



Local Land
Services

Agricultural Services and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing October 2018. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Local Land Services or the user's independent adviser.

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1. Western Local Board Agricultural Services and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group

1.1 Introduction

Western Local Board is responsible for the efficient and effective delivery of services relating to biosecurity, emergency response, natural resource management, cropping, horticultural and livestock advice in the Western region.

The Western Local Land Service region is the largest in NSW, covering 314,500km or 40% of the State. Despite its size, it is the least densely populated region, with a population of approximately 42,873 people (18,500 of whom live in the city of Broken Hill).

The region is made up of the Brewarrina, Bourke, Balranald, Cobar, Central Darling and Wentworth Shires, Broken Hill City Council and the Unincorporated Area and portions of the Hay, Carrathool and Bogan Shires. Major service centres include Broken Hill, Menindee, Cobar, Bourke, Brewarrina, Hillston, Wentworth, Balranald and Mildura (which is just over the Victorian border).

1.2 Purpose of the group

The Western Local Board Agricultural Services and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group is designed to assist the Western Local Board and management on the organisation's direction and programs.

The goal of the group is to provide:

- region and industry specific priorities with direct reference to agriculture and/or natural resource management issues and challenges
- input into the development of strategic plans
- advice on services required
- community consultation
- act as conduit between the Western Local Board and customers on the issues that need to be addressed by Western Local Land Services
- seek input from Western Local Land Services customers about the issues and challenges they are facing.

1.3 Scope

These draft Terms of Reference provide guidance to those appointed to the Agricultural Services and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group in relation to the scope of the agenda to be covered. The Western Local Board will seek input on a range of matters related to service delivery. This may include:

- region specific priorities, with direct reference to agriculture and/or natural resource management
- advice on services required
- community consultation.

2. Committee composition

2.1 Committees

Western Local Board intend to provide scope to utilise a range of advisory groups to address key areas of business, geography, and community needs. The Regional Weeds Committee and Regional Pest Animal

Committee are examples of long term functional committees advising the Western Local Board. The Kangaroo Management Taskforce is an example of a targeted issue based community advisory group convened to address a singular issue. The Western Local Board will establish this Agricultural Services and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group, along with a single Aboriginal Community Advisory Group to complement these already established groups in having input into projects and programs.

2.2 Membership

Group membership is to be determined by the group on a needs basis, having no fewer than six representatives, and no more than 12 at any one time. Applicants must be able to demonstrate ties to agricultural and/or natural resource management in the Western region. Note that applicants do not need to reside in the region, but must offer experience and/or a point of view relevant to the Western region.

2.3 Nomination and appointment of members

Expressions of Interest will be called from people with experience in or knowledge of agriculture and/or natural resource management. Members will be appointed through a competitive selection while the Western Local Board reserves the right to replace or appoint additional members to ensure ongoing and constructive representation of service areas is maintained. Alternate members will not be appointed.

2.4 Desirable attributes of Agricultural Services and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group members

Selection will be based on the following criteria:

- ability to communicate a viewpoint and provide considered feedback
- demonstrate an understanding of agriculture and/or natural resource management
- demonstrate an understanding of future trends and contemporary issues effecting these industries and rural and regional communities
- ability to work in a team
- respect for Western Local Board responsibility to operate its business while balancing numerous drivers within statutory, legal and operational constraints
- capacity to represent the views of a larger stakeholder group
- dedicate sufficient time to carry out their role effectively including attending all required meetings. Meetings will be held as required, with a maximum of four face-to-face meetings per calendar year
- requirement to respect the confidentiality agreements of the group
- requirement to identify, disclose, and assist in managing conflicts of interest.

2.5 Role of members

Appointed members have a responsibility to:

- dedicate sufficient time to carry out their role effectively
- adhere to Local Land Services Code of Conduct (refer to Section 4)
- respect the confidentiality of Western Local Board (refer to item 4.2)
- provide feedback on matters discussed in committee
- attend all meetings (an apology is not deemed as attendance)
- be respectful of all other members of the group, and the inherent diversity of the group.

2.6 Term

Membership of the Agricultural Services and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group is for a term of two years or until such time as their replacement may become necessary as described in 2.7 (Vacancies). For the purposes of retaining core committee knowledge at any one time, replacements may be staggered. The Chair of the Western Local Board has discretion to the termination and appointment of members to ensure the purpose of the group is not compromised. Members may be extended for more than one term, consistent with membership selection as described in 2.3 (Nomination and appointment of members).

2.7 Vacancies

A vacancy may arise, at the discretion of the Chair, if a member:

- resigns in writing
- is absent from two consecutive meetings without leave being granted by the Chair
- fails to abide by the requirements of the group, including, but not limited to, the Code of Conduct, (refer to section 4).

Appointment processes to fill vacancies will be conducted by a request from Western Local Land Services for applications and a selection made as per Section 2.3.

2.8 Western Local Land Services representation

Western Local Board will be represented at Committee meetings by an Executive staff member and other staff as required. A written report will be provided to the Western Local Board. Written reports can be supplemented by representation from the Board member and/or Chair of the group.

2.9 Other attendees

Visitors or presenters may be invited to attend meetings, or part thereof, to provide input to the discussions or observe the proceedings, at the discretion of the Chair.

Other attendees will be required to meet confidentiality requirements of Western Local Board (refer to item 4.2). Other attendee's do not having any voting rights.

2.10 Secretariat support

Secretariat support will be provided by staff of Western Local Land Services.

3. MEETING PROCEDURES

3.1 Meeting schedule

Meetings will be held as required, with a maximum of four face-to-face meetings per calendar year. Meetings shall only be called by the Chair following consultation with the management staff of Western Local Land Services.

3.2 Quorum

A quorum will be deemed as 50 per cent of committee members plus the Chair. Decisions will be by consensus.

3.3 Conflict of Interest

It is agreed that group members are not, by virtue of membership, excluded from funding opportunities or program participation. Conflict of Interest will be managed according to accepted protocols consistent with comparable processes such as assessment panels.

1.1 Disclosure of interests

The group Chair and members must:

- disclose interests whether pecuniary, filial, or otherwise, that could conflict with the proper performance of a member's functions and avoid conflict of interest
- maintain currency of any new interests through updating declaration forms at every meeting, and on any occasion where a decision of the panel will have a direct or ultimate influence on an outcome.

1.2 Management of conflict of interest

A conflict of interest involves a conflict between a public official's duties and responsibilities in serving the public's interest and the public official's private interests. A conflict of interest can arise by avoiding personal losses as well as gaining personal advantage. *(Definition sourced from ICAC Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Public Sector Toolkit.)*

It is recognised that the successful function of the role of Chair and/or member of the group is contingent upon having a high degree of interaction with the agricultural and/or natural resource management industry. The role of group members is to provide advice to the Western Local Board which is based upon this interaction and knowledge of issues of importance to those operating in these industries. For this reason, it is inevitable that there will be occasions where actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest may arise. It is the intention of the Western Local Board that members not be disadvantaged or restricted in the advice that they provide due to participation in these groups. The following procedure will be implemented locally by the group to manage any actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest that may arise.

The group Chair and members will:

- Disclose any conflicts of interest whether pecuniary, filial, or otherwise, that could conflict with the proper performance of a member's functions. All disclosed conflicts of interest will be recorded on a register which will be maintained and updated.
- Where conflicts of interest are of low risk, disclosure and registration will be all that is required. It is anticipated that this will be applicable for the vast majority of conflicts of interest. Where a conflict of interest is significant and of high risk and requires further management the following procedures will be implemented:
 - Where a disclosed significant or high risk conflict of interest is pertinent to a decision which may result in private interests interfering with the public role of a Chair or member of the group, detail the level of interest for the group, refrain from discussion, not participate in or influence the decision in any way, and record the discussion.

3.4 Meeting protocol

The group shall adhere to standard meeting protocols.

The Chair convenes and conducts all meetings and may delegate responsibility for this function if required. Meetings are closed to the public. However non-members may attend to make presentations for a particular agenda item or discussion, at the invitation of the Chair (as per Section 2.9).

3.5 Agenda papers

Agendas and other documentation necessary for conducting a meeting will be made available to committee members at least five days before each meeting.

3.6 Records

A record will be kept of the subject matter discussed and of the feedback received. Names of members making comments will not be recorded. The focus is on the information and feedback received.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT

4.1 Conduct of members

All members are required to adhere to the Local Land Services Code of Conduct.

4.2 Confidentiality

All material that is declared as confidential and provided for discussion and consideration *is* Confidential, and must be respected by members. No confidential material is to be discussed with any third persons. All discussions are encouraged to take place at the meeting, rather than outside of the meeting.

4.3 Sensitive information

Members may occasionally come into possession of sensitive information including information classified as personal information under the National Privacy Principles. Members may not disclose any such information to any person outside the group.

4.4 Security of documentation

All written materials provided by Western Local Land Services as part of the Western Local Board Agricultural Services and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group must be kept secure by the member, destroyed or returned to Western Local Land Services.

4.5 Public representation

Membership of the group does not entitle, nor authorise, members to hold themselves as representing Western Local Land Services, Western Local Board, the group or their opinions.

5. ADMINISTRATION

5.1 Reimbursement

In consideration of the commitment required to participate in the Agricultural Services and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group and the need to attract dedicated and capable representatives, members will be reimbursed for travel and accommodation as deemed appropriate by the General Manager of Western Local Land Services.

Sitting fees are as follows:

- **Member** sitting fee: \$220.00/Day plus vehicle/transport costs

All meals and accommodation are provided by Western Local Land Services.