**ACT Housing Solutions Innovation Group – Terms of Reference**

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## Role & Purpose

### Vision

People with disability in the ACT have equitable access to appropriate housing that meets their needs and is sustainable.

### Mission

The ACT Housing Solutions Innovation Group (HSIG) works, through both direct action and advocacy, to promote the housing rights of people with disability in the ACT.

### Objectives

***Objective 1***

To support all people with disability of all ages in the ACT to achieve suitable housing outcomes, through both advocacy and concrete, time-based actions. This includes through:

* Collaboration across sectors to address barriers and unmet demand
* Gathering and sharing information, for all people with disability and others
* Informing government policy direction, legislation, and implementation.

This may include through collaborative work undertaken by HSIG working groups.

***Objective 2***

To provide a forum at which key and emerging issues for people with disability in the ACT can be discussed and addressed.

### Background

The inadequate provision of housing for Territorians with disability is an enduring issue.

The ACT Housing Solutions Innovation Group (‘HSIG’) is able to draw together a broad range of stakeholders, including those with lived experience of disability, to meet these societal objectives.

The HSIG was formed by Rights & Inclusion Australia (R&IA) in 2020, as part of the *ACT Accessible Housing Innovation Project* (2019-2020) funded by the ACT Government. This followed a series of conversations between R&IA, National Disability Services, Imagine More and others identifying the need for a concerted effort to address the range of systemic, housing-related issues that many people with disability experience. Critical issues identified at the first HSIG meeting held in March 2020 were the need to address housing supply to meet the demand of people with disability, issues with the alignment of housing & service supports, and the lack of readily realisable options other than group homes.

Central to this effort is the need to support people with disability to exercise choice and control in their housing choices, and for the housing system to broadly support this - across all parts of the housing continuum, from specialist homelessness services to the private housing market.

There is a range of instruments that support this intent:

* United Nations (UN) conventions to which the Commonwealth of Australia is a signatory, in particular the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
* Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021-2031
* National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013, and associated legislation and regulations
* Aged Care Act 1997
* Human Rights Act 2004 (Australian Capital Territory)
* Royal Commissions.

There is also a range of other Commonwealth and ACT Government commitments, both through regulation and policy, which are intended to support the appropriate provision of housing for people with disability.

## Currency of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference are effective from 26/04/2022.

## Membership

### Conditions of Membership

Members of the following groups will, by and large, form the membership of the HSIG.

* + 1. ***Core Members***

The Core Members group that drives the agenda of the HSIG will be derived principally from the following:

* people with disability
* family members and carers of people with disability.
  + 1. ***Supporters***

The Core Members group will be enhanced by a Supporter group - organisations, with nominated representatives, who advocate for housing solutions for people who are vulnerable to homelessness or exclusion from housing markets:

* non-government community sector, in particular those in housing and homelessness services
* peak bodies which promote better housing outcomes for people, and social justice for all vulnerable groups, and, further to these
* people who work closely with people with disability to advocate and lobby for housing and support options which relate to aspirations and preferences.

A leadership group will form from both Core Members and Supporters (3.1.1 and 3.1.2), to plan and organise the HSIG’s activities. It will recommend to the remainder of the membership which other stakeholders and potential partners can be approached to enhance the aims and objectives of the HSIG.

* + 1. ***Stakeholders & Partners***

Stakeholders and partners will, generally, be invited to take part in regular meetings and to sit on specially formed working groups. These stakeholders and partners will share with the HSIG members a commitment to improving the housing circumstances of people with disability in the ACT. Stakeholders and partners will be drawn from the following:

* government departments (relevant to housing, planning and/or disability)
* community housing providers
* disability support providers
* Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) providers
* builders, developers, real estate agents, and others involved in the housing market
  + 1. ***Register of contacts***

The HSIG will maintain a register of contacts, consisting of the Core Members plus people and organisations who are Supporters, Stakeholders and Partners, and any other entities they may name as potentially valuable to the achievement of the Objectives. Individuals must agree to be on this list, and privacy concerns will be addressed.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Core Members, Supporters, Stakeholders, and Partners of the HSIG will:

* attend scheduled meetings
* share information and communications with those on the register of contacts
* review and provide commentary and advice on information and other activities
* assist with any identified activity when able, in the spirit of collegiality (i.e., actions arising from meetings). That said, no individual or organisation is compelled to undertake an identified activity
* assist in the identification of potential partners and stakeholders within the ACT and nationally, who can assist with the HSIG’s key activities.

### Secretariat

Secretariat and hosting functions, as currently undertaken by Rights & Inclusion Australia, will be undertaken by an elected organisation which is eligible to be a Supporter, through its work in advocacy. This role will be elected on an annual basis, at the end of a calendar year.

### Confidentiality - Chatham House Rule

Chatham House Rule applies in relation to any information shared through HSIG activities (i.e., participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of any speaker, nor that of any other participant, may be revealed).

Any information should only be attributed to a participant, and/or the organisation that they represent, when:

* that participant has given their express permission for information to be circulated; this will include advice to whom that information can be circulated; or,
* that information, including the participant’s name, and/or the name of the organisation that they represent, is in the public domain.

### Representations to other parties

Typically, participants should not refer to themselves in any way as acting on behalf of, or as a representative of the HSIG.

From time-to-time, the HSIG may identify external stakeholders and/or forums to engage with (e.g., the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development’s ACT Housing Strategy Implementation Consultative Group) for a specific purpose or to meet a particular need that has been identified by the HSIG. The identification of such stakeholders, the rationale for their inclusion, and the people responsible for approaching them will be recorded in HSIG meeting minutes.

### Decision-making

All significant actions will be decided at a meeting, or via email to Core Members and Supporters, with a quorum of five Core Members and/ or Supporters required to achieve consensus, with at least four people beyond the Secretariat staff. Furthermore, a quorum will include:

* for Core Members, only one representative of a family unit and its associated supports (i.e., people with disability, their family and carers)
* for Supporters, only one nominated representative of an organisation.

A registry of Core Members and Supporters will be maintained by the HSIG’s secretariat to ensure decision making is achieved through quorum and is transparent. This register is to be made available to all noted on the register, upon request; it is not intended for circulation. Contacts will be anonymised in any group correspondence (i.e., through bcc: to emails).

### Public statements

Public statements include media releases, media responses, documents and other communication issued into the public domain.

The HSIG is able to make public statements based on agreed objectives and messaging. All public statements will be aligned with the Vision, Mission and Objectives of the Coalition, and the HSIG’s decision-making process.

The HSIG will publish an annual public scorecard, to be published in December each year, that will (i) summarise key work priorities, achievements and issues of concerns from the preceding year, and (ii) flag themes and priorities for promoting better outcomes for housing for people with disability in the coming calendar year.

With the exception of input to consultation processes and the annual public scorecard, the Group will typically only issue public statements once it has exhausted other opportunities to have a matter addressed.

The secretariat will take the lead role in coordinating all public statements, with the following process to be followed:

* A draft of public statements will be circulated to all Core Members and Supporters giving them a time frame within which to respond.
* Core Members’ and Supporters’ names and logos will accompany public statements and documents through an ‘opt in’ process in each instance.
* A final version of a public statement will be circulated to all Core Members, Supporters, and relevant stakeholders and partners at the time of issue.
* Spokespeople will be agreed upon and may vary depending on the issue at hand.

## Meetings

Regular meetings will typically be held online every 6-8 weeks.

An annual planning meeting will typically be held a minimum of one month prior to closing of submissions for the ACT Government budget consultation process.

Meetings will be chaired by a nominee elected by the group’s core membership. This role will be elected on an annual basis, at the end of a calendar year.

Secretariat and hosting functions will be undertaken by an elected organisation as per Item 3.3.

Meeting quorum: In line with regular meeting and decision-making protocols, a meeting will not be regarded as quorate unless there are at least five Core Members and/ or Supporters present, with at least four people beyond the Secretariat staff.

## Amendment, Modification or Variation

The Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by participants who are on the HSIG register of contacts. A quorum of five Core Members and/ or Supporters is required at an HSIG meeting to achieve consensus, with at least four people beyond the Secretariat staff, in accordance with decision-making protocols.