

1. Introduction

The *Support and Safety Hubs: Statewide Concept, July 2017* articulates the Victorian Government's commitment to Aboriginal self-determination¹, with the design and implementation of the Hubs being informed at all stages by the Aboriginal communities in each area. It states that 'Hubs will build an enduring partnership with local Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations to ensure that cultural safety is embedded in all aspects of Hubs' design'. The proposal to establish an Aboriginal Advisory Group for each Orange Door site (Aboriginal Advisory Group) seeks to progress this partnership.

2. Purpose

The Aboriginal Advisory Group will create a clear mechanism for Aboriginal communities and services to:

- collectively advise the Hub Leadership Group (HLG) on implementing the principles of self-determination, service choice and cultural safety within The Orange Door
- inform decision-making about the ongoing operation of The Orange Door, in relation to the needs of Aboriginal communities across The Orange Door catchment area
- support engagement of Aboriginal services within The Orange Door.

3. Membership

Membership of the Aboriginal Advisory Group includes representation from:

- Local Aboriginal services who sit on the HLG
- Local Dhelk Dja Action Group (formerly Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group - IFVRAG)
- Regional/Local Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (RAJAC/LAJAC)
- Aboriginal practitioners in The Orange Door
- Hub Manager (where appropriate).

Dhelk Dja Action Groups and LAJACs will be invited to nominate a representative from their group to sit on the Aboriginal Advisory Group in their local area.

An Expression of Interest (EOI) process may be conducted where areas are seeking a broader membership than those listed.

It is preferable that representatives on the Aboriginal Advisory Group are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

Members should demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the issues affecting Aboriginal communities within a family violence and children and families context. They should also demonstrate an ability to communicate sensitively and effectively with Aboriginal communities and services.

¹ Aboriginal self-determination is our most fundamental of all rights. It means exercising true freedom, full and total control of our own safety, healing, connections to land and culture, communities, futures and lives. Aboriginal self-determination in a family violence context is a systemic shift from government and the non-Aboriginal service sector, that requires the transfer of power, control, decision making and resources to Aboriginal communities and their organisations

4. Governance

The Aboriginal Advisory Group will advise the HLG and work closely with HLG members on matters relating to the needs of local Aboriginal communities across The Orange Door area.

Where appropriate the Aboriginal Advisory Group may also provide recommendations to Family Safety Victoria (FSV) regarding the design and implementation of The Orange Door in their local area.

The Aboriginal Advisory Group may undertake aspects of its work through smaller sub-groups to focus on aspects of self-determination, service choice and cultural safety within The Orange Door. These sub-groups may require input from people who are not formal members of the Aboriginal Advisory Group, for example where practitioner expertise is required.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Aboriginal Advisory Group will be expected to provide guidance, advice and recommendations on structural or systemic issues and facilitate shifts in local barriers to support Aboriginal client outcomes.

The Aboriginal Advisory Group may work to ensure:

- all funded organisations partnering to deliver The Orange Door are delivering culturally safe and responsive services to Aboriginal people as part of their service agreements and in particular, demonstrating compliance with the Human Service Standard 4.4 that supports '*People [to] maintain and strengthen connection to their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander culture and community*'
- training is delivered by local Aboriginal communities/services to The Orange Door workforce, and is embedded as an ongoing commitment, to build a deeper and more nuanced understanding of cultural perspectives, holistic and healing approaches, and the strengths and opportunities within the local Aboriginal community
- Aboriginal self-determination and cultural safety is realised, as required by The Orange Door Integrated Practice Framework and position descriptions for all workers in The Orange Door
- cultural safety is embedded across The Orange Door
- visible recognition and acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture and Country is in place at The Orange Door
- local Aboriginal feedback on The Orange Door frameworks, policies and procedures is being implemented locally
- support for Aboriginal involvement in recruitment processes
- Aboriginal services and workers are providing expert practice advice in delivering culturally safe and appropriate services
- cultural safety issues for Aboriginal service users and Aboriginal workers are addressed.

5.1 Co-Chairs

The Aboriginal Advisory Group will be co-chaired by:

- A representative from the agency auspicing the Aboriginal Practice Leader position
- A representative from the local Dhelk Dja Action Group, subject to their individual preference to take up the co-chair role and noting that sitting fees will be provided.

The Co-Chair's role is to:

- arrange meeting agendas and co-chair meetings
- represent the Aboriginal Advisory Group's purpose at relevant external meetings (as required)
- balance needs and constraints, particularly where it is not possible to gain a consensus view amongst members
- promote and maintain a focus on the desired outcomes
- report to and advise the HLG on progress, recommendations and any issues as required (this responsibility will mainly sit with the Co-Chair who also sits on the HLG)
- Ensure Code of Conduct for Aboriginal Advisory Group is adhered to.

The Chair may be supported by facilitators who will harness the group's collective expertise and guide the required design activities.

5.2 Members

The role of individual Aboriginal Advisory Group members is to:

- endorse and act consistently with the Aboriginal Advisory Group Terms of Reference
- advise the Hub Leadership Group on putting the principles of self-determination, service choice and cultural safety into place from the outset
- inform decision-making about the establishment and operation of The Orange Door, in relation to the needs of Aboriginal communities across The Orange Door catchment area
- raise any opportunities, risks or concerns related to cultural safety, service choice or self-determination with the Chair
- escalate, as appropriate, any matter requiring consideration and endorsement
- be open and respectful to all contributions
- act in accordance with Code of Conduct for the Aboriginal Advisory Groups for The Orange Door.

Members of the Aboriginal Advisory Group and associated sub-groups are expected to contribute to the work of the group and be:

- empathetic to the experience, contexts and needs of all the people who will work in, and access The Orange Door
- open to new perspectives and beliefs
- willing to work differently and think creatively
- aware of the whole, connected system and of the broader landscape of reform
- solution-focused, to contribute to the successful implementation of The Orange Door.

All members will be required to identify and declare potential conflicts of interest.

6. Administrative arrangements

This section outlines the Aboriginal Advisory Group's decision-making process, frequency of meetings, requirements for agendas, minutes and papers requiring decisions, and rules for proxies.

6.1. Quorum

Whilst the Aboriginal Advisory Group is not a decision-making body, it will make recommendations to FSV and the Hub Leadership Group where relevant.

A minimum of one third of members, including the Hub Manager and/or a representative from the Hub Leadership Group is required for recommendation-making purposes.

The Aboriginal Advisory Group will make decisions about the group's recommendations by agreement. If the Aboriginal Advisory Group cannot come to an agreement, the Chair will seek further advice from the members and attendees and will make the decision on the Aboriginal Advisory Group's behalf. Out-of-session decisions will be deemed acceptable by agreement. All out-of-session decisions will be recorded in the minutes of the next scheduled meeting.

To ensure cultural safety, close or contentious decision making points may be facilitated by secret ballot.

6.2. Proxies

Members of the Aboriginal Advisory Group can send proxies to meetings. Proxies are considered members for the purpose of quorum. Aboriginal Advisory Group members will inform the Co-Chairs as soon as possible if they intend to send a proxy to a meeting. The standing member will be responsible for ensuring their proxy has access to and information required for participation in the Aboriginal Advisory Group and/or decision making capacity.

Proxies must ensure they provide any relevant feedback about the meeting to the Aboriginal Advisory Group member they were representing.

6.3. Meetings

Meetings will be held monthly (or more often, by exception, when key input is required). The Co-Chairs will reconsider the frequency of meetings if necessary.

Sub-groups will negotiate timing and frequency of their meetings or workshops as required.

The Aboriginal Advisory Group will nominate who is responsible for secretariat duties, and may request support from The Orange Door if required.

Papers for the Aboriginal Advisory Group will be provided to members via email at least 5 business days before each meeting. Papers must be provided in hard copy upon arrival at the meeting.

Specific opinions of a member or their representative on any issue may be recorded in minutes of meetings if requested.

All Aboriginal Advisory Group meeting papers are to be treated as confidential unless otherwise advised, noting that records may be subject to and must be handled in accordance with legal requirements in relation to privacy, information sharing, record keeping and freedom of information.

The Aboriginal Advisory Group and FSV will handle personal information in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*.

10. Sitting Fees

Aboriginal Advisory Group members who attend meetings on a voluntary basis (ie. are not paid to attend on behalf of their organisation) will be provided with a sitting fee by agreement with FSV, to acknowledge their time and effort.

Where an agreement already exists with FSV, members will be paid sitting fees in line with that agreement, through the Inclusion and Engagement Branch.

11. Timeframes

Members of the Aboriginal Advisory Group will be appointed for an initial period of 18 months – 24 months, to ensure consistency for the Advisory Group in its initial stages. After this period, the Advisory Group's function and membership will be reviewed.

The Terms of Reference of the Aboriginal Advisory Group will be reviewed within six months of operation.

A review of the operation and mandate of Aboriginal Advisory Group will be undertaken by April 2019 to inform ongoing arrangements.