

Guide Dogs.

Consumer Engagement Council Charter

Effective Date

November 2021

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Guide Dogs Victoria (GDV) Consumer Engagement Council (CEC) is to represent the views of people with low vision and blindness and to ensure that their interests are considered in all GDV decision making.

The CEC reports to the Board of GDV via the CEC Chair and provides a vehicle for engaging with, and responding to, the needs of GDV clients, stakeholders, volunteers and the wider community.

The engagement focus of the CEC will provide a voice for clients and other stakeholders in the development of GDV's strategic and business plans, in GDV's fundraising and marketing, in GDV's development of new products and services and in GDV's delivery of services to consumers.

The CEC will also provide consumers an active role in shaping GDV's Victorian and national advocacy on behalf of people with low vision and blindness.

Members of the CEC will act in good faith to support and promote the vision of GDV.

2. Responsibilities

The Council will:

- Develop and regularly review a framework for the engagement of consumers and the community in the day to day running of Guide Dogs Victoria.
- Facilitate two-way communication between clients, volunteers, carers, community groups, service providers and Guide Dogs Victoria.
- Through the three Working Groups:
 - Codesign new services, products and community strategies that improve the independence of people with low vision and blindness

- Participate in the development of improvements to quality and safety across GDV
- Participate in the development GDV's Strategic Plan and our Masterplan development and implementation with regard to accessibility (and other projects)
- Provide support, encouragement and insight into the use and appropriateness of GDV services to prospective clients.

The CEC's advice and recommendations agreed upon by a majority of its members will be presented to the Board at its next regular meeting via the CEC Chair and the minutes of the meeting.

The success of the CEC in actively engaging members through the Council and Working Groups will be measured with an annual Member Engagement Measurement Tool based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Quality Assurance Standard in Community and Stakeholder Engagement that is recognised as the International Standard for Public Participation practice.

3. Membership of the Council

The CEC will comprise a mix of consumers, stakeholders and GDV staff. Consumers will be representative of a wide range of GDV services.

Members shall conduct themselves in accordance with GDV's Code of Conduct, Values and Behaviours and will treat other members courteously and be respectful of the opinions of others.

All non-staff members will be required to register as a GDV volunteer and will be required to comply with GDV volunteer policies including signing the Code of Conduct forms and undertaking the required police checks. The Chairperson will be an appointed Board Director of GDV. The Vice Chairperson will be elected by a majority vote of CEC members through an expression of interest / nomination process. The appointment will be for a 12 month period and will be voted on at the end of each calendar year.

The Council will comprise up to 21 members, with representation as follows:

- Up to seven (7) consumers
- Up to three (3) stakeholders
- Up to three (3) volunteers, with one being a Puppy Raiser representative
- One (1) rotating Board member - appointed by the Board in addition to the chair person
- The GM C&GDS or delegate
- Three (3) staff members with responsibilities for Customer Services, Client Services and Guide Dog Services
- Up to two (2) GDV staff members with responsibility for advocacy, access and quality issues and according to the agenda items
- One (1) other staff member requested by either the CEO or the chair of the CEC via the CEO

4. Selection Criteria

All members, with the exception of those appointed by the Board and GDV staff, will be appointed by the Chairperson in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer.

Members representing consumers will be selected based on skills and experience and to ensure representation of each consumer service group, CALD communities, geographical diversity, age groups and a balance of men and women.

Stakeholders may be appointed from related fields such as:

- Academics, the health sector; e.g. College of Optometry
- Veterinary consultants
- University, Health Sciences (Orientation & Mobility)
- GDV's consultants
- Ethics consultants
- Customer Experience specialists
- Any others as deemed appropriate by GDV and the chair of the CEC.

5. Membership Process

Members will be appointed for a period of up to three years with re-appointment being at the discretion of GDV (for further three year and one year terms).

Appointments of consumer members should be on the basis of their capacity to represent a broad range of GDV services and/or external representatives impacting on people who are blind or have low vision.

Members will be active consumers of GDV or be relevant to the work of the CEC, and will have the capacity to reflect on and present GDV and community issues rather than personal or individual issues.

Members should declare any conflict of interest that should arise and withdraw from the meeting/group as appropriate.

Members will be advised three months prior to their term expiry of the due date of their term.

Members may submit an expression of interest at the end of each term to the Chairperson to remain on the council for an additional term.

6. Meeting Frequency

There will be a minimum of three meetings per year with the Working Groups meeting as required between the CEC meetings.

7. Quorum

A quorum consists of a minimum of six consumer/volunteer/ stakeholder representatives.

8. Co-design Working Groups

There will be a number of Co-design Working Groups:

1. Service/Product/Community Strategy Innovation
2. Quality & Safety
3. Strategy and Projects (including the Kew Masterplan)

The Working Groups report to the CEC and provide updates at the CEC meetings. Each Working Group will have a Charter that includes agreed outcomes and timelines.

CEC members will nominate to be members of Working Groups with final composition determined by the Chairperson. Non-CEC members may be seconded to Working Groups at the discretion of the Chairperson. The Working Groups will meet as frequently as is required to achieve the outcomes identified in the Working Group Charter for each Working Group and at locations agreed by the Working Groups.

Where possible, GDV will seek to fund the participation of consumer/volunteer Working Group members for participation in Working Groups.

9. Minutes

Minutes are to be distributed to the CEC members within two weeks of the meeting. GDV will provide the necessary secretarial assistance for the efficient operation of the CEC.

The secretarial assistant shall ensure that all Board members and Senior Leaders receive a copy of the finalised CEC minutes.

10. Understandings

Each CEC member shall sign a Memorandum of Understanding and register to become a GDV volunteer before the commencement of their term.

Reasonable and necessary travel and accommodation expenses will be refunded and/or provided by GDV.

The meetings of the CEC will normally be held between 9:30am and 11:30am on a Saturday morning. The meeting will be held on GDV's campus or in such other location as the Board designates and at such times as agreed by the CEC members.

CONSUMER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Guide Dogs Victoria (GDV), through its Board of Directors (the Board), has created the Consumer Engagement Council (the CEC) for the purpose of engaging with, and responding to, the needs of GDV clients, stakeholders, volunteers and the wider community.

Members of the CEC, the membership of which is set out in the Charter of the CEC, agree to act in good faith to support and promote the vision of GDV.

It is expected that members of CEC will:

- Conduct themselves in accordance with GDV's Code of Conduct, Values and Behaviours including signing the Code of Conduct forms and undertaking the required police checks
- Have good communication skills and be a team player
- Be proactive and represent views of the stakeholders that they represent
- Communicate to their stakeholder group via the agreed method including GDV administered Facebook page
- Be available to attend the CEC meeting at least three times a year on a Saturday morning. The CEC meeting will normally be held between 9:30am and 11:30am on a Saturday morning once a quarter at GDV's campus or in such other location as the Board designates and at such times as agreed by the CEC members.
- Nominate for, and contribute to, appropriate Working Groups.
- Members of the CEC must not, during or after their term on the CEC, disclose any information obtained as part of their role on the CEC, except:
 - a) In the proper performance of their responsibilities;
 - b) If the CEC member is compelled to do so by law and has used every lawful means available to them to prevent disclosure; or
 - c) If the CEC member has been authorised in writing by the CEO or CEC Chair to do so.

GDV agrees to:

- Provide training as required to CEC members to prepare them for this activity

- Provide and/or refund reasonable and necessary travel and accommodation expenses directly related to meetings of the CEC
- Provide necessary secretarial assistance for the efficient operation of the CEC
- Confirm dates of meetings at the commencement of the calendar year to all members

All members, with the exception of those appointed by the Board and GDV staff, will be appointed by the CEC Chair in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer.

Members, with the exception of those members appointed by the Board and GDV staff, will be appointed for an initial period of up to three years with re-appointment being at the discretion of GDV (for a further three year and one year terms).

The CEC Chair in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer may extend the period of reappointment beyond that stipulated if a suitable replacement is unable to be identified.

The CEC Chair member shall serve for a term of three years from the date of appointment.

Each CEC member shall sign this Memorandum of Understanding before the commencement of their term. This Memorandum of Understanding constitutes the entire understanding of the parties hereto and all prior agreements, understandings, representations or negotiations are hereby superseded, terminated and cancelled in their entirety and are of no future force or effect.

The foregoing is agreed to by:

Signed:

Date:

CEC Member

Who is appointed for a term of ____ years commencing / /

Signed:

Date:

Chief Executive Officer (Guide Dogs Victoria)