

## **Canberra Inclusive Partnership (CIP)'s Service User Reference Group (SURG)**

### **Resource Protocol**

#### **1. Background**

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

As part of the Canberra Inclusive Partnership (the Partnership) agencies' commitment to inclusion, we are partnering with and learning from the unique insights of people with lived experience and recognise the value they bring to improving our work. We recognise that it is not just the work we do but the way in which we do it that contributes to a person's meaningful experience of inclusion.

The Service User Reference Group (the Group) aims to provide advice and input to the [Partnership](#) on the provision of services for the Supporting and Strengthening Canberra's LGBTIQ+ Communities Program funded by the ACT Government. Through establishing a body of representatives, our hope is that service users feel valued and have input into identifying service gaps, while also assisting in the design of services and contributing to the continual improvement of service provision.

The Partnership recognises that community representatives provide a valuable service to agencies, contributing to a service sector that is more informed and better able to address the needs of LGBTIQ+ people, their families and allies.

Service User Reference Group Members (Members) are vital in program, service and policy development and delivery. They provide a consumer's perspective using the consumer experience and expertise to guide decision makers. The Canberra Inclusive Partnership's Service User Group members are appointed by the Partnership, based on their interest, experience and availability.

This Resource Protocol document defines the processes by which Meridian, as the lead agency of the Partnership, will manage reimbursement to Members engaged to participate in the CIP's Service User Reference Group related meetings or other formal activities.

#### **2. Member reimbursement**

The Canberra Inclusive Partnership is committed to adequately reimbursing Members to cover reasonable costs associated with attendance at SURG meetings and activities.

The Partnership will provide the following reimbursement to SURG Members:

- General Members will receive \$75.00 per two hour meeting and a pro-rata rate for meetings longer than two hours. This is intended to cover costs such as parking, petrol, public transport and printing material.
- Reasonable additional expenses associated with attendance will be negotiated and agreed in writing as needed.
- A pro-rata amount of reimbursement is provided to Members when the duration of a meeting is longer than two hours. This pro-rata rate of reimbursement is to be provided in half hourly increments as modelled on ACT Government Health's "Consumer, Carer and Community Representative Reimbursement" Procedure (2019). For example:
  - A meeting of two hours and fifteen minutes duration
    - \$75.00 for the initial two hours +
    - \$18.75 for the fifteen minutes (provided in 30 minute increments) =
    - \$93.75 is how much reimbursement the Member will receive.
  - A meeting of three hours duration
    - \$75.00 for the initial two hours +
    - \$37.50 for the second hour (half of \$75) =
    - \$112.50 is how much reimbursement the Member will receive.
  - A meeting of four hours and thirty minutes duration
    - \$75.00 for the initial two hours +
    - \$75.00 for the second two hours +
    - \$18.75 for the thirty minutes (quarter of \$75) =
    - \$168.75 is how much reimbursement the Member will receive.

### 3. Additional Resources available to SURG members

- Service User Reference Group Members will also receive access to professional development opportunities, advocacy opportunities and access to three sessions of individual counselling per year.
- Catering for SURG meetings will be provided by Meridian, as lead agency of the Partnership.
- Additional costs associated with attending meetings, such as carer expenses, or other costs not relating to local travel, parking and printing material, will also be negotiated and reimbursed, as negotiated and agreed in writing.

### 4. Reimbursement Procedure

1. All Service User Reference Group Members will receive a **SURG Member Information form** to complete, and an **Australian Tax Office Statement by a Supplier form**. These forms enable the Partnership to reimburse Members their costs associated with attending bi-monthly meetings. Tax will not be withheld from Member reimbursement payments because "*The supply is made by an individual or partnership without a reasonable expectation of profit or gain*" (It is suggested that Members tick that box on the **ATO Statement by a Supplier form**).

2. Following each SURG meeting, Members will submit to the Partnership a signed **SURG Member Claim Form** detailing the meeting duration. This form is to be returned to the SURG lead agency, Meridian, in person at the conclusion of a SURG meeting, or via email to [surg@meridianact.org.au](mailto:surg@meridianact.org.au), within a week of conclusion of the SURG meeting. Where a SURG member is an apology to a meeting, they will not receive reimbursement.
3. Reimbursement will be made directly into SURG member's bank account, after the SURG meeting and within two weeks of receipt of the SURG Member Claim form.
4. The CIP Lead Agency, Meridian, is responsible for ensuring that SURG members are reimbursed appropriately and efficiently.
5. When a SURG Member undertakes work out of session in preparation for the meeting, including but not limited to research and constituent consultation, they do not receive additional reimbursement. This out of session work is part of the representative's role as a SURG Member.
6. Where a SURG Member arrives at a meeting to discover that the meeting is not being held as organised, or when a meeting is cancelled or post-poned with less than 24 hours' notice, the representative will be reimbursed as if the meeting was held.
7. Where a SURG Member would like to enquire about financial assistance to attend a professional development opportunity that is directly related to their work as a Service User Reference Group Member, they can email [surg@meridianact.org.au](mailto:surg@meridianact.org.au) with information about the professional development opportunity. Meridian's Chief Executive Officer is responsible for approving these requests.
8. Where a SURG Member requires access to one of three available 1hr counselling sessions, the Member will contact the provider, and identify that they are associated with Meridian via the SURG. A current list of LGBTIQ providers will be shared with SURG members. The provider will directly invoice Meridian up to a max of \$120 per session. This invoice will be de-identified and will only include the session number. Any gap payments must be paid by the Member. Access to providers is confidential; individuals accessing the service are not identified to Meridian. The provider invoices Meridian for their time but no identifying Member details are provided to Meridian. The SURG Member can also see a qualified and accredited counsellor or registered psychologist of their own choice. Rates will differ between professionals and Meridian will re-imburse the Member up to a max of \$120 per session where they see a practitioner of their own choice.
9. Where a reimbursement is required that differs from this protocol and procedure, an exemption is to be sought from the Meridian's Chief Executive Officer, in writing via [surg@meridianact.org.au](mailto:surg@meridianact.org.au).

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