

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Environmental Health Standing Committee is a standing committee under the auspices of Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC). enHealth provides advice and makes recommendations to AHPPC and through it, to Health Ministers on environmental health matters.

The role of the Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth) is to:

- provide nationally agreed environmental health policy advice, based on the best available evidence and expertise, to the AHPPC;
- coordinate implementation of nationally agreed environmental health policies and approaches;
- provide environmental health expertise and support for AHPPC's emergency management role;
- keep the AHPPC informed of developments in environmental policy with significant health implications and provide expert, and where nationally agreed, health advice in environmental policy forums;
- consult with consumers and other stakeholders, as appropriate, in developing environmental health policy advice and implementing environmental health policies;
- contribute, through the Commonwealth, to international collaboration on environmental health issues; and
- coordinate research, share information and develop practical environmental health resources, including through expert and/or nationally agreed publications as guided by the AHPPC.

In delivering its role, enHealth will:

- advise and make recommendations to AHPPC on environmental health matters; to mitigate emerging health threats related to environmental health in the context of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery;
- advise on national environmental health priorities and the allocation of resources to these priorities;
- provide national coordination of environmental health responses to disasters and environmental health issues of national significance;
- enable development and adoption by states and territories of national environmental health policies, guidelines and standards;

- give strategic direction to and support the work of its Expert Reference Panels and Project Reference Groups including; Expert Reference Panel on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health (ERPATSIEH), Expert Reference Panel on Environmental Health (ERPEH), Radiation Health Expert Reference Panel (RHERP) and Water Quality Expert Reference Panel (WQERP);
- consult and negotiate with other relevant agencies and committees, including other standing committees and relevant expert committees, on environmental health matters related to the development of national public health emergency planning, coordination and control, communicable diseases, public health laboratories, environmental health and other health protection priorities and strategies;
- promote the alignment of jurisdictional strategic plans and activities with agreed national priorities;
- consider the role of environmental health in the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes; and
- oversee national activities that strengthen environmental health infrastructure and capacity.

Chairing

The chair of enHealth will be nominated by members and approved by AHPPC as the principal committee. In accordance with the AHPPC Operating Guidelines, the Chair of enHealth will generally hold their position for a period of two years unless otherwise agreed by the Chair of the AHPPC and on the advice of enHealth members.

Membership

The enHealth membership is to include representatives from:

- Each of the Commonwealth, State and Territory health departments;
- The New Zealand Ministry of Health; and
- The National Health and Medical Research Council.

There will also be an observing representative from the Heads of Environment Protection Agencies (HEPA) Australia and New Zealand Environment Protection Authority.

In the event that a member cannot attend, an alternative representative may attend as a proxy with notice provided to the Chair and the Secretariat.

All members must abide by the AHPPC Statement of Expectations.

Reporting arrangements

enHealth will report against its strategic and work plans and track progress of the priority tasks set by AHPPC as required.

Strategic plan and Work plan

enHealth will work to achieve its objectives through projects and activities such as producing publications, providing advice to other stakeholders and conducting workshops and conferences. The Strategic Plan will outline the priorities for enHealth and a Work Plan will set out specific activities that will contribute to achievement of these priorities.

enHealth will provide its proposed strategic and work plans to AHPPC for consideration and approval. The work plan will include details of the proposed support structures to deliver the proposed projects and proposals for allocating funding, including where relevant funding from the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) cost shared budget, to provide policy and project support.

enHealth will include work items on its work plan that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's health and wellbeing, reflecting areas of high priority.

Meetings

enHealth will meet at least bimonthly and where possible meet face to face three times per year. When face to face meetings are held, host jurisdictions will ensure there are satisfactory facilities available for jurisdictions that wish to participate via teleconference or telepresence.

In addition to regular enHealth meetings, enHealth may convene extraordinary or emergency teleconferences, as required, to discuss health protection matters of national significance as they arise.

Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every three years in line with the consideration and drafting of the strategic plan for enHealth. Both the strategic plan and terms of reference will be endorsed by AHPPC every third financial year.

Expert Reference Panels

enHealth is supported by the following Expert Reference Panels:

- Expert Reference Panel on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health (ERPATSIEH);
- Expert Reference Panel on Environmental Health (ERPEH);
- Radiation Health Expert Reference Panel (RHERP); and
- Water Quality Expert Reference Panel (WQERP).