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Equality Rights Alliance

Guiding Principles & Membership Processes

1. Equality Rights Alliance Guiding Principles

Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) is a network of non government and not for profit organisations and social enterprises coming together to advocate for women's rights and gender equality. ERA maintains a focus on gender equality, women's leadership and women's diversity, including bringing young women's voices to policy and decision making.

ERA will support women to attend and fully participate in ERA meetings, including holding meetings in accessible venues and providing services as needed to enable equitable participation of women with disabilities. ERA will also support women with caring responsibilities to participate fully in ERA gatherings.

To advance gender equality ERA adopts a human rights framework and advocates for adherence to international human rights principles.

The following principles are endorsed by Equality Rights Alliance member organisations:

- a. Equality Rights Alliance brings together member organisations to advocate for gender equality, women's leadership and policy responses that support women's diversity.
- b. Equality Rights Alliance believes the advancement of women and the achievement of equality are matters of fundamental human rights and seeks to promote the rights of women including through advocacy for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.
- c. Equality Rights Alliance supports, through practical measures and advocacy, the promotion of women's leadership.

- d. Equality Rights Alliance celebrates the diversity of women in Australia and promotes policy that has cultural integrity. Equality Rights Alliance will work in collaboration with other Alliances to address the express concerns of women from diverse life experiences and backgrounds.
- e. ERA will work to strengthen the voices and participation of marginalised women to achieve optimal policy and service delivery outcomes.
- f. Equality Rights Alliance is committed to advocacy that links domestic issues to regional and international mechanisms for human rights and gender equality.
- g. Equality Rights Alliance recognises that women share some concerns that can be addressed only by working together and in partnership with men and boys towards the common goal of gender equality both domestically and globally¹.
- h. Equality Rights Alliance works to share resources, experience and knowledge between member organisations while respecting the autonomy of the particular principles and processes of each organisation.
- i. Equality Rights Alliance is transparent and accountable in its operations, uses participatory decision-making processes and works in a spirit of trust, mutual respect, inclusiveness and co-operation.

2. ERA Membership

2.1 Who can be members of ERA?

- Member organisations of ERA are national non-government organisations, not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises with a primary focus on the impacts of policy and service delivery on the equality of women in Australia.
- ERA welcomes new organisations committed to all its guiding principles (listed above). A membership application includes stating a commitment to all ERA principles and involvement in ERA priority issue projects.
- Where there is no relevant national level organisation State or territory based organisation may be members, provided the organisation can demonstrate that they engage in national level policy work.
- Membership will be confirmed by agreement of the ERA Steering Group at their regular quarterly meeting. The ERA Steering Group reserves the right to:
 - Seek guidance and the views of current ERA members and their relationships to potential members; and

¹ Paragraph three, Beijing Platform for Action, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

- Consider member applications on a case-by-case basis and accept or decline membership.
- The ERA Steering Group will consider applications for membership taking into account:
 - Full endorsement of all ERA guiding principles
 - Any stated areas of conflict of interest with ERA
 - Any statements or activities of an applicant which may be interpreted as being contradictory or counter to the ERA guiding principles or the ERA Annual Activity Work Plan
 - Complementarities with other National Women's Alliances. ERA supports the ongoing development of other National Women's Alliances and may recommend an applicant to approach another Alliance if this is more compatible with the interest areas of the applicant.
- **Related Organisations:** This clause deals with membership applications from multiple organisations which are part of a group of formally allied organisations which do not have a national level, umbrella or peak organisation ('Related Organisations'). Where two or more membership applications are received from Related Organisations, those Related Organisations will jointly hold a single ERA membership ('Joint Membership'). A Joint Membership will have a single vote. The joint members will notify ERA of the identity of the vote holder and the point of contact for communication with ERA. The organisation holding the vote and providing the point of contact with ERA will be responsible for communicating with the other organisations in the Joint Membership about ERA's activities. To be eligible for inclusion in the Joint Membership, each Related Organisation must demonstrate that they engage in national level policy work.
- **Peak bodies or umbrella associations:** The ERA Steering Group will consider applications for membership from non-government or not-for-profit peak bodies, umbrella groups or associations on a case-by-case basis, taking into account:
 - Full endorsement of the peak body to all ERA guiding principles
 - Current membership of the applicant
 - How many members of the applicant are already members of ERA
 - Complementarities with other National Women's Alliance.
- **Universities, academic and research institutes:** The Federal Government funding agreement for ERA excludes universities, academic bodies and research institutes from Alliance membership. ERA will forge strategic, project-specific partnerships with such entities.
- **Individual women:** ERA membership is for organisations and groups only. Where individual women wish to join they will be recommended to join one of the ERA member

organisations. There will be an email list open for public subscription on the ERA website. This will provide one-way public communication with regular updates and announcements from ERA.

- **Current members list:** An up to date list of ERA members will be tabled at each ERA Annual Members' Face-to-Face meeting and displayed on the ERA website.

2.2 Member obligations

- Prospective ERA members must complete a membership application form which includes:
 - Endorsement of all ERA guiding principles
 - Brief summary of organisation's work in the area of gender equality, women's leadership or women's diversity
 - Brief summary of organisation's membership or supporter base
 - Statement regarding any known or potential conflict of interest with ERA including with the ERA Annual Activity Work Plan
 - Nomination of Primary Representatives (up to two people) to ERA and any additional key contacts for the ERA email discussion groups
- Member organisations commit to active participation in ERA activities to meet ERA's contract and funding agreement obligations, including:
 - Providing input to ERA submissions and reports;
 - Participating and voting in ERA meetings and teleconferences
 - Participating in ERA projects and activities as outlined in the Annual Activity Work Plan's priority issues
 - Endorsing and supporting ERA reports, statements and press releases (noting ERA's opt-in process for member's endorsement, see ERA Working Methods ERA Document 2.0)
- Representatives will contribute to online discussions, respecting the diversity of views across the ERA membership and the need for care and courtesy when communicating via email.
- Members of ERA will be expected to be represented at the annual Members Face-to-Face Meeting. Each member may send up to two delegates. It is expected that the Primary Representative/s of a member organisation will be in the delegation. See section 2.3 for more information on ERA meetings.

2.3 ERA Observers

An ERA Observer is an organisation which meets the membership criteria in 2.1, but does not participate as a full member of ERA.

ERA Observers may attend and observe proceedings at annual members meetings, work group meetings and other activities. They will be included in communications from the secretariat to the members and will have the same access to the website as members.

ERA Observers cannot vote as ERA members and cannot nominate individuals to the Steering Group. They are not obliged to commit to active participation in ERA activities, to participate in communications or to attend the annual members meeting.

ERA observers must fully endorse the ERA Guiding Principles.

If an organisation or entity indicates on its application for membership that it would prefer Observer status to full membership, the Steering Group may approve an organization or entity as an ERA Observer, provided that the organisation or entity meets the criteria for full membership set out in 2.1.

2.4 ERA meetings

ERA will make a budget allocation to support regular face-to-face gatherings for members. This will include:

- One annual Members' Face-to-Face Meeting. This meeting will include adoption of the ERA Annual Activity Work Plan.
- One members' gathering in conjunction with an ERA project or consultation.
- Attendance at these ERA meetings will be on a cost share arrangement:
 - ERA will cover reasonable costs associated with convening the meetings.
 - ERA will also provide accommodation for one interstate representative (twin share rooms or billet arrangements). For members where neither primary representative resides in the locale of the meeting, ERA will provide accommodation for up to two representatives, depending on available budget.
 - Member organisations may be asked to self fund travel to the meeting.
 - Small and volunteer managed organisations may apply for financial assistance for travel to ERA meetings (assistance provided where budget permits and on a case-by-case basis)

2.5 Process to join Equality Rights Alliance

- Individual members invited to join ERA public email lists and encouraged to approach ERA member organisations.
- Organisations or groups interested in ERA membership to be directed to the ERA Secretariat for further information regarding membership.
- The ERA Secretariat will provide an information pack about ERA and the criteria for membership upon request.
- Applications for membership are to be returned to the ERA Manager.

- The ERA Steering Group will consider membership applications at their regular quarterly meeting.
- If an organisation is eligible to become an ERA member, the ERA Manager and ERA Steering Group will provide an induction with a telephone hook-up (or voice equivalent method) to welcome the new member, discuss expectations of participation, upcoming meetings and local contacts.
- The Executive Director, Board Chair, and the prospective Primary Representatives of the new member organisation are encouraged to participate in the induction meeting.
- If the organisation is not eligible to become a member, the organisation will be informed by telephone (or voice equivalent method) with a follow up explanatory letter and invited to join the public email list for ERA updates and information.
- Membership and contact data is to be maintained by the ERA Secretariat.

2.6 Cessation of Membership

- Noting ERA Guiding Principles 8 and 9, ERA and its members work to respect the 'autonomy of the particular principles and processes of each member organisation'. ERA and its members are also committed to ensuring ERA is:
 - transparent and accountable in its operations, uses participatory decision-making processes and works in a spirit of trust, mutual respect, inclusiveness and co-operation.*
- Member organisations of ERA whose focus shifts such that they would no longer be able to endorse all the guiding principles of ERA are required to contact the ERA Steering Group to discuss their ability to meet ERA membership requirements.
- In the event that a member organisation is publicly unwilling to continue their endorsement of all ERA Guiding Principles or is obstructing the delivery of ERA's contract obligations, the ERA Steering Group will meet with the member organisation to discuss their status as an ERA member.
- Every effort (including communications in person and in writing) will be made by the ERA Steering Group to inform the member organisation of their obligations to the Alliance and to assist them to return to full endorsement of the ERA Guiding Principles.
- Cessation of ERA membership will be considered as a serious and last resort for organisations which, after exhausting the above communication process with the ERA Steering Group, continue to violate ERA Guiding Principles or obstruct the delivery of ERA's contract obligations.

- Any consideration of cessation of ERA membership must be preempted by full consultation with the ERA membership.
- A final decision on ERA membership cessation for a particular organisation will be put to a vote of the ERA membership with the requirement of two thirds majority.

Defunct Member Organisations

- Where a member organisation has been inactive for more than 2 years, the Secretariat staff will investigate the reason for loss of contact. If the member organisation has ceased operations, the Secretariat will inform the Steering Group, which will decide whether to remove the organisation from ERA's membership list.
- If the ex-member organisation makes contact with the ERA secretariat within 6 months of the decision to end the membership, the membership may be reactivated without the need for an application.

2.7 Benefits of ERA Membership

ERA provides members with benefits in the following areas:

- **Information and Communication:** Members will receive regular updates, alerts and information regarding issues affecting women via the ERA member email discussion list. Together with member organisations ERA will identify issues concerning gender equality, women's leadership and women's diversity.
- **Online resources:** The ERA website will provide a hub of resources for members through a member login site, with access to online member working groups and document sharing facilities
- **Representation:** Through the priorities of the ERA annual work plan ERA will represent member interests and be a voice for member organisations
- **Networking:** ERA will assist members to network and link with other women's advocates through members gatherings, teleconferences, online forums and email discussion groups. As part of the project work of the annual work plan ERA will support member working groups on priority topics.
- **Advocacy:** ERA will support members to build their capacity as women's advocates and assist members to influence policy.



Equality Rights Alliance Membership Application

1. Application for membership

Having read and understanding the Guiding Principles of Equality Rights Alliance, and with the understanding of the expectation of active membership to the Alliance, we

_____ *(name of organisation)*
apply for membership in the Equality Rights Alliance.

Equality Rights Alliance Guiding Principles

We endorse the Equality Rights Alliance Guiding Principles in their entirety

Applicant information

We are a non-government organisation, not-for-profit organisation or a social enterprise with a primary focus on the impacts of policy and service delivery on the equality of women in Australia

Please outline the aim and purpose of organisation (please do not exceed this space)

Please provide a short summary of organisation's work in the area of gender equality, women's leadership and or women's diversity (please do not exceed this space)

Please describe the membership or supporter structures of the organisation. If a peak body, umbrella organisation or association, please attach a list of member organisations

Please identify any potential or perceived conflict of interest with Equality Rights Alliance or its Annual Activity Work Plan (please do not exceed this space)

Commitment to Equality Rights Alliance

We agree to work together with the other members of Equality Rights Alliance, respecting the diversity of views of the membership and recognising our obligations within the network, including the funding agreement obligations of the Alliance.

This application is submitted and approved by:

Name:

Title:

Signature:

Date:

2. Organisation contact information (may be different to Primary Representative’s contact details)

Organisation Name			
Postal Address			
		Postcode	
Phone		Fax	
E-mail			
Website			
Street Address			
		Postcode	

Nomination of Primary Representatives

- Up to two people may be nominated as Primary Representatives from each member organisation.
- One additional person may join the Primary Representatives on the Equality Rights Alliance members email discussion group. Numbers of participants are limited on this email list as it is an active discussion and decision-making forum.
- Additional representatives of a member organisation may participate in ERA working groups
- Members of ERA consent to ERA circulating representatives contact details within the ERA network.

We nominate the following person to act as a Primary Representative of _____
(name of organisation) to Equality Rights Alliance

Name: _____

Position in organisation: _____

Email address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Postal address: _____

We nominate the following person to act as a Primary Representative of _____
(*name of organisation*) to Equality Rights Alliance

Name: _____

Position in organisation: _____

Email address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Postal address: _____

We nominate the following person from _____ (*name of organisation*) to be
included in the member email discussion group of Equality Rights Alliance

Name: _____

Position in organisation: _____

Email address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Postal address: _____