Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Group

Terms of Reference
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1. RIVERINA ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP

1.1 Introduction

Riverina Local Land Services (LLS) is a customer focused service delivery agency charged with supporting the NSW Government’s commitment to:

- the provision of agricultural advice, supporting sustainable productive food and fibre industries;
- plant and animal biosecurity that protects the economy, environment and community from the negative impacts of animal and plant pests, weeds and diseases;
- protecting and enhancing biodiversity and the State’s natural resources;
- supporting the people of New South Wales in dealing with biosecurity emergencies and natural disasters;
- care, control and management of public land identified as Travelling Stock Reserves (TSR);
- communicate, consult and engage with the Aboriginal Community to encourage participation in the delivery of services.

Riverina Local Land Services is bounded by Harden in the east, Hay in the west, Hillston in the north and Lockhart in the south. The area covers around 67,000 square kilometres (6.7 million hectares) of land and is serviced by 15 Local Governments with over 166,000 people.

The Murrumbidgee River winds through the region and is the second largest river of the Murray-Darling system. The word Murrumbidgee means ‘big water’ in the Wiradjuri language. Aboriginal people of the Riverina region have strong cultural heritage and is as much a living link to ancestors as it is to future generations. Similarly, cultural practices associated with the region are innately important to the Aboriginal people of the Riverina, and represent a living history that has been undertaken for many thousands of years.

There are six unique landscapes in the Riverina Local Land Services region (Figure 1) which are consistent with how communities relate to their landscape:

- **Rangelands** - extends out towards Balranald in the west, Hillston in the North and just short of Leeton in the East. This landscape includes part of the Lower Murrumbidgee Floodplain.
- **Irrigation Areas** - is limited to areas characterised by farms and infrastructure associated with and dependent on irrigation. This landscape includes Leeton, Griffith, Coleambally and Darlington Point.
- **Riverina Plains** – a diverse landscape that includes both dryland and irrigation farming communities. This includes Ungarie, West Wyalong, Narrandera, Griffith, Leeton and Coleambally. Nested within this landscape is the Irrigation Areas landscape.
- **South West Slopes** – lies to the north-east of the Riverina region. It extends North to Young, South to Tumut and West to almost Junee. Includes Gundagai and Cootamundra.
- **South West Highlands** – lies in the south-east of the Riverina region and is located on the western edge of the Kosciusko National Park. The landscape extends north to Jugiong and South to Cabramurra and includes, Tumut, Gundagai, Adelong and Biall.
Land use in the Riverina Local Land Services area is mainly agricultural with dry land grazing and cereal based cropping accounting for over 80% of land use. Irrigation farming in the region covers over 5% of the area.

Many natural assets of international and national importance are found in the area serviced by Riverina Local Land Services: The Ramsar listed site Fivebough and Tuckerbil wetlands found near Leeton and numerous national parks and reserves.

Communities in the Riverina region see agricultural production as important to the country's food security and work toward being resilient to climate variability and the changing economy.

Riverina Local Land Services is committed to improving its service to the community. We are continually striving to develop community engagement strategies and mechanisms to input feedback into our service systems.

1.2 Purpose of the Group

The Riverina Local Land Services Aboriginal Community Advisory Group is a group of Aboriginal representatives who meet with the General Manager and his/her management team, in facilitated sessions designed to gather in-depth feedback on initiatives and issues proposed by Riverina Local Land Services.

Specifically the group will:

- provide input into the development of Riverina Local Land Services plans;
- provide input from the Group during project planning and development phases.
- provide advice on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage issues relating to biosecurity, agriculture, natural resource management and emergency response across the Riverina region;
- provide advice on culturally sensitive policies and procedures; and
- provide advice on appropriate allocation of cultural access water.

1.3 Scope

These Terms of Reference provide guidance to those appointed to the Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Group in relation to the advice to be provided.

Riverina Local Land Services will seek input on a range of matters related to service delivery. This may include:

- Incorporation of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage into service delivery;
- Consideration of strategic planning priorities for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage; and
- Acknowledgement of traditional ownership and traditional cultural practices.

2. GROUP COMPOSITION

2.1 Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Groups

Riverina Local Land Services will establish four (4) Community Advisory Groups, The Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Group is one of these.

2.2 Membership

The group membership will consist of up to seven Aboriginal community members. A representative will be selected from each of the Riverina Local Land Services districts, as shown in Figure 1.

www.riverina.lls.nsw.gov.au
Figure 1: Operational Districts within Riverina Local Land
2.3 The Role of Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Group Members

A member’s role is to express their own opinions, based on their area of representation, to the management of Riverina Local Land Services, across the broad range of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage issues associated with the services provided by the Riverina Local Land Services.

Appointed members have a responsibility to:

- dedicate sufficient time to carry out their role effectively;
- adhere to the Group’s Code of Conduct (refer to Section 4);
- respect the confidentiality of Riverina Local Land Services (refer to item 4.2);
- provide feedback on matters discussed in the Group; and
- attend all meetings.

2.4 Nomination and appointment of members

Members are appointed through a competitive selection process. Riverina Local Land Services reserves the right to appoint or replace members to ensure ongoing and constructive representation of service areas is maintained. Alternate Members will not be appointed.

2.5 Attributes required of Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Group members

Selection will be based on the following criteria:

- candidates must identify as an Aboriginal person within their community;
- demonstrate an understanding and representation of country, its assets and resources and the cultural heritage values of Aboriginal people;
- ability to communicate a viewpoint and provide considered feedback;
- integrity to respect the confidentiality agreements of the group;
- integrity to identify and disclose conflicts of interest;
- ability to work in a team; and
- respect for Riverina Local Land Services responsibility to operate its business while balancing numerous drivers within statutory constraints.

2.6 Term

Membership of a Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Group is for a maximum term of two years or until such time as their replacement may become necessary as described in 2.7 (Vacancies). For the purposes of retaining core Group knowledge at any one time, replacements may be staggered. The General Manager of Riverina Local Land Services has discretion to the termination and appointment of members to ensure the purpose of the group is not compromised.
2.7 Vacancies
A vacancy arises if a member:

- resigns in writing;
- ceases to reside in the Riverina Local Land Services region;
- is absent from two consecutive meetings without leave being granted by the Chair; or
- fails to abide by the requirements of the Group, including the Code of Conduct, (refer to section 4).

Appointment processes to fill vacancies will be conducted by a request from Riverina Local Land Services for applications and a selection made by the General Manager for approval by the Riverina Local Land Services Board.

2.8 Riverina Local Land Services representation
Riverina Local Land Services will be represented at Group meetings by the General Manager or his/her delegate, a Riverina Local Land Services Board Member and/or representatives commensurate with the issues and/or initiatives being discussed. Meeting outcomes will be presented to the Board of Riverina Local Land Services.

2.9 Other attendees
The General Manager of Riverina Local Land Services may invite other persons to attend meetings, or part thereof, to provide input to the discussions or observe the proceedings.

Other attendees will be required to meet confidentiality requirements of Riverina Local Land Services (refer to item 4.2).

2.10 The Chair
A local Board member or his/her delegate will chair the meetings.

2.11 Secretariat support
Secretariat support will be provided by Riverina Local Land Services.

3. MEETING PROCEDURES

3.1 Meeting schedule
Meetings will be held as required, with a minimum of three per calendar year. Meetings shall only be called by the Chair following consultation with the Chair of the Riverina Local Land Services Board.

There will be an annual joint workshop of the Riverina Local Land Services Board and the Community Advisory Groups.

3.2 Meeting Format
The meeting format will be as follows (this does not apply to the annual Board/Community Advisory Group workshop):

- Meetings will be held at a location and date arranged by Riverina Local Land Services.
- The meeting will run no longer than two (2) hours.
Discussion topics will be relevant to local Aboriginal Cultural Heritage issues and may include input into any relevant plans or policies that Riverina Local Land Services may require from time to time. Attendees will also have a chance to add topics for discussion.

Local Land Services will provide catering as necessary, secretariat support for the meeting, and any other resources required for the meeting.

3.3 Quorum
There is no requirement for a quorum and the Chair may decide to proceed with meetings as long as he/she believes that the appropriate level of feedback and discussion is able to occur.

3.4 Conflict of Interest
As members of the group may be ratepayers, there is potential for conflicts of interest. The group does not make decisions but instead provides feedback.

3.5 Meeting protocol
The Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Group shall adhere to normal meeting protocols.

The annual joint Board/Community Advisory Group meetings are closed to the public. However non-members may attend to make presentations for a particular agenda item or discussion, at the invitation of the Chair.

3.6 Agenda papers
Agendas and other documentation necessary for conducting a meeting will be made available to Group members at least seven (7) days before each meeting.

3.7 Records
A record will be kept of the subject matter discussed and of the feedback received. Names of members making comments will not be recorded. The focus is on the information and feedback received.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT

4.1 Conduct of members
A diverse range of issues and initiatives will be brought to the Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Group by Riverina Local Land Services and various opinions, views and feedback provided by the members. All views will be given due consideration and Group members must treat participants courteously at all times.

4.2 Sensitive information
Members may occasionally come into possession of sensitive information including information classified as personal information under the National Privacy Principles. Members may not disclose any such information to any person outside the Group.
4.3 Security of documentation
All written materials provided by Riverina Local Land Services as part of the Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Group must be kept secure by the member, destroyed or returned to Riverina Local Land Services.

4.4 Public representation
Membership of the Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Group does not entitle, nor authorise, members to hold themselves as representing Riverina Local Land Services, the Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Group or the opinions of either.

5. ADMINISTRATION
5.1 Reimbursement
In consideration of the commitment required to participate in the Riverina Aboriginal Community Advisory Group, each group member will be reimbursed in accordance with the Classification and Remuneration Framework for NSW Government Boards and Committees.

Reimbursement for Riverina Aboriginal Advisory Group members are shown below:

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<tr>
<td>Sitting Fee</td>
<td>$220 per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel costs</td>
<td>Travel will be reimbursed in accordance with rates, published by the ATO. This will cover the round trip from usual place of residence to meeting place, when in excess of 30km. This is capped at $120.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; meals</td>
<td>NB: NSW Department of Industry will only reimburse travel for use of vehicles which are covered by a current Comprehensive Insurance Policy. All accommodation and meals will be arranged and paid for directly by Riverina Local Land Services.</td>
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1 Classification and Remuneration Framework for NSW Government Boards and Committees (October 2012), Level C1, NSW Public Service Commission.