

MEETING OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Wet Tropics Scientific Advisory Committee

1. Agenda and minutes

The meeting agenda will be subject to the approval of the Committee's Chair.

Prior to preparing a draft agenda, the secretariat should ask the Executive Director to identify specific matters raised by the Board on which the advice of the Committee is sought.

A draft agenda will then be prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chair and be circulated to all members at least two weeks prior to the meeting. A member may seek the addition of further agenda items. The final agenda is to be approved by the Chair.

The secretariat will facilitate and coordinate the preparation, collation and circulation of agenda papers to all Committee members at least one week prior to meetings.

The secretariat will arrange meeting logistics and take meeting minutes.

The meeting minutes will include:

- a listing of the members in attendance and apologies
- a brief record of the proceedings under each agenda item conveying recommendations, actions and responsibilities
- any statements which members request to be recorded.

Final draft minutes are to be approved by the chair prior to distribution to members.

At the following meeting, members may resolve to accept the minutes as a true and accurate record or accept the minutes subject to amendments.

Minutes will be circulated to Board members once approved. Minutes will be made publicly available on the Authority's website.

2. Conduct of meetings

A quorum shall be a minimum of 50% of current membership.

The Chair will normally preside at meetings. If the chair is not able to attend the meeting, the chair may nominate another Board director to preside at the meeting.

The Committee does not formally 'vote' on issues, but may indicate to the Board that recommendations are unanimous, or represent a majority view. When committee members have dissenting views or divergent views these should be identified and conveyed to the Board.

The Committee should function as more than just a sounding board on issues. Members should use their best endeavours to understand other points of view and try to move issues in the direction of a consensus outcome, or at least identify in the first instance the aspects of issues which prevent a consensus outcome.

Committee members are not expected to be ambassadors for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area or its management. However, it is expected that when appropriate, members will promote the World Heritage Area as a 'learning landscape.' Members, at their own discretion, can also function as information providers to their sectors of representation on Wet Tropics World Heritage issues.

However, members will not be considered as authorised representatives of the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

3. Reporting

The Committee shall report through its Chair to the Board of the Authority. The Committee's Chair may invite a Committee member to attend a Board meeting to present on a particular issue.

The Chair or Committee's secretariat will report back to the Committee on any decisions or other relevant matters made by the Board.

The Chair may, after each Committee meeting, convey to the Board a report on the agenda items considered at the meeting. The report should include the Committee's advice.

There may be occasions where the Board requests reporting on emerging scientific research or scientific findings.

4. Committee operating expenses, resources and secretariat support

The Authority will, within its human resource and budget constraints, provide adequate resources to the Committee to enable it to function effectively.

The Authority will designate an officer to provide secretariat services to the Committee.

In accordance with State Government policy, sitting fees will not be paid to Committee members.

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.

Invited guests, observers and specialist advisers attend at their own expense unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director.

5. Committee spokesperson

Only the Chair has the authority to make statements on behalf of the Committee. No other person may act as the spokesperson for the Committee in relation to a media inquiry on any Committee matter, unless authorised to do so by the Chair.

Unauthorised and/or deliberate misrepresentation of the Committee is grounds for termination.

6. Code of conduct

Members of the Committee are required to undertake Code of Conduct training as provided by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.

All members are to act honestly and fairly and with respect and proper regard for the rights and obligations of others.

Members must abide by the following committee principles:

- promotion of open discussion
- recognition of respective roles and responsibilities of each member
- management of issues in a consistent and effective manner.

7. Fraud awareness

Members of the Committee are required to undertake Fraud Awareness training as provided by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.

8. Conflict of interest

A member of the Committee who has a direct or indirect conflict of interest in a matter being considered or about to be considered by the Committee shall, as soon as practicable after the relevant facts have become known to the member, disclose the nature of the member's conflict of interest.

A disclosure of a conflict of interest (pecuniary or otherwise) shall be recorded in the minutes and the Chair of the Committee will decide if it is appropriate for the member to be present during any discussion with respect to that matter or contribute to any advice the Committee may provide on that matter.

9. Confidentiality

All documents provided to members—except those normally available to the public—are to be considered by members as confidential working documents unless otherwise indicated.

At times there may be a conflict between providing information to the members sectors of representation and respecting the confidentiality of some of the information provided to the Committee. It is the responsibility of members to identify such conflicts and seek direction, either during Committee meetings or through the Executive Director.