

PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY NETWORK

Work Plan and Terms of Reference 2019-2023

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date endorsed</i>	<i>Comments</i>
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

State and territory members		
VIC	Prof Ben Howden	Microbiological Diagnostic Unit (MDU), Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity The 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 Microbiology Public 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 SEALS Prince of Wales Hospital
SA	Dr Ivan Bastian	Infectious Diseases Laboratories Institute of Medical & Veterinary Science
SA	Dr Chuan Kok Lim	Infectious Diseases Laboratories, South Australia Pathology
WA	Dr David Speers	Department Division of Microbiology PathWest Laboratory Medicine
WA	Dr Tim Inglis	Division of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases PathWest Laboratory Medicine
TAS	Dr Louise Cooley	Department of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH)
NT	A/Prof Rob Baird	Royal Darwin Hospital
ACT	A/Prof Karina Kennedy	Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Department ACT Pathology
Australian Government member		

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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 Influenza Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity	
Prof Monica Lahra		WHO Collaborating Centre for Sexually Transmitted Infections and Anti-Microbial Resistance NSW Health Pathology, Microbiology National 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

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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

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

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Canberra ACT 2601

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