

What is an Advisory Group?

An advisory group is a structured way for people to share their opinions and perspectives, and develop recommendations in a focused, small group setting.

Purpose of the Client Advisory Group (CAG)

To increase the inclusion and participation of people with a disability, to provide thoughtful advice and recommendations, from a client's perspective, that can inform DLi around service delivery and delivering excellent person-centred care.

Objectives

- To provide advice and recommendations on opportunities or issues presented around service delivery and access, policy and plans, recruitment, rostering and community participation programs.
- To provide advice and recommendations on the review and implementation of person-centred care improvements across DLi.
- To discuss, formulate, and forward well-developed, thoughtful recommendations to DLi in a timely manner.

Title and Delegations

- The group shall be referred to as the Client Advisory Group (or 'CAG').
- The group shall function as a non-delegated advisory group for DLi.

Authority

- In carrying out its responsibilities, the CAG recognises that the ultimate responsibility for the governance and management of DLi rests with the Board, CEO and Executive Management Team.
- The CAG has no executive powers and cannot make decisions on behalf of DLi.
- Neither the CAG nor any of its members may direct any DLi staff member in their duties.

DLi Decision Making

DLi expects to receive recommendations from the CAG that reflect the individual and collective knowledge and thinking of the CAG from a client's perspective.

In making decisions, DLi's Board, CEO, Executive Management Team and/or staff will consider the CAG's advice and recommendations together with staff recommendations, organisational priorities and goals, resourcing, research and background information.

At times the CAG's recommendations may not prevail or maybe modified by DLi. It is important to recognise that this is not a rejection of the integrity of the recommendation and advice but is an inevitable part of the process of DLi's decision making, where a variety of views, perspectives, and recommendations are considered.

CAG Members are encouraged to freely voice their views and opinions without fear of experiencing negative impact as a result.

Composition

The group shall consist of the following members:

- Up to eight (8) clients acting as Client Representatives (or a parent / guardian in the case of a client under the age of 18)
- One DLi representative to act as CAG Chairperson.
- One DLi representative to act as the CAG Liaison.

In addition to CAG members, the following may attend any meeting of the CAG:

- DLi CEO, Board Members, Executive Management Team; and
- Other people (including third parties and staff) by invitation of the Committee Chairperson.

DLi Staff Representatives

DLi staff representatives will include a Chairperson and a Liaison. As requested by DLi clients, the Chairperson is to be from the Executive Management Team. Having an Executive Team Member as Chairperson validates the CAG and ensures DLi has a delegated authority who can support and guide the CAG as needed.

DLi recognises that staff may attend CAG meetings to support a Client Representative. Staff attending a meeting solely to support a Client Representative are not members of CAG.

Appointment and Responsibility of the Chairperson

- The Chairperson will be appointed by the DLi Executive Management Team.
- In the absence of the Chairperson for a scheduled meeting, an Executive Management Team member will assume the role of Chairperson.
- The Chairperson will remain in the position until the Chairperson resigns or CAG or the Executive Management Team request a new Chairperson and in this case, a new Chairperson shall be appointed.
- The Chairperson will conduct each meeting as follows:
 - Open and close the meeting.
 - Support an open and transparent discussion.
 - Provide professional guidance, issue analysis and recommendations as needed.
 - Present CAG recommendations to the Executive Management Team, if requested to do so by either the group, the Executive Management Team, CEO or the Board.

Appointment and Responsibility of the CAG Liaison

The Liaison will be a suitably qualified DLi staff member selected by the Executive Management Team to undertake the following functions:

- Act as the main point of contact for the CAG members and serves as a communication link between the CAG and DLi management.

- Ensures that advice and recommendations are conveyed to DLi management in a timely manner.
- Assists the CAG with research, report preparation, and correspondence.
- Seeks the input from CAG members into meeting agendas.
- Prepares and distributes agendas, minutes and papers (see below).
- Books meeting rooms and organises the provision of any necessary equipment.
- Ensures CAG Members are familiar with the CAG's Terms of Reference and DLi's Code of Conduct.

Appointment of Client Representatives

The appointment of Client Representatives to the CAG will:

- Seek to represent the diversity and interests of clients; and
- Seek to achieve a mix of skills, knowledge and experience to facilitate the sound functioning and meet the needs of the CAG.

Client Representatives will be appointed for a period of 2 years following an Expression of Interest (EOI) process as follows:

- CAG selection criteria will be issued by the Executive Management Team
- Completed applications must be lodged with DLi and address the selection criteria as advertised.
- Applications will be assessed by DLi Executive Management Team and the CAG Liaison.
- If more applications than positions are received, and deemed suitable for appointment as Client Representatives, offers of membership will be made to the most appropriate applicants against the selection criteria and the remainder placed on an eligibility list.
- DLi may amend the Terms of Reference and add additional members to the Group if suitable applications are received.

Expectations of CAG Members

It is expected that:

- Individual members and the collective group will be fair, impartial and respectful of staff, volunteers, students, other clients and each other and will strive to appreciate differences in approach and point of view and work harmoniously together.
- The CAG Chair will ensure that all members have a fair, balanced, and respectful opportunity to share their knowledge and perspectives.
- The CAG will attempt to reach consensus on issues. If consensus is not possible, strong differing opinions such as "minority" opinions shall be recorded and acknowledged in the CAG's report to DLi.
- Group members will respect the limitations of their individual and collective authority. The role of the CAG is to provide advice and recommendations from a client's perspective to DLi's Board, Executive Management Team and CEO. Membership of the CAG does not empower members to make final decisions, unless authorised by DLi.

- Members must conduct themselves in accordance with DLi's Code of Conduct. In instances of misconduct or breaches to the Code of Conduct, DLi has the right to dismiss a CAG member from the CAG.
- Any requests from the media will be directed to DLi's Marketing and Communication team via the Chair, as per the DLi media policy.

Termination of Membership

Each Member shall remain a member of the Committee for a period of 2 years until:

- The Member resigns, or
- The membership is terminated at the end of the 2 year period.

Client Representatives are eligible for reappointment.

Membership may be terminated by DLi due to:

- The Member's continued non-attendance, or
- The Member's conduct being inconsistent with the CAG Terms of Reference or DLi's Code of Conduct.

If the terminated Member is a Client Representative, DLi will determine a replacement Member from the eligibility list or consider a new selection process.

Connection with the DLi Board

The CAG will be oversighted by the CEO and the Board. The Board may request a sub-committee to assume responsibility for oversight of the CAG.

At least once per year, a Client Representative will be supported by the CAG Liaison or Chairperson to attend a meeting of the Board (or its nominated sub-committee) to provide a brief update of the CAGs' activities and as necessary, to directly raise any matters with the Board.

Meeting Schedule

The CAG will meet at least twice per calendar year at DLi Head Office.

Meeting dates will be agreed by the CAG by no later than December each year for the following calendar year.

Additional meetings may be scheduled by the:

- Chairperson;
- CAG by resolution; or
- DLi CEO and/or the Executive Management Team.

Meeting Agendas & Minutes

The CAG Liaison will distribute a written agenda to the CAG at least 2 (two) weeks prior to each meeting.

Minutes of each meeting will be written by the CAG Liaison and made available within 1 (one) week of the meeting.

Client Advisory Group Terms of Reference



Two versions will be written;

- A formal version for staff attendees, the CEO, Executive Management Team, the Board and other staff (as listed below)
- A simple English summary for clients

Clients may request to have a copy of both types of minutes.

Copies of the minutes will be distributed to:

- The Chairperson
- The CAG Liaison
- CAG Members
- The CEO - for inclusion in Board papers
- The Executive Management Team
- Client Services Managers (for distribution to Team Leaders)
- Client attendees (via email or standard mail)
- All clients in a manner and method as determined by the relevant Client Services Manager to best suit the needs of that client cohort.

Variation to the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference may be added to, repealed or amended by the DLi Executive Management Team, in consultation with or upon the recommendation of the CAG and in consultation with the DLi Board (or its nominated sub-committee).

Governance

The CAG is governed by DLi's policy and procedures.