



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

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Australian Preparatory Groups and Delegations for ITU Radiocommunication Sector and related APT meetings

Guidelines for participation

May 2024

Introduction

1. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (the Department) and the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) are the Australian Government agencies responsible for Australia's participation in international meetings and negotiations within the International Telecommunication Union Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) and Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT). The Department and the ACMA provide advice to the Minister for Communications in support of the government's communications policy objectives, including in relation to international radiocommunications and spectrum management, and to develop Australian positions and input contributions consistent with government policy.
2. The Australian Government values the expertise and perspectives that stakeholders can contribute to preparing for and participating in international radiocommunications meetings. However, the Department and the ACMA have the ultimate authority to determine Australian positions on all matters and will instruct delegations to meetings on how to proceed in the best interests of Australia. As representatives of the Australian Government, members of Australian delegations must at all times unequivocally support Australian Government positions and behave in a way that upholds the good reputation of Australia.

Preparation for international radiocommunications meetings

3. The Department and the ACMA use domestic preparatory groups as an avenue to engage with relevant stakeholders and to assist the Australian Government to conduct the consultation necessary to prepare for international meetings. These preparatory groups assist the Department and the ACMA in the

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development of Australian positions and input contributions that take into account the views of stakeholders, and that are consistent with government policy. The relevant ITU-R and APT forums, along with the corresponding Australian domestic preparatory groups are shown in Figure 1 below.

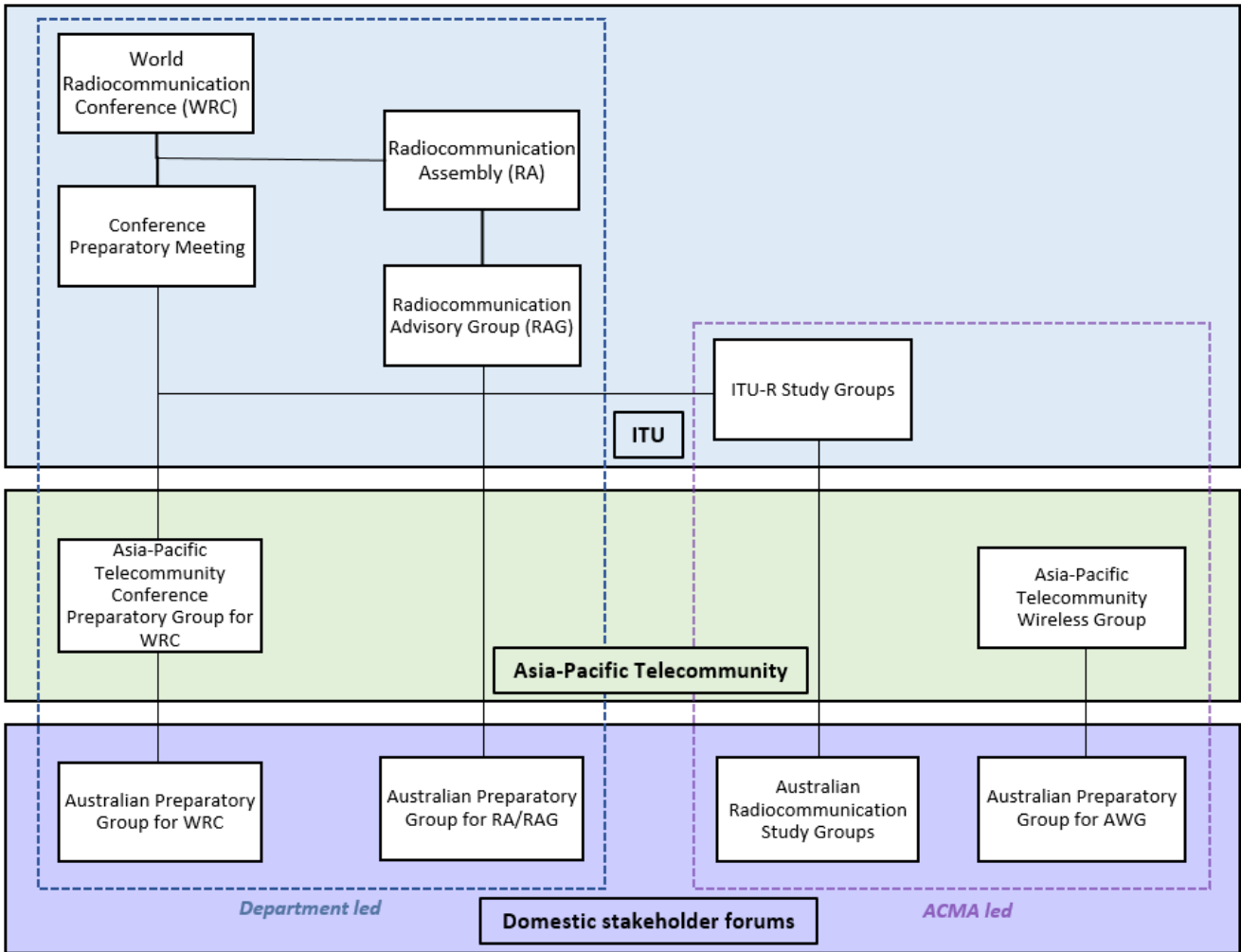


Figure 1 - Domestic and International Radiocommunications Forums

- 4. The Department leads the Australian preparatory process for the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC), the Radiocommunication Assembly (RA), the Radiocommunication Advisory Group (RAG) and associated preparatory meetings and will establish one or more Preparatory Groups (PGs) in each WRC cycle as necessary. The ACMA convenes Australian Radiocommunications Study Groups (ARSGs) which facilitate preparation for meetings of their corresponding ITU-R Study Groups and constituent working parties as well as the Australian Preparatory Group for the APT Wireless Group (PG AWG).
- 5. The terms of reference of each of these groups are defined separately.

Australian preparation for ITU-R and APT meetings

Chairs of preparatory groups

- 6. The ACMA is responsible for the appointment of chairs of the ARSGs and the PG AWG. The Department itself will normally chair preparatory groups associated with preparations for the RA/RAG and WRC.

Further details about chairs appointed by the ACMA, including their responsibilities, are detailed in the ACMA's Handbook – ARSG and PG AWG.

7. In all cases, the appointed chair of the relevant preparatory group must be eligible for inclusion as a member of the Australian delegation to the corresponding international meeting.

Meetings of preparatory groups

8. Preparatory groups provide a forum for interested stakeholders to discuss relevant topics and to make proposals to inform the development of Australian objectives and national positions by the Australian Government.
9. Prior to a delegation being established to attend meetings of the ITU-R and APT, the relevant preparatory group will usually meet to discuss topics of relevance and to capture stakeholder views on the issues to be considered at the upcoming international meeting.
10. A preparatory group does not decide Australian positions or objectives for an international meeting, or on an international issue of interest. Instead, these groups provide advice to the Department and the ACMA in order to allow decisions to be taken in the overall Australian national interest.
11. Eligibility to participate in a preparatory group does not automatically entitle a participant to join an Australian delegation to an international radiocommunications meeting. At times, it will be necessary to limit discussion to members of the Australian delegation to the relevant meeting or to Australian Government representatives only.

Formation and conduct of Australian delegations

Eligibility to join an Australian delegation

12. Selection of members of the Australian Delegation to a meeting of the ITU-R or APT is at the absolute discretion of the Department and the ACMA. The Department and the ACMA will take a range of factors into consideration when determining whether to accept an application to participate as a member of an Australian delegation. These factors include, but are not limited to:
 - the connection the individual has to Australia, including Australian citizenship or permanent residency;
 - the skills and/or knowledge of the participant relevant to the meeting, considering proposed Australian inputs and the work of the meeting;
 - the government, industry or academic interests represented by the participant and the associated benefit to Australia;
 - the ability of the individual to participate effectively in the meeting, noting that in-person attendance may be a requirement for participation in some meetings;
 - any existing or past participation in regional and international radiocommunications forums, including as a member of non-Australian delegations;
 - whether the participant has contributed to meeting preparations through participation in the relevant domestic preparatory group;
 - the number of Australian delegates and expertise required to advance Australia's national interests;
 - the extent to which the entity represented by the participant is represented on other national delegations or as sector members at the meeting; and
 - the participant's past compliance with these guidelines (and their predecessor guidelines).

13. **A delegate may be removed from the Australian delegation at any time prior to, or during, the meeting if they do not act in accordance with these guidelines or if the delegate fails to comply with a direction of the Department or the ACMA.**
14. Calls for expressions of interest to participate in meetings for which ACMA is the lead are circulated through the ARSGs. For meetings led by the Department, calls for expressions of interest will be circulated by the Department. To be accepted as a member of an Australian delegation, the applicant must have provided an up-to-date Participants' Declaration relating to conflicts of interest and other conduct requirements, prior to registration for the meeting.
15. Approved participants will be invited to join an Australian delegation by the Head of Delegation, who will in most cases be an official from either the Department or the ACMA¹, depending on the forum. The Department or the ACMA, as relevant to the meeting, will appoint the Head of Delegation.
16. The Head of Delegation to each meeting is responsible for the development of a draft delegation brief and is required to submit it for approval at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. Delegates are also expected to contribute to the development of the brief. The final delegation brief will be approved by the Department or the ACMA, depending on which entity is responsible for the meeting, and will reflect the positions and objectives of the Australian Government for that meeting. The Department and the ACMA reserve the right to make changes to the delegation brief as they see fit and to decide what, and if, Australian input documents will be submitted to the meeting in the best interests of Australia and in line with Australian Government policy.
17. Heads and Deputy Heads of Delegation have discretion to advance Australian positions in accordance with the spirit of the approved Australian Delegation Brief. However, if new issues arise during negotiations, further consultation may be necessary. Heads of Delegation who are not officers of the Department or the ACMA are required to consult with the agency approving the Delegation Brief and obtain authorisation to deviate from its instructions.

Representing Australia

18. Once appointed as a member of an Australian delegation to an ITU-R or APT meeting, delegates are required to accurately represent and actively pursue Australia's policy positions and objectives as set out in Australian Government approved delegation briefs, the published Australian preliminary positions, and verbal or written instructions from the Head or Deputy Head of Delegation, as applicable. This includes:
 - unambiguously supporting and acting in accordance with the Australian positions and objectives
 - promoting Australian views and expertise, and protecting Australian interests
 - not representing any third party's position as that of Australia
 - not promoting an international government or industry interest that is counter to, or inconsistent with, an Australian position.
19. Members of the Australian delegation cannot also serve dually on the delegations of other Member States across a WRC cycle, or on delegations of Sector, Affiliate, Associate or Academic Members in the same meeting.
20. If a Sector/Affiliate/Associate/Academic Member is unable to fully support the Australian position or objectives for an international meeting, or if a separate (non-Australian) contribution is submitted by their affiliated employer or client which is contrary to the Australian position or objectives, representatives of

¹ The exception to this rule is that in some cases, Australian delegations to ITU-R Study Group/Working Party or AWG meetings may be headed by other (non-Department/ACMA) Australian Government employees or ARSG chairs.

that member organisation should expect to be excluded or removed from the Australian delegation to that meeting, and potentially future meetings.

21. Stakeholders are provided the opportunity to have their organisation or clients' views considered in the development of Australian positions and objectives through the Australian domestic preparatory process.

Delegate conduct

22. The Australian Government requires high professional standards of behaviour of all participants. Employees of the Australian Public Service (APS) are bound by the [APS Values](#) and [the APS Code of Conduct](#), as set out in the *Public Service Act 1999*. Australian Government officials are also bound by requirements and regulations related to the management of confidential information and the use of Commonwealth resources. Participants who are not APS employees should be aware of and understand the APS Values and the APS Code of Conduct and be prepared to act in a manner consistent with the expectations of these documents, and in particular to make an undertaking to "behave in a way that upholds the good reputation of Australia".
23. Participants should make themselves aware of the rules of protocol and procedure of international organisations and act consistently with these expectations.
24. Delegates must accurately represent Australian positions and/or interests when engaged in discussions with international peers and must not imply there is an Australian position or interest on a matter before these have been developed. Where there is any doubt about an Australian position or interest, or it is under development, Australian delegates should consult with and defer to the Head of Delegation or Deputy Head of Delegation in all correspondence or discussions on the subject.
25. Australian delegates are expected to attend all Australian delegation meetings, join any official delegation communication platforms (e.g. WhatsApp), provide regular status updates to the Head of Delegation (or Deputy Head if so delegated), and generally participate in a collaborative way with other members of the delegation to ensure coverage of major issues and successful prosecution of Australia's positions. In general, participation will relate to participants' areas of expertise and interest; however, in some cases, delegates may be tasked by the Head of Delegation to monitor or participate in discussions on other matters.
26. Heads of Delegation are responsible for preparing a Delegation Report containing a summary of the meeting discussions and outcomes, and recommendations for future action within one month of the close of the meeting(s). Participants are required to contribute to these reports.
27. Bilateral consultations and meetings with office bearers, ITU or APT staff, or officials from other delegations should be pursued with the knowledge and consent of the Head of Delegation. Communication of formal Australian contributions, submissions, views (other than published Australian preliminary positions), or statements of position to other countries or secretariat must be agreed by the Head of Delegation.
28. The Head of Delegation must approve any additional roles (chairing and rapporteur responsibilities, assisting chairs, media liaison etc.) Australian participants are asked to take on at the meeting that are not otherwise addressed in the delegation brief.
29. Heads of Delegation may decide to release participants from international meetings if their expertise is no longer required due to the progress of negotiations (unrelated to any disciplinary matter). Conversely, they may request participants remain until negotiations are concluded.

30. Additional protocols apply for accreditation to attend the World Radiocommunication Conference as a treaty-level meeting. Specific guidance for individual meetings will be made available in the relevant delegation brief.

Failure to meet expectations

31. Participants who do not meet expectations as described in these guidelines may be asked to explain or change their behaviour, and may ultimately be excluded from participation in domestic and international radiocommunications groups at the discretion of the Department or the ACMA as appropriate. The Department or the ACMA will pursue official channels and may involve a participant's superiors (including clients, in relation to lobbyists) in any concerns raised about the conduct of a participant. The participant will have a reasonable opportunity to respond to any concerns raised. Where an acceptable outcome can be reached, participants can continue to engage in the radiocommunications groups. However, the Department and the ACMA reserve discretion to revoke the participant's accreditation or registration for an international meeting, withdraw Australian Government support for Sector, Associate or Affiliate Membership, or cancel participation in a domestic group.
32. Given the risks to Australia's international reputation and relationships with other countries, participation in international meetings is particularly sensitive and the Head of Delegation may, at their discretion, exclude any participant from further participation in a meeting. This option should be considered:
- where a complaint has been received and upheld about a participant's conduct
 - where there is prima-facie evidence of unprofessional behaviour or a security breach, including unapproved communication of official information outside the delegation
 - where, in the Head of Delegation's view, there is a failure to comply with expectations set out in this guide
 - where there is prima-facie evidence of a breach of the Participants' Declaration or requirements pertaining to the participant (e.g. an apparent breach of the APS Code of Conduct or the Lobbying Codes of Conduct).
33. Given the difficulty of addressing disciplinary issues in such circumstances, the Head of Delegation's discretion is absolute and their decision is final. The Head of Delegation will consult with any Deputy Head of Delegation on the matter and provide reasons in writing at the time of the decision.² In such circumstances, any additional costs incurred (e.g. for adjusted travel arrangements) are to be met by the participant.

Official information

34. Australian Delegation Briefs and other official information must not be shared outside the relevant Australian preparatory process without the express permission of the Department or the ACMA. Individuals wishing to participate on an Australian delegation representing entities who are also represented on other delegations may be required to agree to additional undertakings at the discretion of the Department and ACMA, in order to avoid any real or apparent conflicts of interest and to ensure official information is appropriately protected. This could include signing a Deed of Confidentiality.
35. Australian Delegation Briefs and other documents developed for meetings of domestic and international groups will only be shared with non-government participants at the "Official" or "Official: Sensitive" level. Participants must ensure all such material is not shared outside of channels set up for sharing this, such as an official SharePoint site or a delegation meeting/teleconference. Please note the following:

² Heads of Delegation who are not officers of the Department or ACMA must consult with both agencies.

- electronic materials at “Official: Sensitive” classification should be held only on password protected devices, including storage devices
- if carrying printed material at the “Official: Sensitive” classification, participants must carry it on their person
- official information also includes verbally-conveyed material, including information shared at preparatory group meetings, delegation meetings and any other formal or informal discussion pertaining to Australian positions or interests.

Conflicts of interest

36. The Australian Government welcomes private sector advice on the basis that participants are required to be transparent about their commercial and personal interests and that participants avoid any conflict of interest (real or apparent) in connection with their involvement in radiocommunications groups. Participants must avoid improper use of their position or information gained through participation in the radiocommunications groups (i.e. for personal gain). Improper use of a representative position or any information, as deemed counter to the Australian interest by the Department (in consultation with the ACMA), may result in the participant being removed from the process or delegation.
37. A conflict of interest may arise where participants are confronted with a situation where the outcomes could influence their own private interests, including the interests of family members³ or any person with whom they have a close personal relationship. These considerations therefore have the potential to influence their decisions or position. They can also occur in a situation where participants are confronted with choosing between the duties and demands of competing positions e.g. employee/advocate of an industry body and being an Australian delegate to an international forum.
38. Such conflicts should be avoided wherever possible. If they cannot be avoided or are an inherent part of the roles (e.g. in multi-stakeholder forums), conflicts can often be managed by openly acknowledging the real or apparent conflict and, if necessary, refraining from decision-making or representational roles on specific matters.
39. Real or apparent conflicts that should be declared include (but are not limited to) situations where participants, their companies (in which they have a substantial interest) or their family members, are employed by, or paid to work for (e.g. have entered into contracts or consultancies), or undertake voluntary work for, foreign government agencies or regulators, or foreign or multi-national companies, on matters related to or that could reasonably be seen to be about preparations for the WRC or engagement with the ITU.
40. Transparency requirements and principles for engagement with government representatives apply to individuals or representatives of Australian and multi-national companies who conduct lobbying activities on behalf of a third-party client (or whose employees conduct lobbying activities on behalf of a third-party client) – as set out in the [Lobbying Code of Conduct](#). Australia’s [Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme](#) may apply additional requirements for some individuals or entities.
41. As outlined above under “Representing Australia”, members of the Australian delegation to an international meeting are required to accurately represent and actively pursue Australia’s policy positions and objectives. Participants should not apply to join an Australian delegation in circumstances where

³ For the purposes of these Guidelines, **family members** include a spouse or former spouse, de facto partner or former de facto partner, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of a member, or a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of a member’s spouse or de facto partner. It also includes step-relations (e.g. step-parents and step-children) as well as adoptive relations.

there is a reasonable prospect that they will be expected to advance an Australian position that is contrary to their employer or client's interests.

Gifts and hospitality

42. A material conflict of interest could arise where participants receive offers of gifts or other benefits which influence, or could be perceived to influence, decisions and actions on a particular matter. Participants should understand Australian laws around bribery, including of foreign public officials, and should not ask for, or encourage, the giving of gifts, hospitality or other benefits.
43. Government officials are bound to follow specific policies around gifts to ensure transparency and avoid conflicts of interest, and may need to seek Head of Delegation approval to receive a gift or offer of hospitality, or may be required to register and/or return gifts, particularly expensive ones. While on delegations, non-government participants should act in a manner consistent with government participants in regard to accepting offers of hospitality, or other benefits, and should seek the advice of the Head of Delegation if in doubt. Offers or actual gifts and hospitality provided are a potential source of conflict of interest and can be declared on the conflicts of interest form as part of the Participants' Declaration.
44. Hospitality associated with a conference, meeting or seminar (such as official dinners/receptions) and low-cost gifts (bags, stationery, promotional or informative materials, small cultural items offered to all participants) are common at meetings of regional and international organisations and acceptance of such offers should not generally raise a material conflict of interest. Heads of Delegation and other senior officials may also exchange low-cost gifts with counterparts as a matter of course during bilateral meetings.

Travel arrangements and costs

45. All costs and travel arrangements associated with attendance and involvement in domestic and international radiocommunication activities are the responsibility of individual participants or their organisation. Travel arrangements include, but are not limited to, visas, passports, flights, accommodation, and travel and medical insurance.
46. Participants and their organisations are responsible for seeking independent advice on travel and associated considerations, including any risks involved.
47. Specific security-related arrangements may be required for particular meetings. Costs for these additional requirements are the responsibility of the individual participants.
48. The Australian Government provides a travel advisory and consular assistance service at www.smartraveller.gov.au. Participants should subscribe to receive travel advice and alerts relevant to their travel via the Smartraveller website.

Privacy

49. In the course of administering the radiocommunications preparatory groups the Department and the ACMA may collect personal information about members. This includes providing personal information to the ITU and the APT for the purposes of registering participants for meetings.
50. The Department and the ACMA manage and protect personal information that they collect and hold in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* which regulates the collection, storage, accuracy, use, disclosure

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and security of personal information by public and private sector organisations. Each agency's privacy policy sets out:

- the kinds of personal information they collect and hold
- how the information is collected and held
- the purposes for which they collect, hold, use and disclose personal information.

51. The Department's privacy policy is available at <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/department/about/privacy-policy> and the ACMA's privacy policy is available at <https://www.acma.gov.au/privacy-policy>.

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