



# Frequently Asked Questions

## Western Australian Forced Adoption Reference Group

Establishment of the Western Australian Forced Adoption Reference Group (Reference Group) will progress the Western Australian Government's implementation of Recommendation 39 from Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives: Report on the Inquiry into Past Forced Adoption in Western Australia (Inquiry Report).

The Reference Group will be primarily people with lived experience of forced adoption inclusive of mothers, fathers, adopted people, adoptive parents and First Nations people<sup>1</sup>. Membership is open to people whose forced adoption took place in WA, and who are currently residing in WA. Expressions of interest will also be sought from community-led support groups and local community sector organisations with relevant experience of forced adoption.

The Reference Group will provide a timely and appropriate mechanism to enable targeted consultation and engagement with people with lived experience in the context of the recommendations of the Inquiry Report.

### When will meetings occur?

Meetings are held every 12 weeks (or as required). The meetings will occur during business hours and run for approximately 2 hours.

### Where will the meetings be held?

At the Department of Communities, Boorloo Campus, 130 Stirling Street, Perth.

Alternative arrangements can be made available for members who are outside the metropolitan area or who do not wish to attend meetings in person.

### Do I receive payment for membership?

Reference Group members will be remunerated according to the Department of Communities' Paid Participation Policy. In line with this policy travel expenses will be covered by Communities. This arrangement will apply to all individuals with lived experience and representatives from community organisations.

Members receive \$200.00 for up to four hours for attendance and meeting preparation.

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<sup>1</sup> Communities have endeavoured to use preferred terms and language as identified by the forced adoption community whilst recognising that not all people with lived experience share the same opinions about the use of certain terms and language to describe their personal experience. Communities will endeavour to engage with individuals in a way that recognises their individual experiences and doesn't cause unnecessary distress.

## **If I am unable to attend a meeting, will I be paid?**

No.

## **Will I receive travel expenses?**

Eligible members, such as those coming from regional and remote areas, are entitled to a reimbursement of travel expenses to and from the meetings. Reimbursement is based on the most economic means of transport available and is subject to approval by the Department of Communities.

## **Who is eligible to apply?**

The Reference Group membership will be primarily people with lived experience and community-led support groups, with some representatives from local community sector organisations and the Department of Communities.

Two Expression of Interest (EOI) processes will help refine group membership.

1. An EOI process for individuals with lived experience of forced adoption:

- Mothers
- Fathers
- Adopted people
- Adoptive parents

The following groups are not invited to apply:

- Adopted people under the age of 18 years old
- Siblings and half-siblings of adopted people
- Partners of adopted people
- Descendants of adopted people
- Adoptive parents already known to the adopted person (relative adoption)
- Carers of adopted people (i.e., where an adopted child or young person is in the care the CEO).

2. An EOI process will also occur for some representatives of community support group and sector agencies with relevant experience in forced adoption, to participate in the Reference Group.

## **How long is the membership?**

Members are appointed for up to two-years.

## Who has the decision-making authority?

The Government is committed to ensuring that people with lived experience of forced adoption play a key role in driving change and informing the legislation, policies, practices and services that impact them. The Reference Group is the primary forum for information exchange and discussion of the recommendations of Inquiry Report.

The Reference Group is established to provide advice to the Department of Communities Director General.

## Co-chairpersons role

An Executive Director from the Department of Communities will Co-Chair the Reference Group with a community member who has expressed interest in the Co-Chair role and has been selected for membership of the group. The Director General will appoint the Co-Chairs.

## Expression of Interest processes

Membership will be determined through the Expression of Interest (EOI) processes coordinated by the Department of Communities.

The Department of Communities will have online nomination form for interested applicants on their webpage. A hard-copy version of the nomination form can also be posted to individuals upon request.

Applicants will be asked to provide information in the nomination form about how their experience would be valuable in informing discussions about policy and service design and how they might contribute to the overall running of the Reference Group including outlining past experiences and skills that show teamwork, collaboration, or policy development.

## Are there other ways to contribute to this work?

On the Forced Adoption Reference Group webpage you can register for other potential engagement opportunities outside of the Reference Group process. These could include updates on the progress of the implementation of recommendations from the Inquiry Report, and opportunities to provide written feedback on specific topics.

These opportunities may be of interest to individuals that do not feel comfortable to apply for the Reference Group and will also be available to applicants who are not selected for the Reference Group.

## How long will Expressions of Interest (EOI) Applications be open?

EOIs will be open from 22 October 2024 until 31 January 2025 at 5pm.

## Will late applications be accepted?

Late applications will not be accepted.

## How will I know my EOI has been received?

Applicants will receive an email notification confirming receipt of their application. If you do not receive a notification, please email [forcedadoptioninquiry@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:forcedadoptioninquiry@communities.wa.gov.au) or telephone 0403 137 530.

## **Who will decide who is on the Reference Group?**

A selection panel comprised of the Department of Communities and an external agency representative will review all applications and recommend appointment of members by the Director General. The selection process will ensure a diversity of lived experience representation and that applicants have relevant experience and skills for participation in a Reference Group.

## **Do I need to be a resident of Western Australia to apply?**

Yes, applicants must reside in Western Australia.

## **How will I know if I'm selected for the Reference Group?**

After applications close, those who applied will receive a letter regarding the outcome of their application.

## **If I am successful, is a Police Clearance required?**

Yes, a criminal record screening is required, and you would need to pay the cost for this to be completed prior to being appointed. Having a criminal record does not exclude an applicant from applying nor mean an applicant will be excluded from the selection process. We understand that people have diverse life experiences, and these unique perspectives may contribute to the work of the Reference Group. Several factors are taken into consideration when assessment is conducted by the selection panel.

## **What documentation will I be required to complete as part of the induction process?**

Successful applicants will be required to complete a Confidentiality Agreement and Forms for payment of meeting participation. Members will review draft Terms of Reference and assist in the development of a Reference Group Charter to articulate agreed group values, principles of working together, ethical standards, duties and the management of any conflicts of interest.

## **Is there an information session I can attend for further information?**

An optional one-hour online information session will be held on Tuesday 3 December 2024 from 4 to 5pm, where the role of members will be discussed and any questions you may have can be answered. Further details on this event will be posted soon. Please register your interest in this session via [forcedadoptioninquiry@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:forcedadoptioninquiry@communities.wa.gov.au) or phone 0403 137 530.

## **Who can I contact if I have additional questions and cannot attend the online information session?**

For any further information about the Reference Group or for assistance with your expression of interest application, please contact Natalie Hall, Manager Strategic Policy on 0403 137 530 or via [forcedadoptioninquiry@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:forcedadoptioninquiry@communities.wa.gov.au).