

Loss and Grief Practitioners' Association

Operational guidelines

April 2015



Purpose of this document

These operational guidelines are set out in order to make clear how the Loss and Grief Practitioners' Association functions and is managed.

1. What is the LGPA

The LGPA is a peak body for specialist loss, grief and bereavement practitioners, volunteers and students working in the field of loss and grief. The Vision, Mission and Aims and Objectives of the Association are available on request and are an important accompaniment to this document. The focus of the LGPA is on practitioners rather than organisations.

2. Origins of the LGPA

The National Association for Loss and Grief was a not-for-profit association that was first established in 1977 following the Granville train disaster in New South Wales, to bring together people and agencies working in the field of loss and grief. The National Association for Loss and Grief (Vic) (NALAG Vic) was established in October 1977 and was involved in community education, professional development and education for practitioners, and accreditation of clinical members. NALAG Vic became insolvent and went into liquidation on 13 May 2013.

Following discussions between Jesuit Social Services and GriefLine and a survey of practitioners interested in loss, grief and bereavement, it was established that there was interest amongst practitioners working in the field to meet together for professional development and support. Many of the people practicing in this field work alone or in small groups and opportunities for collegial support are welcome. Also there are limited opportunities for affordable professional development.

3. Relationship with Jesuit Social Services

Jesuit Social Services has a commitment to be a social change organisation that fosters opportunities for capacity building, education, advocacy and leadership development. It has experience assisting with community development projects to enhance the effectiveness of aspects of community life including the establishment of various special interest groups. For some years Jesuit Social Services has demonstrated a commitment to the field of grief and bereavement with its specialist bereavement program, Support After Suicide. Following consultation, the Board of Jesuit Social Services agreed to support the development of a new Association for loss and grief practitioners.

It is envisaged that this Association will assist loss and grief practitioners to be better able to provide effective assistance to grieving, traumatised and bereaved people. While Jesuit Social Services is providing the administration of the finances, it has no financial interest in the Association, and will not benefit or profit from this arrangement. By auspicing the Association Jesuit Social Services is facilitating its establishment, but is open to the relationship with the Association changing in the future.

4. Structure of the LGPA

a. Management

The LGPA is managed by the Establishment Committee under the auspices of Jesuit Social Services. The Committee is made up of interested members who have self-selected to work towards the formation and successful development of the LGPA. The current Committee has 11 members comprising those who have regularly attended meetings during the development phase of the LGPA.

The Committee will meet four times a year, or more frequently on an as-needs basis, to plan and arrange activities, discuss membership issues and oversee the financial and administrative aspects of the Association. Each member of the Committee is expected to attend at least three meetings each year. The current membership of the Committee has been confirmed from those who have regularly attended meetings. This membership will continue for a term of two years from 1 July 2015. The membership of the Committee will then be reviewed.

A recommendation is to hold an Annual Meeting to report to members on the activities and financial status of the Association. Membership of the Establishment Committee can be confirmed at this Annual Meeting. It is a priority of the Committee to have at least one rural practitioner as a member and, given the relationship with Jesuit Social Services, it is recommended that at least two members of the Committee represent Jesuit Social Services.

b. Administration

An email address, postal address and phone number through Jesuit Social Services (administered by Support After Suicide). Because there are limited administration resources, the preferred mode of contact is by email or post.

c. A website which will have a section for members. This will provide:

- i. referral options
- ii. articles and resources
- iii. a regular newsletter to promote professional development opportunities, employment opportunities, group meetings, and profiles of organisations and practitioners.

d. Activities

A minimum of three events – seminars and/or workshops – per year to be arranged at a cost to enable as many people as possible to attend. Effort will be made to ensure at least one of these will be held in a rural location.

e. Rural / regional events and interest groups

The Association will actively encourage the development of interest groups in rural and regional areas, as well as running professional development events in regional areas.

f. Bereavement Practitioners' Discussion Group

This group was established in 2011 and has met in Melbourne every two months. It will continue to meet, but as a function of the LGPA.

5. Financial management

Jesuit Social Services will provide financial administration and management for the LGPA. This includes receiving membership fees, registration fees for activities and

from these monies arranging the payment of approved expenditure including website costs, venue costs and other costs associated with the activities of the Association.