

Northern Territory Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Cross Agency Working Group Terms of Reference

1. Background

On 4 December 2017 the then Minister for Territory Families launched the Northern Territory's 10-year plan to prevent and reduce the impact of domestic, family and sexual violence: the [Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018 - 2028 \(the Framework\)](#).

The Framework is implemented through a series of action plans. The first of these, [Action Plan 1: Changing Attitudes, Intervening Earlier and Responding Better \(2018-2021\) \(Action Plan 1\)](#) was released in late 2018. Action Plan 2 is due for release in 2022.

Actions in the Framework and Action Plan 1 have been allocated for implementation to the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (TFHC); the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice; the Department of Education; the Department of Health; and the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

Achieving the goals of the Framework and implementing the action plans requires a shared understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence; a strong commitment to reform and collaboration; and clear roles for the relevant government and non-government agencies.

2. Purpose and scope

The Northern Territory (NT) Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) Cross Agency Working Group (CAWG) is an advisory and information sharing group. The CAWG advises TFHC on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Framework and action plans. The work of the CAWG is not limited to actions in the action plans, but includes all policy, service and program development and activity that works towards the Framework's outcomes.

The purpose of the CAWG is to:

- develop and promote a shared understanding of DFSV across the NT, in line with the Framework;
- maintain effective engagement and information sharing between all CAWG members and the services, agencies and groups they represent; and
- support integrated and collaborative DFSV policy development and implementation, and DFSV service delivery, with a clear understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of each agency, and of government and non-government organisations.

3. Roles

3.1 Role of members

CAWG members will:

- consistently attend meetings, including by teleconference or videoconference;
- make every effort not to miss two or more consecutive meetings, despite sending a proxy to attend on their behalf;
- actively participate in meetings;
- nominate a consistent proxy to attend any meeting on their behalf where they are not able to attend;
- ensure the proxy is fully informed and capable of participating in the meeting on behalf of the member;
- represent the interests of their organisation, members or network;
- provide information from the CAWG to their organisations, members and networks;
- be prepared and well briefed about the business of the CAWG;
- facilitate information sharing and collaboration across CAWG member organisations and more broadly, across the DFSV services sector;
- provide timely, practical and strategic analysis and advice to inform decision making;
- punctually contribute to regular progress reports and reports to the CFSC, on action plans and other relevant DFSV activity, including arranging approval processes prior to submitting the update on behalf of their organisation;
- be responsible for reporting on activities of the CAWG to their agency, member organisation or network and reporting to the CAWG on issues raised by their agency, member organisation or network;
- provide advice on and support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the action plans, including the prioritisation of activity;
- provide advice and information on all other relevant DFSV policy, service and program development and activity that works towards the Framework's outcomes, including emerging DFSV issues;
- raise issues of concern and suggest effective remedial action; and
- advocate, where appropriate, for the outcomes of the Framework and action plans within their organisation or network.

3.2 Role of Chair

The Chair will lead and direct the activities of the CAWG. The Chair will:

- chair meetings;
- approve the agenda;

- endorse submission of late papers and/or late addition of an agenda item;
- provide strategic and operational advice;
- ensure the induction of new members;
- drive delivery of agreed actions arising from meetings;
- facilitate the flow of information and participation of all members;
- manage relationships between members;
- review membership of any member who misses more than two consecutive meetings in a calendar year. The Chair's decision on the review of membership will be presented to CAWG for endorsement;
- provide oversight and quality assurance; and
- brief the CEO and CFSC on behalf of the CAWG as required.

3.3 Role of Secretariat

TFHC will provide secretariat support to the CAWG. Secretariat will:

- provide briefings and induction materials to new members;
- develop agendas;
- circulate the agenda and papers five working days prior to the scheduled meeting, where possible;
- ensure that all meeting papers will be marked as "for circulation" (if not confidential) or "not for circulation" (if confidential);
- source appropriate venues for members outside Darwin to participate in meetings by teleconference or videoconference where required;
- maintain a secure document records management system including a membership group email and record of meeting attendance, minutes and action register;
- support delivery of actions arising from meetings including project management;
- circulate draft meeting minutes and other documentation in a timely manner providing sufficient time for members to respond;
- prepare a Communique, summarising the meeting outcomes, after each CAWG meeting, and, following endorsement by the Chair, share the Communique with CAWG for broad circulation and publish it online. The Communique will not contain any sensitive or confidential information.

4. Governance

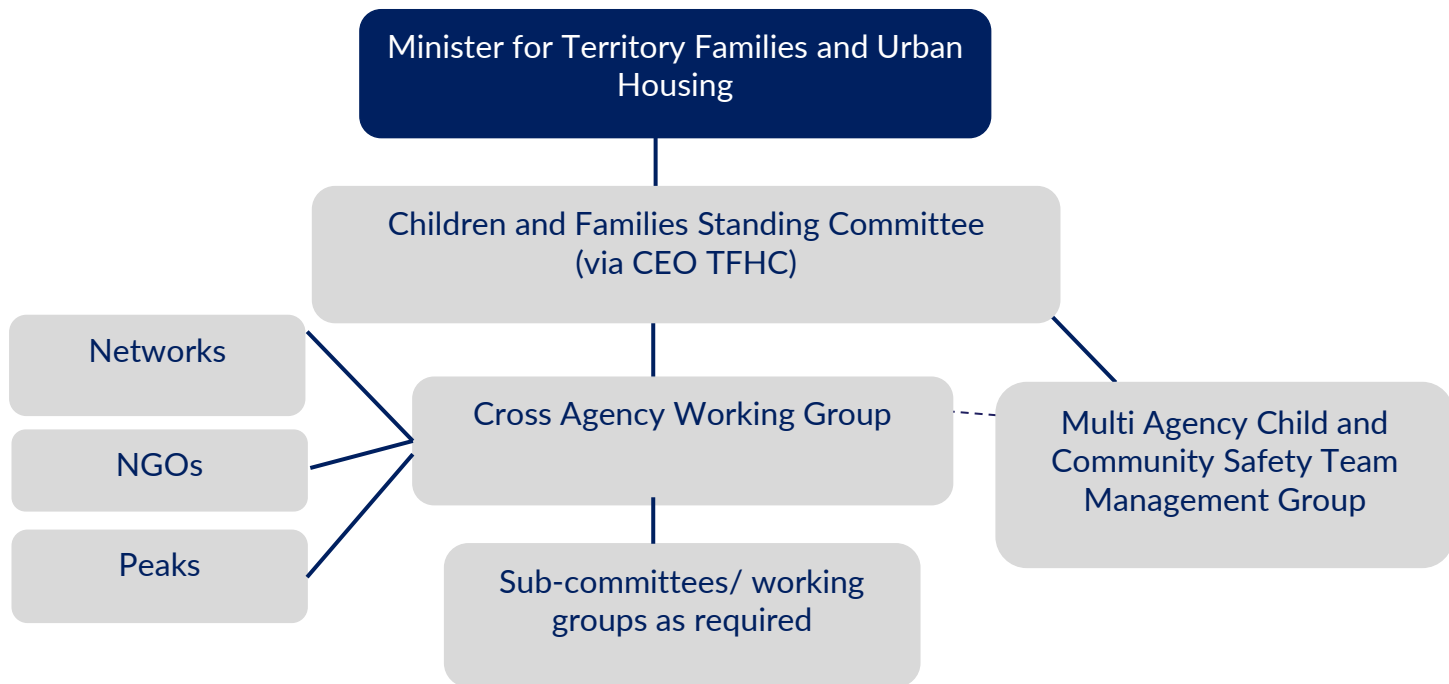
The CAWG will be chaired by the TFHC Executive Director, Families Programs.

The CAWG will report annually to the Children and Families Standing Committee (CFSC) through the TFHC Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The Chief Executive Officer is also responsible for resolving contested issues.

Reports to the CFSC will provide updates on activities, refer relevant recommendations for endorsement, and escalate issues for resolution as appropriate.

The CFSC will approve the CAWG Terms of Reference (ToR) and any amendments to the ToR.

The CAWG also has the option of reporting to the CFSC through the Multi Agency Child and Communities Safety Team (MACCST) Management Group where required. The CAWG may utilise this option where it has issues, recommendations or activities that require escalation, resources or support.



5. Membership

5.1 Appointment of members

Membership of the CAWG comprises nominated representatives of relevant NT Government agencies, specialist domestic, family and sexual violence services, sector network representatives, and peak bodies.

The TFHC CEO invites relevant NT Government agency CEOs and non-government organisations, networks, and peak bodies to nominate a delegate to provide advice to and represent the interests of the agency, organisation, network, or peak body on the CAWG.

The Chair will acknowledge the representative's nomination and membership of the CAWG in writing.

The Central Australian Family Violence and Sexual Assault Network and Domestic and Family Violence Networks have been invited to nominate two representatives to the CAWG to reflect the size and membership of the networks.

Sub-groups of the CAWG may be convened to progress specific initiatives in a timely manner. Sub-groups will report on progress and outcomes to the CAWG within the agreed timeframe. Secretariat support will be provided where the Chair considers appropriate.

5.2 Term of membership

Members are nominated to represent their agency, organisation, network, or peak body for a period of two years.

Membership is automatically renewed every two years from the date of written confirmation of membership from the Chair. Members may withdraw from the CAWG at any time by advising the Chair in writing.

Members must nominate a proxy to attend meetings on their behalf where required and may delegate CAWG tasks to relevant colleagues from policy, service, operational or other areas of their organisation.

5.3 Proxies and guests

Members will nominate a consistent proxy to attend any meeting on their behalf where they are not able to attend, and ensure the proxy is fully informed and capable of participating in the meeting on behalf of the member.

Non-members may be invited to deliver presentations or other information at CAWG meetings, with the prior approval of CAWG members.

5.4 Current membership (as at June 2021)

- Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (Office of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction)
- Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (Child Protection)
- Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (Housing)
- NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Violence and Sex Crimes Division)
- Department of the Attorney-General and Justice (Legal Policy)
- Department of Education
- Aboriginal Medical Service Alliance NT
- Central Australian Family Violence and Sexual Assault Network
- Tennant Creek Local Reference Group
- Katherine Local Reference Group
- Darwin Domestic and Family Violence Network
- NT Correctional Services
- Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet

- Department of Health
- NT Legal Assistance Forum
- Northern Territory Council of Social Service
- Top End Remote Safe House Network

6. Meetings

6.1 Quorum

No quorum is required, however the Chair will use discretion to determine if any item should be deferred to a future meeting if it is considered there are insufficient members present to fully consider the item.

6.2 Voting

Recommendations and advice of the CAWG are made by consensus. Dissenting views are to be minuted, with the final decision resting with the Chair.

Where the Chair's decision is disputed, the Chair will escalate the issue to either the MACCST, or directly to the TFHC CEO for resolution.

6.3 Travel

The preference is for members to meet in person, to facilitate relationship building, engagement and meaningful discussion.

TFHC will assist with travel and accommodation costs for NGO representatives or their proxies located outside Darwin to attend meetings in person, by making all travel and accommodation bookings and payments on behalf of the member. TFHC will not reimburse the member directly.

The NGO member should contact CAWG Secretariat by email (dfv@nt.gov.au) as soon as possible prior to the meeting to allow TFHC to commence making travel arrangements.

There is no limit to the number of times the NGO member can accept travel assistance from the department in any calendar year.

7. Accountability and performance

Progress on actions under the Framework are published on the TFHC website twice a year, and the CAWG reports annually on progress in implementing the action plans to the CFSC through the TFHC CEO. Members agree to contribute to these reports in a timely fashion, including arranging approvals as required.

The CAWG has the option of reporting through the MACCST Management Group where issues or recommendations require escalation and/or cross-government action prior to being brought to the attention of the CFSC.

8. Confidentiality

The Secretariat will ensure that all meeting papers will be marked as 'for circulation' (if not confidential) or 'not for circulation' (if confidential). If a paper is not marked, it is considered to be classified confidential.

CAWG members and proxies agree:

- to advise the Chair of any conflicts or potential conflicts of interest in relation to the CAWG;
- not to reveal any confidential or proprietary information entrusted during the course of their involvement in the CAWG, with the exception of authorised communications within their member organisation;
- not to use or attempt to use any information, documents or data entrusted during the course of their involvement in the CAWG, other than for the purposes of their work with the CAWG;
- to maintain confidentiality after they cease to participate in the CAWG.

CAWG members and proxies will sign a conflicts and confidentiality declaration form, which will be securely stored by Secretariat.

9. Evaluation and review

The CAWG Secretariat will conduct a review of the operation of the CAWG every two years, including a review of the ToR and a review of membership.

The Secretariat will prepare a report on the outcomes of the review to be presented to CAWG and the CFSC for information.

Any recommendations arising from the review (including amendments to the ToR) will be presented to CAWG for endorsement prior to delivery to the CFSC for approval.

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