ACM Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee
Terms of Reference

1. Responsibilities of the Committee

Purpose
The role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee is to strengthen the quality and breadth of advice to the Australian College of Midwives (College) on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. The Committee provides a mechanism for the College to seek input in its decision-making on issues that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait midwives and consumers of maternity services. This ensures that the views and ideas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are reflected.

Role
The role of the Committee is to:

- Provide expert advice to the College (including the Board) via the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the College on matters related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwives and consumers of maternity services.
- Identify the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwives and consumers of maternity care and bring these to the attention of the College.
- Assist with communicating College activities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwives and consumers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumer organisations.
- Prepare, or provide input into submissions for the National Board of Directors as appropriate.
- Provide representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups.
- Liaise with any other College Committee through the Chair as matters arise.
- Carry out the responsibilities/role in a culturally-safe manner, demonstrating respect and understanding of the wide variety of cultural beliefs and practices members may come across during their time on this committee.

Members should be prepared to attend all scheduled teleconferences or web conferences for the Committee, with a minimum of 50% attendance per year to maintain Committee membership. Further, members are expected to actively participate in all dialogue that occurs “out of session” pertaining to Committee business, which may on occasion require a quick response. This information will inform decisions related to continued membership of the committee.
Structure of the Committee

Membership
The Committee members shall be appointed by the CEO of the College. The CEO may determine the size of the Committee and may vary the number of appointees from time to time as the need arises. The ideal size of the committee is 11 members, including the Midwifery Advisor, Policy Unit. This will allow for diversity as well as ensuring an odd number of members to enable a consensus to be reached when voting occurs. It is also anticipated that the Committee will consist of more than 50% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander midwives. A sense of geography will be considered upon making appointments to the committee.

Members of the Committee shall be selected on merit following an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. All members shall meet the following requirements:

- Current financial member of the ACM
- Interest in the ACM vision and goals and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues
- Demonstrate a commitment to and understanding of culturally safe practices in relation to maternity care OR identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Have email access.
- Have a willingness to donate time and expertise to the scheduled meetings and activities undertaken by the committee on behalf of the College as outlined in the Committee’s TOR.

Organisational representatives
The CEO may on occasion invite representatives from relevant organisations to join the committee outside of the EOI process.

Chair
The Committee shall be chaired by a member of the Committee as approved by the CEO. The chair will be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander member of the committee.

When the position of Chair is to be filled, members of the Committee can nominate for the position by submitting an application to the CEO. The CEO will appoint the Chair. The minimum requirements for application to position of Chair include:

- The Committee Chair Nomination form
  - To be supported by at least two members of the relevant Committee. This underlines the value of support from committee members.
- EOI outlining ability to meet the criteria and responsibilities of Chair
  - To show evidence of skills such as managing meetings, time keeping, delegating tasks

Tips on roles and responsibilities of an effective Chair can be accessed here:

- [http://www.wikihow.com/Chair-a-Conference-Call](http://www.wikihow.com/Chair-a-Conference-Call)
- [http://www.ehow.com/how_2077063_be-committee-chairman.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2077063_be-committee-chairman.html)
The length of appointment for the Chair will be the same as for all members and will expire when the member’s appointment to the Committee expires.

The Chair shall be responsible for:
- Determining the agenda for meetings. This will require the Chair to be current with issues pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and may require working with the College Midwifery Advisor, Policy Unit to identify matters that need to be addressed by the Committee.
- Chairing meetings.
- Leading discussion and ensuring all Committee members have the opportunity to contribute their expertise and views.
- Ensuring that the Committee’s work is completed on specific tasks or projects in a timely manner.
- Co-ordinating the preparation of the Committee’s quarterly reports to the CEO.
- Shall have casting vote in a tied decision of the Committee.

Length of Appointment
Each member of the Committee shall be appointed by the CEO for a term of 3 years and is eligible to apply for one further 3 year term up to a maximum of six consecutive years on the Committee.

The length of appointment for the Chair will be the same as for all members and will expire when the member’s appointment to the Committee expires.

Reappointment
Members are expected to respond to an EOI process at the end of their first term such that they reconfirm their commitment to the Committee and the Committee obligations. Re-appointment to the Committee will be dependent on a successful EOI being completed as well as evidence being noted of active participation in Committee meetings and project work over the period of the previous appointment. Ideally members should not all be appointed to commence at the same time to ensure the committee retains continuity and consistency in its functioning. This may mean on occasion that a member’s appointment is soft-rolled into a further period of time before the EOI process for re-appointment commences.

At the end of the maximum term of appointment (2 terms of 3 years each), individuals shall be required to undertake a period of ‘downtime’ for a minimum of 2 years before applying for a position on the Committee again unless they are specifically invited by the CEO to re-apply for the role on the Committee at the end of this period.

Filling a vacancy
Members of the Committee may resign their position with 4 weeks’ notice in writing of their intention to do so. The CEO may appoint a replacement member in consultation with the Chair of the Committee following an EOI process.

Temporary/ad hoc members such as those from the wider community may be invited by the ACM CEO to join the Committee for specific tasks and matters related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. The length of term for this member will be defined in the EOI process and reappointment will be dependent on need and determined by the CEO.
Conflict of interest
In order to prevent the potential risk of conflict of interest no more than one Director or senior manager from another organisation or business with similar objects to the ACM may be a member of the advisory committee.

3. Workings of the Committee

Communication within the committee
The Committee will communicate predominantly by email and telephone. All committee communication must be kept within the committee unless advised differently by the Chair or the CEO. Any changes of e-mail address for individual Committee members should be communicated with both the Committee and the Head Office of the College.

- Teleconference or web conference by arrangement with the Head Office
- Meeting schedule as arranged by the Committee
- Face-to-face meetings of the Committee will be opportunistic – e.g. at national midwifery conferences.

Frequency of Meetings
The schedule for meetings will be the responsibility of the Chair, in consultation with the Committee members. The Committee should meet formally at least four times per year in addition to addressing matters arising at any time. Ideally meetings will be held within business hours, any changes to this will need to be agreed with the Chair and the Midwifery Advisor, Policy Unit.

Quorum
50% plus 1

Decision Making
Decisions are reached by consensus. In the event of a tied Committee the Chair will have the deciding vote.

Secretariat Support
The Head Office will provide secretariat support to the Committee where possible including:

- Providing means of communication via email, teleconference and web conference links.
- Recording draft minutes of meetings.
- Copying and distribution of information as directed by the Chair.

Funding/ Resources
Membership of the Committee is honorary and attracts no remuneration or fee for services provided.

There is no specifically allocated budget for the work of the Committee. The Committee’s work shall be resourced using the office services allocations in the budget provided by the College for teleconferencing and IT services.
The CEO may determine to make resources available for a specific project or activity undertaken by one or more members of the Committee from time to time.

**Stakeholders**
The key stakeholders in this Committee are:
- Members of the College.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwives.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers of maternity care
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander maternity care providers

**Indemnity**
The activities of the Committee in providing advice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters to the College are covered by the College’s professional indemnity insurance policy, in accordance with the terms of that policy.

**Dispute Resolution**
The Committee will be expected to foster professional dialogue among its members and to support and even encourage differences of view based on fact or substance. Professional differences of view can provide a robust basis for effective and informed decision making on an issue, by providing the opportunity for reflection on alternative viewpoints or perspectives.

Where the Committee is unable to reach agreement on a particular matter, alternative views will be outlined in a report to the CEO with sufficient information to support informed decision-making by the CEO on substantive issues over which the disagreement arose.

4. **Accountability of the Committee**

**Reporting**
The Committee is responsible to the CEO of the College. The Committee is required to provide a brief summary report of its activities (half to 1 page), quarterly. The dates are to be agreed with the CEO.

The Committee is also required to keep minutes of any teleconference, web conference or face to face meetings it holds. The minutes shall be a brief summary of any decisions made or recommendations agreed to by the Committee relevant to its role and responsibilities as outlined in Part 1.

**Deed Poll**
Members are required to sign the *Deed Poll by Committee Members about confidentiality, conflict of interest and Intellectual property*, within one month of their appointment as required by the ACM Governance Policy.

**Dissolution of the Committee**
The CEO reserves the right to disband this Committee if in the judgement of the CEO of the day, the Committee is no longer needed to support the work of the College or no longer able to fulfil its responsibilities.