

# Hospitals Industry Action Group Terms of Reference

## – current as of May 2026

The Terms of Reference (ToR) describe the purpose, responsibilities, and structure of the Hospitals Industry Action Group.

### 1. Background

The **Hospitals Industry Action Group (HIAG)** was established following an announcement by the Hon. Sophie Cotsis MP, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Work Health and Safety. The group builds on the legacy of the Action Against Violence in NSW Hospitals Working Group, which formally concluded in 2025.

Hospitals can be complex, high risk, rapidly evolving environments. SafeWork NSW recognises the critical need for strong, coordinated industry engagement to address work health and safety (WHS) hazards, including:

- psychosocial hazards (such as work-related violence and aggression and sexual and gender-based harassment)
- hazardous manual tasks
- slips, trips and falls
- needlestick injuries
- exposure to hazardous chemicals and biological hazards
- system-level WHS risks

The HIAG brings together expert stakeholders from across the hospital system including:

- NSW Health (including the Ministry of Health)
- Local Health Districts (LHDs) and Specialty Health Networks (SHNs)
- Private hospitals
- Unions, their delegates, worker representatives, and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs)
- icare
- State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA)
- NSW Ambulance
- Other relevant NSW Health agencies (e.g. HealthShare NSW, NSW Health Pathology, Mental Health services)

The HIAG sits within the broader SafeWork NSW strategy to drive collaborative, industry-led improvements across the health care and social assistance sectors, while maintaining a specific focus on hospitals.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of the HIAG is to provide a dynamic, solutions focused industry group that:

- **Drives coordinated action** on priority WHS issues affecting hospitals and associated service interfaces (including shared and transitional workplaces), with a particular emphasis on improving safety for workers.
- **Strengthens communication and collaboration**, across hospital networks and sector partners to support effective implementation of WHS initiatives.

- **Investigates emerging industry risks and trends**, enabling timely, evidence-based responses across the hospital system.
- **Shares best-practice approaches** to elevate WHS culture, systems, and capability across both public and private hospitals.
- **Provides expert advice to SafeWork NSW** on regulatory design guidance materials, education initiatives, and opportunities for industry-wide improvement.
- **Supports cross-agency communication**, ensuring learnings and effective initiatives are shared with relevant government and sector partners where appropriate.

### 3. Scope

#### In Scope

- System-level WHS issues, including identification and analysis of emerging risks, incident data, trends, and learnings.
- Priority WHS hazards and risks in hospitals, including but not limited to psychosocial hazards, hazardous manual tasks, slips, trips and falls, needlestick injuries, and exposure to hazardous chemicals and biological hazards.
- Sharing research, proven models, and innovations (including trauma-informed and de-escalation approaches) to improve WHS performance across hospitals.
- Strengthening communication and collaboration across NSW Health agencies (including LHDs, SHNs, and NSW Ambulance), private hospitals, unions, icare, and SIRA.
- Providing expert advisory input to SafeWork NSW on practical, meaningful, and workplace-focused guidance, education materials, and sector-wide WHS initiatives.

#### Out of Scope

- Addressing individual workplace incidents, complaints, or disputes.
- Providing case-specific WHS advice to individual organisations.
- Making regulatory or enforcement decisions.
- Considering matters unrelated to WHS within the hospital sector.
- Developing or approving operational policies for NSW Health or private hospitals.

### 4. Member Responsibilities

Members will:

- Actively participate in all scheduled meetings, nominating an alternate where necessary.
- Contribute openly and constructively, sharing insights, data, lessons learned, and real world experience.
- Support and progress agreed action items, including work undertaken between meetings.
- Promote WHS knowledge, messages and outcomes through their professional networks.
- Provide feedback and recommendations on SafeWork NSW programs, consultations, and initiatives relevant to hospital WHS.

## 5. SafeWork NSW Responsibilities

SafeWork NSW will:

- Chair the HIAG and ensure balanced representation and inclusive discussion.
- Set strategic direction for the group consistent with strategic priorities and Ministerial commitments, in consultation with members.
- Facilitate meaningful, respectful, and solution-focused discussions.
- Coordinate meeting logistics, including agendas, minutes, and distribution of papers.
- Monitor and report on progress of agreed action items.
- Provide timely updates on regulatory matters, incident trends, and cross government initiatives relevant to hospital WHS.
- Support appropriate cross-agency communication where initiatives or findings have broader relevance.

## 6. Meeting Structure

- The HIAG will meet **twice** per year, either in person or virtually.
- Meeting agendas, papers, and minutes will be circulated in advance.
- Out of session engagement may occur for urgent or priority matters (e.g., resource development, incident trend updates, consultation tasks).

## 7. Duration

These Terms of Reference apply on an ongoing basis and will be formally reviewed at least every two years, or earlier if required by mutual agreement.

## 8. Amendments

The Terms of Reference may be amended with the support of a majority of HIAG members and SafeWork NSW.

## 9. Confidentiality

Members shall observe all privacy, confidentiality, and data protection requirements when discussing sensitive or organisation specific information.

## 10. Evaluation and Effectiveness

The HIAG will periodically assess its effectiveness through:

- Tracking completion and outcomes of agreed action items.
- Reviewing progress against identified priorities.
- Periodic reflection on whether the group is meeting its stated purpose and delivering meaningful WHS improvements across the hospital sector.