



Community Connection Group Charter

Purpose

The purpose of the Community Connection Group (CCG) is to provide a proactive forum where matters relating to sentencing can be highlighted and discussed with group members who represent the diversity of regional communities and the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council's (QSAC) stakeholders.

The Community Connection Group shall consist of a maximum of 24 members – 12 from the north of the state, 12 from the south – with members aged over 18 years. The CCG:

- is a voluntary, non-political group
- provides a forum to share and discuss matters relating to the sentencing of Queenslanders in the criminal justice system, and
- provides a forum for CCG members to raise issues affecting their representative organisations and communities in relation to the sentencing of Queenslanders in the criminal justice system.

The CCG will act as a forum for consultation between the Council and regional, rural and remote communities of Queensland, allowing either light-touch engagement or deeper partnerships (opportunity to co-design consultation, creating fit-for-purpose engagement), and will assist in:

- providing information and advice on topical issues raised by the Council
- providing information and advice to feed into the Council's work on Terms of Reference and other projects
- engaging community agencies and service providers (where appropriate) to seek further information and advice on topical issues
- relaying information to their communities/organisations/members/constituents and proactively gathering information/feedback to share with the Council
- advising the Council about key issues or topics affecting their communities/ organisations/ members/ constituents
- promoting the work of the Council and assisting in building public confidence in sentencing, and
- discussing such other matters as QSAC and the CCG agree should be the subject of advice.

The purpose of the CCG is not to provide legal advice or represent the Council, and not to provide comment on individual sentencing matters.

The CCG will act in accordance with all relevant QSAC (or Department of Justice and Attorney General (DJAG)) policies and regulations including:

- Governance
- Fraud and corruption
- Code of conduct
- Privacy policy, and
- Complaints and public interest disclosures.

Scope of authority

The Council has approved the formation of the CCG and given them the following authorisations:

- to meet, share and provide feedback to QSAC on sentencing matters that impact Queensland communities, and
- to meet, share and engage groups and contacts within the community on topics as requested by QSAC.

Membership

Group members shall represent organisations and communities in [geographically and demographically diverse regions](#), directly or indirectly impacted by sentencing matters, and act as a conduit for information purposes with groups including:

- low-income households
- senior citizens
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people from non-English speaking backgrounds
- people with disability
- minority groups
- business groups
- rural, remote or primary producers
- local government, and
- teachers, school students (if 18-years-old), P&C Association members.

Group members may have an association with more than one sector/group. This association is for general information purposes. It is not for the purpose of lobbying specific interests for specific parties.

Relevant organisations and/or community groups may be invited by QSAC to elect a representative to become a Group member.

Members of the Group or delegates will attend all scheduled meetings.

Members should appoint an alternative representative to attend Group meetings when the appointed representative is unable to attend. Representatives will advise the Secretariat when an alternative representative will be attending a meeting and will ensure that the alternate representative is fully briefed for the meeting.

Terms of membership include:

- Membership is in an honorary capacity (i.e. not remunerated)
- Membership is based on individual representation or organisational representation
- Members must represent organisations and communities that are located within Queensland
- Appointment for a 12-month term with option to apply for renewal for a further two terms. Maximum membership length will be three years
- Membership renewal requests must be received in writing one month prior to the end of the initial 12-month term. Renewal requests will be considered by the Council
- Membership can be terminated at the sole discretion of the Council
- Membership can be resigned on the provision of a resignation letter to the Secretariat with one month's notice, and
- Member inductions will be carried out by the Secretariat and will include relevant organisational policies.

Meetings

The CCG shall meet a minimum of two meetings per year. Meetings will be 1 to 1.5 hours in length (or less). All meetings will be held by videoconference, teleconference or face-to-face for any Group members visiting Brisbane (dependent on health advice at the time of the meeting).

Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council members are welcome to attend meetings.

The Secretariat will aim to book meetings six months in advance prior to the end of the financial year with diary reminders issued four weeks out from any meeting.

Ad hoc, issues or project-based meetings and communications via email may also be required in addition to scheduled meetings.

The agenda and papers providing information on matters for discussion should be provided a minimum of five business days before each meeting to allow sufficient time for due consideration of the content.

Chairing

The QSAC Director, Anne Edwards, is the Chairperson and will delegate chairing responsibilities when applicable.

Secretariat

Appropriate Secretariat support will be provided by QSAC to the CCG. The Secretariat includes the Manager, Media and Engagement and relevant supporting team members. The Secretariat will perform the following tasks:

- Scheduling of meetings
- Assembly of material (to ensure Group members receive background information) for CCG meetings, including liaison between the Council and Group members to establish the agenda
- Prepare and distribute minutes and agreed actions within 10 business days of the meetings
- Coordination of reports as required
- Induction/briefing of new Group members
- Any other tasks contemplated by this Charter.

Observers

Observers are welcome to attend the meeting provided prior arrangement has been made with the Secretariat.

Travel and expenses

As meetings will be held via video or teleconference no travel or expenses should be incurred by CCG members. Any Group members who choose to join Council and Secretariat members at 50 Ann Street (the State Law Building) for meetings do so at their own expense. (If available, parking may be able to be arranged at 50 Ann Street).

Reporting and disclosure

The Secretariat will report routinely to the Council and as required to individual Council Project Boards on the activities of the CCG. Reports will be provided to the Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel as required.

The Secretariat is responsible for reporting.

Media

The following principles apply regarding interaction with media:

- CCG members will direct media enquiries regarding the CCG and its activities to the Council's Manager, Media and Engagement or the Director
- Group members are to disclose to the media, that any comments they make regarding the CCG and topics covered in the meetings, are their opinion only
- Any Council statements or media releases about the CCG will be shared with Group members prior to release.

Code of Conduct

CCG members are committed to the application of and adherence to QSAC's CCG Code of Conduct.

Upon review of meeting agendas, Group members are to disclose any perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest that may arise. If required, the Group member will leave the meeting for that item to allow the Council and other Group members to discuss the matter or to decide to invite the relevant Group member to return for discussion of the matter.

Confidentiality

QSAC recognises the need for open debate on issues related to sentencing in Queensland.

QSAC expects confidentiality from all parties present at CCG meetings and QSAC shall resolve what topics may be treated other than as confidential.

Audit

QSAC's Director will conduct an annual review of the governance and administration of the CCG.

Annual Report

The activities of the CCG will be reported in QSAC's annual report to demonstrate active dialogue is being sought from groups and communities that Group members represent. The report will include:

- Information on the community groups that have been engaged, the topics covered and the feedback gained with supporting details such as dates and method of engagement;
- The report will be drafted by the Secretariat and shared with the CCG for feedback before being approved by the Council and included in the final version of the annual report which is based on the financial year; and
- The report or information from it may be included in other communication channels such as QSAC's website.

Review of Charter

The Council may approve changes to this Charter at any time.

Document approval

Position	Name	Approval date
Manager, Media and Engagement	Jane Coates	04/08/2021
Director & CCG Chair	Anne Edwards	22/06/2021
Council Deputy Chair & CCG Project Board member	Elena Marchetti	22/06/2021
Council member & CCG Project Board member	Jo Bryant	22/06/2021