Australian Government
Australian Digital Health Agency

Council for Connected Care Terms of Reference

Council for Connected Care V3.4
Approved for external use
OFFICIAL

1 Background

A connected healthcare system is a cornerstone of the National Digital Health Strategy, the Australian Government Digital Health Blueprint, and state and territory digital health strategies. At a national level, the Agency is charged with implementing the *Connecting Australian Healthcare – National Healthcare Interoperability Plan 2023-2028 (Interoperability Plan)* accepted by the Health Chief Executives Forum in March 2023. The Interoperability Plan focuses on five priority areas across 44 actions to support safe, secure, efficient, quality care through a connected healthcare system that conveniently and seamlessly shares high-quality data with the right people at the right time. Building on a series of successes the nationally agreed Interoperability Plan is a reference for all participants in Australian digital health.

The Interoperability Plan bridges the policy, technical and clinical discussions that influence the interoperability topic and shapes the way consumer health information will be shared across the health system to improve health outcomes and deliver personalised medicine and services in places and at times that best suit consumers. Digital transformation is accelerating across many industries though healthcare lags somewhat behind. The Interoperability Plan will support health service organisations through a period of intense and accelerated transformation while building and maintaining trust amongst consumers and clinicians.

2 Purpose

The Council for Connected Care (the Council) will play a critical role in achieving the connected healthcare system that Australians desire and ensuring that the foundational infrastructure builds confidence and trust in the integrity and provenance of health information. The Council is established to provide strategic advice on matters related to interoperability and support national implementation of the Interoperability Plan, including monitoring progress against the Interoperability Plan's actions and contributing to the quarterly reporting requirements.

The Council will provide a representative based, collaborative environment for consultation and allow the Agency to test approaches, understand pain points in digital and data connectivity, and provide advice to support potential policy options. The Council will achieve its purpose through targeted consultation with health technology stakeholders, discussing foundational issues that are perceived as barriers to sharing consumer health information including identity, standards, and consent, and formulating strategic advice for the Agency on the best ways to address these barriers. The Council augments sector consultation and does not replace existing consultative mechanisms between the Agency and its stakeholders.

3 Objectives

The Council's objectives are to:

- identify opportunities to accelerate interoperability in various parts of the health system and ways to harness these opportunities
- facilitate and support the implementation of the Interoperability Plan
- promote and garner support for digital health initiatives that drive connected healthcare
- identify barriers to achieving interoperability and ways to overcome them.

4 Responsibilities

The Council is responsible for providing strategic advice to the Agency on:

- implementation of actions in the Interoperability Plan including risks, issues within the health technology sector and dependencies
- key interoperability topics and promoting the adoption of interoperability standards by the health technology sector
- key reports and research produced during the implementation of the Interoperability Plan.

It is also tasked with:

- promoting digital health initiatives that connect healthcare and fostering stakeholder participation and engagement in these initiatives
- reviewing the annual workplan for the Interoperability Plan and annual review of progress against the actions prepared by the Agency for consideration by the Digital Health Oversight Committee (DHOC).

The Agency will convene and support the Council and stand up small, time limited working groups that focus on emerging problems or areas requiring focused effort as identified by the Council.

5 Governance pathways, reporting and escalation

The Council reports to the Agency through the Council Chair, Chief Digital Officer and Branch Manager for Connected Care.

6 Standing membership

The standing membership for the Council is drawn from a broad range of health technology sector stakeholders and includes the following members:

- Conjoint Professor Anne Duggan (Chairperson), Chief Executive Officer, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
- Professor Peter Sprivulis (Deputy Chairperson), Chief Clinical Information Officer, WA Health
- Dr Andrew Bell, Chief Clinical Information Officer, Northern Territory Health
- Mr Chris Campbell, Head of Policy and Strategy, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
- Dr Elizabeth Deveny, Chief Executive Officer, Consumers Health Forum of Australia
- Mr Nicholas Elmitt, Head of Quality and Research, Ageing Australia
- Ms Jacqueline Emery, Chief Executive Officer, PHN Cooperative (Sydney North Health Network)
- Dr Neale Fong, Board Member, Australian Private Hospitals Association

- Ms Louise Gates, Executive Director, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Ms Gillian Giles, Executive Director Clinical Governance, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
- Ms Rachel Green, Chief Executive Officer, SANE Australia
- Dr David Hansen, Chief Executive Officer, Australian e-Health Research Centre, CSIRO
- Dr Rob Hosking, Chair Expert Committee on Practice Technology and Management, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- Ms Emma Hossack, Chief Executive Officer, Medical Software Industry Association
- Ms Nicole Kinghorn, Director–Clinical Informatics & National Digital, Tasmanian Department of Health
- Mr Prashan Malalasekera, General Manager National Digital Infrastructure, Healthdirect
- Ms Nicolle Marchant, Director Digital Health,
  National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- Professor Jenny May, National Rural Health Commissioner
- Mr David McGrath, Chief Executive Officer, National Mental Health Commission
- Ms Kristin Michaels, Chief Executive Officer, Advanced Pharmacies Australia
- Libby Muir, Strategic Programs Lead, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation
- Ms Anja Nikolic, Chief Executive Officer, Australasian Institute of Digital Health
- Ms Jackie O'Connor, Policy Lead, Allied Health Professions Association
- Dr Christopher Pearce, Chair, Digital Health Committee, Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
- Mr Michael Perusco, Chief Executive Officer, National Disability Services
- Ms Alex Powell, Assistant Secretary, Digital Health, Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Care
- Mr Chris Radbone, Chair, Australian Digital Health Standards Advisory Group
- Ms Priyanka Rai, Executive Director, Australian Multicultural Health Collaborative (a FECCA initiative), Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
- Mr Matthew Ryan, Digital Health Manager, Pharmacy Guild of Australia
- Ms Robyn Shannon, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Program Design, Services Australia
- Ms Jenny Sikorski, Chief Executive Officer, Public Pathology Australia
- Mr Richard Skimin, Member, Australian Patients Association
- Ms Elizabeth Whitelock, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Information Industry Association
- Mr Andrew Wiltshire, Head of Digital Health, Medical Technology Association of Australia
- Ms Sallyanne Wissmann, Chief Executive Officer, Health Information Management Association of Australia Ltd.
- Representative to be confirmed, President, Australian Medical Association

ex officio

- Mr. Paul Creech, A/g Chief Executive Officer
- Mr Peter O'Halloran, Chief Digital Officer
- Ms Sandra Cook, Branch Manager, Connected Care

Council members are appointed as experts with the ability to provide strategic advice on interoperability and the implementation of the Interoperability Plan.

Membership will be for a three-year term.

6.1 Non-member attendees

The chairperson may, from time to time, invite other individuals or groups to attend meetings as expert advisers or observers. The invitation may extend to attend a portion or the whole meeting. Members may only invite an observer or a support person (to assist with a presentation for example) with the express approval in writing of the chair. Application can be made to the secretariat and a response will be coordinated here.

7 Member responsibilities

7.1 Chairperson

The Agency nominates the chairperson. The chairperson is responsible for:

- approving the agenda and agenda items
- overseeing the orderly performance of business based on the agenda
- leading discussion during the Council meetings and providing advice on the key topics
- determining when an issue should be escalated to the Agency when it can't be resolved otherwise.

7.2 Deputy Chairperson

The Agency nominates the deputy chairperson. The deputy chairperson is responsible for:

- Assisting with the approval of the agenda and agenda items
- Coordinating with the chairperson to ensure smooth conduct of business during meetings.
- Facilitating discussions during Council meetings in collaboration with the chairperson.
- Providing input and advice on key topics as requested by the chairperson.
- Collaborating with the chairperson to assess and address issues that may require escalation to the Agency.
- Chair the meeting in the absence of the Chairperson or when needed.

7.3 Secretariat

The Agency will provide secretariat support. The secretariat is responsible for:

- booking each meeting, based on advice from the chairperson
- preparing and distributing the meeting agenda and meeting pack that will include key interoperable topics presented as position papers and supported by evidence
- recording and distributing the meeting minutes, action items and communiqué.

7.4 Standing Members

Standing members provide input and support the effective operation of the Council. Members agree to provide specialist advice on areas within their expertise and meet due dates for input. This advice could be in the form of a presentation, addressing the key interoperability topics and recommendations on how to address these to support interoperability implementation.

A member who is unable to attend a meeting may nominate a proxy to represent them. Members are to notify the secretariat if they wish to nominate a proxy to attend on their behalf for a particular meeting. Proxies will be accepted at the discretion of the chairperson or the Agency's Chief Digital Officer.

8 Meetings

8.1 Frequency and location

The Council meets online once a year and face-to-face two times per year. Online meetings are expected to be around three hours in length and the face-to-face meetings will be half a day to a full day. At each meeting members will consider a critical aspect of interoperability implementation. The agenda will support these deliberations with regular business reported by exception.

Additional meetings can be called at the discretion of the chairperson when required to deliberate on key deliverables or documents.

The Secretariat is responsible for booking flights and accommodation for members required to attend the face-to-face meeting in accordance with the Agency's travel policies, with the exception of members who are employed by a state, territory or federal government department. The Secretariat will also book flights and accommodation for non-jurisdictional guests as required.

8.2 Meeting pack

Members are supplied with a meeting pack at least 5 working days before each meeting to provide time for members to review the content.

The meeting pack will include:

- meeting agenda
- previous meeting minutes as draft for approval
- supporting information, as necessary for agenda items.

The meeting pack will also be published on the Council's webpage and will include:

- meeting agenda
- all non-sensitive agenda items

8.3 Minutes and communiqué

Minutes of the meeting will record advice provided. A meeting communiqué that summarises the topics discussed will be circulated to members and published on the Agency's website.

8.4 Out-of-session papers

Urgent matters that cannot be deferred until the next Council meeting can be managed as an out–of-session paper. The out-of-session paper and cover sheet will be sent to members via email with a requested response date.

9 Confidentiality

The Council may consider and discuss material that is of a sensitive or commercial nature. Members and attendees acknowledge their responsibility to maintain confidentiality of all material that is not in the public domain. Meeting minutes prepared by the Council are to be kept confidential. Agenda items prepared by the Council or Council members should be developed with the understanding that they will be published on the Council's webpage and as such no sensitive information should be included.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools by Council members, including but not limited to AI-powered chatbots, transcription services, note or minute generation, decision-support systems, and generative applications, is prohibited during Council meetings unless express prior written consent has been obtained from both the Chair and the Agency. This restriction is intended to maintain confidentiality in relation to Council discussions. Members who require the use of AI services should request this formally through the Secretariat at least one calendar month prior to the meeting for consideration.

10 Conflicts of interest

If a member has a real, apparent, or potential conflict of interest relating to a matter before the Council, that member is required to inform the chairperson or, in the case of the chairperson, he or she will inform the Agency member prior to consideration of the matter by the Council. If the chairperson, or the Agency (as the case may be) concurs that a real, apparent, or potential conflict of interest exists, the member faced with such conflict will not participate in the consideration of the matter. Details of interests declared, and actions taken, will be recorded in the minutes.

New members are requested to complete a Conflict of Interest declaration when they are invited to join the Council and all members are required to provide a Conflict of Interest declaration annually to the Secretariat. This will be requested at the time of the Annual Review meeting.

Proxies attending the meeting on behalf of a Council Member are also required to complete a Conflict of Interest declaration prior to attending. These declarations will remain valid for a period of 6 months from the date of signature.

11 Intellectual Property

The Agency will own all intellectual property rights in material created for the Council and will make any such material available to other members for their use under broad licensing arrangements.

12 Performance and review

The performance of the Council will be measured at least annually. The Council will conduct a self-assessment of its performance and opportunities for improvement. Performance measures will include:

- timely delivery of meeting packs supporting effective operations
- attendance by standing members
- effectiveness of meetings
- effectiveness of members in completing assigned tasks.

Version history

Version	Date approved	Comments
1.0	24 July 2023	
1.1	11 October 2024	
1.2	15 February 2024	
1.3	15 April 2024	
1.4	23 May 2024	
1.5	8 August 2024	
1.6	10 January 2025	
1.7	12 February 2025	
1.8	10 March 2025	
1.9	13 May 2025	
2.0	21 August 2025	Change meeting cadence
3.0	12 November 2025	Additional guidance on use of AI and proxies