



Aboriginal Community Advisory Group

Terms of Reference 2015

Background

Hunter Local Land Services is part of a NSW Government Agency which works on natural resource management, livestock health and pest control and biosecurity and agricultural management issues. The HLLS has a commitment to work with the Aboriginal community and to achieve good outcomes for the community. The HLLS needs the guidance of the Aboriginal community to inform its strategies and operations, this guidance will be mainly provided from this advisory group.

1. Primary Function

- a) The role of the Aboriginal advisory group is to advise the Hunter Local Land Services on the strategies and priorities that HLLS should implement with the Aboriginal community.

2. Broader Roles and Responsibility:

- a) Act as a mechanism to give advice and recommendation to HLLS programs including priority strategies and activities.
- b) Support and develop consistent policy for Aboriginal involvement in natural resource management, livestock health and pest control, biosecurity, emergency and, agricultural management issues in the Hunter Local Land Services region;
- c) Be a forum for relevant Government agencies to consult with some members of the Aboriginal community.

3. ACAG Membership:

3.1. The Aboriginal Community Advisory Group is to consist of:

- a) Up to 24 members from the Aboriginal community and one HLLS Board member.
- b) Membership of the ACAG will reflect the diversity of skills, experience and 'grass-roots' knowledge held by Aboriginal people as well as a balance of geography, gender and age and currently networked with Aboriginal community.

3.2. The appointed members of the ACAG are to consist of:

- a) Each LALC will be invited to have at least one representative at ACAG with provision for an alternate to be nominated.

b) Aboriginal Community Representatives to submit expression of interest.

3.3. Members appointed from the community must be able to demonstrate Aboriginality, reside in the HLLS area (or have strong connection) and will possess one or more of the following attributes and/or areas of knowledge:

- a) Aboriginal Cultural heritage needs of the community;
- b) Currently networking with Aboriginal Community groups;
- c) Knowledge of the issues facing the Aboriginal community;
- d) Knowledge of natural resource management, livestock health and pest control and biosecurity or agricultural management issues
- e) Conflict resolution, facilitation and negotiation, both internally and externally;
- f) Teamwork.

4. Additional Membership Category – Associate Member

- a) A category of membership status which recognises that some Aboriginal people have valuable knowledge and experience to contribute to HLLS and ACAG business, however, are unable to attend most meetings due to a range of valid reasons. Associate members will maintain a ‘right of return’ to attend ACAG meetings in the future, in the event that their circumstances change, and will be included in all ACAG communication and correspondence.

5. Application Process & Appointment of Members

5.1 The recruitment of members will be by an advertisement in the media, email or LLS Website for an expression of interest or by invitation

5.2 The process for appointment of Aboriginal Committee members is as follows:

- a) Vacancies in any LALC representation will be by invitation to the LALC to nominate a member and alternate.
- b) Vacancies in Aboriginal community representatives shall be by expression of interest to the Hunter LLS.
- c) Applications will be assessed by a panel including an independent person approved by the Hunter LLS Chair..

5.3 New members to be provided with an information package and/or other induction process

6. Members Responsibilities

6.1 ACAG Member will be responsible for carrying out the following functions:

- a) Attending all ACAG meetings (and any other meetings as deemed appropriate by the members);
- b) Express the range of views of the communities within their areas, as is culturally appropriate;
- c) Informing the HLLS local and regional community about cultural heritage, natural resource management, livestock health and pest control and biosecurity and agricultural management issues;

- d) Providing other groups within the HLLS region with accurate information on the Aboriginal programs within HLLS
- e) Contributing to the development of priorities for resource allocation;
- f) Providing strategic advice at ACAG meetings;
- g) Information regarded as sensitive information should be recorded as sensitive with the name of the person or members of the community who are the custodians of the sensitive information. (According to cultural protocol, as decided by the Advisory group).
- h) ACAG Members may be provided with information from sources in both the HLLS and Aboriginal communities that is of a confidential or culturally sensitive nature, e.g. sacred sites, verbal reports and documents. This information is not for general circulation in the broader community and members must be prepared to maintain this confidentiality until the HLLS and the ACAG approves the release of material for community information and/or comment.
- i) Any information provided by ACAG members pertaining to Aboriginal cultural knowledge should be considered intellectual property and should be handled accordingly as decided by the group:

7. Term of Membership

- a) The term of membership will be two years

8. ACAG Operations

- b) Operate in a consultative capacity by providing information and recommendations to the HLLS Board;
- c) The ACAG does not have a role in HLLS operational issues
- d) Meetings will be held at various locations throughout the HLLS geographic area.

9. Media and Publications

- a) The HLLS will remain responsible for any public announcements or other media contact relating to activities of the committee, in consultation with the committee members. The HLLS may authorise members of the ACAG to carry out this function.
- b) Any correspondence will be approved or jointly agreed by chair of advisory group and chair of HLLS.

10. Election of Chair

- a) Election of Chair shall be conducted by way of secret ballot during an ACAG meeting on an annual basis.

11. Chair Term of Office

- a) Chairperson's term of office shall be two years

12. Chair Responsibility

- a) Chair meetings;

- b) Encourage open and fair discussion;
- c) Summarise actions from discussions;
- d) Represent the ACAG at a range of functions and events; and
- e) Present ACAG recommendations to HLLS Board meetings, as required.

13. HLLS Board Representation

- a) A HLLS Board member shall attend each meeting

14. HLLS Staff Responsibilities

- a) Provide executive support to the ACAG Committee including meeting arrangements, travel, accommodation, catering needs and a single point of contact for correspondence with ACAG members;
- b) Support ACAG members to attend meetings;
- c) Prepare a flexible agenda other meeting papers for ACAG meetings;
- d) Prepare a report of the meeting covering the in session and out of session outcomes;
- e) Action any resolutions from ACAG meetings;
- f) Promote the ACAG in other agency forums; and
- g) Disseminate information to ACAG members and Aboriginal Communities in a timely and effective manner, including feedback from the Board.
- h) Network with other agencies about Aboriginal programs.
- i) Timely and accurate reporting happens between the ACAG, LLS and Board.

15. Quorum

- a) Five members shall form a quorum at any meeting of the ACAG.
- b) Questions arising at a meeting of the ACAG shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present and voting

16. Schedule of meetings.

- a) A minimum of 2 meetings per year
- b) Other out-of-session meetings or activities as they arise

17. Structure of meetings.

- a) 2 day meetings, overnight stay with field trip, presentations

18. Agenda and meeting reports

- a) Agenda to be sent out at least two (2) weeks prior to an ACAG meeting
- b) Meeting reports to be sent out at least two (2) weeks after an ACAG meeting and sent to the next HLLS board meeting.

19. Communication protocol

- a) ACAG Chair may recommendations from the ACAG Committee to the HLLS Board by way of HLLS Board paper.
- b) Operational communications are through the Senior Land Services Officer (Aboriginal Communities) who is supported by Hunter LLS management.

20. Conflict of Interest

- a) Conflicts of Interest are to be recorded and actioned through Hunter LLS procedures

21. Fee for service

- b) Any additional requirement of ACAG members to provide advice or consultation to any external parties outside the regular ACAG meeting cycle will attract a fee for service. The fee for service amount is to be negotiated with the individual ACAG member(s).

22. Review of Terms of reference

- a) The Advisory group will modify the Terms of Reference as required in consultation with the HLLS Board.