

Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose and Role of the Committee

The Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee has been formed by the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources to provide advice and recommendations to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on the implementation of the 2016 Alice Springs Water Allocation Plan, including its 5-yearly review.

The role of the committee is to identify issues, critically evaluate information and to offer suggestions for water management strategies that support current and potential beneficial uses and maximise opportunities for ecologically sustainable development in the Alice Springs region.

2. Statutory effect

Section 23 of the *Water Act* authorises the Minister to establish, and appoint the members of, a Water Advisory Committee.

3. Functions

The Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee shall:

- Identify, discuss and make recommendations to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on matters regarding the assessment, management and use of water in the Alice Springs Water Control District including risk and management of risk to water quantity and quality and the benefits and costs of current and potential water uses.
- Share information about the water allocation planning process with the community and seek their values and interests ensuring these are communicated back to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.
- Participate in the development and implementation of water management strategies for the Alice Springs Water Control District consistent with the requirements of the *Water Act* and, as far as practicable, the National Water Initiative.
- Actively and openly participate in monitoring and evaluating the water allocation plan for the Alice Springs Water Control District and in the review of the plan (scheduled for 2021).
- Consider any other matters referred to it by the Minister or the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

4. Composition of the Committee

The Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee shall bring a diversity of relevant expertise, skills, perspectives and opinions to bear on water management in the Alice Springs Water Control District.

Members of the committee and chairperson are appointed by the Minister from nominations received during the Expressions of Interest process.

The members selected by the Minister will ensure that a diversity of representation is achieved and that all beneficial uses are represented as far as is practicable. Beneficial uses include

Agriculture, Aquaculture, Public Water Supply, Environment, Cultural, Industry, Rural Stock & Domestic and Indigenous economic uses.

Consistent with the intent of the Alice Springs Water Allocation Plan 2016-2026 (p4), a representative of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Logistics will be invited to be an observer to the committee, to facilitate knowledge exchange on land use planning.

5. Nomination and appointment process

Nominations for the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee will be sought through advertisements in the Centralian Advocate and the NT News. Key stakeholders and organisations may also be invited to nominate a representative. Nominations will be by Expression of Interest.

Expressions of interest will demonstrate the contribution that the nominee can make to the committee, including but not limited to:

- Their interest in the development of the Alice Springs Water Allocation Plan and commitment to the sustainable growth of the Territory economy;
- Recognised experience and knowledge in appropriate areas pertaining to water use and planning, regional development, pastoral enterprise, irrigated agriculture, horticulture, mining, tourism, community interests, environmental protection, water engineering and water management, Aboriginal enterprise and Aboriginal cultural values.
- Demonstrated ability to work with a diverse group of people with a range of values, interests, backgrounds and expertise.
- Ability to be representative of a stakeholder group and disseminate information to constituents (if possible, nominees should provide a letter of support or other evidence demonstrating that they are representative of a stakeholder group).

Nominations for casual vacancies may be sought by advertising or by invitation to key stakeholders and organisations or by direct invitation to individuals. The Committee may recommend nominees.

6. Terms of Appointment

The membership of the committee will be for a 5 year period covering the implementation of the current Alice Springs Water Allocation Plan and its review that is scheduled to be completed in 2021.

Members who do not attend three consecutive meetings may have their membership reviewed.

7. Proxy members

Members may nominate to the chairperson a proxy to attend meetings in their place if they are unable to attend all or part of a meeting. The proxy has the same participatory rights as other members for the duration of the meeting. The following operating rules concerning proxies will be applied:

- a) Proxies and members are not to both participate in a meeting but proxies may attend meetings with members as observers
- b) It is preferable that only one proxy is nominated by any committee member so that there is continuity in attendance
- c) Named proxies and committee members receive all information for meetings.

8. Operating Arrangements

- Members and proxies shall declare conflicts of interest and inform the chairperson immediately if a matter comes before the committee that may have a personal financial or other substantial personal interest. Should the committee request it, the member shall abstain from discussions on the affected matter.
- Meetings will be held as often as necessary to conduct the business of the committee. It is envisaged meetings will be held quarterly, most likely in the evening on a business day.
- A quorum in respect of the committee shall comprise half the membership including alternates.
- Sitting fees as per the remuneration for statutory bodies schedule payable to non-government appointees will apply.
- Visitors may attend meetings as observers with the prior permission of the chairperson.

9. Decision making

- Whenever possible, the committee will seek consensus in its decisions, positions or recommendations. The most important contribution sought from Committee members is the identification of issues and options that may not be apparent to those operating within the public sector. Members are expected to critically evaluate information and analyses presented to them by public officials and offer suggestions for innovative water management strategies that support a range of opportunities.
- If consensus is not possible a motion will have passed if $\geq 75\%$ of members present (including proxies where they are present instead of the member) support the motion. The chair has the same voting rights as ordinary members.
- The committee may elect to present alternate positions or recommendations that reflect different views within the committee.
- Visitors and proxies attending with the member, as observers, do not participate in decision making.

10. Role of the Chairperson

The chairperson of the committee has the following responsibilities:

- The chairperson is the primary media spokesperson for the committee.
- The chairperson will advise members of their roles and obligations as members of the committee and will conduct meetings to foster effective consideration of issues referred to or raised by the committee, and which represent the diversity of views in the committee.
- The chairperson will be responsible for setting meeting dates and agendas for meetings.
- The chairperson will ensure accurate reporting of the advice and recommendations of the committee to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.
- In the event that the chairperson is not able to attend a meeting she/he shall nominate an alternate chairperson or, if this is not possible, the committee shall elect a chairperson from those members present for that meeting.

11. Role of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is responsible for informing the Committee about current and forecast matters within its sphere of responsibility that are relevant to the Committee's purpose, role and functions. The Department shall use its best endeavours to ensure that the Committee is also informed of other matters relevant to the Committee's purpose, role and functions. The Department shall provide staff and resources to equip the committee with knowledge and timely information that assist the committee to develop its advice and recommendations.

The Water Resources Division of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will provide secretariat support to the committee and will organise meetings, prepare agendas and record minutes.

The role of Water Resources Division Staff in supporting the committee is to:

- Frame options for the sustainable and equitable management of water in the Alice Springs Water Control District
- Provide relevant technical information and analysis and ensure that it is presented in forms accessible to all members of the committee;
- Identify gaps in knowledge and information and ways of filling those gaps, including through enhanced monitoring systems, and through seeking expertise outside of government.
- Assist in framing advice and recommendations from the committee.