

[Organisation Name]
Consumer Advisory Group
Terms of Reference

1. About the Auspicing Organisation

1.1 Introduction

About the Auspicing Organisation

1.2 Aims of the Auspicing Organisation

The Auspicing Organisation aims to:

1.3 Approach of the Auspicing Organisation

1.4 Activities of the Auspicing Organisation

For the purpose of the aims above, the Auspicing Organisation undertakes the following activities:

1.

1.5 Governance of the Auspicing Organisation

2. The Importance of Participation and the Need for a Consumer Advisory Group

The active and informed participation of people who are homeless, formerly homeless or at risk of homelessness in the design, delivery and evaluation of policies and programs to respond to homelessness is important for three key reasons:

1. The right of affected persons to participate in public affairs and decision-making processes is a fundamental human right;
2. Informed and active participation of affected persons is more likely to result in the development and implementation of policies and programs that are targeted, efficient, effective and meet people's needs; and
3. The process of participation can be empowering and enhance personal development, self-esteem, capacity and independence.

3. About the Consumer Advisory Group

3.1 Introduction

Recognising the importance of active and informed participation, the Auspicing Organisation has resolved to establish a Consumer Advisory Group.

3.2 Aim of the Consumer Advisory Group

The aim of the Consumer Advisory Group is to contribute to enhancing and improving the quality of the Auspicing Organisation's service delivery, policy, advocacy, ... and community development activities by directly involving consumers in the development, implementation and evaluation of such activities.

3.3 Activities of the Consumer Advisory Group

The Consumer Advisory Group will fulfil this aim by undertaking the following activities in relation to realisation of the Auspicing Organisation's objectives and the conduct of the organisation's activities:

1. preparing for, attending and participating in Consumer Advisory Group meetings;
2. undertaking and reporting on consultations with communities and constituents;
3. providing peer education; and
4. providing strategic guidance and advice, and making recommendations, to the Auspicing Organisation.

At the beginning of each year, the Advisory Group will develop an action plan, detailing priorities, intended outcomes and performance measures.

At the conclusion of each year, the Consumer Advisory Group will provide an annual report to the Auspicing Organisation which reports on implementation of the action plan, including by documenting its activities and the outcomes associated with those activities.

3.4 Code of Conduct of the Consumer Advisory Group

Consumer Advisory Group members will undertake to:

1. treat each other with fairness, dignity and respect;
2. ensure that they do not engage in discrimination;
3. encourage and enable each other to participate and have a say;
4. actively listen to and support each other;
5. value and respect each other's contributions;
6. be reliable and punctual;
7. respect each other's privacy and confidentiality; and
8. promote practices of inclusion and empowerment.

3.5 Relationship between Consumer Advisory Group and Auspicing Organisation

The Auspicing Organisation will encourage, value and respect the participation and contribution of Advisory Group members.

In particular, the Auspicing Organisation will consider the advice and recommendations of the Consumer Advisory Group in the design, delivery and evaluation of the Auspicing Organisation's casework, policy, advocacy, and community development activities.

The Auspicing Organisation will report at each meeting of the Consumer Advisory Group on implementation of the Group's recommendations.

The recommendations will also be noted to the Auspicing Organisation Board in the Auspicing Organisation's periodic Board Reports.

3.6 Membership of the Consumer Advisory Group

The Consumer Advisory Group may comprise up to 8 members.

A person is eligible for membership if he or she is homeless, formerly homeless, or at risk of homelessness.

Membership of the Group is by appointment of the Auspicing Organisation.

For the purpose of making appointments, the Auspicing Organisation will seek Expressions of Interest. An Expression of Interest may be in writing or be submitted by telephone. The Expression of Interest should set out the applicant's eligibility, qualification for membership and what he or she would like to achieve through participation on the Group. The Auspicing Organisation will assess Expressions of Interest having regard to factors including experience, expertise, capacity, commitment, stakeholder representation and diversity.

Particular regard will be had to representation of social groups at increased risk of homelessness, including women experiencing domestic violence, people with mental illness, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, children and young people, people from regional and rural Victoria, ex-prisoners, people excluded from SAAP services and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Auspicing Organisation will consult with consumers for the purpose of assessing Expressions of Interest and making appointments.

The term of appointment is one year and may be renewed.

The Auspicing Organisation may co-opt members of the Advisory Group to fill casual vacancies.

3.7 Proceedings of the Consumer Advisory Group

Meetings of the Consumer Advisory Group will be called and convened by the Auspicing Organisation. The Group may also convene on its own motion. At this stage, it is envisaged that the Group will meet, on average, every second month for approximately 1.5 – 2 hours.

The Auspicing Organisation will give at least one weeks advance notice of a meeting. The Auspicing Organisation will also distribute a proposed agenda and minutes of previous meeting in advance of the meeting.

The Consumer Advisory Group will consider and discuss matters referred to it by the Auspicing Organisation, together with any other relevant matters raised by Consumer Advisory Group members.

Generally, Consumer Advisory Group meetings will be attended by a representative of the Auspicing Organisation. In some circumstances, the Group may decide to exclude the Auspicing Organisation from all or part of the meeting or to hold the meeting in camera. In such circumstances, the Group must clearly articulate its reasons for such a decision.

The Group may invite consumers or other experts to attend Advisory Group meetings to assist the Group in its discussion and deliberations. The Group may also invite observers to attend Advisory Group meetings. Non-member attendees are not entitled, however, to participate in decisions or recommendations of the Advisory Group.

The Auspicing Organisation will be responsible for taking minutes of each meeting. This responsibility may be delegated by mutual agreement to an Advisory Group member.

Meetings of the Consumer Advisory Group will be held at the offices of the Auspicing Organisation unless otherwise advised by the Auspicing Organisation.

The conduct and proceedings of meetings will otherwise be determined by the Chair of the Consumer Advisory Group.

3.8 Decisions of the Consumer Advisory Group

The Consumer Advisory Group will use its best endeavours to make decisions and recommendations by consensus through a process of discussion and negotiation.

Where it is not possible to reach consensus, the Group will make decisions and recommendations by majority vote with a quorum of four. In the event of a hung ballot, the Auspicing Organisation will be entitled to a vote.

3.9 Chair of the Consumer Advisory Group

The Consumer Advisory Group will be chaired on a rotating basis by members who wish to act as Chair.

3.10 Remuneration of Consumer Advisory Group

Members of the Consumer Advisory Group will be paid an amount of \$20 per meeting hour, with a minimum \$30 payable in respect of any given meeting.

Reimbursement of transport costs, disbursements, out-of-pocket expenses and remuneration for Consumer Advisory Group work undertaken outside of meetings may also be met in advance consultation with the Auspicing Organisation.

3.11 Resourcing and Support of Consumer Advisory Group

The Auspicing Organisation will use their best endeavours to provide and facilitate training and meet support needs identified by Consumer Advisory Group members. This may include training in areas such as governance, conducting meetings, strategic planning, program evaluation and any other areas identified by Consumer Advisory Group members.

The Auspicing Organisation will also use their best endeavours to resource the Advisory Group to undertake its activities, including by providing access to computers, internet, telephones, photocopying and meeting facilities.

In the event of a critical incident, Consumer Advisory Group members will have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP can provide immediate telephone-based support or onsite counselling as soon as practicable. In addition to this critical incident service, members are entitled to three free confidential counselling sessions each year regarding work and personal issues. Consumer Advisory Group members should contact the Auspicing Organisation to access these services.

3.12 Resignation and Expulsion of Consumer Advisory Group Members

A member of the Consumer Advisory Group may resign at any time. Where a member resigns, the Auspicing Organisation will provide that person with the opportunity to provide feedback on the operation of the Group through an exit interview.

The Auspicing Organisation may remove a person from the Consumer Advisory Group if, in their absolute discretion, they decide it is not in the interests of the Clinic for the person to remain a member.

If the Auspicing Organisation intends to make such a decision, they must give the member written notice setting out the intended decision and the grounds on which it is based. The notice must inform the member that he or she may attend the next Advisory Group meeting and may give an oral or written explanation or submission before the decision is finalised.

The Auspicing Organisation may also remove a person from the Consumer Advisory Group if, without reasonable excuse, that person fails to attend three consecutive meetings.

3.13 Grievance Procedure

Consumer Advisory Group members have the right to make a complaint in relation to the activities and operation of the Group.

The Auspicing Organisation is committed to resolving complaints fairly, reasonably and promptly.

A complaint may be made in person or in writing.

At first instance, complaints should be made to the Auspicing Organisation. If the complaint is unable to be resolved by the Auspicing Organisation, or relates to the conduct of the Auspicing Organisation, a complaint may be made to the Executive Directors of the Auspicing Organisation and further to the Auspicing Organisation Board.

Advisory Group members can seek assistance to advocate in relation to a complaint from the Homelessness Advocacy Service on 9419 8529 or 1800 066 256.

If the complaint is unable to be resolved at the Auspicing Organisation Board level, Advisory Group members have the right to have their complaint referred to an external and independent person.

3.14 Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference and the operation of the Consumer Advisory Group will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Auspicing Organisation in consultation with the Advisory Group.

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