



Partnership Working Group on Closing the Gap

TERMS OF REFERENCE (EFFECTIVE 23 FEBRUARY 2023)

<p>Chair</p>	<p>Partnership Working Group (PWG) meetings will be co-chaired by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a senior government official (corresponding to the jurisdiction providing the Joint Council government co-chair) • Lead Convenor or a representative of the Coalition of Peaks.
<p>Membership</p>	<p>Membership of PWG will be comprised of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a nominated senior official from each Government Party to the Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap (Commonwealth, states and territories, and the Australian Local Government Associations) • representatives from the Coalition of Peaks. <p>Noting the nature of the partnership representation, there should be an approximately equal representation of Government Parties to the number of Coalition of Peaks representatives in the membership.</p> <p>Members should be of appropriate seniority to speak and make decisions on behalf of their jurisdiction.</p> <p>Government Parties and the Coalition of Peaks will inform PWG of any changes to nominated representatives.</p>
<p>Proxies</p>	<p>In the event of a member being unavailable to attend a PWG meeting, the member may send a proxy.</p> <p>Nominated proxies will be able to speak and make decisions on behalf of their jurisdiction. As with the requirement for members, proxies for Government Parties should be senior officials, with an appropriate level of seniority to speak and make decisions on behalf of their jurisdiction.</p>



<p>Governance structure</p>	<p>PWG reports to the Joint Council on Closing the Gap. All papers for Joint Council consideration must be agreed by PWG before tabling at Joint Council.</p> <p>PWG is supported by a Drafting Group. References to the roles and responsibilities of Drafting Group in this Terms of Reference are outlined in further detail in the Drafting Group Terms of Reference.</p> <p>PWG may establish additional working groups at its discretion (for example, for a specific analysis task). These may be time limited or ongoing, and will report to PWG.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference for Drafting Group and other working groups will be endorsed by PWG in the first instance (with revisions to be agreed at the sub-group level and reported back to PWG).</p>
<p>Responsibilities</p>	<p>PWG is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● driving the implementation of the Partnership Agreement and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap ● supporting Joint Council by developing policy positions and providing advice to inform discussions between Joint Council members ● supporting Joint Council to meet activities set out in the Joint Council work plan ● resolving issues referred from Joint Council ● fulfilling requests from Joint Council. <p>PWG will develop a work plan to meet these requirements and prioritise matters so that items are logically sequences and to ensure visibility of risks. The PWG work plan will be updated and reviewed at each meeting.</p>

<p>Meetings schedule</p>	<p>PWG meetings will be scheduled to complement the Joint Council meeting schedule and work plan.</p> <p>In general, PWG will meet approximately every six to eight weeks, with a minimum of two meetings between each Joint Council meeting, or as required (as agreed by PWG co-chairs).</p> <p>The PWG Secretariat will issue meeting invitations to nominated senior officials from each Government Party (Commonwealth, states and territories, and the Australian Local Government Association) and the Coalition of Peaks Secretariat.</p> <p>PWG will agree dates and locations for future PWG meetings at each meeting (included in the forward work plan).</p> <p>Any changes to confirmed dates and locations of meetings are to be agreed in writing between the co-chairs (or their delegates) out-of-session.</p>
<p>Meeting agendas</p>	<p>Drafting Group will lead the development of an agenda and supporting papers for each PWG meeting.</p> <p>The agenda for each meeting should align with the work plan agreed by PWG, and support PWG to meet its responsibilities (set out above).</p> <p>In preparing the agenda and papers for PWG meetings, Drafting Group must take into account any items specifically requested by either Joint Council or PWG at preceding meetings.</p> <p>Any Party can put forward proposals and/or papers for consideration by PWG (for consideration by Drafting Group in the first instance). Draft papers should be submitted to Drafting Group members by either the authoring party, or via the Drafting Group Secretariat.</p>
<p>Meeting papers</p>	<p>The PWG Secretariat will distribute papers to nominated senior officials from each Government Party (Commonwealth, states and territories, and the Australian Local Government Association) and the Coalition of Peaks Secretariat at least eight business days ahead of each PWG meeting, unless exceptional circumstances arise and as agreed by the co-chairs.</p> <p>All papers for PWG consideration must be agreed by Drafting Group before tabling at PWG.</p>

<p>Meeting quorum</p>	<p>For a PWG meeting to proceed, a quorum will be determined as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> representatives from a majority of Government Parties (i.e. Commonwealth, each state and territory, and the Australian Local Government Association); and representatives from the Coalition of Peaks. <p>For clarity, the minimum number of Government Parties represented in order to meet a quorum is six (of 10).</p>
<p>Review and reporting</p>	<p>PWG will report progress to Joint Council as requested by the Partnership Parties or agreed by Joint Council. These Terms of Reference reflect the responsibilities placed on the group by Joint Council.</p> <p>Where possible, PWG will review its Terms of Reference at the first PWG meeting each year, or as required (for example, following Joint Council reviewing its terms reference or following a Partnership Health Check).</p>
<p>Context and accountability</p>	<p>PWG is accountable to Joint Council.</p> <p>Individual members of PWG are accountable to their jurisdictions (for officials) or the Coalition of Peaks (for its representatives).</p>
<p>Secretariat</p>	<p>The Commonwealth (NIAA) will provide secretariat functions for PWG.</p> <p>The PWG Secretariat is responsible for distributing meeting papers and facilitating meeting logistics.</p> <p>The PWG Secretariat will work with PWG co-chairs (and the Coalition of Peaks Secretariat) to schedule meetings.</p> <p>Following each meeting, the PWG Secretariat will draft a <i>record of meeting</i>, including action items, for consideration / endorsement at the following PWG meeting.</p>



<p>Operations</p>	<p>PWG will operate in accordance with the Partnership Agreement Objectives (Clause 13) and Principles (Clause 14). These principles encompass support for self-determination, self-management and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control as fundamental to achieving our shared goals.</p> <p>PWG will make decisions on the basis of consensus between Parties wherever possible. Consensus decision-making requires equal participation and agreement on an outcome and/or course of action.</p> <p>Consistent with the Partnership Principles, equal participation includes identifying and addressing systemic and structural racism, discrimination and unconscious bias.</p> <p>While consensus decision-making does not require uniformity of actions by all Parties, it does require agreement on the outcomes of an item and wording of a resolution.</p> <p>Parties will seek to maximise participation in PWG and support continuity in representation. Effective participation and shared decision-making will be enabled through adequate time for consultation and consideration of key decisions, taking an outcomes focus in the work of the PWG and commitment to open and transparent negotiation.</p> <p>PWG also is responsible for identifying and agreeing individual projects to be funded through the shared resourcing arrangement for training, capability and research that will benefit all Parties.</p>
<p>Information and communication</p>	<p>Documents prepared for Joint Council, representatives and officials will be treated as sensitive, unless otherwise agreed, and only distributed on a need-to-know basis.</p> <p>The Chatham House rule applies to deliberations and discussions of the Joint Council, PWG and any other working groups. This does not preclude members discussing or expressing an opinion on the agreed outcomes of a meeting.</p>