



Illawarra Shoalhaven Suicide Prevention Collaborative

Terms of Reference

1. Background

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Suicide Prevention Collaborative (the Collaborative) formed in September 2015 following the expressed commitment from multiple government and non-government agencies to reduce the impact of suicide in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region.

The Collaborative aims to achieve this by:

- improving the supports available to people at risk of suicide and their family, carers and friends, and improving people's experience of these supports;
- encouraging systems change through collaboration; and
- ensuring that suicide prevention efforts are effective.

The Collaborative's vision and guiding principles are further outlined in the Collaborative's *Statement of Purpose*. To access this, please email Alex Hains (Regional Manager) on ahains@coordinare.org.au.

Priorities are to be reviewed regularly and as prompted by research, funding announcements and political decisions likely to impact the Collaborative's activities.

2. Role of Collaborative

The Collaborative has responsibility for:

- influencing strategic directions and outcomes
- ensuring suicide prevention activities are aligned with the evidence-base
- supporting relevant organisations to implement agreed suicide prevention activities
- identify and monitor potential risks
- taking responsibility for the activities, their implementation and achievement of outcomes
- ensuring the activities align with stakeholder interests and relevant requirements
- communicating and addressing any issues that may have implications for the Collaborative
- promoting the achievements of the Collaborative.

3. Membership

Membership of the Collaborative will include representatives from different sectors, including but not limited to: primary health, academia/research, public health, non-Government organisations and service providers, emergency services, Aboriginal communities, LGBTI communities, people with a lived experience of suicide and/or mental health issues, education, media, local Councils, business and community groups.

3.1. *Roles and responsibilities of members*

By joining the Collaborative, all members commit to:

- work collaboratively with other agencies and individuals towards the common goals outlined in the *Statement of Purpose*;
- actively contribute to a range of evidence-informed suicide prevention activities;
- learn from others and share their own information when relevant;
- prioritise the interests of the community ahead of personal or organisational interests; and
- act as advocates for the Collaborative and its outcomes.

It is the responsibility of all Collaborative members to ensure their networks are suitably informed of the Collaborative's activities and, where members are representing an organisation, report back to senior management within their organisation.

3.2. *Organisational representatives*

Members representing an organisation should hold appropriately senior positions so as to actively contribute to decisions made without needing to confer with other management or executive staff. Collaborative members who are representing an organisation or service should remain constant as much as possible. In the event that the usual representative cannot attend a Collaborative event or meeting, the organisation should send a suitable alternative representative.

3.3. *Executive members*

The executive members are responsible for the oversight and progress of the Collaborative and are required to provide additional contributions to the progress of activities. Executive membership is based on the skills, knowledge and experience of the individual person and the nature of the organisation or community group they represent.

The executive members include representatives from the following sectors:

- Public health (i.e. Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District)
- Primary health (i.e. COORDINARE – South Eastern NSW Primary Health Network)
- Lived Experience of suicide and/or mental health issues
- Academia/Research
- Illawarra-based non-Government service provider
- Shoalhaven-based non-Government service provider
- Aboriginal person working within (or with strong links to) Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations

When an executive role is vacant, an expression of interest process is to be undertaken and all Collaborative members are invited to vote on the most suitable nominee. Should a person in such a role leave their organisation, the executive role is to be filled via a new expression of interest process open to all relevant organisations (unless there is no alternative organisation

to represent that sector, e.g. public health representative can only be fulfilled by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District).

Executive members are responsible for ensuring there is a Chair for the monthly Collaborative meetings.

3.4. *Becoming a member*

Organisations or individuals wanting to become a member of the Collaborative should email their expression of interest to the Regional Manager (ahains@coordinare.org.au). Expressions of interest should outline what the applicant will contribute to the Collaborative and describe how their actions have aligned with the principles of the systems approach to suicide prevention. Applications received will be presented to the Collaborative with the outcome decided by majority vote. The applicant will be advised of the outcome and required to co-sign the Collaborative's *Statement of Purpose* to indicate their commitment to actively support the activities of the Collaborative.

3.5. *Cessation of membership*

A Collaborative member will cease to be a member if they:

- resign from the Collaborative;
- do not attend 3 consecutive meetings without providing apologies;
- resign from employment at the represented organisation/service;
- breach confidentiality;
- act in a way that is considered inconsistent with the principles of the Collaborative or counter to what the Collaborative is working to achieve; or
- their organisation fails to deliver on their obligations, as determined by the executive via discussion at the regular executive meetings.

The executive are responsible for advising a member should it be decided that their membership be ceased.

3.6. *Invitees*

From time to time, the Collaborative may wish to invite external persons to provide advice and assistance. This can be done by the executive at the request of any member of the Collaborative.

4. Operations

4.1. *Decision making*

Decisions are made by majority vote. When a majority cannot be established amongst the Collaborative members, the executive will make a decision on behalf of the Collaborative.

To support activity progress and meet deadlines, the executive are able to make decisions external to meetings where unanimous agreement is reached. Decisions made between meetings will be communicated to Collaborative members and recorded in the minutes of the next scheduled meeting.

Executive members may submit a vote when reaching decisions, but those employed by the Collaborative cannot vote.

From time to time, members may wish to invite other colleagues from their organisation or community group to attend a meeting. The same conditions of membership apply to these additional representatives, even when they only attend one meeting. However, it should be noted that, when decisions are made, these additional representatives do not necessarily have an additional vote. Only one vote per member organisation or community group will be counted.

4.2. *Conflict resolution and disputes*

In the event of a dispute or perceived conflict, members should follow the process outlined below:

- Members should attempt to address the dispute or conflict directly with the other member outside of the Collaborative meetings.
- If the above does not resolve the dispute satisfactorily, members should approach the executive for support to resolve the dispute.

4.3. *Conflict of interests*

The Collaborative acknowledges that when discussing and deciding upon some elements of the development and implementation of the Collaborative's activities, there may be situations where their own personal or organisational interests conflict with the interests of the Collaborative. This would be considered a conflict of interest.

When discussing and deciding upon topics where Collaborative members may have a conflict of interest, the steps below will be followed:

- The Collaborative member declares their conflict to the meeting and it will be noted in the minutes.
- Depending on the point for discussion, the Collaborative member may or may not be permitted to participate in the discussion. This decision will be made by majority agreement of the other members and led by the executive members.
- The Collaborative member with the conflict will not be able to participate in voting for the decision.

If other members believe another person has a possible conflict of interest that has not been declared, they are required to raise this either within the meeting prior to a vote being cast or

directly with an executive member prior to the meeting. In this instance, the above steps will again be followed and similarly be noted in the minutes.

4.4. *Frequency and duration of meetings*

The Collaborative will meet every month for approximately 1-2 hours. A review of these arrangements will be conducted every six months.

All members commit to regularly attending the monthly meeting. However, when attendance is not possible and a suitable alternate representative also cannot attend, members are required to send their apologies to the Regional Manager (ahains@coordinare.org.au) prior to the meeting.

4.5. *Quorum*

At least two (2) executive members and a further eight (8) members of the Collaborative must be present for a quorum. Refer to Section 4.1 with regards to decision making.

4.6. *Absentee voting*

Members who are not able to attend a meeting are still able to vote by sending an alternative representative from their organisation or community group to vote on their behalf. They should advise the executive prior to the meeting.

These alternative representatives should be employed by the same organisation (or participate in the same community group, e.g. Suicide Prevention Awareness Network) as the member for whom they are representing.

4.7. *Chair arrangements*

Responsibility for facilitation of the Collaborative meetings will be the shared responsibility of the executive members. The Chair is responsible for ensuring the meeting run on time, that discussions are productive, and that outcomes or further action required are clarified.

The executive will also ensure that issues raised within the meeting are tracked, reported and resolved in a timely manner.

The executive is also responsible for distributing the minutes from Collaborative meetings.

4.8. *Working Groups*

Working Groups have been established to align with the following work streams:

1. Health interventions ([LifeSpan](#) strategies 1, 2, 3, 4)
2. Community interventions (LifeSpan strategies 5, 7, 8)
3. School interventions (LifeSpan strategy 6)
4. Data driven suicide prevention (suicide audit, service atlas, LifeSpan strategy 9)

5. Aboriginal suicide prevention (applies to all LifeSpan strategies)

The role of these Working Groups is to develop detailed and practical plans focused on how each of the relevant strategies will be implemented. While there may be some scope for Working Groups to also contribute to what each strategy will involve, their focus will be on how to implement the strategies as determined by the LifeSpan framework.

The Collaborative may deem it necessary for the Working Groups to remain active beyond the initial planning phase to continue to support ongoing implementation and sustainability of suicide prevention activities.

Each Working Group is to have a Lead who is responsible for coordinating and facilitating Working Group meetings. The Lead will be determined by consensus of the Working Group members. Where there is a dispute as to who will be the Working Group Lead, executive members (not including those in contention for the Lead role in question) will decide by majority vote. Working Group Leads are encouraged to attend the executive meetings to provide an opportunity to discuss how each Working Group is progressing as well as how to resolve any problems experienced.

Working Groups may include people who do not attend the regular monthly meeting, but have specific skills relevant to the Working Group. Each member is to consider who in their organisation or community group is best placed to actively contribute to each Working Group.

People with lived experience of suicide and/or mental health are to be involved in each of the Working Groups. They will be paid for their participation and supported to ensure this experience is a positive one.

Collaborative staff (e.g. Regional Manager) will aim to attend all Working Group meetings to support the Leads, support the emphasis on evidence-based interventions, and ensure all the plans complement each other.

Working Group Leads will report back to the Collaborative via the regular monthly meetings to ensure all members are informed as to their progress and plans. The monthly meetings also provide an opportunity for the Working Group Leads to seek advice or input from the Collaborative members.

A record of Working Group discussions will be the responsibility of the Lead (or delegated Working Group member) and will be available to all Collaborative members.

5. Communication

The agenda for the monthly meetings will be prepared and distributed by the executive members (or representative organisation) in the week prior to the scheduled meeting. Any additions or changes to the agenda must be submitted via email to the Regional Manager (ahains@coordinare.org.au) no less than two days prior to the next scheduled meeting.

The executive are responsible for the quality of the minutes, ensuring they are an accurate record of proceedings. Executive members will arrange for an appropriate person to attend each meeting for the purpose of taking the minutes and distributing to all members.

Full copies of the minutes, including any related attachments, will be forwarded to all Collaborative members prior to the next meeting.

As outlined in the *Statement of Purpose*, the Collaborative commits to actively creating opportunities for people with lived experience contributing to the activities of the Collaborative. The Collaborative also commits to providing timely feedback to those who have provided such input.

5.1. *Media*

Communications regarding Collaborative activities should be directed to Kristine Laird (Communications Manager, COORDINARE).

Members are not to speak publically on behalf of the Collaborative without prior approval. Members must ensure all communications that identify them as a member of the Collaborative align with the principles of the Collaborative and are supportive of its activities.

5.2. *Confidentiality and intellectual property*

Each member or member organisation shall keep confidential any information that it receives from another member or member organisation that is marked confidential or that another member has stated is confidential.

Intellectual property owned by a member or member organisation remains vested in that member or member organisation. Participating in Collaborative activities does not transfer ownership of any intellectual property rights or constitute consent for anyone else to use that intellectual property in a manner that suggests they have any ownership, unless agreed in writing.

As a guiding principle, intellectual property that is newly developed during the course of the Collaborative's activities would be jointly owned in such proportions relative to member contributions to its development. It is also the intention that members or member organisations would be freely able to use such newly developed intellectual property for their own purposes and at no cost.

6. **Reimbursement**

Members will not be reimbursed for their participation in the Collaborative. Attendance and involvement in Collaborative activities is considered part of the members' current roles for their employer (or community group). All contributions are considered to be in kind given the goal of reducing the impact of suicide in the Illawarra Shoalhaven is important for all organisations and community groups involved.