PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK

phn HUNTER NEW ENGLAND AND CENTRAL COAST

An Australian Government Initiative

Strategic Engagement Advisory Groups

1. Purpose

The role of the Strategic Engagement Advisory Groups is to provide insights, advice and guidance around:

- The PHN's strategic engagement.
- Specific areas and projects which align with the PHN's purpose and strategic priorities, challenges and ambitions, thus ensuring effective strategic engagement and alignment.
- The composition of each group will include both clinical and community members.

The Department of Health and Aged Care requires advisory bodies that include both clinical and community-based representatives that reflect the key health care service providers of the area and provide a community perspective to the PHN Board to support patient-centred, cost-effective, and locally relevant outcomes.

The Groups' role is to:

- Contribute constructive, locally relevant context and feedback to consultation requests from HNECC PHN staff.
- Advocate for and support the PHN to deliver messages to the community and increase awareness of the role of the organisation in the primary care space.
- Respect and support the values of HNECC PHN, its staff, communities and partners through actions, conversations and interactions.
- Actively identify opportunities for the PHN to partner and better integrate with other organisations in local communities to increase health system efficiency and reduce duplication of services.

2. Governance and linkages

The Strategic Engagement Advisory Groups play an important role in providing recommendations and input to the PHN Board of Directors.

The Groups are linked to the Board of Directors through the regular attendance at meetings of a Board member (via a roster) and regular reports of meeting outcomes to the Governance, Remuneration and Culture Committee, a sub-Committee of the Board.

The Executive Manager, Partnerships and Engagement will act as the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) delegate.

3. Membership and Term

The Strategic Engagement Advisory Groups will each consist of a maximum of 11 members (including the Board representative). Each group will have two Co-Chairs, one being a primary care clinician, and one being a community member. The Executive Manager, Partnerships and Engagement will be in attendance at each meeting.

The Strategic Engagement Advisory Groups meeting agendas will focus on clarity of the following for the Group's purpose and:

- The areas the PHN can act on.
- The areas that the PHN can influence (but are not in our remit) such as: working with key stakeholders whose remit it is via social and traditional media; through Policy development and advocacy.
- The areas where we can collaborate.

There will be two Strategic Engagement Advisory Groups being:

- A Rural Strategic Engagement Advisory Group
- An Urban/Inner Regional Strategic Engagement Advisory Group

Members of the groups will be individuals living, working or receiving services in the HNECC PHN region. The eligibility for their membership of either Group will be based on them living, working or receiving services in either the Urban/Inner Regional Local Government Areas (LGAs) as specified below or a Rural LGA.

The "Urban/Inner Regional" LGAs are as follows: Central Coast, Maitland, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Cessnock and Port Stephens. The Rural LGAs are the other 17 LGAs in the HNECC PHN region.

Each Group will consist of an even number of primary care clinicians (maximum 5) and community members (maximum 5).

Membership will be for a term of two (2) years with an option for a single renewal, to a maximum tenure of four (4) years. To ensure continuity, the Board reserves the right to use its discretion to appoint for terms of less than two years and less than a maximum of four years.

4. Selection Process and Criteria

Members will be chosen by a competitive process and consideration will be given to achieving a representation of the required skills, professions, sectors and geographical spread. All members will be appointed via an Expression of Interest (EOI) process and selected by the Governance, Remuneration and Culture (GRC) Committee. The Co-Chairs will also be selected by the Board sub-Committee (GRC).

5. Remuneration

Members will be paid a sitting fee for each meeting which will cover attendance at the meeting, preparation time and availability for out-of-session consultation. Further details about payments can be found in the Strategic Engagement Advisory Groups Payment Information Sheet.

6. Membership Responsibilities

The Groups will endeavour to operate on a consensus decision-making basis where possible and appropriate, however, if a vote is required all members will hold one vote each. Any recommendations of the Groups in regard to proposed initiatives for implementation will be subject to approval from the PHN Board of Directors. In the event of a tied vote, the Board representative will hold the deciding vote.

Groups will participate in an evaluation process once every two years. HNECC PHN will review the Terms of Reference at the end of each two (2) year term.

7. Meetings and forums

The Groups will each meet four times a year. Additional working or other groups may be formed sometimes to progress specific initiatives or provide strategic input to the Board. These groups will be voluntary.

Meetings will be held for about two hours each with appropriate use of teleconferencing or video-conferencing facilities to address geographical distances. To further encourage in person connection and engagement of the Groups' members with each other, there is the opportunity for at least one meeting each year to be held face to face at a location agreed upon by the Group.

8. Quorum and Attendance

A quorum will be considered to exist when more than fifty percent of the members are in attendance either in person or via electronic means.

If a member is absent for more than two consecutive meetings or attends less than 50%, then they will be asked to step down unless exceptional circumstances are communicated to the Co-Chairs.

9. Communication

Group members will provide current telephone and email contact details to the PHN. These contact details will be made available to all Group members.

Group members will be invited to propose agenda items aligned to the purpose, and agendas and meeting papers will be distributed at least one week prior to each meeting.

Draft minutes will be circulated to Group members for comment/approval within one month of the date of the meeting. If responses are not received within a specified time frame, the minutes will be taken to be accurate and distributed in final form to Group members and the PHN Board.

10. Code of Conduct

All members and attendees of Group meetings will be required to sign and return a Code of Conduct attesting to the fact that the member or attendee has read and accepts all the conditions contained therein.

11. Confidentiality

In general, meeting minutes will be treated as confidential and not disclosed to outside parties. The content of meeting papers should also be treated as confidential unless otherwise indicated.

To ensure effective consultation between the PHN and Group members, sensitive information not in the public domain may be disclosed at confidential meetings. Members and attendees are asked to be mindful of the confidentiality of this information and not disclose it to outside parties. If members or attendees are unsure about the confidentiality status of information or data disclosed to them, the Co-Chairs should be asked to clarify the position.

12. Communications Policy

A Communications Policy is included in the induction package for new members.
Where appropriate, a general report or media release can be developed for distribution at a member's

request.

13. Public comment

Group members and attendees must avoid making public comments that may appear to be an official comment from the PHN or from the Group. Where public statements are deemed advantageous, these shall be distributed by the PHN through usual channels.

14. Conflict of interest

Group members and attendees are responsible for declaring any potential, real or perceived conflict of interest if it relates to a specific discussion topic. The secretariat will record this declaration in the minutes and the Co-Chairs will manage the conflict of interest in collaboration with non-conflicted Group members.

A declaration of interests register will be maintained for standing conflicts. Members are responsible for advising and updating the Strategic Engagement Advisory Groups Support Officer or Group Co-Chairs of any changes to standing conflicts.

For further information please refer to the HNECC PHN Conflict of Interest Policy and Declaration Form.

15. Intellectual property

Any intellectual property rights of Group members or attendees must be observed and protected. Members or attendees who are deemed by the Group to have breached, or have an intent which would breach, the intellectual property rights of another member or attendee may, among other remedies, be removed from the Group.

The Group members and attendees must also be aware that breaching another member or attendee's intellectual property rights may result in legal or other remedial actions.

16. Evaluation

Formal evaluation of the Committee will be conducted every two (2) years, with respect to the measurable achievement of purpose and member satisfaction.

Document Control

Policy Approved by:	Governance, Remuneration and Culture Committee
Review Frequency:	Every two years
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Revision History

Version	Status *	Author	Date	Reason
V0.0	Draft	Lorin Livingstone, EM POE (People Operations & Engagement)	20/05/2024	New Advisory Groups structure requiring new Terms of Reference
V1.0	Approved	Governance, Remuneration & Culture Committee	07/06/2024	New Advisory Groups structure requiring new Terms of Reference
V1.0	Approved	HNECC PHN Board		
V2.0	Reviewed	Executive Manager – Partnerships and Engagement	03/06/2026	Additional information added to clarify membership term and evaluation process. Executive sponsor title updated

**Status: Draft/ Approved/ Amended/ Rescinded/ Reviewed*