

# NSW Chapter Practice Committee



## *Terms of Reference*

Last updated: December 2017

### **1. PURPOSE AND RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The NSW Practice Committee is an advisory committee to Chapter Council in matters relating to the practice of architecture. Its purpose is to promote and continually improve the standards of practice and service provided by Institute members, and the circumstances under which they are engaged.

As a nominated committee of Chapter Council, the Practice Committee acts in support of the NSW Chapter President and Chapter Council and operates under the Council's aims, objectives and terms of reference, as expressed in the *Australian Institute of Architects: Chapter Council Charter (2017)*. Committees are established within Chapters by the Chapter Council, as provided under 3.3.2:

*3.3.2. [The primary responsibilities of the Chapter Council are to] Establish such committees, policies and procedures, consistent with those of the Chapter Council, required to facilitate the most effective discharge of the Council's roles and responsibilities.*

### **2. OBJECTIVES**

Working in accordance with the Institute's policies and strategic direction, the objectives of the Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter Practice Committee are to:

1. Continually improve the standard of professional practice maintained by Institute members in NSW
2. Promote the fair and equitable engagement of architects in the design and delivery of NSW's built environment
3. Facilitate discussion and action on regulatory matters concerning NSW's built environment

### **3. ACTIVITIES**

The Committee's core activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Contributing to the publication of well-researched, soundly based documents on matters related to the practice of architecture.
2. Contributing to the chapter's CPD program through advising on content and presenters on topics which will improve the standards of service provided by the architectural profession and the building and construction industry
3. Making available appropriate practice information to architects and other professionals in the building and construction industry as a means of establishing a widely based industry standard of practice
4. Responding to and communicating with other relevant boards and committees of the Institute on matters relating to professional practice
5. Advising the Chapter President and/or Council on matters relating to the practice of architecture, and responding to briefings or commissions as delegated by them
6. Working collaboratively as an advisory group to chapter staff in support of the chapter's advocacy and professional development objectives

### **4. LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Refer the Institute's strategic plan.

## **5. OBLIGATIONS**

Under the Institute's Delegated Authority Policy, the Committee is generally not authorised to make public statements on behalf of the chapter. Please refer to the Delegated Authority Policy for further information.

The committee will provide guidance, support and assistance to chapter staff on the needs of the committee, and timely information on the resourcing and support required. They will also work with staff in the development of action plans, as requested, to prioritise and focus the work of the committee.

Committee members are obligated to fulfil their roles, tasks and responsibilities in accordance with both the Institute's *Code of Professional Conduct* and *Employee and Member Behaviour Policy*.

It is the responsibility of the committee to ensure that work referred to it is undertaken in a timely and constructive manner. This may mean committee members taking on tasks themselves or identifying external stakeholders to be approached regarding specific tasks. Likewise it is the responsibility of staff to work with committees to ensure that work is completed in a timely manner.

## **6. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION**

### *a. Committee membership – general*

Committee members will:

1. Be financial members of the Australian Institute of Architects.
2. Behave with discretion, objectivity and integrity at all times.
3. On joining the committee, agree to attend at least 75% of the regular meetings, unless a leave of absence is granted by the Chair.
4. Not engage in behaviour that is in direct conflict with the committee's objectives and activities.
5. Acknowledge that ongoing failure to contribute to committee discussions or engage in open communications with chapter staff will result in removal from the committee.
6. Acknowledge that there is zero tolerance of abusive or aggressive behaviour towards chapter staff and that such behaviour will result in removal from the committee by the Executive Director.

### *b. General guidelines for committee composition*

Committees will:

1. Reflect the make-up of the profession, with a gender balanced representation.
2. Include members who practice on a day-to-day basis as architects and/or consultants.
3. Include a Chapter Council representative.
4. Include a Chairperson.
5. Include from time to time, at the discretion of Chapter Council, co-opted persons (who might be non-members) with particular expertise in an advisory role.
6. Where possible, be comprised of an odd number of members.

Observers at committee meetings are permitted at the discretion of the Chair.

### *c. Specific guidelines for committee composition*

The Practice committee will consist of seven members across varying scales of practice, including a Chairperson. The committee will also include at least one Senior Counsellor and one EmAGN representative.

## **7. APPOINTMENT**

### *a. Members*

Members of the committee shall be appointed by Chapter Council, through a call for expressions of interest from the membership. Chapter Council and the Executive Director shall assess applications for suitability under the guidelines nominated under 6) above.

The Committee makeup and profile is to be endorsed by Chapter Council, and successful candidates will be notified of their appointment.

*b. Chairperson*

The Chair of the committee shall be appointed by Chapter Council, or where delegated, from within the Committee by majority vote.

## **8. TERM OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Committee terms of appointment shall be for a term of two years with members retiring on a rotational basis. Any member may be re-appointed for a further term upon nominating and at the subsequent decision of the Chapter Council. Members deemed to not be contributing may be asked by the Chair to stand down.

The Chairperson shall also serve a two-year term before standing down or seeking re-appointment.

## **9. INTEREST AND DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Committee members will be bound by the same terms as Chapter Councillors, as required by Clause 5 of the *Australian Institute of Architects: Chapter Council Charter (2017)*.

*5.1. An Interest is a business or other relationship which could, or could reasonably be perceived by others, to now or in the future materially interfere with an individual's ability to act in the best interests of the Institute and not in their own or another person's interests.*

*5.2. An Interest under this Charter includes non-financial interests that might not be considered "material" at law.*

*5.3. Chapter Councillors must be free from any Interest when discussing and deliberating on any Chapter Council business, except where such Interest has been formally declared and recorded as follows:*

*5.3.1. Chapter Councillors must declare an ongoing Interest, which is to be recorded regularly in the Minutes of any meeting of Chapter Council. If recorded, a Chapter Councillor may without explanation withdraw during discussion of or deliberation on any matter where that Interest may operate.*

*5.3.2. Chapter Councillors must also declare any Interest that arises in particular circumstances or in the context of business being considered by Council, and the declaration is to be recorded in the Minutes.*

*5.3.3. An Interest or possible Interest may be raised by the Chapter President, another Chapter Councillor or the Chapter Manager in writing or verbally during a discussion or deliberation by Chapter Council. The Chapter Councillor may then withdraw. If the Chapter Councillor has not withdrawn, Chapter Council must decide before discussion continues whether the Interest is operative and if so, require the Chapter Councillor to withdraw. Alternatively, the Chapter Council may decide to allow the Chapter Councillor to remain present but not take part in discussion and if a vote is required, abstain from voting. If Chapter Council decides that an Interest is operative, the Minutes must record the details of their decision.*

## **10. MEETINGS**

It is recognised that committee members are volunteers, and that their time is important. Committees are therefore encouraged to take a contemporary approach to meetings, and adopt modes of meeting that best respond to the individual circumstances. They need not be face to face, and where appropriate committees are encouraged to engage in meetings by teleconference and/or videoconference.

Specifically:

1. The annual meeting schedule is to be agreed between the committee and staff, but shall include at least 4 meetings per year (quarterly), to discuss issues referred by Chapter Council, other chapter committees, individual members or chapter staff.
2. The committee may agree to call additional meetings as they see necessary, by agreement with staff.
3. Provision shall be made for the inclusion of regional members using appropriate technology.
4. A quorum of 50% is required to pass recommendations and make decisions.

#### **11. AGENDA AND REPORTING**

The chair is to prepare the agenda in consultation with relevant chapter staff. Chapter staff will circulate the agenda along with minutes of the previous meeting prior to the next meeting.

Minutes are to be taken of meetings, and should be a brief summary, rather than Hansard. The intent is to record actions arising with key points to establish the context of the discussion. Chapter staff will be present at meetings and where possible take minutes. Where not possible, a minute taker is to be nominated. Once prepared minutes will be filed on the Institute's database.

The committee shall report on activities to the Chapter Council and other chapter programs as requested.

#### **12. COMMITTEE AND CHAPTER STAFF RELATIONSHIP**

As identified in the Chapter Council Charter (2017), the following responsibilities that apply to Chapter Council also apply to any of the Chapter's nominated committees:

*3.2 The Chapter Council does not conduct the Institute's business activities and does not deliver services. Chapter staff and the Executive Director are responsible for the delivery of activities and services.*

and:

*6.3 In collaboration with the CEO and relevant General Managers, the Executive Director manages the operations of the Chapter, providing all necessary direction and instruction to the staff. A Chapter Councillor does not have authority to direct or instruct staff.*

#### **13. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND STAFF RESOURCING**

The chapter office will provide staff resourcing to support the facilitation of meetings and the delivery of the work of the committee. Chapter staff are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the *Employee and Member Behaviour Policy & Handbook*.

The detailed budget and cost control for all activities is the responsibility of the Executive Director. The authority to approve any expenses and to enter into any contracts and/or agreements, including partnerships with third parties, is held by the Executive Director.

Committees are not permitted to hold any moneys.

Where the committee wishes to request support for an event or project requiring unbudgeted funds, this must be submitted in advance as a formal request to the Executive Director on an approved form. Approval is at the discretion of the Executive Director. Where there is a dispute it may be brought to the Chapter Council for further discussion.

#### **14. REVIEW**

The committee's terms of reference shall be reviewed by Chapter Council on a biannual basis.

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*I understand and agree to participate in the Committee according to these Terms of Reference.*

Signed:

Name:

Date:

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Key reference documents:

- Australian Institute of Architects: Chapter Council Charter
- Australian Institute of Architects: Code of Professional Conduct
- Australian Institute of Architects: Employee and Member Behaviour Policy
- Australian Institute of Architects: Delegated Authority Policy