

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AUSTRALIA

POLICY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

FRAMEWORK AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The *STEM Sector Policy Committee* ('Policy Committee') supports *Science & Technology Australia* (STA) to be an influential voice for evidence and expertise in public policy. It develops policy ideas to implement STA's mission to advance public good and the impact of science and technology.

The Policy Committee reports to the STA Board.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Policy Committee will support STA's leadership to respond to policy issues and develop advocacy strategy. Core activities will include:

- Engage with STA's membership to reflect the needs of the science and technology sector;
- Support, advise, and assist STA's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), President, Board and Policy team to respond to relevant STEM sector inquiries, reviews, consultations, and announcements;
- Recommend to the Board STA's proactive STEM sector policy agenda, including but not limited to updating STA's policy strategy document – ideally each year;
- Contribute to STA's strategic events (for example, Science meets Parliament and the Leadership Dialogue);
- Liaise with STA committees and sub-committees to coordinate STA's advocacy efforts; and
- Proactively engage with all sectors, disciplines, regions, career stages, etc. to ensure advocacy efforts reflect the majority and cover the diversity of scientists and technologists

MEMBERSHIP

All Policy Committee members should be a member or employee of a STA member organisation. The Policy Committee at any time will comprise of:

- The Policy Chair;
- A second Board member, as an optional appointment;
- Nine members (maximum recommended number, with minimum of four);
- A Special Advisor, as an optional appointment; and
- STA Director of Policy and Engagement (and/or other staff as determined by the CEO)
- An optional Friend of the Chair position for a person with an interest in developing policy experience.

The STA CEO, President and other members of the STA Policy team can participate as observers at meetings at their discretion.

Committee appointments will occur as follows:

- The Chair is a member of the STA Board appointed by the Board;
- A second member of the Board may optionally join;
- The remaining (up to nine) members will be selected through a call for nominations (self-nominations are acceptable) every year; and
- The Special Advisor can be appointed as needed by the President and/or CEO
- A Friend of the Chair position will be selected through a call for nominations annually.

The term for Committee members will be:

- The Chair will be appointed annually for a one-year term by the Board, typically in the first Board meeting following the AGM. There is no limit to the number of terms a Chair may serve;
- The members will have a 2-year term with the option of one additional 2-year term, if successful with re-nomination;
- The Special Advisor appointment is valid for 2 years with option for one renewal of term, and where they nominate successfully to be a regular member, their term as Special Advisor counts towards term limits;
- The Friend of the Chair position will have a one-year, non-renewable term. Members of the committee will provide mentoring support to the friend of the Chair throughout their term;
- Any member temporarily appointed as a replacement or secondment on the committee will not have their duration of service counted towards their term limits unless it exceeds 1 year; and
- Past members who have served their full terms are eligible for renomination after serving a cooling-off period equal to their previous maximum term (that is, 4 years after a 4-year term).

The membership will be determined to ensure diversity in gender, ethnicity, discipline, geography, sector, skills, experience, and career stage. The expectation is a minimum of 50% women and those identifying as diverse genders on the committee.

In the event the Chair will be unavailable for a period of more than three consecutive months, an alternative committee member will be appointed in an acting capacity by the STA Board on recommendation from the STA CEO.

In the event a committee member takes a break due to parental leave, an alternative member will be appointed for a 2-year duration. On return from parental leave, the original member will have the sole discretion to recommence their term or pursue it once the replacement completes their term.

All Committee members will be responsible for ensuring all registers of interests related to STA (especially those related to conflicts of interest) are recorded with STA staff and are kept up-to-date.

All new members will be provided with copies of a minimum of three recent meeting minutes and reports to the STA Board for their reference and induction.

Any member who fails to attend a minimum of 80% of the meetings in a 12-month period or three consecutive meetings (unless on long-term leave) without adequate reason and notice will be replaced on the Committee.



All members of the committee can use the title 'Member, STEM Sector Policy Committee, Science & Technology Australia'.

GOVERNANCE

The Policy Committee will report to the STA Board.

The Chair of Policy will provide a report to the STA Board in preparation for every meeting.

The Policy Committee will aim to hold ten meetings in a calendar year. Meetings will occur via videoconference. In rare instances, a meeting might be held over email.

The STA Director of Policy and Engagement (or alternative nominated by the STA CEO) will serve as the Secretary of the Committee responsible for calling meetings (with minimum 2 weeks' notice), circulating agenda and meeting papers (minimum 2 working days before meeting date), and recording and circulating minutes and actions.

The Secretary will be responsible for ensuring adherence to the committee's terms of reference.

COMMUNICATION

The committee members are encouraged to communicate openly, regularly, and respectfully with each other.

They are welcome to promote activities of the committee through personal social media channels or via STA's social media channels through the STA communications team. Care should be taken in such communication to maintain non-partisan, evidence-based commentary and adherence to STA's social media and communication policies. In particular, care should be taken to ensure that you are not speaking on behalf of STA without authorisation to do so.

The STA President and the CEO are the authorised spokespeople for STA. In case of any statements made on behalf of the Policy Committee (especially media releases, statements, and public comments), these will be developed in conjunction with the STA CEO.

DOCUMENT VERSION(S)

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