

## ACNC Charity Forum Charter

### Context

The *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (the Act) sets out three objects:

- (a) to maintain, protect and enhance public trust and confidence in the Australian not-for-profit sector; and
- (b) to support and sustain a robust, vibrant, independent and innovative Australian not-for-profit sector; and
- (c) to promote the reduction of unnecessary regulatory obligations on the Australian not-for-profit sector.

### The ACNC is responsible for:

- i. Registering entities as not-for-profit entities according to their type and subtypes; and
- ii. Administering the national regulatory framework; and
- iii. Assisting registered entities in complying with and understanding the Act, by providing them with guidance and education.

### Consultation

The ACNC values engaging with and listening to charities and advisers to the charitable sector in relation to emerging issues impacting the sector and the regulation of charities by the ACNC.

The ACNC is assisted by an **Advisory Board** established under the Act, which provides advice to the Commissioner. The Charity Forum is not intended to duplicate this function.

### Other Consultation Groups

- **Subsector Forums** that seek consultation with specific groups within the broader charity sector to discuss topics that relate to certain groups of charities
- **Not-for-profit Stewardship Group** is run by The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and provides a forum for consultation between the ATO and the sector on matters

relating primarily to taxation and tax concessions. It is envisaged that any overlap in the membership constitution will be minimal.

## **Purpose**

The Charity Forum membership comprises invited professional advisers to the charity sector, primarily from the legal and accounting professions, as well as representatives from sector peak bodies and registered charities. The forum will bring this membership together with ACNC representatives and invited observer members.

The Charity Forum will be invited by the ACNC to comment on matters that will assist the ACNC to improve its regulation of charities and to be open and accountable about the way the ACNC operates. The ACNC will seek comment and feedback from members of the Charity Forum on matters such as:

- emerging issues impacting the sector and the provision of service to the sector.
- approved forms
- policies as appropriate
- education and guidance materials.

## **Participation**

Annually there will be three scheduled quarterly meetings:

- One virtual session.
- One in-person meeting, which will usually be held in Melbourne.
- One Governing for Good Forum. This may be in person, online or a hybrid event

Additional meetings may be called or requests for comments or feedback may be sought via email on an as needs basis.

## **Membership and tenure**

Membership is extended by invitation and is open to organisations, represented by one agreed delegate. If the delegate is unable to attend or needs to be changed permanently the ACNC must pre-approve the changed delegate in advance of attending a meeting. The exception is for sole traders, who will be invited personally. The ACNC may seek expressions of interest prior to extending invitations.

Members will be invited to participate in the Charity Forum for a two-year term, which can be extended by invitation of the ACNC. Members are required to sign an integrity declaration annually.



Membership of the Forum will be capped at 50 and will reflect the diversity of the sector. Diversity of professional industry, number and type of charities represented, and geographic location of the organisation and charities represented will be considered. Other considerations include area of specialty or expertise as well as independence of Forum membership.

Attendance is ultimately at the invitation of the ACNC.

### **Observers**

Representatives from Australian and State and Territory governments will be invited to attend as observer members, either to every meeting or on an as needs basis.

Standing observer members:

- Treasury
- Australian Taxation Office
- Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB)

### **ACNC Representatives**

- The meeting will be chaired by an Assistant Commissioner.
- The ACNC Commissioner will attend the meeting where possible.
- ACNC representatives will attend as required, depending on the subject matter.

### **Responsibilities of the Chair**

The role of the Chair is to ensure the Charity Forum operates effectively to meet its purpose.

This role includes:

- Determining membership, including inviting or releasing members
- Planning the agenda
- Calling meetings
- Leading meetings
- Ensuring records are maintained.
- Establishing and reviewing short term and long-term goals
- Maintaining relationships with key stakeholders

### **Responsibilities of member organisations**

- Representing the views of professional advisers to the sector



- Representing the views of charities
- Providing input into agenda items and leading topics where relevant
- Actively participating in meetings, ensuring respectful, engaged, dynamic and open dialogue
- Responding to and participating in any requests from the Chair between meetings as necessary
- Advising the secretariat of change to delegate or apologies for scheduled meetings
- Proposal of guests by invitation in time for the ACNC to approve their attendance (or not)
- Advising the Chair if the member wishes to leave the Charity Forum
- Disclosing actual or perceived conflicts of interest to the Chair as soon as they arise
- Maintaining confidentiality of matters marked or announced as confidential.
- Complying with the integrity declaration
- Providing annual feedback on the performance of the Charity Forum

#### **Responsibilities of observer members**

- Representing the views of their agency or department in relation to the regulation and administration of the sector
- Providing input into agenda items and leading topics where relevant
- Disclosing actual or perceived conflicts of interest to the Chair as soon as they arise
- Maintaining confidentiality of matters marked or announced as confidential.
- Providing annual feedback on the performance of the Charity Forum
- Advising secretariat of change to delegate or apologies for scheduled meetings

#### **Responsibilities of ACNC staff**

- Preparing for, leading and/or participating in discussions with members during meetings
- Ensuring issues and concerns are addressed and where possible resolved.
- Listening to and considering the discussion, feedback and comments of members

#### **Secretariat**

The ACNC will provide a secretariat with the following responsibilities:



- preparing and distributing notices, agendas, record of meetings, and papers
- arranging meetings, including escorting members where appropriate and catering
- noting attendances and apologies
- taking minutes and having them published on [acnc.gov.au](https://www.acnc.gov.au)

**Resources**

- There will be no sitting fees for Charity Forum participation.
- Members will meet their own travel costs (where meetings are held in person).
- ACNC will meet costs of venue and catering (where meetings are held in person).

**Review**

The Chair will review the effectiveness of the Charity Forum on an annual basis.

