NAILSMA
NORTH AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE

Terms of Reference

Traditional Owner-Led Reef Water Quality Advisory Group



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1. Purpose & Scope

The Traditional Owner–Led Reef Water Quality Advisory Group will provide strategic advice and input into the design and implementation of Phase Two of the Traditional Owner-Led Reef Water Quality Improvement Program – expected to be a grant program for direct investment into Traditional Owner-led water quality projects. Advice from the Advisory Group will be provided to the Department of Climate Change, Environment, Energy, and Water (DCCEEW) in the form of a report, which may be made public.

Examples of the type of advice and input the Advisory Group may provide into program design for Phase Two include, but are not limited to:

- Traditional Owner priority outcomes, e.g. cultural health of waterways, biodiversity, community wellbeing, water quality improvement objectives;
- Grant program design elements which provide a foundation of support and uplift for grant recipients to successfully complete projects and achieve Traditional Owner objectives;
- Considerations for awarding grant funds, including project delivery periods, eligibility requirements, scope of projects and types of expenditure;
- Identifying possible types of activities which will be eligible for projects funded under Phase Two, including holistic and Traditional Owner-led approaches to:
    - revegetation, restoration and rehabilitation to improve water quality;
    - activities to support on-Country knowledge sharing and two-way knowledge sharing with scientists and land managers;
    - water quality monitoring activities;
    - activities which reduce agricultural impacts including through sustainable farming practices, grazing land management, and reduction in sediment, nutrient and pesticides flowing to the Reef;

    - training employment and capacity-building opportunities for Traditional Owners, Indigenous rangers, land managers, scientists and community members; and
    - capacity and capability building in governance, project management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- Recommendations on program structure, risk, governance, operational considerations and implementation settings for Phase Two;
- Recommendations for monitoring and evaluation and data collection approaches to measure water quality improvements, Traditional Owner priorities and Program achievements relevant to Phase Two of the program;

Following the provision of advice to the Department in report format, the Advisory Group will be stood down for probity and equity assurance reasons. Advisory Group members will be eligible to apply for membership on the Technical Working Group in accordance with eligibility criteria for that governance opportunity.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of Advisory Group members includes:

- Providing strategic advice into the design of the Phase Two investment into Traditional Owner-Led Reef Water Quality Improvement Program (as per the anticipated scope outlined above in section 1);
- Productive and constructive participation and leadership in meetings and workshops (online and face-to-face) to share and ground-truth ideas and concepts relevant for the design of Phase Two, informed by members' knowledge of the priorities, aspirations and directions of Great Barrier Reef and Catchment Traditional Owners; and
- Providing advice and support to NAILSMA to ensure the presentation of advice from the Advisory Group is clear, accurate and easily interpreted by DCCEEW and Phase Two delivery partners. This will include revision and approval of documents and reports for clear and accurate messaging.

Responsibilities of the Advisory Group include:

- Acting in good faith and in the best interests of the Group's purpose to ensure maximum benefits of the Program can be realised for Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef and its catchment areas;
- Offering productive and constructive advice, feedback and recommendations into the Program and in meeting settings to guide sound and equitable decision-making.

Role of NAILSMA includes:

- Maintaining a register of members, conflicts of interest and associated management plans;
- Provision of secretariat and logistics support and payment of remuneration;
- Setting meeting dates, locations and provision of meeting materials;
- Taking and circulating meeting minutes for approval;
- Facilitation of discussions as required, provision of information to support sound, well-informed decision-making by the Advisory Group that can be readily operationalised by Phase Two partners;
- Drafting documents and reports on the outcomes and decisions from the Advisory Group;
- Preparing, circulating and ensuring approval of the final report on advice from the Advisory Group and submission to DCCEEW.

3. Membership

- The Advisory Group will comprise of a maximum of six members. NAILSMA staff including secretariat support are not counted as members.
- Membership will aim to include a mix of relevant experiences, geographic range [catchment/sea Country/northern/central/southern], age range [Elders/ emerging leaders] and gender.
- Members will serve in a personal capacity, not as delegates of their organisations or Traditional Owner groups.

4. Chairing, Secretariat and Decision Making

- **Chair**: To be elected by Advisory Group members.
- **Secretariate:** NAILSMA will provide secretariat support including agendas, minutes and logistics.
- **NAILSMA Staff**: will work with the Advisory Group to help facilitate and inform group discussions as necessary.
- **Decision-making approach**: the group will aim to reach decisions by consensus. If necessary, decisions will be reached via a vote. If there are an equal number of votes, the Chair will hold a double vote to ensure a decision can be reached.
- **Quorum:** Fifty percent of Advisory Group members must be present for quorum to enable a meeting to officially proceed and endorse formal decisions or recommendations.

5. Meetings

- A minimum of four meetings will be held during the life of the Advisory Group: three online meetings and one face-to-face workshop.
- Observers and participants: DCCEEW representatives may join meetings to participate or observe.
- Other partners or stakeholders may be invited to meetings to provide information or advice as determined by the Group.

6. Conduct, Conflict of Interest and Probity

- Members must act in good faith and in the best interests of the Advisory Group's purpose, participating in productive and constructive discussions to ensure the Program is designed to deliver the highest possible impact for Reef and catchment Traditional Owners and their Country.
- On appointment, as part of induction processes, members will be required to make a conflict of interest declaration in writing, this declaration should be updated as new and emerging conflicts, or perceived conflicts are identified. Conflicts will be identified at the beginning of each meeting as required.
- The presence of a real or perceived conflict will not necessarily result in exclusion of a member from the group, the member will be supported by NAILSMA to ensure the conflict is appropriately managed, where possible to do so.
- All conflicts of interest and management plans will be maintained in a register by NAILSMA.
- NAILSMA and DCCEEW are committed to ensuring probity (robust and equitable processes) in the design and delivery of the Program.

7. Reporting and Outputs

- Summaries of Advisory Group meetings will be produced and circulated to the Group.
- Accuracy of these records is important as they will be used to inform the final report providing advice on the design of Phase Two.
- NAILSMA will be responsible for drafting the final report of the Program design principles to inform Phase Two to be submitted to DCCEEW, noting this report may be made public. Time will be provided to Advisory Group members for reviewing the report to ensure it accurately represents the Group's agreed decisions, principles, and recommendations for the design of Phase Two. Members will be responsible for contributing constructive feedback and timely engagement in revision processes to ensure delivery of this report occurs within the given timeframes.

8. Remuneration and Support

- Member remuneration for this Program governance opportunity will be $650 per day for contribution to meetings, plus reasonable expenses to attend meetings (including flights, accommodation, and meals for in-person meetings).
- NAILSMA will book flights and accommodation for face-to-face meetings in liaison with members. Changes to bookings will only be made in an emergency and can only be arranged during business hours.

9. Termination or Resignation

- NAILSMA may terminate the membership of any member where the member is unable to fulfil the requirements of the role or has otherwise failed to meet the expectations of membership as outlined in these Terms of Reference, without notice.
- Resignations are to be submitted by Members to the Chair and/or NAILSMA for action with a minimum of 14 days' notice.
- If an Advisory Group member is terminated or resigns, NAILSMA will use the assessment process outcome to identify the next most suitable candidate for appointment.

10. Terms of Reference Review

In light of the short lifespan of the Advisory Group, there is no plan for this TOR to be reviewed during Phase One. However, changes to the TOR may be made where the need to do so is identified by the Advisory Group and/or NAILSMA, with agreement by the group.

Appendix A: Map of Great Barrier Reef and Catchment Regions

