Working with Women Alliance

Terms of Reference – Working With Women Alliance Working Groups

Background

YWCA Canberra has been awarded the contract for the Working With Women Alliance (WwWA) through funding from the Commonwealth Government. The WwWA must establish two distinct civil society networks (Portfolios) to ensure women's voices are heard in the policy-making process.

The intended outcomes are that the WwWA:

1. establish the National Women's Equality (NWE) portfolio and continue the work of the National Women's Safety (NWS) portfolio.
2. represents Australian women, including underrepresented women.
2. collaborates with policy-makers to inform the Government's understanding of policy issues affecting Australian women's safety and economic equality.
3. collaborates with policy-makers to inform the development of policy solutions to issues affecting Australian women's safety and economic equality.

The National Women's Alliances, including the National Women's Safety and National Women's Equality portfolios, 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.

The PAACs will manage their respective Working Groups through the WwWA Working Groups Terms of Reference and by providing clear direction on objectives and deliverables.

Role of the Working Groups

The role of the PAAC Working Groups is to provide relevant and evidence-based advice to the PAACs. In particular, the Working Groups will:

- Undertake work as requested by PAAC, including developing or making recommendations to the PAAC on submissions, policy and reports.
- Advise on NWE and NWS key priorities as requested.

Duties of the Working Groups

The duties of the Working Groups are to:

- Meet the objectives and deliverables set by the PAACs.
- Support NWE and NWS 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 NWE and NWS, inform policy and advocacy, including the views of members of the organisations they may 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.

Working Groups Operating Parameters

Delegation

The Working Groups will have no binding decision-making authority or executive function in the context of WwWA.

Structure

The PAACs will determine the Working Groups required on an adhoc basis to manage emerging issues, government priorities or large pieces of work from the NWE and/or NWS priorities. The Chairs of the Working Groups will be appointed as members of the appropriate PAAC.

Chair

The WwWA Executive Director will appoint the inaugural standing working group chairs from an Expression of Interest.

The Chairs of the Working Groups cannot be a Chair of a PAAC.

The initial term of the working group Chairs will be 1 year from formation and annually thereafter. A co-chair arrangement will be considered.

Membership

The members will be appointed for a term of 3 years for standing Working Groups or the specified term of the adhoc Working Groups.

Inaugural members of the standing Working Groups will be appointed through an Expression of Interest by the WwWA Executive Director in consultation with the PAAC Chairs. The subsequent working group members will be appointed by the PAACs.

Members of the Working Groups must also be members of NWS or NWE.

All working group members are required to attend 50% of all working group meetings to maintain their position in the working group.

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

The NWS or NWE Director and Federal Policy Advisor will attend meetings.

Meetings
The working group will hold all meetings by digital means.

Frequency of meetings will be set by the Chair in consultation with the working group members.

The Chair is responsible for providing a meeting agenda.

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

Remuneration
Working group member positions will not be remunerated.

Conflicts of Interest
Working group 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, which cannot be managed, they will be asked to step down from the Working Group. The YWCA Canberra Conflict of Interest Policy will apply to all Working Group members.

Voting
Whilst Working Groups have no binding decision-making authority, consensus is required prior to making recommendations to the PAACs. Any matters requiring decision will be decided by a majority of votes of members present.

Secretariat duties
The NWE and NWS Policy Officers will act as secretaries to the Working Groups. The secretary will assist the Chair by providing advice on governance issues and secretariat support including developing and distributing agendas, papers, minutes and calendar.

The NWE and NWS Policy Officers will provide advice on governance issues and limited administrative support.

Minutes
Minutes must be approved by the Chair and circulated to the members within two weeks of a meeting. Minutes must be brief and focus on updates of progress and action items against work requested by the PAACs and the provision of information on emerging issues or matters of interest.

Confidentiality

Working with Women Alliance

Working Group 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 Working Groups is provided to enable members to perform their responsibilities. This includes information relating to agenda items to be discussed. Working Group members must take all reasonable steps to ensure this information remains confidential and is only disclosed where authorised or permitted by law.

Reviews

The standing Working Groups will review their performance on an annual basis. The review may be conducted as a self-assessment and will be coordinated by the Chair. The assessment may seek input from any person. The results of the review will be provided to the Chair of the PAAC.

Endorsed by: WwWA Governance Committee