



Australian Government

Migration Review Tribunal · Refugee Review Tribunal

Member Professional Development

MR8

Background

The Migration Review Tribunal and the Refugee Review Tribunal (the Tribunals) are committed to building and maintaining a highly professional membership that delivers consistent, timely and high quality reviews that are lawful, fair and just.

The objective of professional development is to enhance the knowledge and expertise of Members, which underpins the quality of their decisions. Professional development is regarded by the Tribunals as a process of continual learning and improvement.

The quality of decision-making is very important to the Tribunals. The principal objective of merits review is to ensure that the administrative decision reached in each case is the correct or preferable decision. Sound Tribunal decision making influences the general quality and consistency of decision-making across the portfolio.

All Members are expected to participate in professional development and training activities on a regular basis and to undertake any development and training requirements identified through the performance appraisal process.

Professional Development Committee

There is a Member Professional Development Committee, comprising the Principal Member, the Deputy Principal Member (Chair), all Senior Members, a Melbourne and Sydney Member representative, the Director, Legal Services and the Director, Country Advice Service. The Committee normally meets each quarter. A Professional Development Calendar is maintained on the Tribunals' intranet.

Members are encouraged through Senior Members to identify and attend courses, conferences or seminars of relevance to their individual development needs.

Professional Development activities

Professional development activities cover a wide range of topics, including:

- administrative, migration and refugee law, relevant legislation and policy
- current issues in litigation
- decision-making and decision-writing
- conducting investigations
- procedural requirements
- the conduct of the hearings
- assessing relevance, credibility and weight of evidence
- sources and use of country information
- current country issues and perspectives

- gender and sexual orientation-related issues
- vulnerable persons giving evidence
- cross-cultural issues
- working with interpreters
- working with representatives
- the Member code of conduct
- work/life balance

National Members' Conferences are held regularly and attendance is compulsory. These are usually held over two days, and typically comprise a mixture of plenary sessions with external and internal speakers, and parallel working sessions.

New Member induction program is held whenever new Members are appointed to the Tribunals. The aim of the induction arrangements is to assist new Members to understand their role as independent decision-makers of the Tribunals, including the expectations and requirements in relation to performance, standards of behaviour and general conduct. The arrangements will assist new Members to quickly develop knowledge of legislation and policy materials, procedural issues, case issues, resources and working arrangements.

Regular scheduled **professional development sessions** are held monthly. These generally have content of interest or relevance for all Members, and would normally include a legal update by the Legal Services Section. All Members are required to participate in these sessions. The Tribunals consider it important to include perspectives from inside and outside the Tribunals in relation to the interpretation of the legislation, how we relate to applicants and to country conditions, and sessions have been presented by a range of external speakers including academics, lawyers and journalists.

A **Members' Meeting** is held each month. Members' meetings are an opportunity to discuss issues of general interest or concern to Members.

Other internal development and training and activities may be scheduled from time to time. These may address a general or specific requirement. These include occasional seminars, workshops and focus groups aimed at providing Members an opportunity to attend practical sessions which address specific topics.

Members also attend external conferences, seminars and courses. Priority is given to opportunities which meet the ongoing development and training needs of Members and which are of direct benefit to the Tribunals.

For more information on the Tribunals please refer to [M8: The Migration Review Tribunal – an overview](#), [R8: The Refugee Review Tribunal – an overview](#), [M9: The Members of the Migration Review Tribunal](#) and [R9: The Members of the Refugee Review Tribunal](#), or contact:

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