



CHAMPIONING THE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF WOMEN

Tasmanian Women's Council Terms of Reference 2018

Preamble

Members of the Tasmanian Women's Council are appointed by the Government to champion the rights and interests of women in Government decision making.

The Council advises the Tasmanian Government on issues of importance to women and contributes to the development of strategies that address inequality and increase the participation of women in all aspects of society.

The following Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Council.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide representative advice to Government on issues of interest and importance to women.
- 1.2 To assist Government to address inequalities for women and girls and to enable the full and equal participation of women and girls in the economic, social, political and community life of Tasmania.

2. Functions

- 2.1 To actively support the objectives of Government in delivering activities and initiatives for women in Tasmania, including:
 - Implementation and monitoring of the Tasmanian Government's gender equality agenda, the *Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-2021*.

- The development and implementation of Government policies, programs and services affecting women.
 - Providing a forum for the women's sector to communicate directly with the Government through the Minister for Women.
- 2.2 When appropriate, to work with other advisory bodies and Government working groups on issues relevant to women.
- 2.3 To create a dialogue between women, community groups and Government on a range of issues of importance to women.
- 2.4 To provide advice on matters referred to the Council by the Minister for Women, and to provide advice to the community on such matters.

3. Membership

- 3.1 The Tasmanian Women's Council will be comprised of 12 members including an independent Chair, a Deputy Chair and the Manager of the Policy Branch in the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Communities, Sport and Recreation, in an ex-officio capacity. This membership does not include a voluntary, non-voting Research Officer appointed under 4.6.
- 3.2 The membership of the Council should reflect, as far as possible, the social, economic, demographic and regional diversity of women in the Tasmanian community.

4. Appointments

- 4.1 The Chair, Deputy Chair and members will be appointed by the Minister for Women.
- 4.2 At least one-half of members will be selected using an Expression of Interest process. Remaining members may be directly appointed.
- 4.3 Members will be appointed for a term of up to three years. Members can re-apply for membership at the conclusion of their term.

- 4.4 Members and Chair should not serve more than two consecutive terms (a maximum of six years) unless a critical business need can be clearly demonstrated.
- 4.5 Members, excepting ex-officio members, are appointed on a voluntary basis as individuals, not representatives of particular interest groups or organisations.
- 4.6 The Minister for Women may appoint an independent expert member for a finite period should a critical business need be clearly demonstrated.
- 4.7 Independent expert members are expected to provide advice on a strategic issue and will be appointed on that specific area of expertise.
- 4.9 The Council may use an Expression of Interest process to appoint a Research Officer in a voluntary, non-voting position to assist the Council to undertake its activities.

5. Operations

Meetings

- 5.1 The Tasmanian Women's Council will meet at least four times a year, being encouraged to meet outside the major city centres when appropriate.
- 5.2 Six appointed members and the Chair or Deputy Chair will constitute a quorum at Council meetings.
- 5.3 The Chair, on behalf of the Council, may allow a person to attend a meeting for the purpose of advising or informing it on any matter.
- 5.4 In the event of the Chair being unable to attend a meeting, the Deputy Chair may act in her position.
- 5.5 Members may participate in a particular meeting by:
 - telephone;
 - videoconference; or
 - any other means of communication approved by the Council.
- 5.6 At a meeting of the Council:

- decisions are to be made by consensus wherever possible; and
 - all members wishing to speak to a matter are to be heard.
- 5.7 Voting is only to be used as a last resort, in which case the Chair of the Council will have a deliberative vote and in the event of an equality of votes, also have a casting vote.
- 5.8 Members absent from any meeting where decisions are made are bound by such decisions.
- 5.9 A five-day rule will apply for out of session decisions by Council members. Members will have five working days (from the date of sending by the Chair or Secretariat) to reply where their opinion or approval has been sought. Failure to reply within this timeframe is deemed to be an acceptance of the recommended action.
- 5.10 The Minister for Women will be invited to all meetings.

Administration

- 5.11 Secretariat support will be provided by the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Communities, Sport and Recreation, including organising meetings, preparation of agendas, minutes and meeting papers, work plans and annual reports, as required and in consultation with the Chair.
- 5.12 Members are requested to send agenda items to the Secretariat seven working days prior to a meeting.
- 5.13 The agenda will be sent to members five working days prior to the next meeting.
- 5.14 The Council, through its Chair, will provide an annual work plan and annual report to the Minister for Women outlining its activities and achievements.
- 5.15 The Council, through its Chair, may refer matters of concern to the Minister with recommendations for further action.
- 5.16 Members will be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in relation to the Council.

- 5.17 The Council, through its Chair, will develop communiques on the Council's activities after each meeting, to be published on the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Communities, Sport and Recreation website.

6. Expectation of members

- 6.1 Members are expected to give priority to attendance at normal meeting of the Council and will be required to attend at least 50 per cent of meetings each year and may not be represented by proxy members.
- 6.2 Membership will expire automatically if a member is absent for more than 50 per cent of meetings with or without notice to the Chair. In this event, members will be notified in writing by the Chair.
- 6.3 Members may be required to attend out-of-session Council meetings.
- 6.4 Members will be expected to represent the Council on relevant Government working groups and report back to Council on these activities. If members are absent from two or more working group meetings, the Chair may nominate a replacement representative.
- 6.5 Some intra-state travel may be required.
- 6.6 Members are responsible for:
- Actively participating in Council meetings by contributing ideas, advice and expertise in relation to issues of importance to women.
 - Reporting on relevant issues to their networks.
 - Working collectively with other members and Government agency representatives in relation to women's issues.
 - Representing the Council at events, forums and consultations as required and reporting back to Council on these activities.