



ADGP and Policy Development

Developing and influencing policy at the national and Australian government levels, in collaboration with member divisions and member state based organisations (SBOs), is one of the major areas of output for ADGP. The development of effective policy:

- defines the role of the divisions of general practice network within the primary health care system;
- underpins ADGP's capacity to define the national primary health care action agenda from the network's perspective;
- strengthens ADGP's governance and leadership role;
- improves ADGP's representative and advocacy capacity;
- can underpin organisational and network growth by establishing positioning platforms that will attract substantial grant funding to ADGP and the network to undertake primary health care initiatives; and
- guides ADGP's advocacy with regard to health care priority areas.

What do we mean by 'policy'?

The term 'policy' in this context means any official statements or views articulated by ADGP on external matters (as distinct from internal policies and procedures). These may or may not be publicly available.

Outputs

Outputs from ADGP's policy program vary, and typically include:

- position statements
- submissions
- discussion papers
- options papers
- briefs
- articles and other media
- presentations
- speeches
- media releases
- tender / funding submissions

Identification of issues

Issues requiring an ADGP policy response can be identified by:

- ADGP Board
- ADGP Senior Management Team
- ADGP Policy Team
- Developments and opportunities arising in program areas
- Divisions of General Practice Network
- Australian Government
- State and Territory governments
- Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG)
- Media coverage on health issues
- Representatives on external committees
- Sector partners
- Emerging research and evidence

The range of policy issues

The need for a position statement or network view can be stimulated by issues that emerge or have currency within the network and where it is deemed necessary for that to be articulated to the government and / or the public. It can be also stimulated by developments outside of the network, such as government policy decisions, the Federal Budget, the Australian Health Ministers' Council (AHMC) and the Council of

Australian Governments (COAG). Policy can be developed proactively to articulate a view on key national health issues that the network considers are priorities.

The timeframe for policy development is something that ADGP has variable control over. As far as possible ADGP will attempt to work within the comprehensive policy development process outlined below. Typically, we have more control over the timeframes for proactive, network-driven policy development. However, there will be situations where ADGP needs to act to provide advice to government and other national health stakeholders within very tight timeframes or where ADGP is invited to participate in confidential briefings. In these scenarios, ADGP reserves the right to take a flexible approach to consultation. It will not always be possible to act strictly according to the following process. In these circumstances, ADGP may seek to adopt a more targeted approach to consultation, as time permits.

ADGP Policy Development Process

Some guiding principles

ADGP will give consideration to factors such as the need to support policy development with:

- Sound research and an evidence-base
- Adequate consultation with members and other stakeholders
- Opportunities and risk to the organisation and network
- Adequate resources
- Due consideration of existing and established network policy statements
- Adequate and timely feedback to the network

The development cycle

IDENTIFICATION OF AN ISSUE

Possible sources include:

- Issues emerging from the network at local and / or state level
- ADGP Board
- ADGP Senior Management Team/Policy Team
- Developments and opportunities arising in program areas
- Divisions of General Practice Network
- Australian Government
- State and Territory governments
- Australian Health Ministers and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG)
- Media coverage on health issues
- Representatives on external committees
- Sector partners
- Emerging research



ANALYSIS OF THE ISSUE

Before deciding whether to engage, ADPG will assess:

- the importance and urgency of the issue, and its implication/relevance for the network
- whether it is a new issue or if there is potential to consolidate a response from existing submissions and statements
- whether it will lead to funding and program development opportunities for the network
- risks and risk mitigation strategies (e.g. potential conflicts)
- consistency of the issue / opportunity with existing ADGP, Network and government policies
- time available for the task and scope of consultation that is viable
- resource requirements and capacity
- the impact on alliances and relationships



SCOPING THE ISSUE

- The likely target audience of the policy will be identified (e.g. Ministers, government agency, media, membership etc).
- Preliminary research (e.g. literature review, examination of relevant existing programs) will be determined by available time.
- Appropriate timeframes will be determined.
- Key stakeholders to be consulted will be identified.
- Initial policy view/s and option/s as a basis on which to frame a draft policy statement or submission will be assessed and compiled.



CONSULTATION

Where appropriate and timeframes permit, the ADGP will consult with:

- the Divisions network or a selected sample of the Network
- partner organisations
- individuals (e.g. clinicians, researchers) and other relevant organisations

The method for consultation will generally be in accord with the protocols agreed by the ADGP-SBO Coalition. There will be exceptions from time to time, for example when time or confidentiality requirements do not permit.

- All draft policy submissions or position statements are disseminated to Divisions for feedback via the SBO Chief Executive Officers.
- It is at the discretion of individual Divisions as to whether Board sign off is required.
- The SBOs will consolidate and synthesise a state view on the issue.
- The ADGP will consolidate and synthesise all input into a national position.

Additional suitable consultation techniques and timeframes may be used. Depending on the issue, options include:

- existing networks (e.g. Network Policy Group, Mental Health Network, Practice Nurse Network)
- formation of a specific reference group
- circulation of a discussion / options paper for comment
- convening focus groups or workshops

- one-on-one consultation with identified leaders / experts
- use of feedback mechanisms such as email and / or surveys



DRAFT POLICY PAPER

A draft Policy Paper (in the form of a draft position statement or submission) will be developed and circulated for comment. Where possible, ADGP will allow 6 weeks to provide sufficient time for local consultation, Board engagement and state synthesis.



SYNTHESIS AND ADOPTION

After consolidation and synthesis of feedback from the network, significant policy statements or submissions (i.e. those where it is deemed that the potential impact on the Network is substantial) will be referred to the ADGP Board for approval before release or submission.



FEEDBACK

ADGP recognises the value of feedback to stakeholders and will endeavour to provide a level of feedback to those involved in the consultation process.

Public submissions or statements will be posted on the ADGP website. All unpublished submissions will be available on request to members. In the longer-term unpublished submissions will be available to the Network through the member clearinghouse on the ADGP website, currently under development.