

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**Department of Health**  
**Senate Select Committee on COVID-19**  
**Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**  
**Thursday 23 April 2020**

**Question Number: 11**

**Question Subject:** List of various committees and task forces

**Type of Questions:** Hansard, page 25, 23 April 2020

**Questioner:** Senator Gallagher

**Question:**

**CHAIR:** Following up on Senator Siewert's point, are you able to provide the committee with a list of the various committees and task forces and what arrangements have been established across government where you are a member of those committees? Can you provide that information to us?

**Ms Edwards:** Absolutely. From where we sit, we can obviously provide you with information about all the arrangements within Health that we've put in place to respond.

**CHAIR:** That would be very useful.

**Ms Edwards:** We may also talk to other agencies to see if there's some way of providing that more holistically for you, rather than our slice of the pie. We'll take on notice what arrangements we're involved with.

**Answer:**

The Department of Health established a number of committees and working groups to support the COVID-19 Health response. The Department is also a member of, or contributes to, a number of groups across government to support the whole of government response. The table below sets out those groups the Department leads or is involved in as at 30 April 2020. This is not an exhaustive list of all committees and working groups supporting the COVID-19 response.

Federal			
Committee	Purpose	Chair / Led by	Membership
National Security Committee of Cabinet	Committee of Cabinet which discusses national security matters.	Prime Minister	Health Minister and Chief Medical Officer co-opted to brief the Committee as required.
State and Territory engagement			
National Cabinet	Prime Minister, First Ministers and the Chief Medical Officer to discuss Australia's COVID-19 response.	Prime Minister	Prime Minister, First Ministers, Chief Medical Officer
COAG Health Council	Commonwealth, state and territory Health Ministers are meeting as needed (sometimes as often as weekly) to engage on COVID-19 issues	Hon Natasha Fyles MLA	Federal, state and territory health ministers, NZ Health Minister and NZ Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Mental Health Ministers Meeting	Commonwealth, state and territory Mental Health Ministers meeting every four weeks to engage on COVID-19 issues.	The Hon Martin Foley MP; The Hon Bronwyn Taylor MLC	Federal, state and territory mental health ministers, NZ Mental Health Minister
Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council – weekly COVID-19 meetings	Commonwealth and state and territory health Chief Executive Officers meeting on a weekly basis to address COVID-19 matters.	Ms Elizabeth Koff, Secretary, NSW Health	Department of Health and state and territory health ministries
Australian Health Protection Principal Committee	Commonwealth, states and territories to develop and adopt national health protection policies, guidelines, standards and alignment of plans.	Cth Chief Medical Officer	Chief Medical Officer and all state and territory Chief Health Officers.
Communicable Diseases Network Australia	Provides national public health co-ordination and leadership for multi-jurisdictional outbreaks, and support best practice for the prevention and control of communicable diseases.	Dr Sonya Bennett, Queensland Health	Representatives from each state and territory, Commonwealth Department of Health, New Zealand Department of Health, and various expert organisations.

Infection Control Expert Group	Provide expert advice to Australian Health Protection Principal Committee regarding the use of Personal Protective Equipment and infection control measures.	Professor Lyn Gilbert AO	Infection control experts from various organisations, including Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer.
States and Territories Medicine Shortages	To identify issues regarding medicine supply and shortages in hospitals in response to Covid-19, particularly ICU, and work co-operatively to co-ordinate national solutions where possible, taking account of differing needs between the States and Territories.	Department of Health	State and Territory Chief Pharmacists and their equivalents and State and Territory Health Procurement Managers
Public Health Laboratory Network	A collaborative group of laboratories, which have expertise and provide services in public health microbiology	Prof Ben Howden Peter Doherty Institute	Representatives from Commonwealth, state and territories, laboratories and expert organisations
COVID-19 Special Working Group	Working Group, managed by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority (AHPRA), established to identify and address registration & standard/codes/guidelines issues associated with COVID-19	AHPRA	AHPRA Commonwealth, state and territory health departments
Inter-jurisdictional Medical Workforce Group	Working Group established to identify and address issues relating to surge medical workforce issues, such as students, pre-interns, international medical graduates & junior doctors)	NSW	Commonwealth, state and territory health departments, Medical Board of Australia

External Stakeholders			
Committee	Purpose	Chair / Led by	Membership
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group on COVID-19	To provide advice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health aspects related to COVID-19, including the development of a dynamic and evolving Management Plan to implement the Emergency Response Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and communities, across remote, regional and urban areas.	Co-chairs Dr Lucas de Toca (Department of Health) and Dr Dawn Casey (NACCHO)	<a href="#">Membership on website</a>
Rural Health Stakeholder COVID-19 Teleconference	Small stakeholder group, originally established to inform Minister Coulton on rural health issues, has been repurposed to work with the Minister on health workforce issues in response to COVID-19	Minister Coulton	Key health workforce stakeholders across Australia
GP Peak Body COVID-19 advisory group	To provide medical peak feedback and input to the Department of Health	Deputy CMO	Medical peak body representatives
Pharmacy Sector COVID-19 Meeting	To share information about implementation of COVID-19 measures, progress and issues impacting the pharmacy sector	Pharmacy Guild of Australia	Department of Health, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Society of Hospital Pharmacists Australia, Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL).
Medicine Shortages Working Party	To raise issues regarding medicine shortages in community and hospital pharmacies, harmonise communications and refer or coordinate potential solutions.	Adjunct Professor John Skerritt,  Deputy Secretary for Health Products	Medicine manufacturing industry, Health professional representatives, medicine wholesalers and representatives from across the Department of Health:

		Regulation Group, Department of Health	Medicines Australia, Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association, Consumer Healthcare Products Australia, Australian Medical Association, Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Chemist Warehouse, Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, TGA Licenced Compounders, National Pharmaceutical Services Association, DHL, representatives from across the Department of Health
National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce	To provide advice on COVID-19 to the Australian Government Chief Medical Officer, and through him, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee	Professor Sharon Lewin AO and Professor Michael Kidd (Deputy Chief Medical Officer), Cth Department of Health	Dr Katie Allen MP Professor Fran Baum AO Professor Alex Brown Professor Jonathan Carapetis AM Ms Marita Cheng AM Professor Brendan Crabb AC Professor Bart Currie Professor Angus Dawson Professor Sandra Eades Dr Michael Frelander Professor Michael Goode AO Ms Georgie Harman Professor Anne Kelso AO Ms Samantha Jenkinson Professor Kamalini Lokuge Ms Christine Morgan Dr James Muecke Professor David Paterson Professor Bruce Robinson AC

			Professor Ingrid Scheffer Professor Fiona Stanley AC Dr Ruth Stewart Professor Alison Venn
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Inter-governmental			
Committee	Purpose	Chair / Led by	Membership
Overseas PPE/Medical Devices Virtual Taskforce	Multi-agency taskforce to assist with the procurement and despatch of PPE, PPE inputs, and medical devices from overseas.	Taskforce chaired by Richard Adams, PPE Lead, DFAT COVID-19 Coordination Unit	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Health (including Therapeutics Goods Administration), Austrade, Australian Border Force, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, and Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources.
National Coordination Mechanism (NCM)	To manage the COVID-19 issues outside the direct health management, led by the APS in liaison with states and territories. There are over 30 NCMs, some of these include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Ministers</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Emergency Management</li> <li>• Employment Services</li> <li>• Justice and Corrections</li> <li>• Vulnerable People</li> </ul>	Varies per NCM	Varies per NCM
COVID-19 Supermarket Taskforce	To raise concerns/issues with stock shortages (including remote and regional locations), home delivery to vulnerable populations, bulk purchasing, and safety of staff and customers in stores.	Department of Home Affairs	Department of Home Affairs; Department of Health; Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development; Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources; National Indigenous Australians Agency; Aldi; Coles; Woolworths; Metcash; Costco; Harris Farm; National Retailers Association; Australian Meat Industry Council

Inter-governmental			
Committee	Purpose	Chair / Led by	Membership
Trusted Information Sharing Network (TISN) Communications Sector Meeting	To discuss concerns and issues from COVID-19 facing the communications sector.	Department of Home Affairs	Relevant government departments and industry representatives.
TISN Communities of Interest meeting	To discuss issues facing different sectors related to critical infrastructure.	Department of Home Affairs	Government departments and industry representatives from sectors including banking and finance, energy, health, transport, water, space, communications and food and grocery.

<b>Corporate mechanisms</b>			
Chief Operating Officers' Committee	To manage the COVID-19 impacts across the APS	PMC / APSC	All APS departments
COVID-19 Working Group (Governance)	Provide advice and assurance to the Executive Board on the effective governance and management of the Department's COVID-19 initiatives.	Department of Health	Invitees may include representatives from relevant corporate functions, Business Groups, COVID-19 initiative resources, independent advisors (e.g. Medical advisors, independent assurance, etc.)
Pandemic Incident Management Committee	Manage the department's internal pandemic response for Health employees and to maintain business functions.	Department of Health	Work stream leads for HR, ICT, Property, Communication, Business Continuity Adviser and others as required.
Continuity Management Team	Leadership for the Department's Continuity Management Team and response during pandemic	Department of Health	Chief Financial Officer Chief Information Security Officer FAS People, Communication and Parliamentary Division AS Ministerial, Governance and Cabinet Branch AS Financial Business Support PIMT Lead, Secretariat and others as required. Reports to the Secretary and department's Executive