PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK

*Work Plan and Terms of Reference 2019-2023*

| *Version* | *Date endorsed* |  *Comments* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1.2 | 13 October 2021 | Update to membership, including new Deputy Chair and other minor administrative amendments.  |
| 1.1 | 21 October 2020 | Update to membership for COVID-19.  |
| 1.0 | October 2019 | Initial document |

The Public Health Laboratory Network (PHLN) is Australia’s leading network of public health laboratories, which have expertise and provide services in public health microbiology in Australia. PHLN is a standing committee of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and complements the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA).

**Mission Statement**

PHLN’s mission is the provision of leadership and consultation in all aspects of public health microbiology and communicable disease control, through the continued development of a proactive network of public health laboratories to protect and improve the health of all Australians.

**Membership**

PHLN is comprised of state and territory, national, expert, and associate members, as well as a number of invited observers. Only state and territory, national and expert members are able to vote on PHLN business.

* **States and territories** are represented by individuals from public health laboratories, as appropriate. Larger organisations with separate bacteriology and virology expertise may nominate a representative from each.
* **Department of Health** is represented by a staff member from the Office of Health Protection and Response.
* **National Members** include representatives from the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (formerly Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL)), and CDNA.
* **Expert Members** include representatives from the World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza and the Chair of the National *Neisseria* Network.
* **Associate Members** are members of staff nominated by the state and territory representatives, in order to provide additional expertise and support from their organisations. This includes former members of the network who are able to attend meetings for two years following their retirement from the network.
* **Observer Members** include representatives from private pathology, the Australian Federal Police and New Zealand, as well as any relevant experts.
* **Observer Members for COVID-19** include staff nominated by the state and territory representatives and the Commonwealth, in order to provide additional expertise and support for the Australian Governments’ response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a time limited position and participation at PHLN will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

**Meeting Schedule**

PHLN traditionally meets once a month by teleconference on the last Monday of every month as well as an annual face-to-face meeting. Under exceptional or urgent circumstances, additional meetings, either teleconference or face-to-face, may be arranged. Note: To continue to support the Australian Government’s COVID-19 response, it is anticipated that PHLN will continue to meet fortnightly until further notice.

Current Members

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| State and territory members |
| VIC | **Prof Ben Howden** | Microbiological Diagnostic Unit (MDU),Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and ImmunityThe University of Melbourne |
| VIC | **Prof Deborah Williamson** | Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory, Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, The University of Melbourne  |
| QLD | **A/Prof Amy Jennison** | Queensland Health Forensic and Scientific Services (QHFSS) |
| QLD | **Dr Claire Heney** | Pathology Queensland |
| NSW | **Prof Vitali Sintchenko** | Centre for Infectious Diseases and MicrobiologyPublic Health, Institute of Clinical Pathology and Medical Research Pathology, NSW Health Pathology |
| NSW | **Dr Jen Kok** | Institute of Clinical Pathology and Medical Research Pathology, Westmead Hospital |
| NSW | **Prof Bill Rawlinson AM** | Virology Division, Department of Microbiology SEALSPrince of Wales Hospital |
| SA | **Dr Ivan Bastian** | Infectious Diseases LaboratoriesInstitute of Medical & Veterinary Science |
| SA | **Dr Chuan Kok Lim** | Infectious Diseases Laboratories, South Australia Pathology |
| WA | **Dr David Speers** | Department Division of MicrobiologyPathWest Laboratory Medicine |
| WA | **Dr Tim Inglis** | Division of Microbiology and Infectious DiseasesPathWest Laboratory Medicine |
| TAS | **Dr Louise Cooley** | Department of Microbiology and Infectious DiseasesRoyal Hobart Hospital (RHH) |
| NT | **A/Prof Rob Baird** | Royal Darwin Hospital |
| ACT | **A/Prof Karina Kennedy** | Microbiology and Infectious Diseases DepartmentACT Pathology |
| Australian Government member |  |
| Dr Gary Lum | Australian Government Department of Health |
| National members |
| Dr James Watson | Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Livestock Industries |
| Communicable Diseases Network Australia Representative | Dr Ann Koehler  |
| Expert members |
| Prof Ian Barr | World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on InfluenzaVictorian Infectious Diseases Reference LaboratoryPeter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity |
| Prof Monica Lahra | WHO Collaborating Centre for Sexually Transmitted Infections and Anti-Microbial ResistanceNSW Health Pathology, MicrobiologyNational Neisseria Network Chair |
| Observers and associate members |
| Dr Jenny Robson | Private Pathology, Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology (SNP) | **Dr Susan Morpeth** | New Zealand Microbiology Network (NZMN) |
| Dr Erasmus Smit | NZMN | **Mr Michael Addidle** | Environmental Science and Research (ESR) New Zealand (NZ) |
| Ms Lora Starrs | Australian Federal Police (AFP), Technical Forensics Intelligence (TFI) | **Dr Susan Ballard**  | MDU  |
| Dr Sanmarie Schlebusch | QHFSS | **Ms Cherrone Ellis**  | AFP, TFI  |
| Observers for COVID-19 |  |  |
| Mr Fred Moore | QHFSS |  |
| Dr Maryza Graham | MDU |  |
| Ms Tuyet Hoang | MDU |  |
| Dr Norelle Sherry | MDU |  |
| Dr Jan Williamson | RHH |  |

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2019 - 2023

PHLN operates within the following Terms of Reference (TOR):

1. Establish, maintain and expand collaborative links between pathology laboratories that have a public health focus (including veterinary pathology that has a human health impact).
2. Promote best practice in all disciplines of public health pathology practice.
3. Improve nationwide access to a comprehensive range of pathology and laboratory services for control of communicable diseases.
4. Work collaboratively with other AHPPC standing committees including the CDNA, National Health Emergency Management Subcommittee (NHEMS), Environmental Health Committee (enHealth), and other relevant groups and organisations.
5. Provide strategic advice to the AHPPC to identify gaps and needs, and to ensure optimal use of existing pathology laboratory resources for communicable disease surveillance and for response to outbreaks of national importance.
6. Build on the existing capacity of public health laboratories to respond to communicable disease outbreaks and emerging infectious diseases.
7. Respond to matters relating to public health microbiology, as referred by AHPPC.
8. Fulfil these TOR to the best of the committee's ability within resources available to support these activities.

**Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality**

Members are required to sign a Conflict of Interest and/or Deed of Confidentiality disclaimer.

**Reporting Structures**

PHLN is a standing committee under AHPPC, and reports under the Health Chief Executives Forum (HCEF), formerly the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC). PHLN is required to provide clear advice and/or recommendations on laboratory-related issues to AHPPC and provide updates at each AHPPC meeting on progress of the committee’s work plan.

PHLN prepares annually for AHPPC’s consideration:

* any changes to membership, including the chair;
* a proposed work plan;
* new/variations to support structures to deliver the work program; and
* proposals for funding allocations.

PHLN terms of reference, work plan, project budget and any changes to membership, including the Chair, will be provided to AHPPC for their consideration.

**Review**

The Terms of Reference of PHLN are reviewed annually at the face-to-face meeting. The progress reporting of PHLN activities will occur as required.

PHLN Executive Group (PEG)

**Vision Statement**

The PHLN Executive Group (PEG) is the executive body of PHLN. It provides advice and support to PHLN members and the Office of Health Protection and Response (OHPR) within the Australian Government Department of Health on public health pathology matters of importance.

**Objectives**

1. To provide advice to OHPR and/or AHPPC on the activities of PHLN in an emergency response, or as required.
2. To consider and make decisions regarding urgent correspondence and requests for advice.

**Membership**

The Chair and Deputy Chair of the PEG are the Chair and Deputy Chair of PHLN respectively. The PHLN/PEG Chair and Deputy Chair are appointed by member vote before consideration by AHPPC and advisement to HCEF. The Chair is appointment for a term of 2 years, unless exceptional circumstances are determined.

**PEG Members at October 2021**

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| Chair | Prof Ben Howden |
| Deputy Chair | Dr Jen Kok |
| Immediate Past Chair | Dr Mike Catton |
| Australian Government  | Dr Gary Lum |

**Secretariat:**

The Australian Government Department of Health provides secretariat support for PHLN. Contact details are below:

*PHLN Secretariat*

Public Health Laboratory Network

Mail Drop Point 140

GPO Box 2948

Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone: +61 2 6289 5059

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