

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group: Terms of Reference

Purpose and scope

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Advisory Group is a group of community legal centre (CLC) workers with marginalised identities that advise on what is needed in the sector in DEI initiatives, to improve conditions and outcomes for CLC workers with marginalised identities. It is also a space for peer support among workers with marginalised identities.

This group can inform the development and implementation of DEI policies and practices in the CLC sector in NSW by making recommendations to the DEI Practice Network, the CLCNSW Board and/or other groups. The Group can also give advice for submissions on law reform and policy matters.

Membership

This is a closed group for community legal centre workers with marginalised identities to discuss ideas, support their peers, and put items on the sector's agenda for practice and policy development.

People with marginalised identities for the purpose of this group includes:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- People of colour
- People who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)
- People with disability, mental illness or chronic illness
- Neurodivergent people
- d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing people
- LGBTIQ+ and gender non-conforming people
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- People with lived experience of incarceration
- People with lived experience of homelessness

Disclosure of identities

Where an eligible worker does not wish to disclose their identity or identities to the group, a confidential endorsement may be provided by an existing member who can attest to the worker's eligibility. This endorsement will be used solely for the purpose of confirming eligibility and will be handled in accordance with privacy and confidentiality obligations.

Governance

As the peak body for community legal centres in New South Wales, Community Legal Centres NSW is ultimately responsible for the DEI Advisory Group in a governance capacity.

Direction, facilitation and resource-sharing for the group is managed by the DEI Advisory Group co-convenors, of which there should be two or more.

Responsibilities and resources

DEI Advisory Group co-convenors are responsible for facilitating meetings, taking minutes and sharing resources with group members.

At least two Group members will also be responsible for making recommendations to the DEI Practice Network, the CLCNSW Board or other groups. Those responsible for this task can volunteer or be nominated by other members of the DEI Advisory Group.

Community Legal Centres NSW will set up a private SharePoint site for the DEI Advisory Group to connect and share ideas and resources outside of meetings.

Deliverables

Like the Aboriginal Advisory Group, the DEI Advisory Group provides lived-experience-based advice to inform diversity, equity and inclusion work across the NSW community legal sector.

The group's deliverables include:

- **Advice on policies**
Identification of gaps, risks, and improvement opportunities in DEI-related policies affecting CLC workers.
- **Guidance on action plans**
Lived-experience advice on sector-wide principles, common issues, and good practice in the development and review of action plans, including Disability Action Plans, Reconciliation Action Plans, and similar frameworks.
- **Training advice**
Recommendations on training needs, priorities, and focus areas based on sector experience.
- **Practice and systems improvement recommendations**
Ideas to improve workplace systems, processes, and supports for workers with marginalised identities.

- **Identification of emerging issues**

Raising recurring or emerging DEI issues within the sector for consideration and action.

Advice is provided in the form of agreed notes, themes, and recommendations.

The DEI Advisory Group does not draft, produce, or implement policies, resources, or training for individual community legal centres. The group may, where it determines there is sector-wide benefit, develop collective guidance or information for the sector.

The DEI Advisory Group is not a forum for raising or resolving individual workplace issues or grievances, though it may provide space for collective debriefing and reflection where this supports the group's advisory role.

Meeting procedures

Meeting types and times

The DEI Advisory Group will meet on a regular basis to support participation and manage emotional labour. Meetings will be held online.

- **Annual planning session**

Held annually (ideally in February) to set focus areas, priorities and specific goals for the year, and confirm how advice will be developed and shared.

- **Core advisory meetings**

Held three times per year - six weeks ahead of quarterly DEI Practice Network quarterly meetings, except for February.

These meetings are used to identify and prioritise issues, develop advice, and write recommendations.

- **Debrief sessions (optional)**

These meetings may be convened as needed following significant DEI consultations, sector incidents, or other emotionally demanding work.

Debrief sessions are confidential, optional, and non-decision-making, and are intended to support collective reflection, emotional processing, and peer support.

Proposed annual meeting pattern for DEI groups

February

- DEI Advisory Group: Annual planning session
- DEI Practice Network: Quarterly meeting

April

- DEI Advisory Group: Advisory meeting (Prepare advice for May Practice Network meeting)

May

- DEI Practice Group: Quarterly meeting

July

- DEI Advisory Group: Advisory meeting (Prepare advice for August Practice Network meeting)

August

- DEI Practice Group: Quarterly meeting

October

- DEI Advisory Group: Advisory meeting (Prepare advice for November Practice Network meeting)

November

- DEI Practice Group: Quarterly meeting

As needed

- Optional debrief sessions following major DEI work, consultations or incidents

Confidentiality

Aside from action points and advice agreed upon by the group for sharing with the DEI Practice Group, information shared by workers in the meeting is private and confidential, and not to be shared outside of the group.

Respect and Inclusion Statement

The DEI Advisory Group is a dedicated and respectful space for staff with lived experience of marginalisation. The group recognises the emotional labour involved in DEI work and is committed to operating in a way that prioritises care, safety and trust.

Group members are expected to:

- Engage respectfully and listen to the lived experience of others without challenge, minimisation or defensiveness
- Recognise the sovereignty, cultural authority, and right to self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Speak from personal lived experience and, where relevant, professional knowledge or expertise, while recognising that no individual perspective represents or negates the experiences of others within the same community
- Recognise intersectionality and the diversity of experiences within and across marginalised communities
- Acknowledge personal and systemic privilege, and its impact on whose voices are heard, centred, or marginalised within discussions
- Maintain confidentiality and respect personal boundaries
- Contribute to a space free from discrimination, harassment, or harm, and that supports the safety and dignity of all members

Participation in the group is based on self-identification and mutual trust. Behaviour that undermines the safety, dignity or inclusion of group members is not consistent with the purpose of the DEI Advisory Group.