

Terms of Reference (TOR)

1. Background

PHNs have been established by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care to:

- Increase the availability, efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, and;
- Improve the coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

2. Purpose of Group

The purpose of the Community Advisory Council/s is to advise the Western Health Alliance Limited (WHAL) Board (trading as the Western NSW Primary Health Network – WNSW PHN) on locally relevant community perspectives to improve the health and wellbeing of primary health care consumers in the region. WNSW PHN believes that health care consumers (patients, carers and their families) are essential partners in creating better health care. We value the knowledge and lived experience that consumers can bring to the WNSW PHN to inform strategic direction.

3. Role and Function

The main roles and functions of WNSW PHN's Community Advisory Council/s are to:

- Provide advice to the WHAL Board regarding the organisations strategic direction and priorities.
- Make recommendations to the WHAL Board and WNSW PHN Management on ways to promote best practice consumer and community engagement across and within the organisation's governance, culture and operations, with a focus on key functions including primary health care commissioning.
- Review and recommend improved engagement and communication with consumers and local communities by providing feedback on WNSW PHN's Community Engagement Framework.
- Identify current health issues and inefficiencies within local communities from a consumer perspective.
- Use patient and carer stories to inform and communicate service improvements or system changes as required.



- Suggest strategies to improve consumer health literacy, patient self-management and care navigation skills.
- Provide advice on how best to introduce consumer perspectives on areas linked to WNSW PHN's commissioning work.

The Community Advisory Council/s may also be asked to actively consider relevant strategic issues emerging from the WNSW PHN Aboriginal Health Council, GPs in our region, the Western and Far West Clinical Advisory Councils, other clinical networks and/or community groups.

The WNSW PHN Community Advisory Council/s will be guided by WNSW PHN's Strategic Plan and will act in accordance with WNSW PHN's applicable policies. These will be available from the Advisory Council's Coordinator.

4. Membership

WNSW PHN Community Advisory Council/s will be individual members, with 10 to 12 members on each council appointed for a two (2) to three (3) year term. There will be at least two Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander members on each council.

Membership will be skills and region-based and may include:

- Consumer/Carers.
- Community Services.
- Population health and health inequity.
- Health systems and service development with a focus on prevention, primary and integrated care.
- Clinical governance and organisational development.
- Local government.
- Regional and community development.

Membership may include people with relevant experience in the following areas:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and well-being.
- Chronic Disease management.
- Mental Health.
- Maternal and Child Health.
- Disabilities.
- Carers.
- Aged Care.
- Primary Prevention and Early Intervention.

The Community Advisory Council/s also seek to maintain a membership that is representative of the geographic spread of the five planning sub regions within the WNSW PHN boundary and to ensure an equitable voice from smaller communities where access to services is limited.

The Community Advisory Council/s, via the Chair, may invite other individuals to attend meetings as and when necessary for specific purposes or to provide expert advice or information to the group.

5. Appointment

Following a process of selection and assessment through the WHAL Governance Committee, the WHAL Board will appoint members including Council Chairs. Selection will be based on demonstrated experience, strength of networks and ensuring the broadest possible cross section of community interests and geographical spread are represented on the Community Advisory Council/s.

6. Duration of Membership

The WHAL Board will appoint Community Advisory Council/s members for a term of up to three (3) years.

The Community Advisory Council members may be reelected for another term through an Expression of Interest process. Membership roll overs will include a percentage of current members and the remainder to be new members.

Membership may be terminated by the WHAL Board for breach of the Terms of Reference and other guidelines and requirements, including the Employee Code of Conduct.

7. Roles and responsibilities

WNSW PHN will:

- Report to members on strategic activity undertaken by the WNSW PHN.
- Consult with Community Advisory Council members on significant health issues, projects or other issues that impact on consumer health.
- Support the ongoing professional development of the Community Advisory Council members, with a focus on building member knowledge in relation to the strategic objectives of the WNSW PHN.
- Undertake all duties to enable effective and efficient management of Council meetings.
- Facilitate liaison between the Community Advisory Councils, Aboriginal Health Council, Clinical Advisory Councils and the WHAL Board.
- Provide direct contact to the WHAL Board through a nominated Board Liaison Director.

Community Advisory Council members will:

- Attend regularly and contribute to Community Advisory Council meetings.
- Read and review information circulated.
- Objectively communicate the views and health issues affecting consumers and members of any networks and communities they may represent.
- Where relevant, seek feedback or input from their communities.
- Where relevant, provide feedback regarding meeting outcomes and decisions to consumer networks.
- From time to time, contribute to out-of-session consultation.
- Connect to the broader consumer health environment.

8. Confidentiality

Matters discussed at WNSW PHN's Community Advisory Council meetings may be of a confidential nature and must be treated as such by members. Meeting papers and other materials must only be used or disclosed for the purpose of the Community Advisory Council function, unless otherwise advised by the Chair of Community Advisory Council and/or WNSW PHN's CEO.

9. Extent of Authority

WNSW PHN's Community Advisory Council is an advisory body and does not have authority to:

- Convene without prior approval.
- Speak on behalf of WNSW PHN without prior approval of the CEO.

10. Probity and Conflict of Interest

Members have obligations for declaring any actual or potential Conflicts of Interest, including financial, professional and personal. The COI is reviewed at the beginning of each meeting.

11. Meeting Frequency and Schedule

The Community Advisory Council/s will meet at least five times per year – by face-to-face meetings and/or tele/video conference. Members are expected to attend all meetings. In the event of unforeseen circumstances an apology at the earliest convenience is required.

12. Quorum

A quorum is considered 50% of members plus one member in attendance.

13. Meeting Support

Support for meetings is provided by the WNSW PHN Advisory Councils Coordinator and secretariat. Meeting support includes:

- Liaise with the Chair of the Community Council.
- Circulate meeting papers and background information one week before meeting date.
- Circulate the draft meeting minutes following approval by the Council Chair.
- Arrange meeting venues and/or video/teleconference enablement.
- Facilitate communication between the Aboriginal Health Council, the Community Advisory Councils and the Clinical Advisory Councils.
- Provide relevant reports and other resources that assist the Community Advisory Council to fulfil its role.

14. Meeting Procedure

All members have equal rights to list items on the Agenda for any Clinical Advisory Council meeting. Agenda items for each meeting will be requested by the Chairperson four weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.

15. Endorsement and Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed at the completion of the first year of the Councils term.

16. Evaluation

The performance of the Community Advisory Council/s will be evaluated by the WHAL Board against these Terms of Reference after twelve (12) months.

17. Reimbursement of Expenses and Sitting Fees

When attending meetings or workshops, Advisory Council members will be eligible for reimbursement of appropriate travel expenses. Sitting fees will be paid to members, except in the case where their attendance is part of their current responsibilities for another organisation, in line with the Councils and Other Meetings Remuneration Procedure.

18. Related Documents

- Employee Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interest Procedure
- Councils and Other Meetings Remuneration Procedure
- WNSW PHN Confidentiality Agreement