

Australian Public Sector Evaluation Network Terms of Reference

August 2020

Purpose

The Australian Public Sector Evaluation Network (APSEN) seeks to establish a dedicated informal network to connect those working in evaluation in the public sector to share information and build capability across the membership by:

- Sharing evaluation resources (tools, templates and guides) between government departments and agencies across Australia
- Sharing public sector evaluation findings and lessons learnt in the public sector with network members in addition to publicly available information
- Establishing a supportive community of practice for professional public sector evaluators
- Supporting capacity and capability building within and across our departments and agencies
- Providing a platform for sharing, interaction and hosting events
- Raising the profile and promoting the professionalisation of public sector evaluation in Australia.

APSEN is committed to supporting public sector employees and to improving the quality of public sector evaluation.

Network membership

While primary audience of the network will be public sector employees, APSEN will also be open to members from consulting, academia and non-for-profit or community-based organisations.

There are no costs associated with APSEN membership. APSEN members are not required to be Australian Evaluation Society (AES) members.

Governance

APSEN is governed by a self-nominated Steering Group, members of which required to be public sector representatives from the network with balanced multijurisdictional and multisectoral representation. Steering Group membership is based on an individual expertise rather than organisational representation.

Steering Group membership will be refreshed every 12 months, with a preference for maintaining at least half of the membership annually. In June each year new members will be recruited as required to maintain a balanced multijurisdictional representation and members can determine whether they would like to continue. The Steering Group Chair will be rotated every two years and the Chairperson will be responsible for overseeing the secretariat function.

APSEN Steering Group membership can be found at Appendix 1 and will be updated as required. APSEN Network members can attend Steering Group meetings on request.

Steering Group responsibilities

The Steering Group will operate as a decision making body for the network and consult with members on an ongoing basis to identify network priorities and find ways to address the needs of evaluators working in government. The Steering Group will consult with members via an annual survey and provide additional opportunities for members to provide feedback throughout the year at network meetings and via email. The Steering group will communicate with members initially via email and once established via the network's online platform.

The Steering Group will:

- Have oversight of the infrastructure and administrative arrangements required to support the network and share resources with members
- Organise events for network members
- Liaise with stakeholders including the AES
- Communicate across the Network and on behalf of the Network to external parties.

Key principles guiding this work will be to ensure that priorities and activities reflect best national and international practice standards and that activities are accessible to members from across Australia.

Confidentiality

Information shared in Steering Group meetings can be requested to be kept confidential as required.

Annual review and planning

An annual review of APSEN achievements will be undertaken to monitor progress. Key achievements will be measured against the specified *Purpose* of the network. Depending on the outcome of this review the Terms of Reference may be refined as required.

The Steering Group will develop a core planning strategy for the network every 12 months which will be informed by the annual review.

Meeting Frequency

The APSEN Steering Group will:

- Meet monthly until the end of 2020. Meeting frequency will be reviewed in January 2021
- Consider issues out-of-session on an as-needs basis.

Secretariat

As stated above, the Chair has responsibility for overseeing secretariat arrangements. Under the current Chairing arrangements, the Centre for Evaluation and Research Evidence (CERE) at the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will provide secretariat support and will manage email lists and all relevant communication. This arrangement will be reviewed with any change of Chairing arrangements required.

Agendas and associated meeting papers will be distributed to all members in advance of meetings. Minutes of meetings will be distributed to all members no later than two weeks following each meeting.

Australian Evaluation Society

The AES is the leading professional body for public sector evaluators with over 50% of this workforce AES members. In May 2020 the AES Board approved the APSEN AES Special Interest Group (SIG). As a SIG, the AES will provide essential administrative and infrastructure required support to the network. For further information regarding AES SIG requirements see *Establishment and Maintenance of Special Interest Group (Version 2, March 2020)*.

All AES members will be eligible to join the APSEN SIG. Given the potential reach of APSEN and the importance of inclusivity, the APSEN SIG will also to be open to members outside the AES community.

Appendix 1

APSEN Steering Group Membership

- Michael Amon (Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, Australian Government)
- Zoe Bishop-Kinlyside (Department of Health, QLD)
- Martin Bortz (Yarra City Council, VIC)
- James Burchmore (Office of the Prime Minister's National Suicide Prevention Advisor)
- Raoul Craemer (Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, ACT)
- Christabelle Darcy (Department of Treasury and Finance, NT)
- Gavin Faunce (Department of Customer Service, NSW)
- Florent Gomez (Department of Customer Service, NSW)
- Eleanor Kerdo (Australian Institute of Family Studies)
- Jo Norman (Department of Health and Human Service, VIC)
- Ruth Nicholls (National Indigenous Australians Agency)
- Katherine Pontifex (Wellbeing, SA)
- Nolan Stephenson (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, WA)
- Ashley Ubrihien (Department of Health, TAS)
- Angkana Whiley (Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, ACT)
- Eleanor Williams (Department of Health and Human Services, VIC)