

# Proposal Details (National Body for Grandparents)

## Mission Statement:

The National Body seeks to uphold the right of all Australian children to enjoy a safe, secure and loving childhood environment by ensuring relative carers are adequately resourced to provide the children's physical and emotional needs and the extended family is permitted to develop meaningful relationships with them.

## Philosophy underpinning the National Body (NB):

- The NB is to be managed by those representing **relatives** raising children, denied access to them or in similar needy predicaments.
- The NB is to actively encourage the participation of service providers, Government agencies and any other parties involved with these relatives.
- The NB is for those representing a number of relatives from different families rather than individuals.
- The NB must not have any political, gender, ethnic, religious or other bias.
- Delegates to the NB are to be elected by State bodies where existing.
- If certain members of the NB represent a particular section of eligible relatives (i.e. those raising or denied access or any other) the Council must act to ensure no particular sector is overrepresented. This is until State bodies are formed.
- The NB is to address National matters and refer other matters to State organisations they feel most competent to deal them. (Where there are no State bodies available the National Council can intervene.)
- Members of the NB must respect the views of others at all times.
- 

## Objectives of the NB:

### To provide:

- An advisory body to Governments
- A voice for children and their relatives
- Information and referral to appropriate National services
- Access to research related to relatives and their role in the rearing of well adjusted adults of the future.
- General assistance not able to be provided by State Councils if possible

### To assist in instigating the establishment of:

- A National body to oversee the implementation of child protection laws.
- A National tribunal/ombudsman able to correct inappropriate decisions in family matters.
- A National helpline for our members.
- Peak bodies in each State to address State specific issues.
- A National, specific payment for grandparents and relatives raising children who are not in receipt of State payments
-

## To encourage:

- Relative carers to reach out for assistance
- The awareness and acceptance of the vital role relatives play in the nurturing of our children.
- NGOs and other service providers to address the unique situations faced by our children and carers nationally
- Professional people to study the latest trends and incorporate them in their practices
- Educational institutions to include related topics in course outlines throughout Australia.

## Structure:

- The NB will be comprised of support group leaders and advisory representatives, the latter without voting rights.
- Eventually each State will have delegates, approx two, from their own Peak group with voting rights. Until then other fair arrangements will be made by those attending the first meeting.
- Advisory reps from service providers, both State and NGOs, Government agencies and any other interested individuals/groups are free to attend.
- Meetings will need to be kept to a minimum and through teleconferencing mostly. (Email availability will be essential especially for voting reps.) Timing of these, again, to be set by first meeting.
- Any individual will be able make submissions to the NB through their local support group/State body or personally where these other bodies are not available.
- The NB should be chaired by a representative from the advisory reps or other independent body to allow all grandparent representatives to debate issues..
- A spokesperson with media background or broad knowledge of those represented on the NB will be appointed.
- No press statements will be made without executive approval.
- Subcommittees will be appointed to address specific issues and develop policies.

## Establishment Plan:

The first meeting, in November 2009, will be open to any interested parties and decisions made by consensus. Prior intention to attend must be advised and places will be allocated to ensure no bias on voting. An independent chair will be appointed previously. Suggestions for a title to the body will need to be called for.

The first **full meeting** of a balanced council, with regard to State representation, will attend to the development of a strategic plan with regard to the above outcomes. Extra outcomes may be added, some reworded but the intention of them is not to be compromised. At this meeting only State reps will have voting powers not advisory parties. This is to ensure the Council is run by relatives.

This meeting will also attend to developing a constitution, consider applications for funding and discuss the possibility of incorporation as well as deductible gift recipient status.

Initially several meetings/teleconferences etc may have to be scheduled to set up position holders elected to attend to establishment matters. No official titles necessary until members have had sufficient time to assess their colleagues in a council environment.