



www.northwestdefencealliance.com.au

Terms of Reference

This Terms of Reference is the single defining document of the North West Defence Alliance (NWDA) and is current from 08 March 2024.

Preamble

The current defence strategy developed by successive federal governments since 2020 has emphasised the importance of increasing the presence of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in the north of the country. Major powers in the Indo-Pacific region have entered a dangerous phase of strategic competition and it is assessed there will be reduced warning if this escalates to conflict. The north-west is a source of enormous wealth for the nation and must be viewed by any would-be aggressor as appropriately defended to deter attack. The north-west is also of strategic importance because of its proximity to vital trade routes in the Indian ocean and through Indonesia.

Since being established in 2020 the NWDA has been successful in lobbying the federal government and Department of Defence to invest in the north-west. Air bases in the Pilbara and Kimberley have been prioritised for upgrade to support expanded operations. The ADF has increased its exercise activity and will invest in training areas like Yampi Sound to support exercises like Talisman Sabre and Koolendong. Army units such as 13 Brigade based in Perth have been ordered to focus on the north-west and will be spending more time operating in our region. Though these achievements are significant, the work of the NWDA in lobbying government to follow through on its commitments to protect the north must continue.

With an increase in investment in defence facilities and expanded presence of ADF and foreign forces it is now important and appropriate for the NWDA to establish the mechanisms to inform our communities and industry about the opportunities to work with and for defence. The NWDA will champion our industry to drive manufacturing, supply and sustainment opportunities with defence. Through collaboration with federal and state government agencies the NWDA will access resources to enable industry to prepare for defence work and maintain a capability directory to help companies compete for contracts. The NWDA will work with community groups to enable the increased defence presence to act as a positive influence and create opportunities for youth to be part of the growth in the uniformed force in the Pilbara and Kimberley.

NWDA Membership

There are nine local governments (eight with coastlines on the Indian Ocean) between the Shires of Exmouth in the south and Wyndham/East Kimberley in the north. These local governments constitute the core membership of the NWDA.

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The member local governments at 08 March 2024 include the Shires of:

- Wyndham/East Kimberley
- Derby/West Kimberley
- Broome
- Halls Creek
- Town of Port Hedland
- City of Karratha
- Exmouth

NWDA Stakeholders

In order to best serve the interests of the communities in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions the NWDA has identified a number of stakeholders:

- Defence West
- Regional Development Australia - Kimberley
- Regional Development Australia - Pilbara
- Australian Industry Defence Network
- North Regional TAFE and other TAFEs as interested
- Pilbara Kimberley Universities Centre
- Universities as may be interested (CQU, Curtin, UWA etc)
- Resource Industry Majors (Rio Tinto, BHP, Woodside etc)
- Defence industry Prime Contractors (BAE, Raytheon, Thales etc)
- Regional Chambers of Commerce
- Development Commissions
- Local businesses.

Objectives

The following objectives represent the core purpose of the NWDA. These objectives serve as a 'north star' for the membership and should be reflected in the annual business plan. Each objective is not equal in importance and does not require an even share of the resources of the NWDA in the annual business plan. The governance mechanisms of the NWDA will determine the highest priority objectives to assist with the production of the annual business plan.

- Represent the concerns of the membership to the federal government and Department of Defence regarding strategic vulnerability and the need for defence presence
- Act as a point of liaison for the Department of Defence and associated authorities to exchange information and increase transparency
- Identify opportunities for industry in the north-west to support ADF activities and defence related infrastructure work
- Support local businesses that are interested in defence related opportunities with accessing the necessary resources to become 'defence ready'
- Develop and maintain a capability directory of businesses that are seeking defence related work
- Advocate for defence related science and innovation in the north-west to include test and evaluation of emerging technologies

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- Host forums to attract new business to the north-west to enhance defence industry capabilities and capacity
- Maintain effective communication and collaboration between the members and stakeholders to promote one another's strategic objectives.

Governance Structure

The NWDA is an incorporated association and has the Incorporated Association Registration Number (IARN) A1043269S. In accordance with the Associations Incorporations Act (2015) and the INC Guide¹ a management committee is required for each registered association. In order to meet the requirement to have a suitable management function, the NWDA will establish a Steering Committee that will decide all matters relating to the operation of the NWDA. The following points explain the governance of the NWDA:

- The Steering Committee will be represented by one member from each local government which shall nominally but not necessarily be the Mayor/Shire President or otherwise a councillor who will represent the Mayor/Shire President.
- Councils are encouraged to have a second councillor to act as proxy where necessary.
- Individual local governments may co-opt other councillors, or senior staff as necessary to attend Steering Committee Meetings, but if a vote is required, each local government will have only one vote.
- Defence West and the RDA Kimberley and RDA Pilbara may have representation on the Steering Committee
- The Steering Committee will elect a Chairperson, whose tasks shall include:
 - Scheduling and arranging Committee meetings
 - Chairing the Committee meetings
 - Taking a lead role in initiating and managing lobbying activities, inter- or intra-state trips, advertisements etc
 - Sending official correspondence on behalf of the NWDA
 - Engaging with media and delivering media statements on behalf of and only with the approval of the Committee
- A Deputy Chairperson shall also be elected, whose task is to assist the Chair as required.
- The Steering Committee shall appoint a Secretary whose tasks shall include:
 - Arranging Committee meetings when requested by the Chairperson
 - Preparing Steering Committee reports and distributing them prior to the meeting
 - Taking minutes and distributing them to all members
 - Coordinating lobbying activities, inter- or intra-state trips, advertisements as directed by the Chair
 - Drafting, distributing and record keeping of official correspondence as directed by the Chairperson
 - Preparing media statements for the Chairperson
- The Chairperson and Deputy shall be voted in by a majority of Committee members for a term of one year.
- Neither the Chair nor the Deputy Chair shall be paid for their time.
- The Secretary may be paid for their time in accordance with the approved budget.

¹ <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/books/inc-guide-incorporated-associations-western-australia/introduction-inc-guide>

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- Consultants and other services may be hired at any time but only in accordance with the approved budget.

Steering Committee Meetings

- The Steering Committee must conduct an Annual General Meeting by November 2024 and thereafter annually.
- The AGM must review and decide the annual business plan and budget.
- In addition to the AGM, the Steering Committee will meet quarterly.
- Ad hoc meetings may be requested by the Chair or any member.
- The Chair is responsible for determining if an ad hoc meeting is necessary.
- A minimum of two weeks' notice must be given for any Steering Committee meeting.
- The meeting agenda and any associated materials must be distributed one week prior to the meeting.
- Meetings may be face to face or through the use of electronic media such as Zoom/Teams/Skype.
- A quorum for any Steering Committee meeting is two thirds of the membership.
- The Chair may decide to proceed with a meeting if a quorum has not been achieved, but no decisions related to business plan or budget can be taken.
- The Secretary may be assisted in organising and hosting meetings where necessary by a nominated local government staff.

North West Defence Advisory Forum

In order to assist the Steering Committee with understanding the complex situation related to geostrategic politics and defence activity an Advisory Forum will be established. The Forum will also invite representatives from the major industries in the north-west. The forum will be composed of the following entities:

- ADF – Director Regional Airbases North
- ADF – Director Regional Airbases West
- ADF – Senior ADF Officer Western Australia
- ADF – Commander 13 Brigade
- ADF – Commander Regional Force Surveillance Group
- Director – Office of Defence Industry Support (WA)
- Australian Industry and Defence Network
- Chair UWA Defence and Security Institute
- Director Defence and Space – Curtin University
- CEO North Regional TAFE
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA
- Construction Contractors Association WA
- Resource Sector Representatives

The Advisory Forum will meet twice annually at a time and location determined by the Steering Committee. The Chairperson of the NWDA and the Senior ADF Officer WA will co-chair the Forum. In addition to the individuals and entities mentioned above, additional people may be invited to join the Forum or attend a Forum meeting. All NWDA members are encouraged to attend the Advisory Forum

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meetings. The main purpose of the Forum is to facilitate formal information exchanges. The forum will help the NWDA identify and target opportunities for defence industry and take appropriate action to ensure the necessary workforce, skills and infrastructure are in place.

NWDA Annual Business Plan

The Secretary is responsible for the production of an Annual Business Plan that explains the focus for the year and is aligned to the objectives of the NWDA. The Secretary may delegate the production of the plan to an external resource subject to the approval of the Steering Committee and the available budget.

The Business Plan must detail the major initiatives that will be pursued over the 12-month period and identify the required resources. The plan is to assign responsibility for the achievement of the initiatives and document time and output-based milestones. The plan is to be presented at the AGM and be endorsed by the Steering Committee.

An update on the Business Plan is to be included in the agenda of the quarterly Steering Committee meetings. The Secretary is responsible for the production and presentation of these updates. This may be delegated in part or whole to an external resource subject to the approval of the Chairperson and the available budget.

Communications and Correspondence

Information management and communication are essential to the success of the NWDA. The Business Plan will contain details of specific information campaigns the NWDA plans to conduct, how and when they will be actioned. The NWDA web site will be the primary communication median for distributing information to members, stakeholders and our communities. The following guidelines are provided to assist members in managing their communications with regard to the defence issues:

- All Members are responsible for updating other councils of any key defence related matters, including issues/incidents, activities, risks, and opportunities, when appropriate.
- Members can request the NWDA formally address the media, Defence and/or responsible Ministers at the state and federal level on issues of concern by contacting the Chair, Deputy Chair or Secretary.
- The Chair or Deputy Chair is authorised to speak on behalf of the NWDA, but should consult with any member who may be impacted by public comments.
- All communication and correspondence is to be aligned to the objectives of the NWDA (as above).
- The Chair is responsible for communicating to the entire membership any correspondence or public comment in a timely manner.
- Member council Mayors/Shire Presidents or CEOs may provide informal updates on NWDA activities to their councils and communities in addition to what is published on the web page.
- If a document distributed to members for comment is not responded to by a council within one week of issue, it will be assumed that council approves the document.
- Members must keep abreast of pertinent issues within their own local government area and provide information to NWDA when there is potential for these issues to impact the objectives or the business plan.

Attendance at Defence Industry Events

Lobbying is often best done at major events as a wide range of Defence personnel will be present. Such events are expensive to attend, and the cost must be included in the approved business plan and annual budget.

To minimise costs, attendance at events will generally include no more than the Chair and the Deputy and any consultant that may be involved. Other members may attend such functions but will be responsible for all travel and accommodation costs.

Subject to approval in the business plan and available budget, the NWDA may support the attendance at the defence industry events of individual companies that are pursuing defence business. The rules governing this are to be drafted and maintained by the Secretary.

Finances

- The NWDA will take membership fees from its member local governments and other sources as available. Annual budgets will be prepared and member contributions considered necessary for the organisation to operate in the following year shall be determined by agreement at the Annual General Meeting.
- Expenses accrued by members enacting the business plan agreed at the Annual General Meeting such as advertising, social media, lobbying, travel and accommodation to approved events, shall be reimbursed and the costs recovered from members equally in accordance with the approved budget.
- However, the NWDA will not be responsible for any salary or working time costs associated with members involvement in lobbying, event attendance etc.
- It is considered that time costs for members associated with lobbying, event attendance etc to be part of their Local Government elected members allowance, or staff salary. It is up to the individual local government to pay or not pay for this time as thought appropriate.
- Individual councils must meet all the costs of their representatives attending Alliance meetings, including costs such as travel, accommodation, stationery, telecommunications etc.
- A Budget for the upcoming year will be prepared by the Secretary and must be approved at the AGM.
- An annual financial report will be provided for each Annual General meeting.