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| Pacific Reference Group (PRG) |  |
| Terms of Reference |

**Introduction**

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is establishing a Pacific Reference Group (PRG) to contribute to the development of a strategy and action plan for working with Pacific people. The strategy and action plan will:

* be external facing to show MSD’s transparency to all New Zealanders regarding its commitment to Pacific people
* require all parts of MSD to participate and contribute to its implementation
* have a life expectancy of four years alongside internal work streams that will be reviewed every year
* ensure Pacific clients and communities are central to its success.

**Role and Responsibilities**

The role of the PRG is to provide advice that will assist with the development of:

* an MSD strategy and action plan for working with Pacific people
* a plan on how MSD can engage Pacific entities and communities to ensure Pacific voices are clearly reflected and articulated in the strategy and action plan.

**Membership**

PRG will comprise of ten members which will be a combination of up to five MSD staff members and five external Pacific leaders who together reflect diversity across Pacific communities, NGOs, and the business, industry and employer sectors. This number of members is considered large enough to give a range of various perspectives and experiences, but small enough to enable members to work effectively as a group.

Specifically membership will consist of Pacific individuals who collectively:

* have skills, knowledge and experience in working with Pacific people and / or Pacific communities (e.g. voluntary or paid capacity)
* have an understanding of the challenges which Pacific people face in terms of hardship and adversity
* are forward thinking, innovative and are not afraid to challenge the status quo
* have credibility and are recognised as leaders within the Pacific communities they serve
* are well-connected within Pacific communities and are able to act as conduits for sharing and relaying information in relation to strategy and action plan development (as agreed by PAG);
* are committed to the successful implementation of an MSD strategy and action plan for working with Pacific people.

A member may:

* resign from the PRG at any time by giving written notice to the Chair
* be removed from the PRG under exceptional circumstances where their behaviour is considered detrimental to the effective operation of the group
* be approached by the Chair to discuss the viability of their on-going membership where the member has missed two meetings in a row.

**Term of Appointment**

A call for nominations will be made and members will be appointed by MSD for a period of 12 months or until strategy and action plan development processes are completed. MSD aims to complete this work by 30 September 2019.

If for some reason a member is no longer able to serve on the PRG, a new Reference Group member will be approved and appointed by the Group General Manager, Community Partnerships and Programmes, MSD.

**Meetings**

The PRG will meet every two months or as determined necessary by members. The first meeting (an induction) will be held over two days, with remaining meetings lasting one day each in duration. Meetings will be chaired by MSD’s Community Partnerships and Programmes Principal Advisor, Pacific.

An agenda and any pre-meeting reading material will be supplied prior to meetings so that members can prepare and be ready to present their views from the meeting onset. From time to time members may be called on to provide further insights and advice on matters outside of scheduled meeting times. This will conducted via email and telephone.

A meeting quorum will consist of six members (which must include the Chair). However, there is an expectation that members will attend all meetings and devote sufficient time to become familiar with the affairs of the PRG and the wider environment it operates within.

**Reporting**

The overall responsibility of the PRG sits with the Group General Manager, Community Partnerships and Programmes, MSD who retains lines accountability over all aspects of the development and implementation of the Strategy.

**Resourcing**

The PRG will be serviced and supported by the Community Partnerships and Programmes unit at MSD.

**Remuneration and Expenses**

In line with this framework, Government employees will not receive fees for participating in the PRG.

All travel and accommodation expenses to attend meetings will be met by MSD provided all arrangements are booked by MSD. To enable this, members will be required to submit a travel and accommodation request to a nominated member of MSD’s Community Partnerships and Programmes business unit, who will then make all necessary arrangements.

MSD will not reimburse any travel or accommodation expenses that are not booked by MSD (unless prior approval by MSD has been granted). Members should discuss with MSD any specific requirements they have.

**Conflicts of Interest**

Members are required to perform their functions in good faith, honestly and impartially and avoid situations that might compromise their integrity or otherwise lead to conflicts of interest.

If members have any perceived or potential conflict of interest on a subject that will prevent them undertaking an activity consistent with the PRG’s function, then they must declare a conflict of interest to the Chair and if the conflict is unable to be suitably managed, absent themselves from the discussion and/or activity.

**Confidentiality**

Unless it is explicitly agreed that information cannot be shared, members can share and discuss information acquired or received in the course of their role on the PRG. However members must not attribute any comments or views they share, to individual members.

Information marked as confidential must not be shared. All confidential information shall remain confidential until otherwise notified by the Chair, and shall therefore not be divulged in any way to any person without the prior approval of the Chair.

The provisions of the Privacy Act 1993 and Official Information Act 1982 will also apply without exception to the activities of the Pacific Reference Group.

**Delegations**

The PRG is an advisory group and has no financial delegations or decision making authority.