



Living Evidence for Australian Pregnancy and Postnatal care (LEAPP) Guidelines

Consumer Panel Terms of Reference

Version 2.2

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LEAPP Guidelines Group

Australian Living Evidence Collaboration
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Background

In July 2023, the Living Evidence for Australian Pregnancy and Postnatal care (LEAPP) team began producing national guidelines for midwives, GPs, obstetricians and other healthcare professionals to guide care during and after pregnancy. These guidelines are 'living' — which means they are regularly updated with the latest research over a period of five years (until 2028).

The LEAPP guidelines will make recommendations for care during pregnancy and in the first six weeks after birth. They will update and replace the existing Australian Pregnancy Care Guidelines. There were no Australian postnatal care guidelines prior to the LEAPP guidelines, so these are being developed from scratch.

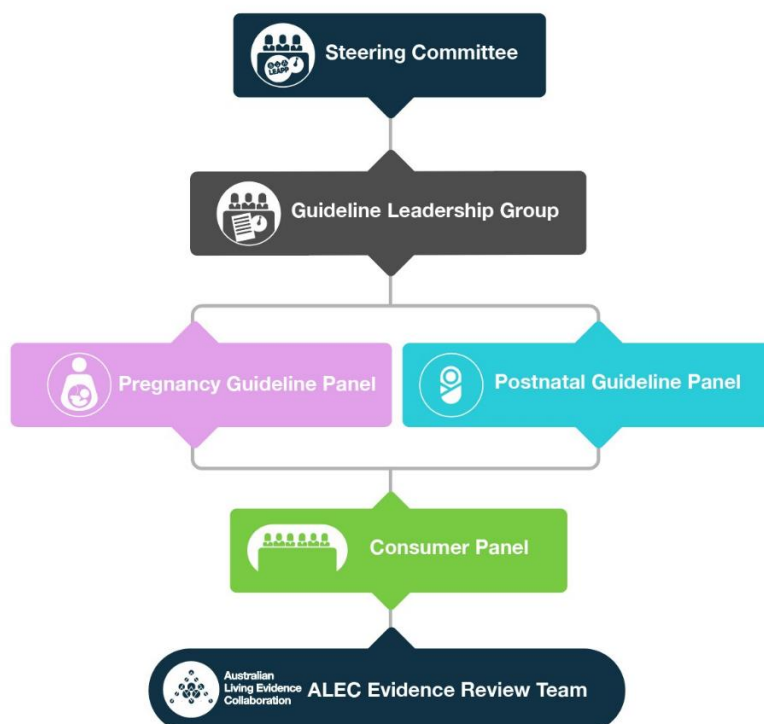
The Australian Government is funding these guidelines, and the LEAPP team is led by the Australian Living Evidence Collaboration ([ALEC](#)) based at Monash University, the Australian College of Midwives ([ACM](#)) and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists ([RANZCOG](#)).

The Terms of Reference below sets out our scope of work and how Consumer Panel members work together on the guidelines.

LEAPP organisational structure

The LEAPP organisational structure is outlined below, and more information is available at the [LEAPP Terms of Reference](#).

In addition to the Consumer Panel, there are consumer members on the Pregnancy and Postnatal Panels and the Guidelines Leadership Group (drawn from the Consumer Panel). The Steering Committee involves LEAPP member organisations, which includes [Maternity Consumer Network](#).



About the LEAPP Consumer Panel

The purpose of the LEAPP Consumer Panel is to make sure the views and perspectives of people with experience of pregnancy and postnatal care are included in all aspects of the guideline. The LEAPP Consumer Panel includes 16 members who meet for online meetings about four times a year. Panel members are provided with initial training in guidelines and how they are developed, and in being a consumer representative. Ongoing support from the LEAPP guideline team and peer support from experienced consumer representatives is provided to ensure that everyone can contribute.

The Consumer Panel will be in place whilst the LEAPP guidelines are funded (through to 2028) but individual members are not expected to commit for that length of time.

The role of the LEAPP Consumer Panel

The Consumer Panel contributes to different aspects of the LEAPP guidelines, including:

- advising on what different topics the guideline should cover and specific questions the guideline should answer
- providing feedback on draft recommendations about specific treatments/care
- discussing what people from different backgrounds might value or consider important when making healthcare decisions during or after pregnancy
- offering advice about how and where the guideline should be shared.

There will also be opportunities for interested members to join other groups and activities as they are developed, such as LEAPP Guideline Working Groups, LEAPP-related research projects, and co-presenting at conferences and workshops, and co-authoring publications.

Consumer panel meeting structure

Meetings are online (via Zoom) and run for up to two hours. They are held about every three months (meaning four meetings per year). Ideally, panel members will attend at least 50% of the meetings each year. We will work together to agree on how we will ensure respectful, inclusive, safe and enjoyable meetings for everyone. Meetings are child-friendly.

Members are sent an agenda and sometimes a small amount of additional material to read, before the meeting. The LEAPP guideline team gives a presentation at the start of each meeting to explain the topics being discussed, with time for members to ask questions before the discussion begins. If a member can't make a meeting they can provide input over email or by phone before the meeting. We send out meeting minutes after the meeting.

About the Consumer Panel members

The Consumer Panel should include members who have been pregnant ideally within the last five years, and who have a variety of experiences before and after birth.

Members bring different skills and experience. Some members have experience working with hospitals, health services, health researchers and/or guideline developers as maternity consumer representatives. This means they are able to represent the views of people other than themselves, and may be a member of a national organisation or small group that works to support women during this time.

Other members will not have experienced being a consumer or patient representative. They will draw from their recent personal experience, and will be offered extra training and peer support (see Mentoring and Support).

Ideally, the Panel will be inclusive and diverse, including:

- First Nations people
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people who:
 - identify as LGBTQI+
 - live in metropolitan, regional and remote areas
 - live on a low income
 - are under 25 years of age.

Consumer Panel co-chairs and deputy co-chairs

The Consumer Panel includes two co-chairs and two deputy co-chairs. These people are panel members with leadership experience. Their role is to help the LEAPP guideline team prepare for, and then to lead (or chair) the meetings. In addition, they represent the Consumer Panel on the Guidelines Leadership Group (all four consumers) and on the Pregnancy Panel and Postnatal Panel (two consumers on each panel).

The Terms of Reference for the Guidelines Leadership Group, the Pregnancy Panel and the Postnatal Panel are described in the [LEAPP Terms of Reference](#).

Consumer Panel member commitments

Panel members are invited to:

- participate in the initial orientation and training
- participate in LEAPP Consumer Panel meetings
- respect the opinions and experiences of all committee members
- maintain confidentiality, as outlined later in this document
- advise of any personal 'conflicts of interest' - this means a situation where a person might gain a benefit, such as money, from what is recommended in the guidelines. This could mean their advice is not objective.

Co-chairs and deputy co-chairs have additional responsibilities, to:

- participate in pre-meeting check-ins with the LEAPP team to plan Consumer Panel meetings
- co-chair (or, if a deputy, be able to stand in for) the Consumer Panel meetings
- attend Guidelines Leadership Group meetings
- attend Pregnancy or Postnatal Panel meetings
- provide support for Consumer Panel members.

Maintaining confidentiality

Before meetings, Consumer Panel members may receive pre-reading material that includes draft recommendations or other content that has yet to be approved for inclusion in the LEAPP guidelines. Draft recommendations are likely to be changed before their wording is agreed. As such, we ask that Consumer Panel members treat all meeting documents as

confidential, unless otherwise specified. Similarly, to ensure that all members feel comfortable participating, we ask that Panel members keep the discussions held during meetings (including personal stories shared by panel members) as confidential.

We recognise that some panel members may wish to seek the views of other consumers in their networks to inform the Consumer Panel meeting discussions. We are very happy to support members who would like to seek broader input from their networks, although we do not require members to do this. We will provide a brief summary of the topics being discussed and the kind of questions you might like to ask, so that members can discuss the issues and seek input without sharing confidential drafts.

Group agreement

Panel members contributed to a group agreement, which is intended as a guide for how we will work together effectively and respectfully to make the LEAPP Consumer Panel meetings a good experience for everyone involved.

Mentoring and support

Consumer Panel members are provided with ongoing information and support needed for their roles. We offer an initial orientation, in partnership with the [Maternity Consumer Network](#), covering the guideline development process and the Consumer Panel's role. We also ask new members about the ways in which we can support them to participate.

Panel members who would like to receive peer mentoring can be linked with one of the Consumer Panel Co-chairs or Deputy Co-chairs.

We regularly seek feedback from Consumer Panel members about how we can improve our processes.

In some meetings, we may discuss topics that some panel members find distressing. In these cases, panel members can provide input before the meeting, or step out of a meeting, if needed, at any time.

Payment

Consumer Panel members are offered an 'honourarium' (payment) as a gesture of appreciation.

Honourarium amounts are as follows:

- Consumer Panel members are offered an honourarium of \$205 for each Consumer Panel meeting they attend (including the initial orientation session).
- Co-chairs and deputy co-chairs are offered \$256.25 and \$230.65, respectively, for Consumer Panel meetings, and \$205 for Guideline Leadership Group and the Pregnancy and Postnatal Panel meetings.

Honourarium amounts will increase by 2.5% every year. Members will be able to choose how they would prefer to receive their honourarium (direct to bank account or voucher).

The honourarium payments are not subject to withholding tax or superannuation as there is no employer/employee relationship between members of the Consumer Panel and the University. However, the ATO has indicated that payments may be subject to income tax in the recipient's hands where there is a connection to the recipient's income-producing activities (such as working in the health profession). We suggest that Panel members obtain their own taxation advice with regard to these payments.

Contact

For any questions or more information, contact admin.alec@monash.edu

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