

# Terms of Reference Network of Intercountry Adoption Lived Experience

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Network of Intercountry Adoption Lived Experience (NICAL) is to serve as an information sharing forum as part of the delivery of the Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service (ICAFSS) by Relationships Australia.

Key areas of focus include:

- contribute opportunities and ideas to inform Relationships Australia South Australia as the ICAFSS (lead agency of the national service) on the primary needs of the intercountry adoption community, including intercountry adoptees, adoptive parents and family members.
- provide community feedback and guidance on ICAFSS service delivery, wider professional development and community capacity building, and the types of activities and small research grants that could be funded under the Small Grants and Bursaries program.
- complement and support the work of existing national peer networks (such as ICAV, KAIAN, Buna Chat, etc) and encourage and assist the development of new and emerging groups by linking individuals with lived experience across the ICA sector.
- promote the ICAFSS service.

## 2. Membership

2.1. The following positions constitute NICAL:

- Chair and Administrative support – Relationships Australia National (1 person)
- Program representative – Relationships Australia South Australia (2 people)
- Lived Experience members (up to 8 people) representing:
  - ICA Adoptee communities
  - ICA Adoptive parents
  - ICA Birth Parents
  - Academics who have published research in ICA, who have a lived experience of ICA
  - Others as deemed appropriate by Relationships Australia.

2.2. Membership of NICAL will be determined by a selection panel constituted by Relationships Australia, following an Expression of Interest process.

- 2.3. In determining membership, and in addition to any other matters set out in the Expression of Interest criteria, Relationships Australia will give consideration to:
- geographic representation
  - links to community
  - history of work with, and support for, the intercountry adoption community, and
  - an understanding of the experiences and needs of intercountry adoptees and families.
- 2.4. Membership will be for a term of twelve (12) months, with possibility of renewal at the discretion of Relationships Australia for a further twelve (12) months.
- 2.5. Members of the NICALÉ will be entitled to payment of an honorarium payment for attendance at each NICALÉ meeting of sixty dollars (\$60.00) or such other amount as notified by Relationships Australia from time to time.

The process for accessing the honorarium payment will be set by Relationships Australia South Australia and communicated to NICALÉ Members.

- 2.6. Members of NICALÉ agree to abide by the Code of Conduct (Appendix 1) and acknowledge that any breach of the Code of Conduct may lead to removal of that Member from NICALÉ at the discretion of Relationships Australia.

### 3. Decision Making

- 3.1 NICALÉ is not responsible for making any changes to policy or practice in the delivery of ICAFSS by Relationships Australia.
- 3.2 Implementation of any recommendations from NICALÉ remains at the discretion of Relationships Australia.
- 3.3 In exercising its discretion, NICALÉ acknowledges that Relationships Australia is bound by the terms of the grant agreement, provided by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services.

### 4. Meeting Frequency

- 4.1 NICALÉ meets via videoconference three to four times per year.

### 5. Agenda and Minutes

- 5.1 The agenda will be informed by the objectives of the group and the information evolving between meetings.
- 5.2 A meeting agenda will be prepared by Relationships Australia and circulated 1 week prior to the meeting.

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- 5.3 Formal minutes will not be recorded, however key action points will be noted by Relationships Australia.
- 5.4 All meetings will operate on a “confidential” basis and members will be asked to provide a confidentiality and privacy undertaking.

**6. Review and continuous improvement**

- 6.1 NICALE will undertake a review of effectiveness, purpose and agenda every 12 months .

**7. Responsibility****Terms of Reference Owner**

Relationships Australia National Office

**8. Version Control and Change History**

Version No	Approval Date	Approved by	Amendment
V1.0			
V2.0			

## APPENDIX 1 – Code of Conduct

All members of NICALE are committed to ethical conduct. NICALE Members shall recognise and respect the potential vulnerability of all attendees at Meetings and provide support to each other and demonstrate their responsibility to NICALE through respectful conduct at all times.

Attendees of NICALE Meetings will:

- Act honestly and in good faith at all times in the interests of the group, and develop constructive and collaborative relationships;
- Carry out their duties in a fair and reasonable manner
- Conduct themselves at meetings and in dealings with other attendees in a courteous and reasonable manner;
- Encourage fair and full participation of all attendees and consideration of the independent views of all members;
- Respect the confidentiality of personal information, including about individuals, that is disclosed to them and not disclose to any other person such information.
- Do nothing that in any way denigrates the NICALE, its Members or its public image;
- Deal with any differences of opinion or concerns that may arise within NICALE in a respectful and ethical manner within the Group in the first instance;
- Raise concerns that may arise about fellow attendees in a respectful and ethical manner;
- Ensure that personal interest does not adversely influence the conduct or roles of attendees.

Any conduct by Members which is at variance to this Code of Conduct and compromises the safety and wellbeing of attendees will be discussed at the time by Members to resolve those concerns. In extreme circumstances Relationships Australia may ask a person to leave the meeting if the concerning conduct does not cease. Repeated failures to comply with this Code of Conduct may lead to Relationships Australia, at its discretion, removing the Member from NICALE.

### Safety Statements

- 1 Be aware of your own emotional health. Discussion may cover sensitive issues, which may trigger painful memories and emotional responses.
- 2 Confidentiality: it is important attendees monitor anything of a personal nature which they may disclose in the meeting and ensure other members are clear what personal information is confidential and what may be shared outside the meeting.
- 3 Be responsible for your own emotional reactions, in particular anger. It is not appropriate to take out your anger on any others present, (attendees, staff or guests).
- 4 People come to meetings not just as adults, but possibly as parents or family members, and we were all once children ourselves.
- 5 Ensure you only disclose personal stories or experiences that you are comfortable to speak about and if these experiences add to the issues being discussed.
- 6 Recognise the value of hearing all points of view - and agreeing to disagree.

- 7 If you are concerned about safety and wellbeing in a meeting for yourself or another attendee or feel distressed about anything discussed in the meeting, it is important you are able to express this in the meeting as early as possible so this can be known and responded to quickly. Attendees are also encouraged to raise concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing with Relationships Australia at the earliest possible instance.