



Department of Health and Aged Care Distribution Working Group Terms of Reference June 2023

Purpose

The Distribution Working Group (DWG) will provide independent expert advice to inform policy and programs aimed at improving health workforce distribution into areas of services access need. This includes advice on the health geography classifications and their use.

For example, the DWG may provide independent expert advice on:

- Policy and program directions aimed at rebalancing the equitable distribution of the Australian medical workforce geographically.
- Requirements for tools and programs to promote equitable distribution of the medical workforce nationally, which may include health-related geographical classification (e.g. the Modified Monash Model, Distribution Priority Area indicator, District of Workforce Shortage (DWS) indicator and GP Catchment methodologies), guidelines that contribute to distribution (e.g. section 19AB legislative guidelines)
- Other relevant issues identified by the Minister or Department related to medical workforce distribution.

Roles and Responsibilities

The DWG is not a decision-making body. Its operation is established and governed by the Department of Health and Aged Care's (the Department) Health Workforce Division to support the provision of advice to the Minister for Health and Aged Care. All DWG papers and discussion are committee-in-confidence.

The responsibilities of the DWG Chair include:

- seeking advice from the DWG to inform advice on health workforce programs and distribution mechanisms
- the appointment of members (as individuals or as representatives of key stakeholders)
- facilitation of meetings.

The Secretariat is responsible for providing timely and effective organisational support to DWG meetings, including:

- developing, in consultation with the Chair, agendas and papers
- distributing meeting materials and ensuring all members are kept informed of any changes. Papers will be made available to members one week ahead of a meeting.
- issuing meeting minutes and papers (within three weeks of a meeting).

Members are responsible for attending meetings, participating in discussions, and providing advice.



- there may be up to three general business meetings per calendar year conducted via video/teleconference. A forward schedule of meetings will be provided to members for each financial year. Members will be notified of any changes to the schedule of meetings a minimum of one month in advance.
- special meetings may be called by the Chair in consultation with members to address issues as needed by the Minister. (For example, consideration of exceptional circumstance review applications and their assessment)

Membership

The DWG will comprise between 9 and 12 members, with composition determined by the Department and drawn from workforce experts, peak bodies representing the health workforce, the National Rural Health Commissioner, the Department, and independent medical advisers. Additional members may be appointed by the chair temporarily and as needed where expertise within the DWG membership does not cover key areas requiring discussion.

A Distribution Technical Advisory Group (DTAG) will be established to provide the DWG with advice on technical issues related to the tools, methodology and options to support development of advice regarding medical workforce distribution.

The First Assistant Secretary of the Department's Health Workforce Division will Chair the DWG, and will consider appointments to DWG vacancies, as appropriate. The Chair retains the discretion to terminate a member's appointment to the DWG at any time and for whatever reason. The Chair may nominate a proxy if they are unable to chair a meeting.

Members may send a proxy to a meeting. Notice of this is essential to ensure the proxy can agree to confidentiality requirements. Members who are unable to make three (3) meetings in a row will be requested to confirm their interest in continuing to be part of the DWG. Members may resign in writing at any time.

Members and observers are required to disclose at the beginning of each meeting any conflicts of interest, actual or potential, relating to issues under discussion at that meeting. The Chair will determine if and how an actual or potential conflict of interest needs to be managed.

Each member is appointed for two years.