

# Coalition of National Nursing and Midwifery Organisations

## Terms of Reference



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The Coalition of National Nursing and Midwifery Organisations acknowledges the traditional owners and Elders past and present of the land on which we meet across Australia

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## Contents

<b>1 Preamble .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Terms.....	4
<b>2 Role and Objectives .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Role.....	4
2.2 Objectives .....	4
<b>3 Structure and membership.....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Structure.....	5
3.2 Council .....	5
3.3 Membership of the Council.....	5
3.4 Secretariat.....	5
3.4.1 Roles and functions of the Secretariat .....	5
3.5 Working Groups.....	5
3.6 Criteria for membership of CoNNMO .....	6
3.7 Application for Membership .....	6
3.8 Register of Members .....	6
3.9 Responsibility of member organisations .....	6
3.10 Orientation for new members .....	6
3.11 Cessation of membership.....	7
3.12 Member expenses.....	7
<b>4 Meetings of CoNNMO .....</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1 Frequency of CoNNMO meetings.....	7
4.2 Chair of meetings.....	7
4.3 Notices of meeting and agendas.....	7
4.4 Role of member organisations at meetings .....	7
4.5 Appointment of proxies .....	8
4.6 Observers at member meetings .....	8
4.7 Minutes and outcomes of meetings.....	8
4.8 Travel costs associated with attending member meetings .....	8
4.9 Special meeting procedures.....	8
4.9.1 Quorum for special meetings .....	8
4.9.2 Voting and decisions at special meetings.....	8

4.9.3	Minutes and outcomes from special meetings .....	8
4.10	Urgent decision required of members between meetings .....	8
<b>5</b>	<b>CoNNMO Council.....</b>	<b>9</b>
5.1	Role and functions of Council.....	9
5.2	Term of Council members .....	9
5.3	Election of Council members .....	9
5.4	Council vacancy .....	9
5.5	The Chair .....	9
5.5.1	Role and functions of Council .....	10
5.6	Meetings of Council.....	10
5.7	Orientation for Council members.....	10
<b>6</b>	<b>Policy development and review.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Financial management.....</b>	<b>11</b>
7.1	Membership fees.....	11
7.2	Funds management .....	11
7.3	Financial overview .....	11
7.4	Insurance.....	11
7.5	Payment of Council and members .....	11
7.6	Audit.....	11
<b>8</b>	<b>Alterations to the Terms of Reference.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Dispute and grievance resolution .....</b>	<b>11</b>

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## 1 Preamble

The Coalition of National Nursing and Midwifery Organisations (CoNNMO) is made up of more than 50 national nursing and midwifery organisations that work collectively together to advance the nursing and midwifery professions and to improve health care. The Coalition is funded, through the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, as a program within the Health Workforce Division of the Australian Government Department of Health (DoH).

### 1.1 Terms

**ANMF** – Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation

**Auspicing Body** – is the ANMF in accordance with the Funding Agreement.

**CoNNMO** – Coalition of National Nursing and Midwifery Organisations.

**Coalition** – a combination or alliance of groups, factions or parties for a specific reason.

**Consensus** – an agreed view of parties.

**Council** - the CoNNMO Council, elected by Coalition membership to support the work of the CoNNMO.

**DoH** – Commonwealth Department of Health (formerly the Department of Health and Ageing).

## 2 Role and Objectives

### 2.1 Role

CoNNMO enables national nursing and midwifery professional organisations in Australia to come together to share information, learn from each other, support and mentor one another in building capacity, and, at times, to act as a conduit to influence and give voice on matters of mutual concern for the nursing and midwifery professions.

### 2.2 Objectives

In order to achieve its purpose, CoNNMO will:

- Promote recognition of nursing and midwifery as essential to the health and wellbeing of the Australian Community
- Provide national leadership in debates on health and public policy
- Be a forum for discussion and consultation on professional matters
- Facilitate communication between member organisations and other stakeholders
- Be a primary conduit for access within and to the nursing and midwifery professions
- Assist the development of governance and capacity of member organisations
- Remain robust using principles of good governance

CoNNMO aims to work together with coalition members to:

- Encourage collaboration across the nursing and midwifery professions, with health consumers, and other stakeholders in health and aged care
- Be transparent about CoNNMO's purpose and outcomes and communicate and engage effectively with all member organisations and stakeholders
- Demonstrate accountability through clearly defined functions and roles
- Make informed and transparent decisions
- Engage effectively with member organisations and stakeholders
- Develop the capacity and capability of the CoNNMO Council and members to conduct CoNNMO Council and member meetings

## **3 Structure and membership**

### **3.1 Structure**

The structure of CoNNMO is represented in the diagram in Appendix 1 and comprises of CoNNMO member organisations and Council, acting as a representative committee of CoNNMO. Council includes a permanent position for a representative of the ANMF, as the auspicing body for CoNNMO. The secretariat services for CoNNMO are provided by the ANMF.

### **3.2 Council**

CoNNMO Council is a representative committee elected by CoNNMO member organisations. The Council is responsible for planning for member meetings, developing and maintaining the strategic plan, terms of reference and CoNNMO position statements, as agreed to by member organisations.

### **3.3 Membership of the Council**

The Council consists of the following members:

- Chairperson
- Deputy Chairperson
- ANMF representative (permanent position)
- Six additional CoNNMO representative members

### **3.4 Secretariat**

As the original sponsor and auspicing body of CoNNMO, the ANMF acts as the Secretariat. The Federal Office Professional Team of the ANMF is responsible for the day to day operations of CoNNMO.

#### **3.4.1 Roles and functions of the Secretariat**

The Secretariat is responsible for:

- Organising two meetings each year – one in Melbourne and one in Sydney
- Preparing materials for meetings
- Organising venues and catering
- Updating the membership database
- Managing and updating the CoNNMO website
- Organising and distributing other publications
- Organising the meeting agenda in consultation with Council
- Organising CoNNMO members and guests
- Preparing meeting papers and submissions
- Attending meetings and taking minutes
- Preparing minutes and organising action requested by CoNNMO
- Maintaining a database of correspondence
- Securely storing all documents and securities
- Managing the election of Council members and the Chair and Deputy Chair of Council

### **3.5 Working Groups**

The Council, in conjunction with CoNNMO member organisations, may create ad-hoc, time-limited, working groups to address specific issues and projects.

### 3.6 Criteria for membership of CoNNMO

CoNNMO is made up of organisations that have members in four or more states/territories. Members are either:

- all registered nurses and/or enrolled nurses and/or midwives and/or students of nursing or midwifery
- the nursing and/or midwifery section of a multidisciplinary group
- a clear network of nurses or midwives within such groups who can ensure a nurse or midwife representative and feedback to nurses and midwives in their organisation

Organisations not meeting the membership criteria may apply to attend CoNNMO meetings as observers following prior approval by Council. Organisational observer status will be considered on a case by case basis and must be approved by CoNNMO member organisations.

### 3.7 Application for Membership

The Council will consider applications for membership and make recommendations to CoNNMO, guided by the criteria for membership.

### 3.8 Register of Members

The Secretariat will maintain a register of all CoNNMO member organisations that will include details of:

- the name and business address of each member organisation
- the date on which that organisation became a member
- any name changes
- reason and date of cessation of membership.

### 3.9 Responsibility of member organisations

CoNNMO member organisations must ensure:

- that their elected representative, a **nurse, midwife or student of nursing or midwifery**, attends the two scheduled CoNNMO members meetings that are held annually;
- continuity of representation at CoNNMO, or ensure that new representatives or delegated representatives are well briefed prior to meetings and have the authority to speak on behalf of their organisation and make decisions at CoNNMO member meetings;
- representatives of CoNNMO member organisations declare any conflicts of interest that may arise from political or commercial interests and close personal relationships;
- they notify the CoNNMO Secretariat, in writing, if there is any change to their organisation name, structure or role.

### 3.10 Orientation for new members

An information package will be sent to all new member organisations, by the Secretariat. The package will include:

- a statement of welcome
- information about bi-annual meetings
- the CoNNMO Terms of Reference
- the CoNNMO Strategic Plan
- the CoNNMO National Priorities
- the CoNNMO travel policy
- the link to the CoNNMO website

### **3.11 Cessation of membership**

An organisation ceases to be a member of CoNNMO if one of the following applies. The organisation:

- resigns from membership in writing
- is expelled from membership due to factors such as non-viability or major loss of membership
- is wound up

Membership of CoNNMO cannot be transferred to another organisation. Should a member organisation merge with another organisation or significantly change its profile and role, the new organisation/s will be required to inform the Secretariat in writing and make a new application/s for membership.

### **3.12 Member expenses**

Membership of CoNNMO is free of charge. Reimbursement of any member expenses must be consistent with the Funding Agreement and the CoNNMO Travel Policy.

## **4 Meetings of CoNNMO**

### **4.1 Frequency of CoNNMO meetings**

Representatives from CoNNMO member organisations meet face to face bi-annually, once in Melbourne and once in Sydney.

### **4.2 Chair of meetings**

The Chair of the Council will preside over meetings, assisted by the Secretariat.

Should the Chair not be available for the CoNNMO member meeting, the Deputy Chair of the Council or delegated member of the Council will preside as Chair at the meeting.

### **4.3 Notices of meeting and agendas**

Meeting dates will be set annually at a CoNNMO member meeting twelve months in advance. The Secretariat will be responsible for:

- organising each meeting and notifying member organisations of the date, time and venue for the meeting at least two months in advance of the meeting
- inviting member organisations to contribute to the agenda and setting the agenda for each meeting
- taking the Minutes of meetings and circulating to member organisations in a timely manner

### **4.4 Role of member organisations at meetings**

Member organisations should:

- keep 'business without notice' items to a minimum
- notify the Secretariat prior to the commencement of the meeting if any urgent last minute items of 'business without notice' should arise so that adequate time can be set aside at the meeting
- ensure that the representative member sent to the meeting is well informed of the issues to be discussed and has the authority to speak on behalf of their organisation and make decisions if called upon to do so at the meeting
- declare any conflicts of interest prior to the commencement of the meeting

## **4.5 Appointment of proxies**

Should a person who represents a member organisation be unable to attend a CoNNMO member meeting, the member organisation may appoint a proxy. The proxy must be another nurse, midwife or student of nursing or midwifery member of that member organisation. Proxies are eligible to apply for travel funding.

## **4.6 Observers at member meetings**

CoNNMO member organisations can request for an observer/s to attend member meetings. The observer/s should be a member/s of the CoNNMO member organisation. Observers are not eligible to apply for travel funding.

## **4.7 Minutes and outcomes of meetings**

Minutes of meetings are documented and circulated by the Secretariat to all CoNNMO member organisations. Minutes are also made available on the CoNNMO website.

## **4.8 Travel costs associated with attending member meetings**

Representatives of CoNNMO member organisations or their proxies are entitled to funding to cover the cost of attending CoNNMO member meetings (as per the Funding Agreement and the CoNNMO Travel Policy). Members must complete the CoNNMO travel application form and return to the Secretariat by the allotted time. The Secretariat will book all flights.

## **4.9 Special meeting procedures**

A special meeting can be requested by member organisations if funding is available. If there is insufficient funds in the budget to cover the cost of these meetings, member organisations may be asked to cover the associated costs of the meeting.

### **4.9.1 Quorum for special meetings**

A quorum for a special meeting must be fifty percent plus one (50% + 1) of the current CoNNMO member organisations. If within half an hour after the appointed time for the commencement of a special meeting of CoNNMO, a quorum is not present, the meeting shall be dissolved.

### **4.9.2 Voting and decisions at special meetings**

Decisions made at special meetings will be by consensus. If there is a matter that requires a vote, each member organisation shall have one vote. A secret ballot will be held if a motion to that effect is made to the meeting and agreed. A majority decision will constitute 50% of the vote plus one.

### **4.9.3 Minutes and outcomes from special meetings**

Minutes of a special meeting will be documented and circulated by the Secretariat to all CoNNMO member organisations within three weeks of the meeting.

## **4.10 Urgent decision required of members between meetings**

In the event of a decision of CoNNMO being required urgently between meetings, Council may canvas the opinions of the member organisations via email or teleconference. Once a decision has been reached the Secretariat will circulate the results to all members.

## **5 CoNNMO Council**

### **5.1 Role and functions of Council**

The Council, acts as a representative committee of CoNNMO.

Members of the CoNNMO Council are elected by CoNNMO members. With the support of the member organisations the Council is responsible for developing:

- and maintaining a Memorandum of Understanding between Council and the ANMF
- and reviewing the Terms of Reference of CoNNMO
- and implementing the Strategic Plan
- position statements as determined and agreed to by member organisations and
- meeting agendas.

Council members represent and act in the interest of CoNNMO as a whole, rather than the individual member organisation that nominated them.

### **5.2 Term of Council members**

The term of office for Council members is two years. A Council member may serve on Council for a maximum of three (3) consecutive two year terms.

A Council member, who has completed three consecutive terms, may be re-elected to the Council after standing down from Council for at least one two year term.

### **5.3 Election of Council members**

At the end of a Council members two year term, or in the event of a vacancy occurring, the Secretariat will call for nominations from member organisations and, if required, an election to fill the vacancy will be conducted. The member representative must have attended a minimum of two (2) member meetings, as a representative or observer, to be eligible to nominate for Council.

CoNNMO member organisations can nominate their representative for a Council vacancy. The election of Council members is based on one vote per member organisation. The election of Council will be conducted by secret ballot when more than one nomination is received by the Secretariat for the vacant Council position. If a secret ballot is conducted, two (2) scrutineers shall be appointed by the Secretariat to oversee the counting of the votes.

### **5.4 Council vacancy**

The Office of any member of Council is vacated by the following events:

- resignation by notice in writing to the Secretariat,
- ceasing to be the representative of a CoNNMO member organisation, or,
- absence from three (3) consecutive Council meetings without notice.

### **5.5 The Chair**

The Chair of the Council is elected by Council members for a two year term. A Chair may only preside for a maximum of two (2) consecutive, two-year terms. If more than one nomination for the position of Chair is received, the Secretariat will conduct a secret ballot with Council members.

### **5.5.1 Role and functions of Council Chair**

The role of the Chair is to:

- preside over all meetings of CoNNMO and the Council
- act as a representative of CoNNMO when agreed to, or required to do so, by CoNNMO members
- speak on behalf of CoNNMO in regard to agreed positions as articulated in CoNNMO position statements.

The Chair may nominate the Deputy Chair or another delegate representative member of the Council to act as a representative of CoNNMO when the Chair is unavailable, or when necessary as agreed by CoNNMO members.

### **5.6 Meetings of Council**

Face to face meetings of the Council, between CoNNMO member meetings, usually only occur if funding is available or if there is a critical issue warranting this approach. Communication between Council members is usually via email or teleconference.

Council decisions will be by consensus, unless the matter requires a vote. Each Council member has one vote. In the event of a decision of Council being required urgently between member meetings, the Chair and the Secretariat, may canvas the opinions of Council and formulate resolutions which will be circulated to each of the Council Members.

Minutes of each Council meeting will be taken by the Secretariat and circulated to CoNNMO Council members in a timely fashion.

A quorum of five members must be present for all meetings of Council.

### **5.7 Orientation for Council members**

An orientation package of materials on the role and responsibilities of Council is developed and kept updated by the Secretariat. The orientation package will be provided to each new member of Council.

## **6 Policy development and review**

Policy on issues critical to the conduct of CoNNMO business including the role, function and aims of CoNNMO may be developed by ad hoc, time-limited, CoNNMO working groups and presented to Council for review and approval.

Once approved by Council, the policy will be circulated to members for discussion at the next CoNNMO member meeting. Adoption of CoNNMO policy is through consensus at a CoNNMO member meeting.

Council may deem it necessary to have further consultation with all member organisations prior to the final ratification of policy.

All CoNNMO policies will be available on the CoNNMO website and will be reviewed by Council every three years.

## **7 Financial management**

### **7.1 Membership fees**

CoNNMO does not levy membership fees. Funds for some of the operations of CoNNMO are allocated to ANMF through a program within the Health Workforce Division of the Australian Government Department of Health (DoH).

### **7.2 Funds management**

The ANMF, as the auspicing body, is responsible for the management of CoNNMO funds.

The ANMF will advise CoNNMO Council of any changes to the funding for CoNNMO and undertakes to continue to support CoNNMO for a period of 12 months in the event that funding should cease.

### **7.3 Financial overview**

The ANMF will provide CoNNMO with a financial overview at each face to face meeting of Council. This overview will provide relevant information while complying with the terms of the confidential Funding Agreement.

### **7.4 Insurance**

At a minimum the ANMF, as the auspicing body, will hold the following insurances for CoNNMO:

- Workers compensation insurance
- Professional indemnity insurance
- Public liability insurance

The cost of the insurance will be met from the program funds, in accordance with the terms of the Funding Agreement.

### **7.5 Payment of Council and members**

CoNNMO Council or representatives of member organisations will not be paid sitting fees or any other payment, other than payment of travel expenses to attend meetings in line with CoNNMO policy.

### **7.6 Audit**

The ANMF will audit program funds in accordance with its obligations set out in the Funding Agreement.

## **8 Alterations to the Terms of Reference**

CoNNMO Council shall make a recommendation in writing to the member organisations regarding any proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference shall be formally reviewed every four (4) years.

## **9 Dispute and grievance resolution**

The Council will take all reasonable steps to resolve any disputes or grievances involving CoNNMO using the principles of natural justice.

Independent mediation, at the expense of each party involved, should be sought if differences are irreconcilable.

## CoNNMO ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

