

**Community Development Institute
Research Special Interest Group**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

The Research Special Interest Group draws its authority from the Community Development Institute Initiative Steering Committee's (CDIISC) Terms of Reference (ToR) which charged the CDIISC to implement 'core participatory principles' in establishing the institute. One way the CDIISC has implemented this is through the formation of inclusive and participatory structures with the power to co-opt outside the CDIISC. These Groups have their own ToRs and a convenor/s responsible for ensuring a two-way flow of views and recommendations to the CDI Steering Committee. The Research Special Interest Group (RSIG) is one of these structures.

Relationship of the Research Special Interest Group (RSIG) to the Community Development Institute (CDI) Steering Committee

The RSIG was established by the CDI Steering Committee on 3rd August, 2024. It is co-convened by people drawn from the CDI's Circle of Friends network. The RSIG gains its mandate from, and reports to, the steering committee about its activities.

Purpose

The purpose of the Terms of Reference is to outline the responsibilities of the RSIG as it pertains to the research-related activities that support the CDI.

Role of the Research Special Interest Group

The primary role is to support the mission of the CDI, which is to build collective voices and capability to understand and practice community development across all sectors, systems and sectors in Australia. Research that features both citizen-led and professional practice that will enable the CDI to speak with authority about community development nationally.

The secondary role is to convene a community of practice (CoP) of scholars and practitioners who engage in community development research. As a CoP, high quality CD research will be enabled and strengthened through collaboration and mentoring. It is envisaged that through the dissemination of research findings, community development will gain increased recognition and influence; and such research will contribute to CD education, training and policy advocacy.

Membership of the Research Special Interest Group

The membership of the RSIG is open and participatory to scholars and practitioners who engage in community development research. The RSIG is guided by principles of inclusive diversity and interdependent autonomy.

Research Focus

The focus will be on scholarly research that theorises or tests theory; and contributes to the knowledge base of community development as it pertains to a broad range of fields and contexts. A range of research methods will be encouraged and be guided by principles commensurate with community development practice, including that it is collaborative, partnership-oriented and non-extractive.

Operations

The RSIG will determine how it will operate concerning how often to meet, meeting procedures, how to call meetings, who can attend, and how to capture and document decisions, advice or recommendations to the Steering Committee.

Convener/s

The RSIG may have two convenors who work collaboratively to initiate and support leadership processes. The convener/s will be responsible for bringing the group together and ensuring that reporting to the Steering Committee occurs.

RSIG will provide a written report the CDI Steering Committee annually of activities, or when the group seeks to provide advice or recommendations to the Steering Committee.

Time Period

These ToR will be reviewed 18 months after the adoption of the ToR.

Adopted

These ToR were adopted by the Steering Committee on 23 September 2024.