



# **Terms of Reference**

## **Policy and Advocacy Advisory Committee**

### **Background**

YWCA Canberra has been awarded the contract for the National Women's Safety Alliance (NWSA) through funding from the Commonwealth Government. The NWSA must establish a civil society network (Alliance) to ensure women's voices are heard in the policy making process.

The intended outcomes are that the NWSA:

1. Represent Australian women, including underrepresented women.
2. Collaborate with policymakers to inform Government's understanding of policy issues affecting Australian women's safety.
3. Collaborate with policymakers to inform the development of policy solutions to issues affecting Australian women's safety.

Alliances are expected to undertake the following activities:

1. Grow a membership base of organisations and individuals, including women who are underrepresented.
2. Work collaboratively with other Alliances.
3. Consult with Australian women to identify issues affecting Australian women.
4. Gather evidence to develop solutions to priority issues affecting Australian women.

### **Role of the Policy and Advocacy Advisory Committee**

The role of the Policy and Advocacy Advisory Committee (PAAC) is to provide relevant advice to the NWSA Executive Director. In particular, the Committee will:

- Support the delivery of NWSA's intended outcomes.
- Advise on NWSA key priorities.
- Make recommendations to the Executive Director on submissions, policy and reports.
- Form appropriate adhoc working groups to undertake work to meet government requests, NWSA priorities or emerging issues.



## Duties of the Policy and Advocacy Advisory Committee

The duties of the Policy and Advocacy Advisory Committee (PAAC) include:

- Supporting NWSA public consultations and evidence gathering, including by promoting consultations through their stakeholder networks to encourage participation and involvement, actively seeking representation from underrepresented women.
- Provide advice on the key priorities for NWSA, inform policy and advocacy, including the views of members of the organisations they represent.
- Share insights into practical measures to inform policy implementation.
- Identify opportunities to support links with other relevant policies, frameworks or programs.
- Work collaboratively with other National Women's Alliances.
- Manage the Working Groups in respectful and efficient manner by setting clear objectives, deliverables and timelines.

## Committee operating parameters

### Delegation

The PAAC will have no binding decision making authority or executive function in the context of NWSA.

### Chair

The inaugural Committee Chair will be appointed by the Executive Director. The members of the PAAC will elect the Committee Chair of PAAC on an annual basis thereafter.

The initial term of the Committee Chair will be from appointment to 30 June 2022 and annually thereafter.

The PAAC Chair will be a member of the PAAC and cannot be a representative of the five National Women's Alliances. A Co-Chair arrangement will be considered by NWSA Executive Director.

### Membership

The Committee will comprise of 15 members, inclusive of the Chair, from:

1. a representative from each of the five National Women's Alliances
2. a representative from the NWSA Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Working Group
3. a representative from the NWSA Sexual Violence Working Group
4. up to 8 subject matter experts and national peak bodies that can represent:
  - a. sectors that support women's safety, such as frontline services in health, legal services and domestic violence crisis support
  - b. environments where violence can occur, including workplaces, sporting environments and within educational settings
  - c. other sectors that represent cohorts not currently represented by the other National Alliances for women's safety



## **National Women's Safety Alliance**

The members will be appointed by the Executive Director for a three-year term following a call for expression of interest.

Members of the Working Groups must also be members or represent members of NWSA.

Members who cannot attend a meeting and that are representing organisations, may nominate an alternate to attend meetings. The name and email of the alternate must be provided to the NWSA Executive Director in advance of the meeting.

The quorum for the Committee is 50% of current members, plus the Committee Chair.

The Committee Chair may appoint a delegate from the membership to chair a meeting when required.

The NWSA Executive Director and Policy Advisor will attend all Committee meetings. YWCA Canberra may attend meetings as an observer.

### **Meetings**

The PAAC will hold a minimum of one face-to-face meeting (if possible) and five teleconferences per year. These meetings may be supplemented by additional teleconferences as required.

The NWSA Policy Advisor is responsible for providing a draft meeting agenda. The Committee Chair will approve the agenda for all Committee meetings. Other Committee members may nominate items of business to the Committee Chair or NWSA Executive Director.

Unless otherwise agreed by the Committee Chair, notice of meetings and supporting documentation are to be emailed to Committee members seven days in advance of the meeting date.

### **Observers**

Observers maybe invited to meetings by the NWSA Executive Director.

Observers cannot vote at meetings.

### **Remuneration**

PAAC member positions will not be remunerated. Travel to meetings will be subject to a shared cost arrangement and will require approval of the NWSA Executive Director prior to incurring expense.

### **Conflicts of interest**

Committee members will be invited to disclose conflicts of interest at the commencement of each meeting. Ongoing conflicts of interest need not be disclosed at each meeting once acknowledged. Where members or invitees are deemed to have a real or perceived conflict of interest, they will be excused from committee discussions on the issue where a conflict exists. YWCA Canberra Conflict of Interest Policy will apply.

### **Voting**

Whilst PAAC has no binding decision-making authority, consensus is required prior to making recommendations to the Executive Director. Any matters requiring decision will be decided by a majority of votes of members present.



## **Working groups**

PAAC will manage the standing Working Groups and adhoc Working Groups through the NWSA Working Group Terms of Reference.

The NWSA Executive Director will approve standing Working Groups and the PAAC will approve adhoc Working Groups.

The following working groups will be standing:

- Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence
- Workplace Sexual Violence

## **Secretariat duties**

The NWSA Policy Advisor will act as secretary to the PAAC. The secretary will assist the Chair by providing advice on governance issues and secretariat support including developing and distributing agendas, papers, minutes and calendar.

## **Minutes**

Minutes must be prepared, approved by the Committee Chair and circulated to the members within two weeks of a meeting. They must be ratified and signed by the Chair, at the next meeting of the committee.

## **Reporting to members**

Following each meeting, the NWSA Executive Director will also provide a communique to members.

## **Confidentiality**

PAAC members have an obligation not to use or disclose information provided in confidence without consent of the Chair, the party that provided the information or as otherwise authorised or permitted by law. Confidential information provided as part of the PAAC is provided to enable members to perform their responsibilities. This includes information relating to agenda items to be discussed. You must take all reasonable steps to ensure this information remains confidential and is only disclosed where authorised or permitted by law.

## **Reviews**

The PAAC will review its performance on an annual basis. The review may be conducted as a self-assessment and will be coordinated by the PAAC Chair. The assessment may seek input from any person. The PAAC Chair will report performance to the NWSA Executive Director.

The PAAC should review the Terms of Reference and its composition annually, to ensure that it remains consistent with the NWSA's objectives and responsibilities. The NWSA Governance Committee should consider the PAAC's review and either approve or further review the committee's Terms of Reference and/or composition.