

Terms of Reference

Heart Foundation Expert Advisory

June 2025

Preamble

The National Heart Foundation of Australia (Heart Foundation) is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1959. The Heart Foundation's mission is to reduce heart disease and improve the heart health and quality of life of all people living in Australia through our work in risk reduction, support, care, and research.

1. Role

Convened by a Director of the Heart Foundation Board (Convener), the Heart Foundation Expert Advisory (HFEA) is a group of independent experts (members). Members will be called upon to provide guidance to the Heart Foundation Board and Executive on areas in which they have experience and expertise. This includes endorsing guidelines, relevant resources, and publications for the Heart Foundation.

2. Purpose

The Heart Foundation Expert Advisory will consist of a core group of members who will be called upon by the Heart Foundation Executive or Board, via the Secretariat, to:

- Inform relevant clinical policies, guidelines, and programs
 - Offer expert advice to shape Heart Foundation policies and programs.
 - Recommend endorsement of clinical guidelines and resources.
- Provide strategic guidance and recommendations
 - Address health topics where there are uncertainties by providing guidance on risks and benefits of proposed actions in these areas.
 - Assist in framing our messaging on significant topical health issues.
- Provide guidance and recommendations on potential strategic health-related partnerships
 - Ensure partnerships align with our strategic goals and benefit our target audiences.
 - Provide insights to maximise both revenue and health impact.
- Support media communications
 - Select members could provide high-profile media commentary when requested by the Heart Foundation Board or Executive.
- Advise on the potential need for additional consultation
 - Recommend formation of expert steering groups for specific guideline reviews and development.
 - Ensure diverse representation and appropriate expertise in consultations.

3. Reporting

Heart Foundation Expert Advisory activities, decisions, and recommendations will be logged and collated by the Heart Foundation Secretariat and presented by the HFEA Convener, or a Heart Foundation Executive member, in a report to the Heart Foundation Board.

4. Core group

The core group of the Heart Foundation Expert Advisory should reflect a variety of expertise and experiences, including prevention, care and support, equity, health policy, health systems, epidemiology, and lived experience. The core group will be convened by a Heart Foundation Board Director and could include other clinical Heart Foundation Board members.

5. Subject-specific expert engagement

The core group may also form expert steering groups for specific programs. This wider group of subject-specific experts may include a diverse range of professionals such as cardiologists and other specialists, general practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, paramedics, cardiac rehabilitation health professionals, and allied health practitioners. These expert steering groups may be formed as needed based on the topics and content of specific projects, guidelines, and programs.

6. Core group tenure

Membership of the core group will be reviewed every three years to ensure diversity and identify any gaps in relation to the skills matrix.

7. Way of working and decisions

The Heart Foundation Expert Advisory will not have formal, scheduled meetings, and will instead work in a dynamic and responsive 'on-call' manner.

The HFEA, and other relevant experts, will be contacted via email by the Secretariat with a request that will include:

- A clear request
- Supporting information
- A deadline for response

HFEA responses or query outcomes will be collated and circulated to the core group and relevant experts.

Further questions will be posed if they have arisen and will be discussed with the Convener and HFEA (as well as other experts) as appropriate. Final outcomes will be recirculated to the HFEA and relevant experts for endorsement, before being provided to the Heart Foundation Board.

The Convener can call an online meeting when required.

8. Specific roles

Convener

- A Director of the Heart Foundation Board who, with support from the Secretariat and Heart Foundation Executive, facilitates the functions of the HFEA.

Members (within the core group)

- Actively provide focused contributions and expert advice to enable the points listed under 'Purpose' in these Terms of Reference.
- Advocate for the Heart Foundation's activities in the broader community.
- Recommend and connect other relevant and appropriate experts as needed.

Secretariat (provided by the Heart Foundation)

- Organise communications and distribute supporting materials.
- Collate and record outcomes and maintain HFEA documentation.
- Prepare the HFEA report for the Heart Foundation Board.
- Provide general logistical and administrative support as required.

9. Conflicts of interest

All members (within the core group and any other independent experts) must declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest related to the proposals under review, matters circulated, or the overall purpose and responsibilities of the HFEA. These declarations of interest should be disclosed by members as soon as they become aware and will be recorded in a register.

Each request that goes out to the HFEA will include a reminder to raise any conflicts of interest.

The declaration of interest register may be regularly reviewed by the Heart Foundation Board to determine if continued HFEA membership is appropriate (see [Termination of Member](#)).

10. Confidentiality and Policy Compliance

Members and engaged experts will not reveal any confidential or proprietary information entrusted in the course of their duties and may not use, or attempt to use, any such information, documents, or data, other than for the fulfilment of their duties as a HFEA member or a member of any expert steering group.

Upon cessation of membership or engagement, and thereafter, the member shall not reveal any confidential or proprietary information obtained whilst a HFEA member or engaged expert, and may not use or retain, or attempt to use or retain, any such information, documents, or data.

All members and engaged experts must adhere to the Heart Foundation's Code of Conduct and any other appropriate policies as provided.

11. Intellectual property

All members and engaged experts will respect the copyright of any information and resources developed under the auspices of the Heart Foundation and/or its collaborators, to which they have access while a HFEA member, and may not use or attempt to use any such information, documents, or data in a manner which may breach copyright.

12. Payment

Involvement in the HFEA is on an honorary basis.

13. Resignation or Termination

Should a member wish to resign their membership from the core group, the member is required to provide written notice to the Secretariat.

The Heart Foundation Board reserves the right to terminate a member's appointment immediately from the HFEA, if deemed in the best interests of the Heart Foundation. Reasons for termination may include (but not limited to) notification of a conflict of interest, breach of Heart Foundation policies, inability to implement the philosophy of the Heart Foundation, or breaches of confidentiality. The Heart Foundation is required to provide written notice of termination.

14. Review and Amendment of the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference (ToR) will be reviewed annually or as deemed necessary by the Heart Foundation.

Changes to the ToR can be proposed by the HFEA core group but must be approved by the Heart Foundation Board.

15. Approval and Review

This ToR was approved by the Heart Foundation Board on 31/03/2025. The next review is scheduled for 01/04/2026.

Appendix A

Skills Matrix for Heart Foundation Expert Advisory Membership

Name:

Please indicate your area(s) of expertise using these symbols:

Strong expertise = ++

Limited expertise = +

No expertise = -

Skill / Experience area	Description	Expertise
Clinical cardiology	Experience in the practice of clinical cardiology, with an understanding of patient needs, treatment protocols, and current challenges in the field.	
Primary care - GP	Experience in the delivery of primary care, including patient-centred care, preventive services, and chronic disease management.	
Primary care - other	Experience in the delivery of primary care, including patient-centred care, preventive services, and chronic disease management.	
Allied health care	Experience in the delivery of allied health care, including patient-centred care, preventive services and chronic disease management.	
Cardiovascular research	Experience in cardiovascular research, with published works, leadership in research projects, and experience in cutting-edge cardiovascular research design, execution and evaluation in basic, clinical, public health and/or health services research studies.	
Research translation	Skills in bridging the gap between research findings and practical applications, ensuring that discoveries lead to tangible health outcomes or policy changes.	
Service delivery	Experience in the design, implementation, or evaluation of services, ideally related to healthcare or research contexts. Understanding of the principles of quality service delivery and patient-centred care.	
Policy, government, and advocacy	Skills in influencing policy formation and decision-making within state and/or federal government.	
Patient advocacy/ representation	Direct experience or a deep understanding of patient needs, lived experience, and the patient journey through cardiovascular care.	

First Nations	Expertise in, and respect for, First Nations cultures, traditions and cardiovascular health challenges and experience in collaborating with First Nations communities. Experience in culturally safe patient-centred care, preventive services, and/or chronic disease management with First Nations health care providers. <i>If you identify as First Nations, please use the symbol 'L' for lived experience.</i>	
Rural and remote	Experience working in rural and/or remote healthcare settings.	
Children and young people	Expertise in cardiovascular health in children and young people.	
Health economics	Understanding of the economic aspects of healthcare, including funding, cost-benefit analysis, and the economic impact of cardiovascular diseases.	
Other specialty	A relevant specialty that is not listed above.	

Subspecialty

If you have a subspecialty within one of the broader specialities listed above, please select from the below list.

- Imaging
- Electrophysiology
- Prevention
- Cardiac surgery
- Interventional
- Cardiac rehabilitation

Appendix B

Core Member Appointment Process for the Heart Foundation Expert Advisory Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI)

The National Heart Foundation of Australia (Heart Foundation) Board will issue a public call for EOIs for positions on the Heart Foundation Expert Advisory (HFEA). This call will be published on the Heart Foundation website, the websites of affiliated medical and research institutions, as well as communicated via other relevant platforms and channels as deemed appropriate.

Expression of Interest (EOI) submission

Interested individuals are required to submit:

- A brief statement (max. 250 words) outlining their interest in joining the HFEA.
- A CV highlighting professional background, academic qualifications, and key achievements.
- A specific indication of experience with reference to the [Skills Matrix](#), categorically mentioning which skills they possess (see [Appendix A](#)).

Shortlisting process

EOIs will be reviewed by a selection panel comprising members from the Heart Foundation, and external experts as deemed necessary.

The panel will assess EOIs based on alignment with the Skills Matrix and potential contribution to the HFEA's responsibilities and purpose.

The shortlisted candidates will be presented to the Heart Foundation Board for approval.

Equitable representation

As part of our commitment to ensuring a diverse and expertise-rich membership, the selection panel will give careful consideration to achieving an appropriate equitable representation, considering gender, location, First Nations, and minority groups. This is in conjunction with evaluating the skills mix as outlined in the [Skills Matrix](#).

Reference check

The Heart Foundation may contact referees to verify the authenticity of qualifications and to gather additional insights into the candidate's suitability.

Appointment

The Heart Foundation Board will make the final decision on the appointment of members to the HFEA.

Onboarding

Newly appointed members will undergo an onboarding process that includes completing a volunteer agreement and associated documentation, an introduction to the Heart Foundation's operations and policies, the HFEA's purpose, and current projects.

Announcement

The Heart Foundation will formally announce the new HFEA members on its website and through other relevant communication channels.

Note

The Heart Foundation Board reserves the right to directly approach and invite individuals with specific expertise to join the HFEA, if deemed appropriate. This is to ensure that the committee remains balanced and possesses key skills identified from the [Skills Matrix](#).