



# **Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) National Alliance Policy Advisory Group**

## **Terms of Reference 2021-2024**

### **Introduction**

In 2021 Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) received funding for the first time from the Australian Federal Government's Office for Women (OFW) Women's Leadership and Development program to represent women, feminine identifying and non-binary people with disability as a National Women's Alliance.

The National Women's Alliances (the Alliances) include six organisations that represent diverse women's voices. Alliances advocate for the economic security, safety, and leadership opportunities of women in Australia and collaborate with policymakers to inform Australian Government policies that impact women.

The following six specialist women's organisations are funded by the Australian Government under the Women's Leadership and Development Program:

- [National Women's Safety Alliance](#)
- [Equality Rights Alliance](#)
- [Harmony Alliance](#)
- [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance](#)
- [National Rural Women's Coalition](#)
- [Women with Disabilities Australia](#)

### **Purpose**

As a new Alliance, WWDA is committed to developing rigorous structures that ensure our organisation is representative of a wide range of women, feminine identifying and non-binary people with disability across Australia and is accountable to who we represent.

This document outlines draft Terms of Reference (TORs) for WWDA's National Alliance Policy Advisory Group (PAG), which will advise WWDA on both domestic and international policy issues.

## **Role of the Policy Advisory Group**

The role of the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) is to contribute to and help inform the policy work and systemic advocacy of WWDA. This work may include, but is not limited to, providing feedback and input to Government submissions, and contributing to stand-alone discussion papers or those submitted to processes such as the Disability Royal Commission (DRC). The PAG will also advise WWDA on and contribute to WWDA's international engagement with human rights treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The PAG shall function as an important vehicle to amplify the voices, insight and knowledge of different cohorts of women, girls, feminine identifying and non-binary people with disability, including: First Nations women with disability, LGBTIQ+ women with disability, women with disability living in poverty, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women with disability, women with disability from refugee and migrant backgrounds, women with disability from rural, regional and remote locations, women with disability with lived experience of institutionalisation, segregation and/or incarceration, women with intellectual or cognitive disability, and young (15-30) women with disability.

Members of the Policy Advisory Group will:

- Consult with and accurately represent the positions of the member organisations which they represent (if sitting on the PAG as an organisational representative) and be adequately informed and up to date on the activities and advocacy of those organisations
- Contribute to all relevant scheduled consultations and meetings
- Share relevant information with other Advisory Group members
- Make timely decisions and take action as required
- Recognise that WWDA manages the relationship with the funding body (OFW) and is the point of contact related to the grant
- Provide sufficient information and take all reasonable steps to enable WWDA as contract holder to comply with all grant funding contractual obligations, including the development and submission of progress reports, final reports and financial acquittal documentation related to being a National Women's Alliance (NWA)

## Policy Advisory Group Expertise and Skills

All of WWDA's work is grounded in a human rights framework. WWDA practices intersectional and intergenerational feminism and will ensure the PAG is representative of the needs and views of a diverse range of women, feminine identifying and non-binary people with disability in Australia; as well as having the technical expertise required for a functional PAG. Representatives will be selected for the PAG based on a range of experiences and expertise, including:

- Lived experience as a woman, feminine identifying or non-binary person with disability, including experience of navigating systems of disability support
- An understanding and working knowledge of international human rights frameworks that impact on the human rights of women, feminine identifying and non-binary people with disability, including but not limited to: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- An understanding and working knowledge of national policy and legislative frameworks that impact women, feminine identifying and non-binary people with disability, including but not limited to the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the National Disability Strategy (NDS) the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality & Safeguards Commission, and the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children
- Experience in the development of relevant policies, strategies and frameworks
- Ability to consult with and represent diverse groups of women, feminine identifying and non-binary people with disability, including, but not limited to those who are:
  - Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, questioning and / or asexual (LGBTIQ+)
  - Culturally and / or linguistically diverse
  - Migrant and / or refugee
  - From rural, regional and / or remote locations
  - Living or have lived in institutional or segregated environments
  - Currently or previously incarcerated
  - Living in poverty
  - Have intellectual or cognitive disability
  - Young people (aged 15 -30).
- Participation in a Disabled Person's Organisation (DPO) or National Women's Alliance.

## Structure and Membership

The Policy Advisory Group (PAG) will consist of up to 7 women, feminine identifying or non-binary people with lived experience of disability acting in their own personal capacity, alongside a representative from Women With Disabilities ACT (WWDACT), Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) and the WWDA Youth Advisory Group (WYAG). No more than 10 people will sit on the PAG at any one time.

Individuals acting in their own personal capacity shall be full WWDA members, appointed by a nomination process by the WWDA staff team.

In appointing individual PAG members, WWDA will ensure a broad array of voices are represented, including but not limited to the voices of First Nations women with disability, LGBTIQ+ women with disability, women with disability living in poverty, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women with disability, women with disability from refugee and migrant backgrounds, women with disability from rural, regional and remote locations, women with disability with lived experience of institutionalisation, segregation and/or incarceration, women with intellectual or cognitive disability, and young (15-30) women with disability.

## Meetings and Consultations

WWDA will hold formal meetings over Zoom with the full PAG at least four times per calendar year between February 2022 and March 2024. A timetable for the first calendar year will be agreed at the first meeting.

Minute-taking and chairing of formal meetings shall be shared amongst PAG members on a rotational basis, with a roster for these duties to be facilitated by WWDA staff. Formal meetings will abide by standard meeting procedures outlined in WWDA's *Conduct of Meetings 2021* Policy.

WWDA may also engage with individuals or small groups of individuals from the PAG outside of formal meetings. Not all PAG members will always be engaged at the one time. How and when PAG members contribute outside of formal meetings will depend upon the needs of WWDA and the policy issues of the day.

WWDA will take into account the engagement preferences identified by PAG members upon joining the Panel. This means that engagements outside of formal meetings may take the form of telephone discussions, videoconferences, meeting in person and/or email communication.

The meeting papers and minutes of each PAG meeting will be prepared by WWDA. Meeting papers, including agendas and attachments, will be distributed to members in accessible formats no later than seven (7) days prior to formal meeting. Full copies of the minutes shall

be provided to all PAG members no later than 14 days following each formal meeting.

## **Responsibilities of WWDA**

WWDA will endeavor to capture and take on all feedback and perspectives provided by members of the PAG in relation to policy matters. However, where views and discussions of the PAG are fragmented or inconclusive, WWDA will retain the authority to resolve the matter in the best interests of its members.

WWDA will provide and take responsibility for all secretariat duties and expenditure required for the functioning of the Policy Group.

This may include:

- The preparation and distribution of meeting papers and minutes
- The preparation and distribution of meeting schedules, meeting links and calendar invites and other required materials and information
- The preparation and publication of any papers, reports, surveys and other material that the PAG resolves to develop.

WWDA will take responsibility for ensuring that the accessibility needs of members are met at all meetings. Auslan interpretation and captioning shall be provided at every PAG meeting. WWDA is committed to enabling the involvement of all women with disability, including those who require the support of others to participate. WWDA will engage with support organisations where required, to seek their assistance in supporting women to participate in the PAG.

## **Payment**

Policy Advisory Group members may claim \$100 per meeting for their participation. Where an individual is representing an organisation, this amount should be invoiced by that organisation. Where the individual is representing themselves, this amount may either be invoiced to WWDA by a PAG member if they have an ABN, or will be provided in the form of a gift voucher. WWDA is not permitted to pay PAG members in cash.

## **Contact**

For more information, please contact Heidi La Paglia at [Director@wwda.org.au](mailto:Director@wwda.org.au) or Mali Hermans at [Project@wwda.org.au](mailto:Project@wwda.org.au)

