

Terms of Reference

Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG)

JULY 2023

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1. Constitution

- 1.1. The Benalla Rural City Council ("Council") has created a Social Inclusion Action Group ("SIAG") to help improve social connection and inclusion for people of all ages and abilities in the community.
- 1.2. The SIAG supports the goals outlined in the Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2021 – 2025 and Community Plan 2016 - 2036.
- 1.3. If a SIAG member has a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest regarding a topic under discussion, they must disclose it before the group discusses the matter.
- 1.4. SIAG members must adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct.
- 1.5. The SIAG has no specified end date and will continue until the Council decides to dissolve it.
- 1.6. SIAG members working with individuals under 18 years of age must have a valid Working with Children Check. The SIAG coordinator can assist with obtaining this check upon request.

2. Objectives and Functions

- 2.1. Identify local needs, existing initiatives, and gaps related to social connection and inclusion.
- 2.2. Test, develop, and support various funded initiatives that prevent social exclusion and promote community participation, inclusion, and connection.
- 2.3. Explore successful initiatives from other areas and assess their suitability for the local context.
- 2.4. Promote mental health and well-being by coordinating and implementing activities/initiatives that address social inclusion and connection at the local level.
- 2.5. Participate in relevant training and development opportunities related to SIAG objectives and functions when available. These opportunities are optional but encouraged, aiming to enhance members' capacity and support them in achieving the goals of the group.

3. Delegation

- 3.1. The SIAG, in collaboration with the SIAG coordinator, has the authority to make decisions regarding flexible funding for initiatives and activities that support social inclusion and connection in the Local Government Area.

4. SIAG Membership

- 4.1. The SIAG consists of the following members:
 - One (1) full-time coordinator appointed by the Council.

- At least six (6) but no more than nine (9) community members who have personal experience with mental illness, psychological distress, addiction, social exclusion, isolation, or discrimination (volunteer or paid role).
 - Up to five (5) organisational representatives contributing to the SIAG as part of their professional roles.
- 4.2. The SIAG may involve additional members with relevant expertise and interest for specific issues as needed.

5. Term of Appointment

- 5.1. SIAG members can resign at any time.
- 5.2. Appointments to the SIAG can be reviewed at any time.
- 5.3. At the end of each financial year, SIAG members can review and confirm their ongoing membership.
- 5.4. The SIAG understands the importance of accommodating members' health and support needs for active participation, allowing flexibility for multiple non-attendances if members provide prior apologies.
- 5.5. If a member fails to attend three consecutive SIAG meetings without notifying their absence, they will be considered to have resigned. The Council may arrange a replacement if practical and desired by SIAG members.

6. Nomination of Membership

- 6.1. The Council will invite expressions of interest for SIAG membership through public notices in local media, social media, Council publications, and various networks. This approach aims to provide the opportunity for individuals in the Benalla Rural City community with personal experience of social exclusion and/or disconnection to be appropriately represented.
- 6.2. The Council welcomes input and nominations for membership from community members to achieve a diverse group of at least six (6) but no more than nine (9) volunteer or paid members, encompassing various ages, locations, genders, races, sexualities, and personal experiences of social exclusion and/or disconnection. Up to five (5) organisational representatives can also be part of the SIAG.
- 6.3. Prospective members will need to complete an expression of interest process, demonstrating how they meet the membership criteria. The appointment to the group will consider fulfilling the diverse membership requirements outlined in 6.1 and 6.2.

7. Office Bearers and Sub-Committees of the SIAG

- 7.1. The SIAG includes a Chairperson, who will be the SIAG coordinator. However, SIAG members will be encouraged to take on decision-making roles, including co-chairing meetings with the coordinator.
- 7.2. The Chairperson's role is to preside over SIAG meetings.

- 7.3. If the Chairperson cannot attend a scheduled meeting, the SIAG will appoint an acting Chairperson.
- 7.4. The SIAG may form sub-committees as necessary to carry out its functions, and these sub-committees may engage suitable community members for consultation.

8. Reporting

- 8.1. The SIAG will regularly provide reports on its activities to the Council, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Promotion Office, other advisory committees, and the broader community.

9. Insurances

- 9.1. The Council shall arrange and maintain a portfolio of insurances to cover all possible risks, including a Personal Accident Policy, Voluntary Workers Policy and an Indemnity Policy for members of the Advisory Committee.
- 9.2. Committee members must complete the Benalla Rural City Council Online Volunteer Application and Induction.

10. Meetings of the SIAG

- 10.1. SIAG meetings will be conducted in a focused and respectful manner to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.
- 10.2. The agenda for each SIAG meeting will be distributed at least one week in advance, and the information format will be adjusted to accommodate the communication needs of each member.
- 10.3. Members of the SIAG can choose to participate in a Briefing before each SIAG meeting. This briefing will help them actively engage in SIAG meetings and provide an opportunity to share relevant additional information with the SIAG coordinator.
- 10.4. Meeting minutes will be distributed to all members, with the information format adjusted to meet the communication needs of each member.
- 10.5. A quorum for SIAG meetings will be 50% of the membership plus 1. If a quorum is unavailable, the meeting may proceed with unanimous agreement, and any outcomes will be discussed or ratified in the next meeting with a quorum.
- 10.6. Meetings will be held monthly.
- 10.7. Meetings are typically expected to last no longer than 90 minutes.
- 10.8. Members are encouraged to attend all SIAG meetings.
- 10.9. Training sessions may replace some scheduled SIAG meetings, enhancing members' skills and aligning with group objectives. Members will be notified in advance to ensure active participation in these capacity-building opportunities.

11. Review

- 11.1. The Benalla Rural City Council may review the SIAG's Terms of Reference at any time, either through internal review processes or at the request of the SIAG.
- 11.2. The Council will consult with the SIAG before adopting amendments or alterations to the SIAG's Terms of Reference.