

# Canberra Inclusive Partnership (CIP) Service User Reference Group (SURG) Position Description – Co-Chair

## Role context

Meridian is lead agency for a partnership of community organisations committed to building a more inclusive Canberra. Our partners in the Canberra Inclusive Partnership (the Partnership) are A Gender Agenda, Northside Community Service, and Sexual Health & Family Planning ACT.

As part of Meridian's commitment to inclusion, we are looking to partner with and learn from the unique insights of people with lived experience and recognise the value they bring to improving our work.

The Service User Reference Group (the Group) provides advice and input to the Canberra Inclusive Partnership on the provision of services for Supporting and Strengthening Canberra's LGBTIQ+ Communities Program. The SURG has input into identifying service gaps, while also assisting in the design of services and contributing to the continual improvement of service provision.

Members are invited to participate in the Service User Reference Group for a two-year period and attend a scheduled meeting every two months, in accordance with the Terms of Reference. The Group is comprised of up to 10 members. The meetings are initially being led by Meridian staff during its establishment phase of 6 months. After this period, SURG Members may choose to have the SURG co-led by a Co-Chair, alongside Meridian. It is expected that the Co-Chair role will be rotated between Members at 6 month intervals, allowing different General Members to submit an expression of interest for the Co-Chair role every 6 months.

The role of the Co-Chair is to assist Meridian staff in the running of SURG Meetings, supporting the Group to work together respectfully and democratically. The person appointed to this position will act in partnership with Meridian to ensure the effective and efficient operation of the Group, in accordance with the Terms of Reference. Expressions of interest for the Co-Chair position can be submitted privately to Meridian's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) by General SURG Members. Where there is more than one expression of interest received, Meridian's CEO and two Canberra Inclusive Partnership Members will make the appointment decision. The Co-Chair role ceases after a 6 month period within the Member's two-year tenure. A SURG Member who has served as a Co-Chair for 6 months, may apply to the CEO with a new expression of interest to have their role as Co-Chair renewed for another 6 month period, however other General Members will also be invited to submit an expression of interest for the Co-Chair position every 6 months.

Participation in meetings will include sharing lived expertise and specialist knowledge, as well as helping to improve service users' experiences and outcomes. Meetings will be held in Meridian's Pride Hub, in Turner, with other location opportunities becoming available across Canberra in discussion with Group Members. Members of the Group are reimbursed for their attendance and are entitled to access Meridian's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Members of the Group are also entitled to subsidised professional development training opportunities throughout their Membership of the SURG. The Co-Chair is not expected to attend Meridian outside of scheduled meeting times, but will however be reimbursed at a higher rate than General SURG Members, for attendance at SURG meetings. This is to ensure that additional costs associated with Co-Chair responsibilities are covered.

## Underpinning values

The Partnership commits to upholding the following values in practice:

- We acknowledge the Ngannawal people as Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.
- Respect for the lived experience of LGBTIQ+ people, the intersections of their experience and the value of this experience as an evidence base.

- Diversity of voices and experience help us learn from each other. We value equity and inclusion and commit to providing opportunities for voices to be heard and acted upon.
- We value collaboration between funders, service providers and service users.
- We promote open, continual and transparent communication between the Canberra Inclusive Partnership and community members.
- We operate in a trauma informed manner, acknowledging that trauma is frequently a part of the lived experience of LGBTIQ+ and HIV+ community members. Trauma informed principles of safety, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment underpin Meridian and the Partnership's engagement with communities.

## **Eligibility for membership**

Membership is open to people who identify as LGBTIQ+. We acknowledge that as a term, LGBTIQ+ cannot capture the diversity of sexualities, bodies, identities, and experiences that exist in our communities. We use the plus sign to communicate that LGBTIQ+ does not capture the full diversity of sexualities, bodies, identities, and experiences, which include people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, agender, non-binary, gender fluid, asexual, and pansexual.

In addition to people of diverse identities, the Service User Reference Group encourages membership from people whose intersectional lived experience can often result in additional discrimination, stigma and structural disadvantage. This includes but is not limited to LGBTIQ+ people: who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; who are from diverse cultural backgrounds, including those who have lived experience of seeking asylum; who are people with disability; who use alcohol and other drugs; who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness; who are living with HIV or other chronic illnesses. Membership is also encouraged from people who are family or allies of LGBTIQ+ people.

## **Criteria for participation**

- A strong interest in influencing systems change for the LGBTIQ+ and HIV+ community.
- Ability and desire to work within a team requiring co-operation, inclusiveness, active listening skills and respect for diversity and difference.
- Availability to attend meetings between the hours of 9:00am-5:00pm every two months.
- Feel comfortable participating in meetings in an organisational setting.
- Possession of a current Working with Vulnerable People card (WWVP) or willingness to undergo the process of getting one.
- Willingness to participate in Meridian's recruitment process, which includes interview(s), police background checks and reference checks<sup>1</sup>.
- Experience using Meridian or other Partnership member's services (desirable, but not necessary).

## **Areas of responsibility**

The main areas of responsibility for the Canberra Inclusive Partnership Service User Reference Group General Members are:

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<sup>1</sup> Checks are conducted in strict confidence. Applicants will not be automatically excluded on the basis of having a police record. If a disclosable outcome results from a check, we will meet to respectfully discuss with you.

- Developing, carrying out and tracking progress towards the development of an annual Service User Reference Group Work Plan.
- Participating in and providing ideas and opinions into the Canberra Inclusive Partnership activities, including the Strategic Plan and Team Plans for partner agencies as required.
- Participating in training and induction activities with partner agency staff.
- Participating in advocacy activities, including presentations to government and community groups.
- Participating in developing feedback loops for ongoing communication between the Service User Reference Group and Canberra Inclusive Partnership agencies.
- Participating in ongoing evaluation processes to reflect Service User Reference Group Members' experiences.
- Identify issues and areas of concern that the Service User Reference Group wishes the Canberra Inclusive Partnership to look at, including service delivery and advocacy, both within the organisation and about wider concerns affecting LGBTIQ+ communities.
- Keep the Canberra Inclusive Partnership listening to its service users who want to talk about improvement in the lives of LGBTIQ+ people and also the barriers inhibiting these changes.

**Specific Areas of Responsibility for the SURG Co-Chair are:**

- To act as a co-facilitator of the Service User Reference Group.
- To at all times make sure that the underpinning values, in particular, those involving equity and inclusion, are used in their guidance of the Group.
- To assist in welcoming new Members.
- To assist in making sure that the annual SURG Work Plan is created through team work by the Group and that progress toward the achievement of the Work Plan is a regular agenda item at meetings.
- To assist with minute taking of meetings.
- To have read and be familiar with the CIP SURG Terms of Reference, SURG Communication Protocol and SURG Resource Protocol documents.
- When co-chairing meetings, to make sure that:
  - a) An Acknowledgement of Country is made at the commencement of each meeting,
  - b) The agenda is covered in a timely manner,
  - c) All viewpoints are heard, and
  - d) Actions and decisions are recorded accurately by the minute taker.