

Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators (AJJA)

Operating Guidelines

AJJA is a sub-group of the Children, Youth and Community Services Policy Research Working Group (CYCSPRWG) which is a standing committee of the Standing Council on Community and Disability Services Advisory Council (SCCDSAC)

AJJA operates as a body of senior executives whose purpose is to share information of relevance for the benefit of all youth justice jurisdictions, support the collection of relevant youth justice data, support and contribute to research in the area of youth justice and promote national standards for youth justice.

1. Membership

AJJA membership comprises a minimum of one senior executive officer from each of the Australian state or territory departments and New Zealand who is responsible for the delivery of youth justice services.

2. Terms of Reference

AJJA will work collaboratively to:

- set the strategic direction for youth justice in Australasia;
- provide leadership in the field of youth justice;
- provide relevant, accurate and research based information and advice to CYCSPRWG and SCCDSAC on youth justice matters; and
- share information of relevance for the benefit of all youth justice jurisdictions.

AJJA will also report annually to the CYCSPRWG and provide work plans in relation to its working groups for approval.

In order to meet these standards AJJA will undertake to:

- establish working groups to progress the work of AJJA;
- continually develop and review the work plans of its working groups;
- work with national bodies such as the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) in the collection of data;
- support and contribute to national research and reports;
- develop a National Minimum Data Set for youth justice; and
- continually promote national standards for youth justice.

3. Chairing AJJA

The CYCSPRWG will appoint an AJJA Chair every two years. AJJA will nominate a Deputy Chair every two years and seek the CYCSPRWGs approval for the nomination.

The Chair is responsible for managing AJJA meetings and AJJA business between meetings. However the Chair will consult with jurisdictions when matters have not previously been considered by AJJA.

4. Decision Making

AJJA representatives work collaboratively and employ a consensus decision making model and the development of a national approach on any topic takes account of the views of all jurisdictions including divergent positions.

5. AJJA Meetings

AJJA meetings will be held bi-annually in May and November. Generally they will be held over two days with an optional third day which will be used to visit a youth detention facility and or a community based service or to focus on specific matters of national interest.

6. Observers and Presentations

Generally only AJJA representatives or persons approved by them will attend AJJA meetings. However:

- external guest presenters may be invited by the AJJA Chair or the Chair of working groups to address meetings on specific issues; and
- the hosting jurisdiction may invite departmental staff to attend part or all of the meeting.

Generally jurisdictions would invite the external presenter to the meeting only for the period of the presentation.

7. Venue and Hosting

Each jurisdiction will in turn host an AJJA meeting. The hosting jurisdiction is responsible for organising a venue, the meeting dinner, booking accommodation and advising delegates of the details. However individual delegates are responsible for their own bookings.

Hosting jurisdictions are also responsible for:

- delivering the opening and closing address at meetings; and
- preparing meeting folders if requested by individual representatives that are inclusive of all papers, reports, etc that are forwarded by the Secretariat.

8. The AJJA Secretariat

The main tasks undertaken by the Secretariat are:

- coordinating AJJA meetings;
- drafting agendas, agenda papers and minutes of AJJA meetings and teleconferences;
- providing administrative support to the AJJA Chair and Deputy Chair on AJJA matters;
- assisting the coordination of the work of AJJA;
- providing assistance to working groups as approved or directed by AJJA or the AJJA Chair or Deputy Chair;
- acting as the central repository of information;
- monitoring the AJJA Website;

- making day to day decisions on minor matters such as administrative issues;
- referring all significant decisions to AJJA for consideration at its regular meetings or if necessary out of session;
- establishing, monitoring and reviewing systems as necessary to support the work of AJJA, AJJA Working Groups and the relationship to the CYCSPRWG; and
- as required, liaising with other Ministerial Council Secretariats.

9. Agenda Setting and Management of AJJA Meetings

The Secretariat is responsible for the coordination of meetings and forwarding to jurisdictions time frames for meeting activities. (Attachment 1)

Jurisdictions will adhere to these time frames.

9.1 Agenda Item Nomination

Approximately 13 weeks prior to an AJJA meeting the Secretariat will:

- call for agenda nominations and advise jurisdictions of the due date for the agenda nominations, AJJA papers and AJJA jurisdiction reports; and
- provide jurisdictions with the templates for agenda nominations, AJJA papers and the jurisdiction report. (Attachment 2, 3 and 4)

Ten weeks prior to a meeting the agenda will be finalised by AJJA representatives via teleconference. (Attachment 5)

9.2 Agenda Structure and Management

The agenda for AJJA meetings will include those items agreed to at the teleconference. This will include standing items such as working group reports.

The endorsed agenda items will then be grouped together on the agenda in order to efficiently manage the time available.

9.3 Agenda Papers / Jurisdiction Reports

Jurisdictions will forward electronically to the Secretariat AJJA papers and jurisdiction reports four weeks prior to a meeting. These will be prepared in accordance with the templates provided by the Secretariat.

Papers will be no longer than two to three pages and jurisdiction reports no longer than four to five pages. If a longer paper or jurisdiction report is necessary, jurisdictions will attach an Executive Summary to the document.

The Secretariat will, the next working day after the due date, forward electronically to all jurisdictions the AJJA papers and jurisdiction reports.

9.4 Late Papers / Reports

Late papers will be circulated to jurisdictions. However, if papers or reports are lodged after the due date and there is insufficient time for representatives to be adequately briefed or to consider the implications of the recommendations, AJJA representatives may decide at meetings to defer the item to the next meeting or to deal with the item out of session.

If a decision is made to deal with an item out of session, the Secretariat will coordinate a teleconference for this purpose within six weeks of the meeting unless otherwise advised.

9.5 Access to Papers and Decisions

AJJA papers and reports would generally be considered to be confidential to AJJA representatives. However this is a matter for the judgement of representatives in the context of the purpose of the request for the information, the nature of the document, whether the matter is finalised and the application of relevant Freedom of Information legislative provisions.

10. Responsibilities of Jurisdictions

Jurisdictions are responsible for:

- providing agenda item nominations, papers and jurisdiction reports in accordance with the Secretariat's time frames;
- participating in teleconferences coordinated by the Secretariat;
- participating in meetings;
- responding to all requests from the Secretariat, including a nil response, by the due date; and
- advising the Secretariat immediately of any changes to the "AJJA Contact List".

11. Recording Decisions and Records of AJJA Meetings

Decisions from meetings will be recorded by the AJJA Secretariat. The Secretariat will prepare draft minutes within two weeks of a meeting and forward them to representatives for feedback.

Once the draft minutes and decisions are finalised, the Secretariat will issue the document "Final Decisions and Actions Arising" within four weeks of a meeting. (Attachment 6)

This will document for jurisdictions their responsibilities prior to the next AJJA meeting.

12. Costs

AJJA representatives meet the travel and accommodation costs associated with their attendance at meetings. Hosting jurisdictions meet the costs associated with the meeting venue.

Cost sharing for the provision of secretariat services is negotiated by AJJA representatives.

13. Templates

AJJA will agree to a specific format for the nomination of agenda items, AJJA papers, and jurisdiction reports in order to:

- ensure consistency across jurisdictions; and
- facilitate the conduct of AJJA business and decision making processes.

14. Relationship to the CYCSPRWG and SCCDSAC

AJJA will nominate issues for the consideration of SCCDSAC through the CYCSPRWG.

AJJA will report annually to CYCSPRWG. This report will:

- report on the financial year preceding the CYCSPRWG meeting;
- highlight the priority areas identified by AJJA and seek strategic direction;
- report on the status of working group work plans; and
- seek approval for the establishment of new working groups including their Terms of Reference and work plan.

15. AJJA Working Groups

15.1 Establishing Working Groups

AJJA may establish working groups to progress work on, examine or identify issues of relevance to youth justice.

15.2 Membership

Members of working groups may be nominated by AJJA representatives. They do not need to be AJJA representatives.

15.3 Chairing Working Groups

An AJJA representative must Chair each working group in order to ensure that there is congruency with the AJJA operating guidelines. The Chair represents the working group, not their jurisdiction at working group meetings.

An additional AJJA representative will be nominated as a Deputy Chair to assist with chairing duties as required. However, AJJA may agree to a person other than an AJJA representative being elected to the position of Deputy Chair.

15.4 Procedures

Working groups will develop their own Terms of Reference and work plan for approval by AJJA and the CYCSPRWG. (Attachment 7)

In order to ensure that AJJA representatives are fully informed regarding the work of working groups, working group members will ensure that their AJJA representative is briefed in relation to the progress of the working group and seek their endorsement as required for work being undertaken.

15.5 Reporting

Chairs of working groups will provide a progress report bi-annually at AJJA meetings. (Attachment 8)

15.6 Confidentiality

Working group reports would generally be considered to be confidential to AJJA representatives unless otherwise directed by AJJA.

15.7 Costs

AJJA jurisdictions meet travel, accommodation and hosting costs associated with the activities of working groups.

16. Attachments

Attachment 1	AJJA Secretariat Meeting Time Frames
Attachment 2	Agenda Nomination
Attachment 3	AJJA Paper
Attachment 4	Jurisdiction Report
Attachment 5	Agenda
Attachment 6	Final Decisions and Actions Arising
Attachment 7	AJJA Work Plan
Attachment 8	Working Group Progress Reports