Client Reference Group Charter

**Vision Australia Limited**

**ACN 108 391 831 (Vision Australia)**

# Overview

Vision Australia engages with the blind and low vision community to ensure that in fulfilling its mission of “supporting people who are blind or have low vision to live the life they choose”, services are responsive to the needs and aspirations of clients.

Vision Australia is committed to engaging with its clients and the parents and carers of clients at every level of the organisation, including through its client representative body known as the Client Reference Group (**CRG**). This Group is established in accordance with the requirements of Vision Australia's Constitution (**Constitution**).

This Charter sets out the principles for the operation and administration of the CRG.

# Role of the Client Reference Group

The CRG has two core functions:

1. to provide strategic advice to Board and Chief Executive Officer; and
2. to participate in strategic projects providing a client’s perspective.

The CRG will provide direct advice on specific topics, general feedback reflecting the views of clients, and "client insight" relevant to Vision Australia and more generally the blindness and low vision community of Australia.

# Structure of the Client Reference Group

## Composition of the CRG

The CRG will be comprised of:

* 1. Client Members;
  2. Chair of the Client Services Committee (ex officio); and
  3. the Chief Executive Officer of Vision Australia (ex officio).

**Client Members** are individuals appointed to the Client Reference Group in accordance with section 3.2 of this Charter.

Vision Australia Limited Board members have an open invite to attend any meeting of the CRG.

The General Manager National Programs and Client Insights and their Executive Assistant will support the CRG and will be invited to attend all meetings.

## Appointment of Client Members

From time to time, Vision Australia may call for expressions of interest (**EOI**) for the appointment of one or more Client Members. The EOI may specify criteria (including particular knowledge, lived experience or skill sets required) for the selection of those Client Members. Vision Australia Directors or employeesare not entitled to hold a position as a Client Member.

To be appointed as a Client Member, a person must:

1. be (or have been) a client of Vision Australia;
2. hold the requisite qualifications or experience (if any) set out in the EOI; and
3. respond to the EOI with all information requested and within the timeframe required under the EOI.

The members of the CRG will broadly reflect the overall demography of clients of Vision Australia.

The Board has delegated the role of appointing Client Members to the Client Services Committee (the **Committee**). The Client Services Committee, based on a recommendation from the Chief Executive Officer, will determine which, if any, of the persons that have responded to an EOI will be appointed as a Client Member and will determine the number of Client Members to be appointed at any one time.

Client Members are appointed on a voluntary basis and will be required to abide by all Vision Australia policies and procedures (including those relating to the Vision Australia workforce) as amended from time to time and notified to them in writing (**Policies**).

Unless otherwise determined by the Committee from time to time, each Client Member will be appointed (or re-appointed) for a term of three years, up to a maximum of two terms. Thereafter, Client Members may continue to serve on an exceptional basis where the Client Services Committee considers that such extension would benefit Vision Australia. Any exceptional term will be for a one-year period only but may be renewed.

## Removal or suspension of Client Members

The Board may, in its absolute discretion, at any time either suspend the Client Member for a specified period, or terminate their appointment if a Client Member:

1. does not carry out his or her duties as a Client Member;
2. refuses or neglects to comply with this Charter or with the Policies;
3. engages in conduct unbecoming of a Client Member;
4. engages in conduct which is prejudicial to the interests of the CRG or Vision Australia.

# Proceedings of the CRG

## Meetings

The CRG will meet monthly (or as otherwise agreed), including two face-to-face meetings each year. No meeting will be held in January.

The Vision Australia CEO will publish a schedule of meetings annually and will circulate an agenda (with any relevant briefing papers or other materials) at least one week before the meetings. Client Members will be given an opportunity to include items on the agenda up to 3 days before the meeting.

The Chair of the Client Services Committee, or the Chief Executive Officer in their absence, will chair the meetings of the CRG.

The CEO may arrange for senior members of the Vision Australia team to attend meetings of the CRG with the objective of promoting involvement of members of the CRG in projects being undertaken by Vision Australia.

Informal meetings of Client Members may take place at the discretion of the CRG. Vision Australia will provide administrative support for the conduct of such informal meetings.

## Use of technology

Meetings of the CRG will ordinarily be held by Zoom, except for the two face-to-face meetings annually.

## Minutes

Minutes of the meeting will be prepared by Vision Australia outlining the issues raised and conclusions reached during those meetings. These minutes will be circulated to members of the CRG as soon as practicable after the meeting.

# Remuneration and expenses

As volunteers, Client Members are not entitled to remuneration for services in their capacity as members of the CRG.

Subject to any restrictions or limits determined by Vision Australia from time to time, Client Members may be reimbursed by Vision Australia for reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred in the performance of any duty as a member of the CRG (provided that any such expenses are approved in writing by the Chief Executive Officer of Vision Australia (or their delegate) before being incurred).

From time to time, Vision Australia may engage a Client Member in paid consulting work, where this work falls out of the usual scope of the CRG. During the period in which that Client Member is engaged in paid work by Vision Australia, that Client Member will cease to be a member of the CRG.

# Amendments to the Charter

This Charter may be amended by the Board in consultation with the CRG as contemplated by the Constitution.