

# Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance Interim Steering Group

## Terms of Reference

### Introduction and purpose

The Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance (the Alliance) is a coalition of organisations working together to increase the resilience of forests across the Wet Tropics bioregion, including the world's oldest continuously surviving tropical rainforests. The intent of the Alliance is to protect existing forests and undertake large-scale restoration to increase resilience to climate change. The Alliance will also seek to increase investment and capacity to existing organisations working within the Wet Tropics. This will strengthen the ecological, social, cultural and financial resilience of the Wet Tropics region. The Alliance was formed in September 2022, with 27 organisations initially committing to working together. The number of organisations involved is expected to grow over time.

To develop solid foundations for an effective and sustainable Alliance, an interim steering committee and governance structure is to be established - *the Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance Interim Steering Group* (the Interim Steering Group). The purpose of the Interim Steering Group is to oversee the establishment phase of the Alliance (first 12-24 months), and to provide direction on:

- strategy and long-term governance structure
- investment framework
- knowledge sharing and capacity building
- membership engagement and support
- advice and support on specific initiatives or activities needed to provide value and interest to Alliance members during the establishment phase.

The Interim Steering Group governance and operations will be reviewed after the first year to ensure the arrangements are fit for purpose and meet the needs of Alliance members.

### Roles and responsibilities

The establishment phase of the Alliance is supported by funding through the Wet Tropics Management Authority and resources contributed by James Cook University and Terrain NRM. This includes a dedicated position of a Wet Tropics Restoration Alliance Coordinator (Alliance Coordinator), who will act as secretariat and will progress directions from the Interim Steering Group. The Interim Steering Group members will commit to deliver the purpose defined above and provide advice to the Alliance Coordinator. They will:

- attend and participate in quarterly Interim Steering Group meetings (online or in person)
- direct their expertise and experience towards establishing the Alliance
- actively communicate with members of the Interim Steering Group, Alliance Coordinator, Alliance members and other stakeholders on progress
- ensure Alliance members' issues and interests are considered and incorporated in the establishment of the Alliance
- participate in technical working groups, if required
- be champions for the Alliance
- follow up on Steering Group meeting actions as per minutes.

## **Membership**

The Interim Steering Group is skills-based and reflective of the diversity of interest groups involved in restoration and stewardship across the region. It will also be diverse with respect to gender, cultural and professional background, and location. The first serving term shall be up to two years. Seven to ten members will be selected based on skill sets including:

- Indigenous knowledge and ecological solutions
- science and research
- restoration experience
- natural capital investment (e.g., carbon farming or biodiversity credits)
- advocacy and community engagement
- sustainable farming and/or land management
- governance and planning
- other skills as identified by the Interim Steering Group.

The process to seek membership will be through an expression of interest process and will be selected through an independent panel.

## **Chair**

- The Chair of the Interim Steering Group shall be nominated from within the Interim Steering Group membership and determined by interested candidates nominating themselves and selected via a secret vote administered by the Alliance Coordinator.
- The Chair term is one year, which can be extended or changed by consensus with the Interim Steering Group.

## **Ethics**

All members will adhere to the following:

- behave in a professional manner and maintain confidentiality on identified sensitive issues
- work cooperatively and endeavor to reach a consensus view on issues discussed, where possible. If not possible, the issue will be decided by a majority vote
- any actual, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest will be addressed at the start of each meeting or in a conflict of interest register, and these will be noted in the meeting minutes
- the Chair may exclude individuals from decisions and/or discussions to manage conflicts of interest.

## **Meeting attendance and location**

- Member participation in the Interim Steering Group is on a voluntary basis (unpaid); however, where members are not already covered for meeting attendance by the member's employer or research institution, personal out of pocket expenses associated with the meeting attendance, including travel and living expenses, will be met at the standard state government rate. Attendance in person is appreciated where practical with virtual options as appropriate.
- Meetings will be held in Cairns, or at a mutually agreeable site as agreed and required.
- Meeting attendees may agree to use contemporary communication technologies through an online service as stated by the supporting partners.
- Meetings will be held at least four times a year and will also include attendance at an annual Alliance event to consult with and update Alliance members.

## **Termination**

- The Interim Steering Group members reserve the right to terminate an individual's membership in the Interim Steering Group at any time subject to procedural fairness and a majority vote from the Interim Steering Group members. A termination notice must be in writing from the Chair.
- A membership may be terminated if a member fails to attend multiple consecutive meetings without a valid reason or takes an extended period of leave without agreement.
- A membership may be terminated if a member does not act in accordance with the Queensland Government Code of Conduct.
- The Interim Steering Group members may reserve the right to leave by sending an email to the Alliance Coordinator at [restoration@wtma.qld.gov.au](mailto:restoration@wtma.qld.gov.au).

## **Amendment, modification, or variation**

- This Terms of Reference may be amended, varied, or modified in writing after consultation and consensus by the Interim Steering Group members.