



EMPRESS SUPPORT SERVICES

INFORMATION GUIDE

About Empress Support Services

Empress Support Services provides a wide range of services focused on the delivery of in-home, community and residential support. Our services range from a few hours of in-home support to whole-day activities. This guide introduces you to our services and how we are here to help you.

Contact Us

Contact Details	Phone	Email
Saheed Akolade Service Coordinator	03 8899 9168	Info@empress.org.au
Address	Website	ABN
3 Empire Avenue, Burnside, VIC, 3023	www.empress.org.au	68 653 655 577

Our Vision

To be the preferred provider of support and services for people with a disability and their families. To help connect, build, and sustain a contented group of participants who, whilst in our care, will receive the best service we can provide, delivered in a personal, caring, and meaningful way.

Our Services

Empress Support Services just got audited for being a registered NDIS provider for the following NDIS Registration Groups:

- Assistance with accessing employment.
- Assistance with personal care and safety products.
- Assistance in Coordinating or Managing Life Stages, Transitions and Supports.
- Assistance with Daily Life Tasks in a Group or Shared Living Arrangement.
- Innovative Community Participation.
- Household Tasks.
- Participation in Community, Social & Civic Activities.
- Assistance with Travel and Transportation.
- Group / Centre Activities.
- Implementing Behaviours Management.

For more information about these services, please call us on 03 8899 9168.

Our opening hours are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm Saturday and closed on Sunday. After-hours number 03 8899 9168.

Participant Guide

Service Quality

To deliver our services as a Provider, Empress Support Services complies with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework. This means we specifically comply with the requirements of the following:

- NDIS Act 2013 (Cwth).
- NDIS Terms of Business for Registered Providers and any Conditions of NDIS Registration.
- The requirement to obtain and maintain accreditation against the NDIS Practice Standards.

The NDIS Practice Standards are quality standards that govern how Registered NDIS providers must deliver services. We have standards that address:

- Rights of participants and responsibilities of providers.
- Provider governance and operational management.
- Provision of support.
- Support provision environment.

What do we mean when we say

We, us or our	Means Empress Support Services
Staff or worker	Includes our director, management, employees, contractors, other service providers, or where relevant, volunteers.
Participant	Includes our clients or participants, their representative or their visitors or advocates.
Workplace or environment	includes wherever our services are delivered including a participant's home, during transport or within community activities, public spaces, or other facilities.
Service	includes all aspects of our services and activities under a Support Plan.

Rights of Participants and Responsibilities of Providers

Empress Support Services respects and fully commits to upholding the rights of all people, including those with disabilities. We are also committed to ensuring you are aware of your rights and responsibilities and are supported to exercise them. In supporting you to exercise your rights, we must comply with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013, and NDIS Practice Standards (2018)- Rights and Responsibilities.

We believe in providing person-centred support whereby our approach is where the person is placed at the centred of the service and treated as a person first. The focus is on the person and what they can do, not their condition or disability. Support should focus on achieving the person's aspirations and be tailored to their needs and unique circumstances.

You have the right to access supports delivered by us that:

- promote, uphold, and respect your legal and human rights.
- respect your culture, diversity, values, and beliefs.
- respect and protect your dignity and right to privacy.
- are free from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or discrimination.
- allow you to exercise informed choice and control.
- tell you about and uphold your rights.
- provide support in a way that promotes, upholds, and respects your rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making.
- support you to make informed choices, exercise control and maximise your independence in relation to the supports we provide.
- respect your autonomy, including your right to intimacy and sexual expression.
- provide you sufficient time to consider and review your support options and seek advice if required, at any stage of our service delivery.
- support you to access an advocate (including an independent advocate) of your choosing.
- support you to engage with your family, friends and chosen community in the ways you want to.
- treat you with fairly, with courtesy, dignity, and respect and without discrimination.
- give you information about our services and associated costs, as well as other support options, within and outside Empress Support Services' business.
- involve you in decisions about your support, as well as our programs and policies.
- provide services that consider and respect your lifestyle, cultural, linguistic, and religious background, and preferences.
- protect your personal information and only use it for the right reasons.
- support you to provide us with feedback on our service, including complaints.
- promptly address enquiries and complaints about the support you are receiving.

- support you to connect with other services, including advocates, interpreters, and translators, if needed.
- support you to have a person to speak on your behalf for any purpose. and
- provide safe and appropriate services that are culturally relevant and support your needs and goals.

We encourage you to ask questions and want to make sure that you understand your rights and choices!

What you need to do as our Participant

- provide us with complete information that will help us to support you best.
- tell us if things change or if you cannot keep an appointment or commitment.
- act respectfully and safely towards other people using the service and towards our staff.
- provide us with feedback about our service and how we can improve.
- Promptly pay the agreed fees associated with your services and tell us as early as possible if our services are not required.
- Tell us if something is wrong or appears wrong.

Diversity and Participation

All aspects of the way we manage our service delivery promote participants' active participation and inclusion in the community. We support participants in developing and maintaining their independence, problem-solving, social and self-care skills as appropriate to their age, developmental stage, cultural background, or other needs and goals.

Some of the ways we do this include:

- delivering services in a way that respects your personal, gender, sexual, cultural, religious, or spiritual identity.
- employing and developing a diverse and culturally competent workforce.
- working collaboratively with disability-specific, mainstream, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse services to support holistic service delivery.
- using a strengths-based approach to identify individual participant needs and life goals, particularly in relation to recognising the importance of family, extended family, kinship, □ cultural, spiritual, language and community ties.

Interpreting and Translation

We know that delivering high-quality and safe services relies on effective communication. Where required, interpreters and translators will be made available at no cost to support your interactions with us.

Advocacy

Empress Support Services fully supports your right to have an independent advocate support you in your interactions with us. If you'd like help finding an independent advocate, speak to one of our staff. We are happy to help!

Alternatively, you can use the Disability Advocacy Finder, which is available online at <https://disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au/disability/ndap>.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Empress Support Services values and respects the privacy, confidentiality and dignity of our participants, their families, and our staff. We collect, use, protect and release Personal Information in full compliance with relevant State and Federal privacy legislation.

Empress Support Services will only collect information necessary for safe and effective service delivery. We will only use the information for the purpose it was collected and secure it safely. When we collect your information, we will explain why we are collecting the information and how we plan to use it. We will only take photos or videos of you with your complete and voluntary consent.

Information about you will only be released to other people or services with your informed consent, in an emergency, or where such disclosure is required or authorised by law.

You may access the information we hold about you, including in order to update or correct it, subject to certain exceptions. If you wish to access your information, please speak to a staff member.

When your information is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was obtained, we will destroy or permanently de-identify it.

You can request our Empress Support Services Full Privacy Statement from any of our staff members.

Feedback, Compliments and Complaints

Compliments, complaints, and other feedback provide us with valuable information about your satisfaction with our services. Feedback is taken seriously by Empress Support Services and is seen as an opportunity for improvement.

We encourage feedback and comments on the services we provide, both positive and negative. Whether a compliment or complaint, your feedback will be treated with confidentiality and sensitivity.

Feedback, compliments, and complaints can be lodged:

- directly with a staff member, either verbally or by providing a completed Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Form.
- by email to info@empress.org.au
- or by phone to 03 8899 9168.
- in writing to PO Box 3182, Caroline Springs, VIC, 3023.

Your complaint will be formally acknowledged within 5 working days. We aim to respond to all complaints and grievances as quickly as possible and within 28 working days from acknowledgement.

Empress Support Services will use all feedback and complaints to continuously improve our service delivery.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement

In addition to the above, Empress Support Services is continually seeking feedback on how we can improve the services we provide. This includes satisfaction surveys, requests for feedback by staff after you interact with us and involving you in our service delivery planning and review processes. Please feel free to provide any suggestions or ideas you have to a staff member. We love to hear from you!

Escalating Complaints

If you feel a complaint has not been sufficiently or appropriately addressed, you can seek further support from Empress Support Service's Director or alternatively through any of the following agencies:

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

- Online: www.ndiscommission.gov.au
- Phone: 1800 035 544.

Australian Human Rights Commission

- Phone: 1300 656 419
- Online: humanrights.gov.au

Disability Services Commissioner

Phone: 1800 677 342
Website : www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Disability Services Commission

- Email: complaints@dss.gov.au
- Phone: : **1800 634 035**
- Online: <https://www.dss.gov.au/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints-and-enquiries/feedback-form>

NDIS participants purchasing products and services have rights and protections under the Australian Consumer Law (ACL), including provisions on customer guarantees and unfair contract terms. Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety provides information, advice, and, in some cases, dispute resolution services for customer disputes under the ACL. In addition to the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, you can also contact the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) if you have concerns regarding consumer protection in relation to your finances.

Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety

- Phone: 1300 304 054
- Email: consumer@dmirs.wa.gov.au

ASIC

- Online: <https://asic.gov.au/about-asic/contact-us/>.

Accessing Empress Support Services' Services

We aim to provide services to you that are accessible, safe, engaging, and responsive to your support and communication needs.

To be eligible to receive Empress Support Services' services, a participant must meet the following eligibility criteria.

The person must:

- have one or more identified intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory, or physical impairments that are, or are likely to be, permanent.
- have one or more identified impairments attributable to a psychiatric condition and are, or are likely, permanent.

Consideration must also be given to the participant's Priority of Access by examining

- their relative need compared to others who receive or want to receive services.
- any additional needs they have.
- the extent to which Empress Support Services can contribute to those needs being met.
- the resources available within Empress Support Services to meet the participant's needs.
- other services the participant receives and how Empress Support Services' services will complement those and contribute to improved outcomes for the participant.
- the best interests of the participant.

Anyone wishing to access our services must participate in an Intake Interview. Where required, we will provide you with information and support to access a person of your choice, such as an advocate, to assist you in this process. The purpose of this interview is to assess your needs and whether Empress Support Services is able to support you. You will be contacted within 5 working days of the Intake Interview and advised of the outcome.

If you are offered services and accept, we will work with you and your supporters to assess your needs and develop and agree upon a Service Agreement. This will be completed during an Assessment and Planning Interview, which will take place within 10 working days of your acceptance.

We will review the provision of your support every 6 months with you and your supporters. Flexibility will be provided in regard to the timing of review assessments based on your needs and wishes, and you can request a review at any time.

Refusal of Service

We will accept your choice if we offer you a service and you choose not to accept.

Empress Support Services may refuse to offer a person service where:

- they do not meet our eligibility requirements.
- other potential participants are assessed as a higher priority based on our Priority of Access considerations.
- we do not have the capacity to cater to additional participants.
- we do not have the resources to cater to the person's specific needs.

Where services cannot be provided, we will assist you with referrals and support to access alternative services.

How does our Waiting List work?

A person who meets Empress Support Services eligibility requirements and cannot be offered a service due to lack of service capacity can elect to be placed on our Waiting List. Potential participants on our waiting list will be contacted every 2 months to achieve the following:

- advise you of your current Waiting List status.
- check whether you want to remain on the list.
- provide referrals to other service providers if required.
- advise the estimated wait time remaining.

Appeal

Any person refused services has the right to appeal. Appeals should be directed in writing to Empress Support Service's Director.

Leaving Empress Support Services' Services

All participants have the right to exit Empress Support Services' services at any time, and a decision to do so will not prejudice future access to the service. You must give us at least 4 weeks' notice if you wish to leave our services before the end date of your Service Agreement.

All participants exiting the service will be offered an Exit Interview, where we can discuss why they left and obtain feedback about how we can improve our processes. We also provide assistance and resources to support people exiting or changing services. This includes an agreed Exit Plan and the identification of referral to and support accessing alternative services.

Participants who have chosen to exit our services have the right to re-access services within a 1-month period of exiting, without having to follow formal access processes, provided the necessary resources are still available.

If you wish to end your service provision, please speak to an Empress Support Services staff member.

Termination

Empress Support Services may terminate a participant's services if:

- participants are unwilling over a period of time to work towards agreed goals.
- other people using the service, staff, or the person themselves are at risk of harm.
- financial requirements are not being met.
- severe incompatibility with other participants using the service is displayed.
- dramatic health changes require significantly increased levels of care, or a service model not provided by Empress Support Services.

Any person whose services are terminated has the right to appeal. Appeals should be directed in writing to Empress Support Service's Director.

Fees and Charges

We will discuss fees with you before providing services and include all fees in a Service Agreement. The Service Agreement contains detailed information about the services we will provide you and when fees must be paid. You must agree to this before services can commence. Empress Support Services will provide you with regular invoices and statements to assist you in managing payment for our services. If you have difficulty paying your fees for any reason, we encourage you to discuss this with a staff member so that mutually acceptable payment arrangements can be put in place.

Freedom from Harm, Abuse and Neglect

Empress Support Services employs skilled staff who respect the rights of people with disability, are aware of current policies and legislation pertaining to abuse, neglect and unexplained absences and will support people and their families, guardians, and advocates to access complaint mechanisms and raise any concerns they have about our services. All staff undergo comprehensive criminal history screening and other mandatory checks prior to employment.

Work Health and Safety

Where Empress Support Services provide services in your home, we expect that you, or the owner of the premises, will take responsibility for your safety and the safety of our staff working there. As far as practicable, please ensure that the premises are safe for our staff and meet all relevant building regulations or legislation. If you cannot perform or arrange for appropriate safety checks, this service can be included in your care plan or arranged with another service with our support.

Community Participation and Inclusion

Empress Support Services is committed to working with you to dismantle barriers, change attitudes and promote positive attitudes to create opportunities for your full inclusion and participation in your community. We work closely with a range of organisations to support you and encourage you to speak to a staff member if you have any specific needs or goals that another organisation could meet.

What happens if my usual worker is unable to come?

We arrange schedules to ensure you know who is attending to their needs and support and match you with workers with appropriate skills and knowledge. Your requests, such as workers who speak

the same language, are from the same culture or meet specific criteria, are matched wherever possible.

Staff are allocated to a participant on a regular basis to allow for predictability and provide continuous support. All supports are linked to the participant's plan and demonstrate consistency with their preferences and needs.

If your worker is absent, we will organise staff with relevant qualifications as a suitable replacement, and

- Where possible, provide a staff member who has worked with you previously and is aware of your requirements.
- Where possible, advise you of replacement staff.
- Replacement staff are required to be sensitive to your needs and ensure that care is consistent with your expressed preferences.

Incidents

We hope that Critical Incidents never occur.

If they do, then you are our priority, and we will support and assist you by following the correct procedures to deal with any critical participant incident.

A critical incident is classified as an event (or alleged event) that occurs because of, or during the delivery of services directly provided, and has caused or is likely to cause a significant negative impact on your health, safety, or well-being.

We will engage with the required authorities to support you during this time.

Critical participant incidents could include for example:

- Death, serious injury or alleged assault (including physical, sexual abuse, sexual assault, and indecent assault) that occurs as a result, or during the delivery, of services
- Allegations of serious unlawful or criminal activity or conduct involving an employee, a subcontractor or volunteer that has caused, or has the potential to cause, serious harm to participants
- An incident where a participant assaults or causes serious harm to others (including employees, volunteers, or contractors), as a result, or during the delivery, of services
- A serious fire, natural disaster, accident, or another incident that will, or is likely to prevent, service provision, or that results in closure or significant damage to premises or property, or that poses a significant threat to the health and safety of participants.

Incident Management

We have established procedures that identify, manage, and resolve incidents which include the following:

- Completion of an Incident Report that identifies and records the incidents
- Staff report all incidents to the Director.
- The Director is responsible for reporting incidents that are reportable incidents to the Commissioner.
- Support and assist participants who may be affected by an incident.

Our director will review the incident with the affected participant and collaborate with the person to manage and resolve the incident. Incidents will be reviewed, and amendments made to reduce the risk of recurrence.

Work Health and Safety

We have a duty to make sure it is safe for our staff to provide services at your premises in a healthy and safe environment, so we may ask you to make changes. Some of the requirements include:

- Telling our staff of any unsafe conditions in your home
- Participating in safety assessments of your home
- Helping with fixing any hazards found in your home through our safety assessment
- Ensuring your pets are controlled during service provision
- Providing a smoke-free working environment
- Providing a workplace for staff that is free of racial, sexual, physical, or emotional abuse
- Treating our staff with dignity and respect
- Telling our staff if you are unwell or cannot do things the way you usually do them
- Telling our staff if their doctor has diagnosed them with a short-term infectious illness
- Providing cleaning equipment that is suitable and well maintained
- Providing safe cleaning products
- Ensuring your mobility equipment and the other items you need to live independently in your home are available, and well maintained to enable us to provide care safely.

We will discuss with you the need for any change. After all, it is your safety as well!

We will conduct a safety check during our first service and discuss any risk we identify with you. The safety of the service will be reviewed with you on an ongoing basis in accordance with occupational health and safety legislation.