

Wet Tropics Community Consultative Committee Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention) was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in Paris on 16 November 1972. The World Heritage Convention came into force in 1975. The World Heritage Convention promotes cooperation among nations, in order to identify and protect heritage that is of Outstanding Universal Value and ensure its conservation for current and future generations. Australia ratified the Convention in August 1974.

Under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (the Act), the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) is established to ensure that Australia's obligation under the World Heritage Convention is met in relation to the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (the Area). Australia's obligation is to protect, conserve, present and transmit to future generations the Area.

As a body corporate operating under the requirements of both Australian and Queensland legislation, the Authority's structure enshrines its engagement with the Queensland and Australian governments and a range of industry and community stakeholders throughout the Wet Tropics region. The Authority operates as an administrative unit within the Queensland Government's Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) and is subject to Queensland public sector legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines governing administrative functions and arrangements. The Director-General of DESI is the accountable officer for the Authority under the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009. The Authority is responsible to the Director-General regarding compliance with Queensland Government administrative and financial standards.

The Authority comprises of a board of seven directors and more than 40 technical, professional and administrative officers. The Authority's Board is responsible for the way the Authority performs its functions and exercises its powers. It is also the role of the Board to decide objectives, strategies and policies to be followed by the Authority. The Authority's strategic goals are in its [Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020-2030](#).

Under the Act, the Authority is required to establish two statutory advisory committees: a Community Consultative Committee (the Committee) and a Scientific Advisory Committee.

2. Purpose of the Wet Tropics Community Consultative Committee

As set forward in section 40(3) of the Act, the Authority is required to ensure the Committee is broadly representative of the community and able to channel information and opinion effectively between the community and the Board, and that Aboriginal interest are adequately represented on the Committee.

The function of the Committee is to advise the Authority's Board on the views of the community on the Authority's policies and programs in relation to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. In addition, the Committee disseminates information provided at committee meetings on matters concerning:

- the views of the various communities of interest to management objectives, plans, policies and actions undertaken by the Authority
- provision of essential services to communities within and adjacent to the Area
- provision for acceptable use of the Area compatible with maintaining World Heritage values and integrity
- the relationship of non-government agencies to the Authority.

Members of the Committee will seek and report on the views of communities within their area of interest on relevant issues and are expected to advance these views to the best of their ability and knowledge.

In addition to the above functions, the Board is looking to the Committee to offer cross sectoral views about issues, problems and challenges facing World Heritage management, protection and presentation and to work cooperatively together and with the Board to promote good management. Through cross sectoral discussion and collaboration, the Committee will contribute to creative and innovative solutions to complex management and presentation challenges while ensuring that World Heritage Convention obligations are met.

3. Membership

The Committee will comprise of approximately 12 members.

The Committee membership will have an equitable gender composition.

The Committee primarily reflects broad sectors of community interest relevant to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Members should be involved in or have strong knowledge of issues and views relevant to one or more of the following:

- agriculture
- community conservation
- Community development
- education and training
- environmental advocates
- environmental sustainability
- local government natural capital markets
- Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples
- recreation
- restoration
- social science, health and wellbeing
- tourism
- World Heritage landholders and neighbours
- youth

The Authority encourages representation from a broad geographic range across the Wet Tropics.

Members will be knowledgeable of the issues relevant to their area of interest/sector of representation and thus be able to provide informed advice both in and outside of formal meetings. Discussions outside of meetings may occur through use of various forms of media including social media.

Committee membership will also include at least two people representing Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples', preferably one male and one female. It is essential to have equal gender balance to receive the appropriate advice from the persons representing Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

Observers:

Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI)—Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P), Terrain NRM and other formally recognised managers of the Area will be invited as observers to the Committee meetings and will provide advice and information where requested. Other Board directors, officers from the Authority, guests and specialist advisers may be invited by the Chair to attend and to provide advice.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Authority's Board is responsible for:

- appointing a Chair for the Committee
- providing direction to the Committee on matters for which it is seeking the views of the community.
- providing feedback to the Committee regarding advice provided by the Committee to the Board.

The Committee Chair has the following responsibilities, to:

- preside at all meetings at which he/she is present in accordance with formal meeting protocols
- liaise with the Authority's secretariat as required to develop agendas and approve meeting minutes
- facilitate discussion on the agenda items, seeking consensus on issues and developing recommendations to provide to the Board. May include regular liaison with the Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee to encourage collaboration between both committees and coordinated advice to the Authority
- facilitate participation of all committee members in the meeting and encourage members to share and exchange information with each other and the Authority
- present the Committee's advice/recommendations, including unanimous, majority and/or divergent views on discussion topics
- speak publicly on behalf of the Committee
- maintain adherence to the code of conduct at meetings
- maintain dialogue with the Authority and committee members about ongoing and relevant issues in-between meetings to support progress of actions from meetings.

Committee Members have the following responsibilities to:

- attend and participate in committee meetings and ongoing deliberations
- directing their expertise and experience towards:
 - advancing the views of their respective sector or community interest and debating and formulating a view on issues brought before the Committee and making appropriate recommendations
 - providing meetings with an up-to-date analysis of their sector and opportunities available for the Authority and members to work collaboratively
 - providing up to date advice at meetings when requested on issues identified on the agenda

- consult with other experts, industry and stakeholders and encourage wider knowledge about Wet Tropics World Heritage issues (subject to any overriding confidentiality and media provisions under these terms of reference)
- work cooperatively and endeavour to reach a consensus view on issues discussed where possible
- participate in working groups as agreed
- follow up on committee actions as per the minutes
- behave in a professional manner and maintain confidentiality on identified sensitive issues.

The Secretariat is responsible for:

- ensuring a timely and appropriate level of administrative support
- dissemination of information to members
- providing background information considered reasonably necessary to assist members in their deliberations which may include agendas and minutes from Scientific Advisory Committee meetings.

5. Appointment of the Committee Chair

The chair of the Committee will be a Board Director appointed by the Chair of the Board.

6. Appointment of members

Appointment to the Committee will be by invitation of the Board following a call for expressions of interest.

Priority will be given to gender balance and consideration will be given to other equity and diversity issues within the Committee.

7. Term of appointment

The term of the Committee shall be for a three-year period commencing on the convening of the first committee meeting for the term. Committee members may be appointed for a maximum of two consecutive terms. Following a break of at least one term, previous members may be eligible for reappointment.

Members may resign at any time in writing to the Chair of the Board. Vacancies may be filled by invitation of the Board for a period to coincide with the committee term.

The Board will be mindful of the Committee's corporate memory and will consider ensuring some continuity of membership between the outgoing and incoming committees.

8. Meeting attendance and time commitments

As membership of the Committee is on an honorary basis, the Authority is appreciative of time commitments made by members. Although no minimum time commitments are set, it is expected that members will attach a priority to attending and participating at committee meetings. It is also expected that members will allocate appropriate preparation time for reading of agenda papers and responding to issues where the Committee's advice is sought.

Meeting attendance is on a voluntary basis as per Queensland Government policy, with Rainforest Aboriginal committee members paid in accordance with the Department of Environment and Science Innovation (DESI) First Nations Payment Guide.

Where a committee member is not already covered for attending a committee meeting by the member's employer or research institution, personal out-of-pocket expenses, including travel and living expenses associated with the attendance at committee meetings will be met by the Authority at the standard state government rate. Where members are unable to attend meetings due to long absences the Board will select an interim replacement of that member.

9. Termination

The Board reserves the right to terminate an individual's membership of the Committee at any time subject to procedural fairness. A termination notice must be in writing from the Chair of the Board.

The Chair of the Board may consider terminating a membership of the Committee if a member fails to attend two consecutive meetings without a valid reason.

10. Meeting location and frequency

Meetings will normally be held in Cairns. However, the Committee may meet in other Wet Tropics locations, particularly when there is an opportunity to inspect sites/issues of interest.

The Committee will meet at least three times per year and at other times as deemed necessary. The Committee will participate in joint meetings with the Scientific Advisory Committee at least once a year or if significant issues arise requiring shared input from both committees.

The Chair may agree to use contemporary communication technologies to hold meetings where this is deemed practical and efficient. Matters decided at these meetings must be noted by the Committee at the next formal meeting and be recorded in the minutes of that meeting.