Members Advisory Group (MAG) terms of reference

July 2025

History of CLCA’s membership engagement

* CLCA (formerly NACLC) has a long history of engaging and consulting members in its work.
* Previously an Advisory Council comprising two representatives from each jurisdiction, was required by the constitution which met online and face to face semi-regularly throughout the year. This requirement was removed from the constitution in 2020.
* Other structures were established to provide advice on specific areas of the CLCA’s work. These were later collapsed into a single advisory group, although the membership was not streamlined at the same time.
* In 2022 the MAG was formed, with membership from the national peak’s eight members.

Purpose of MAG

* To provide advice to CLCA on state and territory issues and perspectives
* To help inform CLCA thinking and practice, including on:
  + National policy and advocacy matters
  + Any of the sector service programs that CLCA runs.
* To provide a forum for sharing of ideas and experiences between jurisdictions.
* To facilitate sector cohesion and collaboration by:
  + Assisting CLCA to form positions that are, where necessary and possible, consistent nationally and across the country;
  + Providing advice on particular issues relevant to CLCA’s work
* MAG members are not responsible for delivering information to centres on behalf of CLCA
* MAG is not a substitute for sector communications directed to centres.

Relationship to the Board

* The Board is the governance authority for CLCA.
* The Board will take advice from MAG however MAG is an advisory mechanism and CLCA is not bound by its advice.
* The CLCA CEO serves as the conduit for information between the MAG and the Board, and for advice from the MAG to the Board.
* The Board may direct the CEO to seek the MAG’s views on specific issues.
* When a CLCA Board member is also a MAG member, the member will be mindful of conflicts of interest.

Membership

* MAG members include one representative from each of CLCA’s eight members (being the state and territory CLC peak bodies) which will be:
  + the CEO of the state peak where the peak is funded,
  + the Chair of the state/territory association where there is no funded peak, or
  + a nominee or delegate of the above.
* If a jurisdiction is unable to provide a representative to MAG, the CLCA CEO will take reasonable steps to ascertain the views of centres in that jurisdiction.
* MAG acknowledges the very different levels of resourcing available to state and territory CLC associations and that it is harder for associations which are not funded to provide a MAG representatives. Currently, only associations in NSW, Qld, Victoria and WA are funded.
* MAG members bring perspectives informed by their knowledge and experience, and will do their best to represent the views of their jurisdiction and should note where necessary any divergence or difficulty in reaching consensus.
* The CLCA Board Chair is invited to attend the MAG but is not a member of the MAG. The purpose of attendance is to enable the Chair to be informed of matters impacting the members and to gain a sense of the sector’s perspectives on key issues in order to inform lobby and advocacy and the work of CLCA.

Process

* MAG will meet as determined by the members, but ideally at least every six weeks.
* The CEO of CLCA will act as secretariat for MAG.
* MAG may appoint one of its members to act as chair of MAG meetings. If there is no nomination the CEO of CLCA will serve as meeting Chair.
* Summary notes of meetings are to be kept and shared with members for transparency and continuity (could there be a SharePoint site?).
* Meetings will encourage informality and participation.
* MAG applies the Chatham House Rule i.e. MAG members are free to use and share information from meetings with their state peak/association and with centres within their jurisdiction but will not identify the holder of any views expressed within MAG meetings. MAG members should feel free to express views without fear they will be identified as having or expressing those views. An exception may be made by agreement where a MAG member is expressing the official view of their jurisdiction and is happy for this to be reported.
* CLCA notes that participation in a discussion that informs a CLCA policy or position is not de facto endorsement.

Decision-making and disagreements

* MAG is not a deliberative authority. Where there is no consensus CLCA will be clear in communications to the Board and others noting any divergence on views.
* Any concerns with the conduct of the CLCA CEO that cannot be resolved directly with the CEO should be raised with the CLCA Chair.
* Any concerns with the conduct of the CLCA Chair should be raised with the CLCA CEO for reference to the CLCA Board.
* The Board Chair and CEO are subject to the CLCA Feedback and Complaints Policy and members are entitled to make complaints under this policy.
* The CLCA constitution includes provisions by which members can raise issues, including complaints, with the national peak.
* Any issues that one MAG member may have with another member will be raised in the spirit of collaboration and sector cohesion.
* CLCA will assist in the resolution of any disputes in the way it considers most appropriate.

Review

These terms of reference will be reviewed bi-annually or at any time the members decide.