal

- If you have a legal problem contact LawAccess NSW on **1300 888 529** for information, referral and assistance. www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au
- Contact the Law Society of NSW for referral on **02 9926 0333** or visit www.lawsociety.com.au
- Contact Australian Lawyers Alliance for advice and referral on specialist accredited personal injury solicitors (or help with a solicitor for your circumstance; each personal injury has different laws applied depending on whether it is motor, work cover, or other) **02 9258 7700** or visit www.apla.com.au
- The Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC) is a state-wide service providing free access to information about the law for the community. Based in the State Library of NSW in Sydney, it operates through public libraries across the state. Contact LIAC on **02 9273 1558** or visit www.liac.sl.nsw.gov.a

Complaints

- NSW Ombudsman (Complaints about Govt. non-Govt., community services, NSW Police, local councils, freedom of info. and protected disclosures) **02 9286 1000** or **1800 451 524** (outside Sydney) or visit www.ombo.nsw.gov.au
- The NSW Medical Board **02 9879 2200** or visit www.nswmb.org.au (provides information on making complaints about doctors and medical specialists. Access to medical records is referred to Office Federal Privacy)
- Health Care Complaints Commission (deals with complaints relating to health practitioners and health services provides regional contacts) **1800 043 159** or visit www.hccc.nsw.gov.au
- Disability Complaints Service (for consumer complaints about any service you receive or are trying to access) **1800 424 007**

- The National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline and Complaints, Resolution and Referral Services. For Complaints about Advocacy and Employment services call on **1800 880 052** or visit www.pwd.org.au
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission Complaints Info line **1300 656 419** or www.humanrights.gov.au

Discrimination

- Contact NSW Disability Discrimination Legal Centre (provide a free Legal Advice Line 9.30am – 12.30pm Tues., Wed. and Thurs.)
- Call **02 9310 7722** or **1800 800 708** (Voice) or **1800 644 419** (TTY Tollfree) or TTY **9310 4320** or visit www.ddlcnsw.org.au
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission Complaints Info line **1300 656 419** or www.humanrights.gov.au (Complaints against Discrimination)
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Board **02 9268 5555** or **1800 670 812** or visit www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb

Advocacy individual (face-to-face)

- Action for People with Disabilities (Individual Advocacy – People with Disability and their families) **02 9449 5355** (offer support for people in Metropolitan Northern Sydney) Email: action-for-people@swiftdsl.com.au
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association NSW (MDAA) **02 9891 6400** or visit www.mdaa.org.au
- Spinal Cord Injuries Australia **02 9661 8855** or **1800 819 775** (outside Sydney) or visit www.spinalcordinjuries.com.au
- People with Disabilities (PWD) 52 Pitt St, Redfern NSW. Phone **02 9319 6622**.

Advocacy systemic (group)

- People with Disability Australia Inc. (Federal and State issues) **02 9319 6622** or **1800 422 015** or visit www.pwd.org.au
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) provide Advocacy for people from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB) call **02 9687 8933** or visit www.neda.org.au
- Spinal Cord Injuries Australia **02 9661 8855** or **1800 819 775** (outside Sydney) or visit www.spinalcordinjuries.com.au
- Physical Disability Council of NSW **02 9552 1606** or visit www.pdcnsw.org.au
- Family Advocacy **1800 620 588** or www.family-advocacy.com (works with Families about advocacy issues and developing advocacy skills, through workshops. For further information a library is available free-of-charge via on-line and on-site access)
- Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) is an independent, non-profit litigation, policy and research centre located in Sydney. Its charter is to promote the public interest through challenging laws, policies and practices that are unjust or deficient. Call **02 9299 7833** or visit www.piac.asn.au
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association NSW (MDAA) **02 9891 6400** or visit www.mdaa.org.au
- Action for People with Disability (Systemic Advocacy and Community Development – focus groups on raised systemic issues – Clients, Family and Carers) **02 9449 5355** (offer support for people in Metropolitan Northern Sydney)