

## ***Communities for Children***

### ***Community Committee***

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Introduction**

The ***Communities for Children (CfC)*** initiative addresses the needs of young children and families in the community to give children the best possible start in life. The initiative aims to directly assist children, aged 0-12 years, whilst also influencing the contexts within which they live: their families, their communities, and the broader social, economic and cultural environments. The Committee's work will be consistent with this intent. Committee membership includes a range of community representatives, including clients, parents and caregivers, local businesses and service providers.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Communities for Children Community Committee is to identify emerging trends based on evidence and advise on activities that directly assist children under 12 years, and their families, to meet local need.

We will do this in a way that is collaborative with, and of mutual benefit to, the community so as to consolidate resources and knowledge into local action.

The Committee will provide strategic advice and guidance to the Swan Alliance in the planning and implementation of programs and services for the community as part of the Communities for Children initiative. It is the **key decision-making mechanism** for the Communities for Children site and **drives the direction** of the Swan Alliance.

#### **Role**

The Community Committee will assist the Swan Alliance, as Facilitating Partner of the Communities for Children initiative, in the governance of the site to:

- consult with the wider community on community strengths, issues and needs;
- analyse and assess information from consultations and a range of other data sources to identify areas of need;
- determine evidence based solutions to priority needs;
- develop linkages within the local service system;
- monitor progress and review performance;
- assist the Swan Alliance to make decisions about the disbursement of funds;<sup>1</sup> and
- develop the Community Strategic Plan and Activity Work Plans<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Community Partners on the Committee should abstain from decision-making regarding disbursement of funds when there is a perceived or actual conflict of interest.*

<sup>2</sup> *Community Partners also engage in developing the Plan and provide services in line as agreed by the CfC Committee.*

The Community Committee is an **advisory group** comprising of individuals who bring unique knowledge and skills which complement the knowledge and skills of the Swan Alliance CEO Group and Leadership Group in order to more effectively govern the CfC site.

The Community Committee **makes recommendations and provides key information** to the Swan Alliance but does not have formal authority to govern or issue directives which must be followed.

The Swan Alliance seeks regular feedback from the Committee about its operation and management.

### Membership

The Committee reflects the **characteristics and demographics** of the local community. Membership of the Committee includes:

- Communities for Children Activity participants
- parents and caregivers
- local businesses
- local service providers, including Community Partners and other non-government organisations that deliver children's services, family support services and adult services, as well as schools, preschools and health providers.

Particular attention is given to engaging representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and other people who do not easily access mainstream services.

Consideration is also given to how to engage children in planning processes.

### Attendance

Members are expected to attend scheduled meetings and/or nominate a representative and ensure the representative is equipped to participate in any required decisions.

Where members are unable to attend, contributions may be submitted in writing.

Committee meetings are conducted as an open forum where representatives from local organisations and the community may attend as observers.

### Meetings and Decision Making

An agreed **schedule** of bi-monthly meetings is developed by the Swan Alliance.

The Chair is responsible for ensuring true and accurate **minutes** of all meetings are taken and circulated to Committee members in a timely manner.

If a **quorum** of 5 members is not present within 15 minutes of the commencement of a meeting, then the meeting will be adjourned.

The Community Committee makes **recommendations** to the Swan Alliance regarding the governance of the CfC site. Recommendations are reached by consensus. If consensus is unable to be achieved then each member (or proxy) present at the meeting shall have one vote cast by a raised hand. In the event of a tied vote, final recommendations will be presented to the Swan Alliance for consideration.

Committee recommendations made via email need 50% plus one of voting members to agree. The decision brought to the next Committee meeting.

### **Voting Members**

Voting rights apply to Committee members who are community members, service participants, church representatives, community groups and local non-government organisations (NGOs). Voting rights do not apply to Commonwealth, State and Local government representatives on the Committee with the exception of Child Health Nurses and teachers. Voting rights do not apply to members where a conflict of interest is declared.

### **Conflict Resolution/Grievance Procedures**

The Community Committee is committed to the equitable resolution of disputes that have the potential to interfere with the achievement of the Initiative vision and objectives. The parties to any dispute will confer in good faith with a view to resolving the matter by conciliation. When conflict arises and is unable to be resolved, then the Chair of the meeting may terminate the discussion and/or meeting.

Unresolved matters will be documented in the Minutes and referred to the next Swan Alliance Leadership Group meeting for decision or referral to the Swan Alliance CEO Group, as appropriate. Committee members will be notified, in a timely manner, of the decision of the Swan Alliance Leadership Group or CEO Group via email.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Committee members have a responsibility to declare any conflict or potential conflict of interest between their business or professional interests and their roles as members of the Committee. The Committee may then determine if and how the member may participate in its deliberations.

### **Facilitation**

The Swan Alliance has the role of Chairperson of the Committee. The Swan Alliance may choose to share this role with a Co-Chair or, appoint an alternative Chair. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the Committee operates in an effective manner within the parameters of CfC. The Chair shall endeavour to ensure that all members have a fair and reasonable opportunity to present their views. The Chair will also ensure the communication and decision making process throughout the meetings embraces normal meeting procedures.

### **Resignation from Committee**

Any Committee member may terminate their participation by giving 30 days written notice to the Swan Alliance.

### **Filling of Committee Vacancies**

Community members or agencies seeking membership to the Committee need to apply in writing to the Swan Alliance. The Swan Alliance, or other Committee members may invite new members to attend meetings. Applications for membership shall be considered taking into consideration a balance of geographical and sector representation. The Committee will submit its recommendations to the Swan Alliance.

### **Review of Terms of Reference**

These Terms of Reference will be subject to annual review.