



National Carer Strategy Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose and status of the terms of reference

These Terms of Reference set out the objectives and operational arrangements of the Committee and the responsibilities of those associated with the Committee. These Terms of Reference will be binding on all Committee members once they are considered and adopted at the first meeting of the Committee.

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (the department) will work together with the Committee to review and reassess these Terms of Reference and, if required, make any amendments to the Terms of Reference to ensure they remain consistent with the functions of the Committee.

As part of this review process, the Committee will work with the Department to review its performance.

Establishment

The Committee was initially established on 4 April 2024 until December 2024.

The Committee was re-established in February 2025 for a term of up to 12 months. The Committee will remain in place until the Carer Advisory Committee is established in accordance with Commitment 4 of the Action Plan 2024-2027 (the Action Plan).

The Committee is a non-statutory body created to fulfil the purpose outlined below.

Purpose of the Committee

The Committee will inform and guide work to support the implementation of the National Carer Strategy (the Strategy) and Action Plan.

The Strategy is an overarching national policy framework to guide actions towards improved coordination of carer policy across Commonwealth portfolios including health and aged care, including mental ill health and palliative care, disability, education, employment and veteran's affairs.

Scope

The following topics are considered **out of scope**:

- Carer Payment and Allowance
- Kinship, Grandparent and Foster care

State and Territory services and support, noting this a Commonwealth only Strategy.

The Minister for Disability is the Commonwealth Government Minister responsible for the Strategy. The work of the Committee will consider and align with other relevant strategies, inquiries and reviews including (but not limited to):

- House of Representatives inquiry into the recognition of unpaid carers final report

- National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy
- Senate Select Committee on Work and Care
- Productivity Commission inquiry into Carer Leave
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Review
- Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031
- Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality (2024-2034)
- Early Years Strategy (2024-2034)
- National Autism Strategy (2025-2031)
- Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability
- National Dementia Action Plan
- National Plan to End the Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People (under development)
- The National Plan to End Gender Based Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 and First Action Plan (2023-2027)
- National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse (2021-2030)
- National Preventative Health Strategy (2021-2030)
- The National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People (2025-2035)
- Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2024-2029)
- National Roadmap for Improving the Health and Wellbeing of People with Intellectual Disability

Timeframe

The Committee will operate for a period of up to 12 months. The Minister may extend the operation of the Committee beyond 12 months.

Committee membership

The Committee consists of:

- a) two Co-chairs of the Committee; and
- b) at least 10 and no more than 16 members

Membership of the Committee will include carers who are caring for someone with disability, a chronic or terminal illness or mental ill-health, or who is frail due to ageing. Membership will also consist of 20% of members' organisations that represent carers.

The Committee membership will ensure members have:

- an understanding of matters affecting Australia's unpaid carers and care recipients
- the ability to connect with and represent the views of carers the ability to advise and work with government (as an individual or through an organisation)
- an understanding of matters affecting diverse communities including First Nations communities, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, young carers, women and girls, LGBTIQ+ communities, veterans, those who live in regional and rural areas and carers of people with complex needs.

A person is appointed as a Committee member for the period specified in their letter of appointment.

Co-chairs

The Minister for Disability will appoint the following representatives to cochair the Committee:

- a) a lived experience carer co-chair
- b) a Department of Health, Disability and Ageing co-chair – Group Manager, Disability and Carer Programs Group.

The Co-chairs have a key role in ensuring the Committee effectively fulfils its purpose. The co-chairs will be responsible for:

- a) being the primary points of contact between the Committee and the Minister
- b) ensuring the Committee adheres to the Terms of Reference
- c) preparing the agenda for meetings in consultation with the National Carer Strategy Committee Secretariat (Secretariat)
- d) convening meetings, including the number, time and place
- e) ensuring meetings are advertised in a timely fashion and the agenda and papers are distributed to members in advance of meetings
- f) ensuring that adequate time is allowed for the discussion of agenda items and opportunity is available for the contribution of all members; and
- g) verifying the accuracy of minutes prior to publication and distribution.

Members

The Minister for Disability will appoint the Committee members. In addition to the Co-Chairs, the Committee will consist of 10-16 members comprised of at least:

- a) **6-12 members with lived experience from diverse backgrounds** including First Nations, CALD, Caring for an older person, a young carer, former young carer or advocate and an LGBTQIA+ carer.
- b) **4 carer and community sector members**, who may also have lived experience

Members will be appointed by the Minister for Disability, following an open Expression of Interest process.

Committee member responsibilities

The responsibilities of a Committee member are to:

- Participate in the deliberations of the policy and business of the Committee.
- Be mindful of the strategic objectives and activities of the Committee as they relate to the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan.
- Be conscious of the Committee resources, in relation to its purpose and budget, and the need for efficiency and effectiveness in the activities for which the Committee has been established.
- Be well informed on issues before the Committee. Prepare adequately for meetings and seek additional information if required.
- Read thoroughly all reports, agendas, and previous minutes prior to the scheduled meeting.
- Be mindful of the potential for a "Conflict of Interest" to occur through participation on the Committee and to declare such Interests as and when they arise.
- Support the delivery of Committee initiatives where appropriate.
- Observe confidentiality when it is required.
- Inform the Committee as soon as possible of inability to attend meetings or attend to the business actions agreed to.
- Seek support as required.

Guest speakers, non-members and observers

Other Commonwealth, state and territory government departments will be consulted and informed of the progress of the implementation of the Strategy through the work of the Committee and broader public consultation processes.

The co-chairs may invite experts and representatives from the carer community and sector to participate in discussions for specific agenda items, as appropriate.

Priorities and work program

The Committee will:

- a) oversee and advise on the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan
- b) provide an annual report to the Minister on the progress implementation, and realisation of the Strategy actions and outcomes
- c) connect with and complement the Parent and Carers Reference Group, where there are areas of overlapping interest, while also delivering on its specific mandate; and
- d) facilitate transition to ongoing Carer Advisory Committee at the conclusion
- e) of this appointment term.

Meeting frequency and format

The frequency of Committee meetings will be a minimum of 4 times per year.

Committee face-to-face meetings will be limited to no more than 2 meetings per year unless the Committee co-chairs determine otherwise. Other meetings will be conducted through MS Teams, videoconference, or teleconference, with consideration of other remote methods for diverse needs, including accessibility, preferred communication and sensory requirements.

The Secretariat will, in the ordinary course, circulate meeting agendas and papers to Committee members one week prior to the applicable Committee meeting.

Voting and decision-making

A question or resolution proposed or arising at a meeting is determined by a majority of the votes of the Committee members present and voting.

The Committee may consider and decide on any matter without a meeting if all of the Committee members entitled to vote on the proposed decision sign a document containing a statement that they are in favour of the resolution set out in the document.

The document may be circulated and signed in counterparts (including by electronic means) and the resolution is passed when the last Committee member entitled to vote signs the document.

The Committee must keep a record of decisions without a meeting.

A Committee member who is appointed as an individual is not entitled to appoint a proxy or alternate. A Committee member who is appointed as a representative of a carer and community sector organisation may appoint a proxy or alternate from their organisation.

Standards of conduct and duties

Committee members must at all times:

- a) perform their functions in accordance with all relevant laws (including work health and safety laws), these Terms of Reference and the terms of their appointment
- b) act in a collegiate, collaborative and respectful manner when discussing and resolving issues
- c) perform their functions with a reasonable degree of care and diligence
- d) perform their functions honestly, in good faith and for a proper purpose
- e) not improperly use their position or information obtained because of their role as a committee member:
 - a. to gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or an advantage for themselves or any other person; or
 - b. to cause, or seek to cause, detriment to the Department, Commonwealth or any other person
- f) make reasonable enquiries if relying on information or advice provided by others; and
- g) not engage in "corrupt conduct" as defined in section 8 of the National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022.

National Carer Strategy Committee Secretariat

The Secretariat function will be provided by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

The Secretariat will provide administrative and policy support to the Committee including by:

- a) liaising with the Co-chairs to schedule meetings, establish and circulate agendas and follow up on agreed actions
- b) providing advice to Committee members on procedures, practices and policy
- c) providing administrative and clerical support, including assisting the Committee to maintain records of meetings and decisions
- d) preparing drafts of reports, Committee papers, minutes and other documents as reasonably requested by the Committee
- e) consulting internally and externally as reasonably requested by the Committee and managing Committee correspondence and communication
- f) managing the resources of the Committee to enable their effective and efficient function
- g) maintaining a Declaration of Interests register
- h) ensuring all members are kept informed of issues and information relevant to the work of the Committee
- i) arranging venues and catering for meetings (including travel and transport)
- j) verifying and arranging payment of associated travel costs and reimbursement of eligible expenses; and
- k) providing any other assistance as reasonably required by the Committee.

Remuneration for time spent working on Committee business

Members will be remunerated for the time spent working on the Committee, including pre meeting preparation, post-meeting follow-up work, and nonmeeting day travel time, provided that the member:

- is not an 'Australian Public Service (APS) employee' within the meaning of the Public Service Act 1999, or
- is not engaged by a state or territory government.

The time spent (number of hours) by members on Committee business will be determined by the Department.

Committee members will be required to advise the secretariat of the time spent (number of hours) of pre-meeting preparation time prior to payment. A maximum payable number of hours of pre-meeting preparation time will be determined by the department based on the volume and complexity of meeting papers.

Sitting fees for Committee members who are not employed by the Commonwealth or a State or Territory Government will be paid using, as a guide, the rates set out in the Australian Government's Remuneration Tribunal (Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-time Public Office) Determination 2024 (the Determination) (as amended from time to time) (<https://www.remtribunal.gov.au/offices/part-time-offices>) at:

- Part 2, section 12—Other holders of part-time public office, and
- Part 4, section 21—Calculation of daily fees.

[Note: section 21 of the Determination will be applied to determine payments where only part of a day is spent on activities related to Committee business.]

Travel (flights, accommodation) expenses, provisions for care recipients (person receiving care) and other expense

The Secretariat will:

- arrange flights and accommodation for Committee members, and their care recipient (as required)
- reimburse reasonable costs directly related to travel and attendance at face-to-face meetings (but only after the member and their care recipient completes the required documentation and returns it to the Secretariat); and
- arrange payment of reasonable costs for the care recipient of Committee members (while they are engaged in Committee business) that are not paid as part of the care recipient usual salary and are considered additional costs or out-of-pocket expenses for the Committee member.

The department will not pay or reimburse any costs incurred by Committee members for private business or that is covered by the care recipient's NDIS or Aged Care plan. This applies to the Committee member and the care recipient.

Deliverables and Intellectual Property

Ownership of all Intellectual Property rights in all reports, deliverables or other material created by the Committee and its members in the course of or connection with the work of the Committee will vest immediately on their creation in the Commonwealth.

For the purposes of this clause, Intellectual Property includes any:

- a) copyright.
- b) design, patent, trademark, semiconductor, circuit layout or plant breeder rights (whether registered, unregistered or applied for).
- c) trade business, company or domain name.

- d) know-how, inventions, process or confidential information whether in writing or recorded in any form; and
- e) any other proprietary or personal rights, or licence, arising from intellectual activity in the business, industrial, scientific or artistic fields.

Confidentiality and privacy

Committee members must observe obligations for maintaining the confidentiality of information received in the course of their role.

A co-chair or member must not participate in Committee business until they have entered a Deed of Confidentiality and provided a signed copy to the department (through the Secretariat). Members must comply with the Deed of Confidentiality.

Any personal or other confidential information received by co-chairs and members in the course of their role, must be treated with the utmost care and diligence, and must not be disclosed by the co-chair or member to anyone outside the Committee.

Co-chairs and members must observe all applicable laws (such as the Privacy Act 1988 and the Eligible Data Breaches Scheme under that Act), state and territory privacy laws and secrecy provisions. Confidential information may also attract equitable duties of confidentiality.

Committee members may seek advice from the Committee secretariat where they have queries about confidential information and circumstances in which it may be shared beyond the Committee.

Conflict of interest

Committee members must observe obligations for declaring conflicts of interest.

A co-chair or member must not participate in Committee business until they have provided a signed Conflict of Interest declaration to the department (through the Secretariat).

The Committee co-chairs and members must give written notice to the department (through the Secretariat) of all interests—pecuniary or otherwise— that the member has or acquires and that conflict or could conflict with the proper performance of the member's functions.

A member of the Committee who has an interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in a matter being considered or about to be considered by the Committee or must disclose the nature of the interest to a meeting of the Committee (as the case requires).

The disclosure must be made as soon as possible after the relevant facts have come to the member's knowledge. Unless the Committee co-chairs determine otherwise, the member:

- a) must not be present during any deliberations by the Committee on the matter; and
- b) must not take part in any decisions of the Committee with respect to the matter.

For the purpose of making a determination about the member's further involvement in a matter, the member:

- a) must not be present during any deliberations of the Committee for the purposes of making the determination; and

- b) must not take part in making the determination.

A determination about the member's further involvement if made at a meeting of the Committee—must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Committee; and

If the department determines that the person's interests or potential interests are or would be inconsistent with their role on the Committee, the person's appointment to the Committee will be ceased.

Reporting

The Committee will provide an annual report to the Minister for Disability on the progress implementation, and realisation of the Strategy actions and outcomes.

Public reporting

The Committee has an online presence with a dedicated web page on the department's website.

An outline of non-confidential matters discussed at each Committee meeting will be determined by the Secretariat. This outline will be published in an accessible format on the Committee's web page as soon as possible following the meeting.

Additional reporting

The Department may request such additional reports from the Committee as the Department deems necessary.

Resignation

The lived experience co-chair and a Committee member may resign his or her appointment by giving the Minister for Disability or the department a written resignation. Resignations can be provided to the Secretariat in the first instance to CarerAdvisoryCommittee@dss.gov.au.

The resignation will take effect on the day it is received by the Minister or the department.

Termination

The Minister for Disability may terminate the appointment of a member:

- a) for misbehaviour.
 - a. It is a matter for the Minister to determine whether they consider misbehaviour has occurred. Misbehaviour may encompass misconduct and serious misconduct. Misconduct or serious misconduct in the context of the Committee may include deliberately behaving in a way that is inconsistent with continuing on the Committee. Some examples of behaviour that may be inconsistent with continuing on the Committee could include causing serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of another person; or causing damage to the reputation of the Committee or Government; engaging in theft or fraud; assault, sexual harassment; not acting consistently with the standards of conduct outlined above; or refusing to carry out a lawful and reasonable instruction

- b) if the member engages in paid employment that, in the Minister's opinion, conflicts or may conflict with the proper performance of the member's duties
- c) if, the Minister reasonably forms the view, that the member is incapable of performing the duties or functions of a member if the Minister is satisfied that the performance of the member has been unsatisfactory for a significant period.

