

Aboriginal Reference Group

initiative of

**State Records of South Australia
State Library of South Australia**



Government
of South Australia

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG) is established to assist with the activation of the intentions of the Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration and to work with State Records of South Australia and the State Library of South Australia (the agencies) to enhance the availability of archival materials and services that relate to Aboriginal peoples and culture. The ARG will consider and be consulted on the agencies' programs and activities as they relate to Aboriginal peoples in South Australia.

Acknowledgement

Building on UNESCO's Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and with specific reference to the Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration, the agencies acknowledge:

- the impact of the administration of the affairs of Aboriginal peoples and resulting issues faced by Aboriginal peoples and record holders,
- their responsibility to re-imagine their relationships with Aboriginal peoples,
- their desire to work towards becoming models of respect and collaboration, and
- that it is hard to know whether their work is meeting the needs and expectations of Aboriginal peoples without consultation.

The ARG establishes a consultative relationship, based on respect and collaboration, with a trusted group of people who can contribute ideas from the perspective of Aboriginal peoples.

Aims and responsibilities

Members of the ARG will work collaboratively with agencies to:

- consider, develop and implement mutually respectful responses to the Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration
- understand and narrow gaps in the agencies' compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library, Information and Resource Network Inc. (ATSILIRN) Protocols.

The ARG will also:

- raise matters with agencies that are relevant to the services, aims and direction of the agencies in relation to Aboriginal peoples,
- help the agencies to ensure their activities reflect Aboriginal history, experience and culture,
- advocate for the interests of Aboriginal peoples and communities, including communities not represented by those in the ARG, and
- help the agencies to promote, engage and partner with Aboriginal communities in the delivery of their programs and services.
- refer any matters relating to operations and employment to the relevant director as a confidential item.

Together, the agencies will:

- engage openly and respectfully with all ARG members
- support ARG members in their awareness of the agencies' activities, services and policies,
- make and seek recommendations for ARG business,
- receive and consider feedback and advice from the ARG,
- provide administrative support for the ARG (including coordinating venues, online hosting, and agendas and minutes), and
- fund ARG members' sessional payments and expenses
- inform the ARG about any business activity which is likely to impact on Aboriginal peoples and communities, as well as other activities, and
- work with the ARG towards implementing the themes and commitments for immediate action.

Additionally, staff members from both agencies who attend ARG meetings will:

- attend in their capacity as agency employees, not as ARG members. Staff are expected to uphold their obligations as representatives of their respective agencies, including compliance with the Code of Ethics.
- provide support and advice to ARG members, ensuring a collaborative and respectful environment.
- Uphold the values of the Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration.
- participate in the delivery of ARG Action Plan items, and other initiatives, as assigned by the agency Director.
- actively listen and participate openly in discussions, fostering an inclusive and constructive dialogue.

- not attend or participate in ARG sessions outside of scheduled ARG meetings or working group discussions, unless prior approval has been granted by the relevant Director.

The ARG contributes to the work of public sector agencies and so is open to public scrutiny. Information provided to, or at, a meeting of the ARG may be subject to application for access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*. The agencies may also proactively release information about ARG business if appropriate or as required.

Additionally, both agencies must comply with the requirements outlined in the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* and regulations, which includes a legal duty of care to provide a safe workplace for all employees.

Recruiting and selecting members

A call for nominations will be sought 4 months in advance of required appointment date.

An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person may nominate for membership of the group.

Appointment to the group will be based on gaining a diverse representative group of South Australian Aboriginal communities, including age and gender diversity, who have demonstrative interest, knowledge and/or experience in archival matters.

Joint applications can also be identified and considered for sharing the membership responsibilities. It is expected that only one representative of the joint application attends each meeting.

Existing employees of both agencies are not eligible for ARG membership.

Members of the Aboriginal Reference Group are appointed by the Director of State Records of South Australia and Director of State Library of South Australia in consultation with an Aboriginal staff member from each agency.

A member of the Aboriginal Reference Group is appointed for a term not exceeding three years. On the expiration of a term of office, members are eligible to apply for reappointment.

An ARG member who is employed by a State Government agency (other than the State Library or State Records) must obtain formal approval from their respective Director before participating in the ARG. It is explicitly understood that, in their role as an ARG member, they do not represent their employing agency and must not discuss matters related to their agency without prior agreement from the Directors, including their own.

Nomination types

A written nomination is required including a statement of support. Members can be nominated by:

- 1) a community member.
- 2) an Aboriginal organisation, board or community group.
- 3) self-nomination with the encouragement or endorsement from a local Aboriginal body, organisation, or corporation.

Member representation will be capped at 9 including the Chair.

Appointment and role of Chair

Upon commencement of a new term members can self-nominate or nominate a member for the position of Chair. Group members will proceed to vote and appoint a Chair for the entire term.

The Chair will:

- concentrate people's energies,
- ensure that actions are accurately recorded and reported on,
- ensure all members have equal opportunity to participate in discussion and share views,
- allocate sufficient time to lead and collaborate with group members and agency staff,
- ensure the group focuses on the scope of the terms of reference,
- ensure members conduct is respectful, and
- keep meetings on schedule.

Attendance

Members of the group should strive to attend most, if not all, meetings and spend a reasonable amount of time in preparation of meetings to ensure that they meet the obligations identified in the terms of reference. Apologies in advance of non-attendance should be communicated to the Executive Officer by email. To cancel attendance at a meeting it is preferred that apologies be made at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting date. Members that have an identified proxy or joint membership may send them on their behalf.

If attendance numbers are expected to be less than 5 members for a meeting a decision will be made to either continue as planned, change to an online format or cancel the meeting entirely.

The ARG welcomes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community observers, noting observers are not to participate at meetings. A member seeking to invite a community observer to a meeting must obtain the Chair's prior approval. Requests, via the ARG Observer form, should be forwarded to the Executive Officer of the ARG and the Chair with at least two weeks' prior notice of the meeting.

Remuneration and reimbursement guide

The *Aboriginal Reference Group Remuneration and Reimbursement Guide* sets out the remuneration/sitting fees and reimbursement for expenses incurred by members to attend Aboriginal Reference Group meetings.

Whilst the Aboriginal Reference Group is not considered a government board or committee, the group is closest to the Category 2, Level 4 Board or Committee within the Boards and Committees Remuneration Framework.

ARG members who are current public sector employees are not eligible for sitting fees in addition to receiving a salary for their time spent at ARG meetings and working groups.

Ethical behaviour and professional integrity

In alignment of values outlined in the *Public Sector Act 2009* all members are to –

- promptly report and deal with improper conduct;
- promptly notify if there is a conflict of interest;
- act in a manner that does not reflect adversely on the represented agencies (State Library of South Australia and State Records of South Australia);
- maintain agency confidentiality of sensitive information shared;
- provide advice fairly and without bias, caprice, favouritism or self interest;

In alignment with the Code of Ethics all members are to maintain the integrity of South Australian public sector values:

- **Service**, proudly serve the community and Government of South Australia.
- **Professionalism**, strive for excellence.
- **Trust**, have confidence in the ability of others.
- **Respect**, value every individual.
- **Collaboration and engagement**, create solutions together.
- **Honesty and integrity**, act truthfully, consistently and fair.
- **Courage and tenacity**, never give up.
- **Sustainability**, work to get the best results for current and future generations of South Australians.

Membership may be terminated by either agency on the following grounds:

- the behaviour of a member does not reflect the values listed above; or
- a member undertaking alleged or proven misconduct; or
- a member is charged or convicted of a criminal offence.

Review

These terms of reference will remain flexible and will be adapted as requirements change. They will be reviewed at least annually in the first three years.

The ARG, in agreement with the Directors, may increase the scope to incorporate other South Australian archives. If such a change occurs, the ARG will provide advice and support to these other organisations in line with the terms of reference.

References

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library, Information and Resource Network Inc. (ATSILIRN) Protocols: <https://atsilirn.aiatsis.gov.au/>

Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration: <https://www.ica.org>

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: <https://www.un.org>

UNESCO's Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity: <https://en.unesco.org>

Approval

Version	Approved by	Date approved	Date for review
Final V1.0	Director, State Records of South Australia Director, State Library of South Australia	1 July 2021	2 July 2022
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