Working with Women Alliance

# Terms of Reference – Working With Women Alliance Policy and Advocacy Advisory Committees

## 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.

## Role of the Policy and Advocacy Advisory Committee

The role of the respective Policy and Advocacy Advisory Committees (PAACs) for the National Women's Safety and National Women's Equality portfolios is to provide relevant advice to the NWE and NWS Directors. In particular, the Committees will:

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

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## Duties of the Policy and Advocacy Advisory Committee

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

- Supporting 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 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 NWE and NWS.

### Chair

The inaugural Committee Chairs will be appointed by the Directors. The members of each PAAC will elect their Committee Chair on an annual basis thereafter. The initial term of the Committee Chairs will be from appointment in February 2025 and annually thereafter. The PAAC Chairs will be members of their PAAC and cannot be a representative of the five National Women's Alliances. A Co-Chair arrangement will be considered by the Directors.

### Membership

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

1. a representative from the Working Groups
2. up to 13 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 and environments where violence can occur, including workplaces, sporting environments and educational settings.
    b. sectors that support women's economic equality, such as financial services, the corporate sector, legal services and other aligned NGOs and environments where inequality can occur, including workplaces and within educational settings.
    c. other sectors that represent cohorts not currently represented by the other National Alliances for women's safety and equality.

The members will be appointed by the respective Directors for a three-year term following a call for expressions of interest. Membership is contingent on attendance of at least 50% of meetings each year.

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

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

The quorum for the Committee meetings 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 Director and Federal Policy Advisor will attend all Committee meetings.

YWCA Canberra may attend meetings as an observer.

**Meetings**
Each PAAC will hold four online meetings per year.

The Policy Officers are 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 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 may be invited to meetings by the Director. Observers cannot vote at meetings.

**Remuneration**
PAAC member positions will not be remunerated.

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

### Working groups

The PAACs will manage the standing Working Groups and adhoc Working Groups through the WwWA Working Group Terms of Reference. The WwWA Executive Director will approve standing Working Groups and the PAACs will approve adhoc Working Groups.

## Secretariat duties

The NWS and NWE Policy Officers will act as secretaries to the PAACs. 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.

### Confidentiality

PAAC members have an obligation not to use or disclose information provided in confidence without consent of their 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. Members must take all reasonable steps to ensure this information remains confidential and is only disclosed where authorised or permitted by law.

### Reviews

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

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

Endorsed by: WwWA Governance Committee