



Expert Advisory Group on Genomics Australia

Communique – 02 August 2023

Introductory Meeting

The Expert Advisory Group (EAG) on Genomics Australia held its inaugural meeting on Wednesday 2 August 2023.

The EAG has been established as a time-limited and task-oriented group to provide independent advice to the Australian Government through the Department of Health and Aged Care (the Department) and the state and territory governments through the Health Technology and Genomics Collaboration (HTGC) on the establishment of a national genomics body, including on its optimal design, role, key priorities and critical partnerships.

The EAG is Co-Chaired by Professor Kathryn North AC and departmental Deputy Secretary, Penny Shakespeare. The membership of the group is broad and includes researchers, clinicians, relevant industry and consumer representatives as well as First Nations representation. Members have been appointed on an individual basis for their expertise and interest in health genomics.

The focus of this first meeting was on establishing appropriate committee governance arrangements and providing members with contextual information to guide their future discussions at subsequent meetings. Members reviewed and endorsed the Terms of Reference for the EAG and agreed for these to be published on the Department's website.

Deputy Secretary Penny Shakespeare outlined the role of the EAG and the Department's broader consultation approach on the establishment of the new body. She emphasised the Government's commitment to consult genuinely and widely, including with states and territories through the HTGC under the Health Ministers Meeting framework and with First Nations People. She briefly outlined key activities being undertaken across the health portfolio that may intersect with the work of the committee.

Professor Kathryn North then provided a presentation on the recent history of genomics in Australia, including the role of Australian Genomics to date, and the key achievements and challenges that have shaped the current genomics landscape. She also talked more broadly about international examples such as Genomics England.

The presentations were followed by a high-level discussion about barriers to, and priorities for the successful translation of genomic research into clinical practice. Some of the key themes discussed were workforce and training, equity of access, and opportunities for connections with other work across the health portfolio such as digital health.

The next meeting of the EAG is expected to be held at the end of August 2023.