

# NSW CHILDREN'S SERVICES FORUM

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

*(Last updated June 2016)*



- NAME:** The name of the body shall be the NSW Children's Services Forum
- AIM:** To ensure all children in NSW benefit from quality early education and care.
- OBJECTIVES:** The Forum brings together state-wide, not-for-profit community based children's services organisations, in order to:
- Facilitate coordinated advocacy and campaigning on shared policy positions towards improving the quality, range and provision of children's services in NSW;
  - Promote the role of not for profit children's services;
  - Ensure services operate in the best interests of children;
  - Promote principles of social justice in the planning, funding and delivery of children's services, including ensuring the needs of all vulnerable children are considered;
  - Strengthen and extend consultation in the field;
  - Facilitate coordinated communication and cooperative planning with government departments and other bodies involved in children's services;
  - Engage in regular dialogue with other stakeholders in children's services.

### MEMBERSHIP:

- a) The members of the Forum shall be drawn from State-wide specialist organisations representing or supporting non-profit community based children's services. This can include resource agencies and co-ordinating bodies.
- b) Members of the Forum shall also be Members of NCOSS.
- c) Each member organisation shall have one voting representative on the Forum, but may have one additional observer representative.
- d) Membership shall be reviewed annually, with all members required to provide confirmation of ongoing membership of the Forum. If a member is absent for more than 3/6 meetings in any given year (including by teleconference) the Secretariat will check whether and how the member would like to continue to be involved.
- e) Applications for Membership will be considered during Forum meetings. The result of any application for membership will be forwarded to the organisation by the Secretariat in writing.
- f) Forum Members may from time to time invite non-voting observers to provide input and expertise which will benefit the Forum.
- g) The CSF will hold open one meeting per year to a broader audience.



NEW SOUTH WALES  
CHILDREN'S  
SERVICES FORUM

## ADMINISTRATION

- a) The forum shall hold bi-monthly meetings and such other meetings as shall be considered necessary by the Forum or at the request of other agencies.
- b) Until agreed otherwise by the Forum, NCOSS shall act as Secretariat of the Forum and will:
  - Prepare the Agenda including responsibility for organising the meeting;
  - Type the Agenda and Minutes; and
  - Circulate the Agenda and Minutes and any other documents arising out of the Minutes and Agenda.
- c) Other tasks shall be shared by members as determined at Forum or sub-committee meetings.
- d) The Forum shall have the power to appoint working parties from time to time for specific purposes. Reports from working parties will be a standing agenda item.
- e) The Forum may nominate representatives to external committees as requested. Reports back from committees will be a standing agenda item.
- f) Any written communication from the Forum should be produced on the Forum letterhead.
- g) The Forum shall produce a communiqué following each meeting, highlighting important points of discussion. The Secretariat will draft the communiqué to be endorsed by members in accordance with the decision-making process outlined below. The communiqué will be distributed to any interested organisations, with a distribution list maintained by the Secretariat.
- h) Costs associated with the work of the Forum will be shared as determined by the Forum from time to time.
- i) The venue for meetings of the Forum will be at NCOSS until agreed otherwise.

## DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

- a) Decisions must be supported by a quorum of members (comprising at least eight members).
- b) Where a public statement issued on behalf of the NSW Children's Services Forum will include a list of Forum Members, Members will be given the opportunity to opt out once the statement has been drafted. As above, decisions to issue public statements (e.g. policy positions, policy submissions, research papers, letters) must be supported by at least eight members.
- c) Drafts will be circulated via email, with members given a minimum of 24 hours (longer where feasible) to provide feedback and/or opt out.
- d) Media releases in line with agreed policy positions may be issued by the Secretariat on behalf of the NSW Children's Services Forum. Draft media releases will be circulated to Forum Members via email with a two-hour window for comments. In the event that any serious objections are raised, the release will not be issued.

