



Tinnitus Australia Advisory Committee

Draft Terms of Reference

Purpose and status of this document

This document describes the role, level of authority and key functions of the Tinnitus Australia Advisory Committee.

The Terms of Reference are draft for discussion. The final Terms of Reference will be finalised in discussion with the Committee when it is appointed in January 2021.

Tinnitus Australia

Tinnitus Australia was created by a previous dedicated board member and Soundfair Australia, formerly known as Better Hearing Australia (Vic).

Tinnitus Australia is supported by a group of professionals and people who are affected by Tinnitus who are interested and engaged in Tinnitus service provision and research. It is a collaboration of people working professionally, passionately, and ethically to eliminate the suffering experienced by people, their friends and families, due to tinnitus.

Role of the Committee

The Tinnitus Australia Advisory Committee is formed to provide advice to the CEO of Soundfair about the strategic direction and priority projects of Tinnitus Australia. Advice will include, but not be limited to advice about:

- The needs and requirements of people with tinnitus;
- Effective activities, treatments and research that have the potential to better support people with tinnitus;
- Medium and long term strategic planning, including the prioritisation of projects to achieve strategic goals;
- Governance structures and processes to achieve strategic goals, including the development of committees, working groups and consultative forums
- The growth and development of an effective network of people with tinnitus and the professionals who support them.

Extent of Authority

Tinnitus Australia operates as a Soundfair initiative, which means that it is not a legal entity in its own right and the risk for undertaking Tinnitus Australia activities (like the website, referral or services guide) is taken by Soundfair in line its own risk management requirements. Decisions made by the Advisory Committee therefore constitute advice to the CEO of Soundfair or their delegate.

Committee members must not:

- Speak for Tinnitus Australia or Soundfair, including in writing or via social media, or without prior approval from the CEO of Soundfair;
- Make undertakings on behalf of Tinnitus Australia or Soundfair or commit Soundfair resources without prior approval from the CEO of Soundfair

Membership

The Committee will be of no less than 5 and no more than 7 members comprised as follows

- (a) At least two people who have a lived experience of tinnitus
- (b) Up to three people with professional expertise in treatment, support or policy development for people with tinnitus
- (c) The Soundfair Community Enablement Lead, or another member of Soundfair as delegated by the CEO.

The Committee has the power to engage other expertise by co-opting up to two non-voting members as determined by the Committee.

Decision making

Decisions of the Committee will be made by consensus. Where a decision is not able to be reached by consensus, the Chair can direct the matter to a vote.

Appointment of the Committee

Members are appointed to the Committee by the Soundfair CEO following a broadly promoted call for Expressions of Interest. Selection criteria will be developed co-operatively by Committee Members and Soundfair and will normally include:

- Commitment to the goals and purpose of Tinnitus Australia and Soundfair
- Expertise in either tinnitus treatment, tinnitus research or policy and program development for people with tinnitus and/or a lived experience of tinnitus
- Capacity to fully participate and contribute to the Committee both in terms of devotion of time and ability to solve problems constructively and proactively
- Capacity to develop and sustain networks of people who can progress the goals of Tinnitus Australia

All members including professional members except the Soundfair representative, are appointed as natural persons based on their experience and expertise. Members are not appointed as the representative of organisations for whom they work and will not be expected to make decisions on behalf of their organisations. Views expressed by members are taken to be their personal view.

The Soundfair Community Enablement Lead represents the interests and views of Soundfair and has the primary role of ensuring that Tinnitus Australia and Soundfair goals and activities remain aligned and complementary.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Chair

The Committee will nominate a Chair for a period determined by the committee. All members of the committee are ordinary members, except the Chair. The Chair will:

- work with the Community Enablement Lead or other Soundfair staff member delegated by the CEO of Soundfair to develop the agenda for all meetings;
- facilitate meetings, ensuring at each person has an opportunity to contribute, all matters before the committee are fully considered and decisions reached are clear;
- communicate decisions of the committee to the Soundfair CEO in a timely manner; and
- liaise with and support committee members to ensure that all members are able to fully and safely contribute to the committee

Committee members are responsible for:

- Regular attendance at committee meetings
- Providing sufficient notice of intended absence and unavailability to the chair
- Preparing for meetings, including contributing to draft agenda's and attending to all required pre-reading
- Actively contributing to shared problem solving and cooperative decision making
- Proactively networking and connecting with others who may wish to support Tinnitus Australia and Soundfair advance our work in hearing equality

Soundfair is responsible for:

- Committee secretariat functions including meeting agenda development in consultation with the committee chair, setting and notifying meeting dates and times and taking and dissemination of minutes.

Conflicts of interest

From time to time it is possible that conflicts of interest may arise. A conflict exists if a decision before the committee has the possibility of accruing a benefit to the member personally, or to any organisation or group associated with the member.

Members have a responsibility to identify and declare where a conflict exists. The extent and impact of the conflict will normally be discussed by the committee and measures put in place to manage the conflict. Measures may include exclusion of the member with the conflict from discussion and/or decision making about the matter at hand.

Where possible member should notify the chair before a meeting to discuss a potential conflict. Members may request the Chair to keep the nature of their conflict confidential, providing measures to manage the conflict are put in place.

Confidentiality

All Committee proceedings are considered confidential unless members are specifically empowered by the Committee to share Committee proceedings. Members should take care not to communicate the content of Committee proceedings verbally or in writing unless they are empowered to do so by agreement of the Committee.

Members should not disclose the private/personal details of members, clients, sponsors, supporters, volunteers, or staff members or share without permission material that constitutes Intellectual Property owned and/or managed by Soundfair

Dispute resolution

It is possible that disputes may arise between Committee members, or between the Committee and Soundfair. Where a dispute arises between Committee members, the Chair of the Committee will instigate a process to bring parties together quickly and in good faith to attempt to resolve the dispute. If the dispute remains, the matter can be referred to the CEO of Soundfair for a final decision.

Any dispute between the Committee or Committee members and Soundfair, the matter will be immediately referred to the CEO of Soundfair. If the dispute remains, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Soundfair Board for a final decision

Membership Term

Members are appointed for a period of two years. The inaugural Committee will include at least two members (one person with tinnitus and one professional member) who are appointed for one year, providing for a half spill of the Committee annually, and ensuring balance between consistency and refreshed views.

Term of the Committee

The Committee is established for an initial period of two years commencing February 1st, 2021. The outcomes and impact of the Committee will be reviewed in the last six months of the Committee term (ie commencing no later than September, 2022). The review will be considered by the Committee and will include recommendations for action by the Soundfair CEO.