



INDIGENOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wet Tropics Management Authority and Terrain NRM

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) for the Wet Tropics Management Authority (the Authority) and Terrain NRM (Terrain) is a non-statutory advisory committee established to ensure that the views, interests, and aspirations of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples¹ are included in the delivery of strategic plans and programs of the Authority and Terrain. To reduce duplication of effort for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and strengthen coordination, the two organisations would like to establish this group together.

The Authority and Terrain recognise that there has been a direction from the 2017 Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forum for the creation of a regional entity and both organisations support this initiative and hope to be able to engage through this entity once it is established. The IAC does not replace any existing statutory advisory bodies and is not considered a representative body.

It was identified that there is a critical need to have the voices of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples informing the strategic objectives of the Authority and Terrain and stipulated through funding agreements. The Authority and Terrain will present the new IAC at the 2023 Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forum. This IAC is not responsible for the refresh of the Regional Agreement.

2. Background

The Wet Tropics Management Authority is a statutory body established under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (the Act). The Act and the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 set out requirements for the Authority to perform its functions, as far as practicable, with regard to traditions of Aboriginal people; and to liaise, and cooperate with, Aboriginal people particularly concerned with the land in the Area. The work of the Authority is guided by their [Strategic Plan \(2020–2030\)](#).

Terrain NRM is a not-for-profit environmental management organisation working in Australia's Wet Tropics region of Far North Queensland. As one of Australia's leading natural resource management bodies, Terrain's vision is for a thriving and sustainable Wet Tropics. This will must be achieved through empowering communities to solve our region's environmental challenges, together. Traditional Owner partnerships is a key cross-cutting theme in Terrain's 2021–2026 Strategic Plan, embedding Terrain's aspiration to enable Indigenous people to plan, coordinate and deliver NRM work and support the aspirations of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples to manage and work on country.

¹ Throughout this document the term Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples is used by the Authority to refer specifically to Traditional Owners/Custodians of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area. However, the Authority recognises that Traditional Owners/Custodians of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area may identify themselves at local, state, national and international scale using a diversity of terms. These include but are not limited to: clan groups (at least 120), tribal groups (at least 20), language groups (at least 8), Bama, Traditional Owners, Custodians, First Nations Peoples, First Peoples, Indigenous Peoples, native title holders and common law holders.



[The Wet Tropics Plan for People and Country](#) is a community-based plan that prioritises natural and cultural resource management activities in the Wet Tropics, addressing social, economic and environmental management. The plan includes a Cultural Connections Regional Theme and priority actions reflecting the aspirations expressed by Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples over more than 20 years.

3. Purpose

The IAC will provide advice to the Authority and Terrain to ensure the rights, interests and priorities of Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples are included in the delivery of their plans, policies and programs at a strategic level. Following this advice, the Authority and Terrain are responsible for obtaining free, prior and informed consent. Through the IAC Chairs, the respective Authority and Terrain Boards will report back to the IAC on outcomes of any advice provided out of session or at the next meeting.

4. Membership

The membership of the IAC will be up to eight people, and will be skills-based and selected through an EOI process. Members will need to demonstrate that they have a connection to the Wet Tropics Biocultural Region. A joint committee of Board members from the Authority and Terrain will undertake the selection process based on skills-based criteria. The IAC will be alternately chaired by one Indigenous Director from each of the Authority and Terrain Boards. The IAC membership may include the following skills:

- Governance
- Community development
- Cultural heritage
- Indigenous employment and training
- Economic development and procurement
- Research and education
- Tourism
- Youth involvement
- Land and sea management
- Ecological and biological research
- Environmental markets
- Communications and community engagement
- Traditional ecological knowledge
- Ethical best practice standards
- Understanding free, prior and informed consent, and data sharing agreements
- Understanding of international obligations.

All members will be invited to attend meetings to provide advice to the Authority and Terrain. The committee will be supported by a secretariat of staff from the Authority and Terrain. If the Chair cannot attend, they can nominate a proxy. Meetings may be held in person and/or online via teams.



5. Remuneration

IAC members (excluding Authority and Terrain employees and observers) payment is in accordance with the [Department of Environment and Science's \(DES\) procedural guide: Payments to First Nations People working with DES \(Co-stewardship Payments\)](#).

6. Role and responsibilities

The role of the IAC is to:

- Attend and participate in IAC meetings and ongoing deliberations for the topics for which they are called on for advice. It is anticipated that there will be at least 4 (but no more than 6) meetings per year.
- Provide culturally appropriate advice to the Boards of the Authority and Terrain relating to the 'purpose' section as outlined above.
- Support the Authority and Terrain to embed a rights-based approach with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.
- Work cooperatively and endeavour to reach a consensus view on issues discussed where possible.
- Follow up on the IAC's actions as per the minutes.
- Comply with the respective Code of Conduct for the Authority and Terrain.

7. Secretariat responsibilities

The role of the secretariat is to:

- Organise meetings, including requesting the participation of relevant IAC members at least 4 weeks in advance of meetings.
- Ensure an appropriate level of administrative support.
- Disseminate information to all members.
- Provide background information considered reasonably necessary to assist members in their deliberations.
- Prepare and distribute minutes of meetings within one month from the meeting. Urgent action items that fall within the one-month period should be sent out from the meeting to enable the item to be actioned within the timeframe allowed.
- Manage the budget for the operation of the IAC.

8. Evaluation and review

The effectiveness and membership of the committee will be reviewed initially at a 6-month interval and every 2 years onwards.