

Terms of Reference

Mansfield Social Inclusion Action Group



Establishment

The Social Inclusion Action Group was established on 29 November 2023. The first meeting was held on the 7 February 2024 in response to the State Government created and managed Social Inclusion Action Group program launched in a local government environment.

Purpose

The group's purpose and objectives as outlined in the guidelines is to:

- Prevent social exclusion.
- Increase social inclusion.
- Increase social connection - Connection has a lot of different meaning for people. Sometimes that is a physical, distance, time, emotional connection, spiritual and psychological.
- For community members within the Mansfield Shire community.
- By bringing community members and leaders together for the purpose of:
 - Identifying gaps and existing initiatives to do with social inclusion.
 - Testing developing and supporting a range of funded initiatives.
 - Activating and reviewing initiatives.
 - Promoting Mental Health & Wellbeing through place-based coordination and activities.
- It is key that the group is community lead and owned, which is important when having conversations about the group in the community. It is important to bring back local data, information, and anecdotal stories from the community into the group to show what's working well, what's not working well out in the community.

Objectives

The Group's objectives are to:

- Identify local needs, existing initiatives and gaps related to social connection and social inclusion.
- Test, develop and support a range of funded initiatives that prevent social exclusion and support community participation, inclusion, and connection.
- Promote mental health and wellbeing through place-based coordination and

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activities/initiatives addressing social inclusion and connection.

- SIAG aims to increase social inclusivity in all groups including:
 - young people
 - single parents
 - people who are not in education, training or employment
 - people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities
 - refugees
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - people with a disability
 - LGBTQIA+ communities
 - older people

Membership

Membership of the Mansfield SIAG as per the guidelines should reflect the demographics of the local community. Membership should include a variety of lived and living experiences including members with experience of mental illness, psychological distress, addiction and/or social exclusion, isolation, and discrimination.

Membership should reflect diverse communities defined as people with a disability, LGBTIQ+ people and people from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, as well as include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, young people, financially disadvantage and older adults and a balance of sexes.

Membership of the Group is voluntary, and currently consists of:

- Organisational Members currently represented by:
 - Yooralla
 - Gadhaba Local Aboriginal Network
- Organisational Members represented in the past:
 - MACE
 - Wellways
 - Mansfield District Hospital

Up to two Mansfield Shire Council Staff can be considered community group members within the group.

Up to fifteen diverse community group members with a minimum of eight.

Roles

The chairperson is responsible for chairing meetings and for communications between the Group and Council. If the chairperson is not present at a meeting, the attendees may elect a chairperson for that meeting by consensus or reschedule the meeting to a convenient date and time.

The minute-taker is responsible for producing minutes of the meetings and providing them to the chairperson.

The members of the Mansfield Social Inclusion Action Group collaboratively developed core values that guides decision making and interactions with the community. These values are:

- Inclusivity
- Connection
- Collaboration
- Empowerment
- Wellbeing

In performing their roles as Group members, members:

- Act with integrity.
- Impartially exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the local community or the community group they represent.
- Do not improperly seek to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
- Treat all persons with respect and have due regard to the opinions, beliefs, rights, and responsibilities of other persons.
- Commit to regular attendance at meetings.
- Do not make improper use of information acquired because of their position, or release information that the member knows or should reasonably know is confidential.

Way of Working

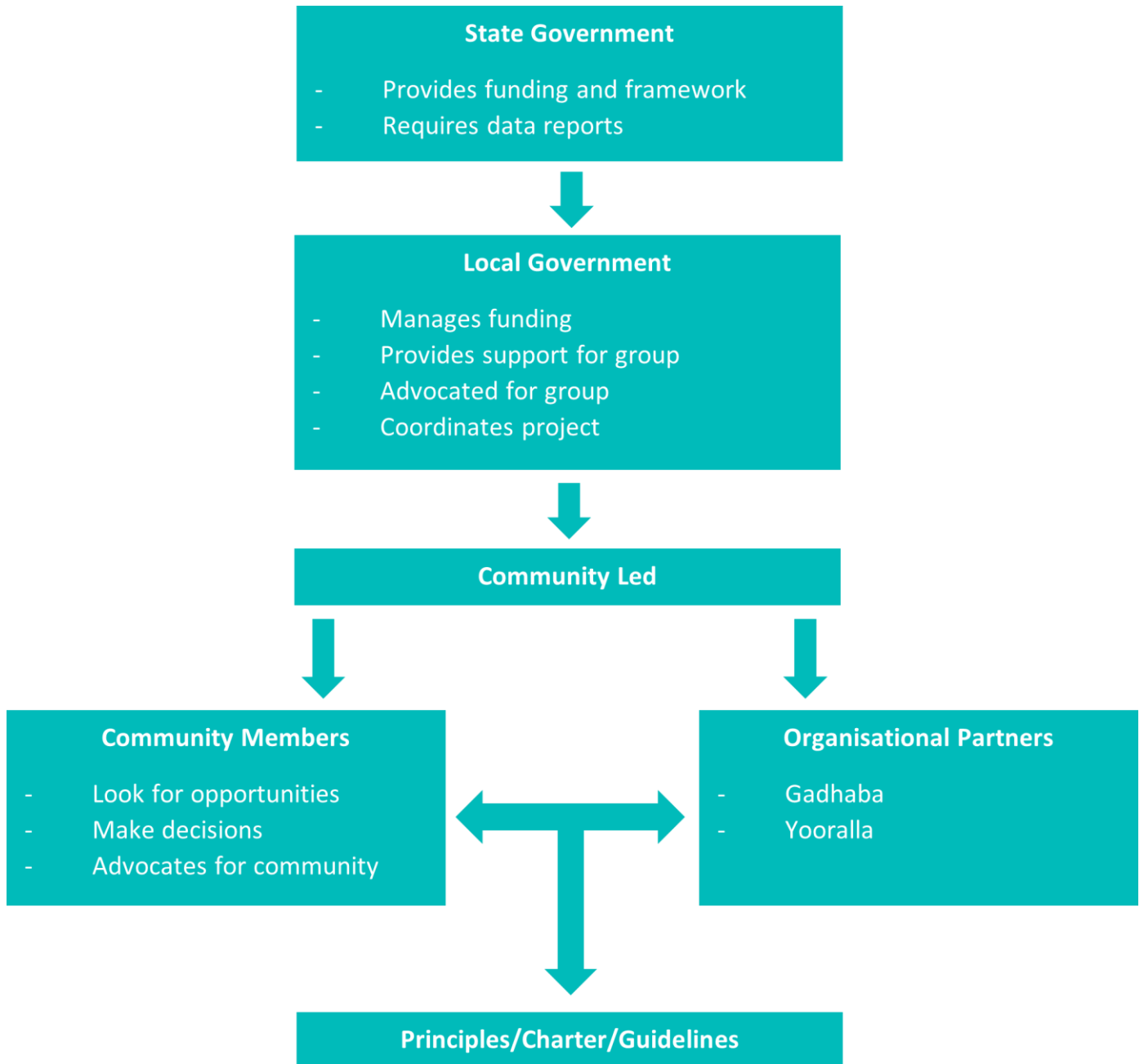
The Mansfield SIAG members agree to operate within the agreed Way of Working, the Way of Working will be periodically reviewed and amended as required to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

The agreed Ways of Working can be found on the SIAG portal website.

Employee Assistance Program

As this initiative relies heavily on members sharing their lived experience, we will extend eligibility to the Mansfield Shire Council Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for up to two sessions a year.

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Remuneration

- Remuneration is available for community members at \$35.00 per hour for up to 2 hours per month and additional ad hoc meetings upon prior agreement.
- Remuneration for community members is voluntary. If a member wishes to be paid for their time, they need to contact the coordinator for the appropriate finance forms.
 - Community members will be paid monthly for all meetings attended during that month after the last meeting attended.
 - Members will be paid directly into their bank accounts and will need to fill out

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the following finance forms and submit them to the coordinator to be put on the finance system for payment.

- Statement by a Supplier Form
- New Creditor Form

For some people the payments they are given may affect their government benefits or tax. Members receiving payments should be encouraged to seek independent tax advice on any impacts extra income may have. Members may also be directed to the [Australian Tax Office's Tax Help Program](#).

Vacancies

Where a vacancy exists, the coordinator will contact applicants deemed suitable from previous recruitment drives to see if they are still interested (if within the six months of recruitment advertisement) and appoint as appropriate. Otherwise, an Expression of Interest will be advertised, and group members can provide nominations while actively supporting and creating opportunities for community members from priority groups to apply and ensure membership reflects the demographics of the community. Nominees will be interviewed and appointed to the group by Council officers and group members.

Meetings

The Group meets monthly, for ten months of the year (February to November) and at other times by agreement between the members for ad hoc or subcommittee meetings.

Meeting procedures are not prescribed however it is a requirement that each meeting is recorded, and minutes are taken. The minutes are kept as a permanent record of Council.

A quorum is required for a meeting. The chairperson uses their discretion to defer any item on the agenda if there are insufficient attendees to fairly consider the item.

Meetings will follow standard meeting procedure protocols:

- Commence on time and conclude by the scheduled completion time.
- Be scheduled and confirmed in advance with all relevant papers distributed to each member as appropriate, not less than 7 days before the scheduled meeting time.
- Focus on the relevant issues.
- Action items completed within timelines.

A 70% attendance rate is required for group members throughout the year.

48 hours' notice to the coordinator is required for non-attendance to meetings.

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There may be times that people cannot attend the meetings physically. A virtual meeting, via Microsoft Teams can be arranged by the coordinator. Advanced notice needs to be given by members if required.

Active participation is expected from members in all group meetings.

We recognise that some topics of discussion maybe difficult for some members. In line with the charter of commitment, we respect a group member's right to choose to sit out of a conversation we request members inform the group or the coordinator of why you have chosen to do this.

Communications

The Group agrees to circulate items of significance or interest to all members in between scheduled meetings where necessary, via email circulation.

Council commits to communicating to the group any items of significance or interest that arise between meetings, via email circulation.

All communication sent out to the group will have a timeline, and requirements.

All communications will address access issues by making sure:

- Printed copies are available.
- They are available in other languages upon request.
- They are available in modified formats or print.
- They are in audio formats upon request.

Agenda and Meeting Notes

An agenda and further information will be sent out to group members one week prior to each meeting, it is expected that information will be read in advance so informed decisions can be made at meetings.

The minutes:

- Contain details of the proceedings, action items and agreements made.
- Are clearly expressed, and self-explanatory.
- Are distributed to each member as appropriate not more than 7 days after the meeting. Members will have opportunities to comment on them and then they will go into the program records for this project.
- If members choose not to comment and add input then they don't get to say after the fact that they didn't agree with a decision, or what was in the meeting's agenda, or they want something changed.
- Are submitted to the next meeting for information.

Grievance Handling

Due to the nature of the program and the initiatives, we understand at times there will be a need to provide feedback to each other, to be able to have robust and healthy debate.

We encourage members to lean into challenging conversations when providing feedback.

- If the Ways of Working in the Charter of Commitment are met, then people should feel comfortable in being able to bring things up directly with the person involved.
- If someone is feeling there is a breach, they should have the courage to speak up at the time and have a conversation with the person concerned to try and resolve the issue.
- Where that option is not available or there is a situation where the member feels uncomfortable, they are encouraged to seek out the chairperson to discuss further.
- If the issue remains unresolved escalate it to the coordinator outside of the room.
- The coordinator will speak to both parties to try and resolve the issues as an independent third party.
- If no resolution can be made reached a decision may be made to remove group members.
- If an organisational partner has an issue with program operations, for any reason it is expected they will contact the coordinator outside of the group to discuss and resolve the issue.

Conflict of Interest Provisions

Where a conflict of interest is identified by a member, that member informs the Group of the conflict and excludes himself or herself from discussions and decisions regarding the item to which the conflict relates to.

Learning and Development

Formal and informal learning and development opportunities are available to the group and will be guided by the group and their needs and may take the form of mentoring, skills training, and network building. The group will collaborate with other SIAGs within the area to swap ideas, experiences, build networks and strengthen the program collectively.

Review

These terms will be reviewed in July 2027.

References

[The Social Inclusion Action Groups – Guidelines for Local Government Areas.](#)

[Mansfield Social Inclusion Action Group – Ways of Working.](#)