

ALICE SPRINGS WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE and OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS as at 9 JULY 2008

1. The Purpose of the Committee

The Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee is an advisory group established by the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage to consider and advise the Controller of Water Resources (or delegate) on such matters within the Alice Springs Water Control District as are referred to it by the Controller (or delegate).

In particular, the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee is to advise the Controller of Water Resources (or delegate) on the effectiveness of the Alice Springs Water Resource Strategy in maximising economic and social benefits within ecological restraints

2. The Legislation

In September 2007 the Alice Springs Water Resource Strategy was declared to be a water allocation plan for the Alice Springs Water Control District, under section 22B of the *Water Act*. Section 23 (1A) of the *Water Act* authorises the establishment of a Water Advisory Committee. The establishment of an Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee was approved in October 2007 and the initial membership was appointed in March 2008. The Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee has the powers and functions ascribed to it under section 23 of the *Water Act*.

3. Terms of Reference

3.1 To participate in decision making about sustainable water resource management by identifying, discussing and making recommendations to the Controller of Water Resources (or delegate) on water resource management in the Alice Springs Water Control District. This shall include:

- (a) liaising with, and providing feedback from, other stakeholders as appropriate;
- (b) operational issues impacting on the efficient extraction of the groundwater resource;
- (c) the granting of licences to take groundwater from the Alice Springs Water Control District, and the conditions contained in such licences;
- (d) the water resources investigation program directed at assessing the groundwater resources of the Alice Springs Water Resource Strategy region; and
- (e) development of water conservation programs and projects.

3.2 To advise the Controller of Water Resources on regional development issues and policy matters that may influence the sustainable use and development of groundwater resources in the Alice Springs Water Control District.

3.3 To participate in the operation, progress and adoption of the water resource management principles, policies and actions outlined in the Alice Springs Water Resource Strategy.

- 3.4 Responsible for delivery by 30 August each year of an annual assessment of work plan achievements for the previous financial year and proposals for the following year.
- 3.5 To report annually to the Minister by 31 December each year on the operation of the Water Advisory Committee and the implementation of the Alice Springs Water Resource Strategy for the previous financial year.
- 3.6 Participate in periodic review of the Alice Springs Water Resource Strategy and community consultation arrangements and assist with the determination of beneficial uses and water allocations under the NT *Water Act*.

4. **Membership**

- 4.1 Members of the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee will be appointed by the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage to "hold office at the Minister's pleasure" and shall be suitably qualified and experienced persons in management of the water resource, or be in a position to represent key stakeholder interests. Members shall have a range of skills, experience and interests.
- 4.2 One (1) Independent Chairperson:
 - (a) Experienced in chairing meetings including understanding and relating meeting procedures;
 - (b) Some experience in water resource management, hydrogeology, engineering, environmental science, agriculture, horticulture, pastoralism, regional development, commerce, or water-related industry;
 - (c) Per diem allowance payable to non-government appointees (up to 1 day per month); and
 - (d) Nominations sought through public process (e.g. local newspaper advertising).
- 4.3 Up to seventeen (17) ordinary voting members:
 - (a) One person representing the public water supply utility;
 - (b) One person representing local government authorities;
 - (c) One person representing industry/commerce bodies;
 - (d) One person representing pastoral interest groups;
 - (e) One person representing defence organisations;
 - (f) One person representing housing associations;
 - (g) One person representing native title holders;
 - (h) One person representing Indigenous development;
 - (i) One person representing Indigenous land management;
 - (j) One person representing science-based organisations;
 - (k) One person representing environmental conservation groups;
 - (l) One person representing horticultural/agricultural groups;
 - (m) One person representing vocational/educational groups;
 - (n) One person representing sporting/recreational groups;
 - (o) One person representing Alice Springs residents;
 - (p) One person representing licensees in the Alice Springs Water Control District;
and
 - (q) One person representing the resources sector in the region.

- 4.4** As far as is practical, membership shall reflect diversity and equity principles including equal opportunity with regard to age, gender and disability. Nominations for replacement or additional members shall, in the first instance, be received by the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee. The Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee shall make recommendations to the Minister Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage on all future appointments.
- 4.5** If a member misses three meetings in a row, the Chairperson shall write to the organisation that nominated that person, asking them to ensure that their member attends the next meeting. If a person misses four meetings, the Chairperson shall write to the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage asking that the person be removed from the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee.
- 4.6** The Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee relies on information supplied by the Northern Territory Government to achieve informed decision making on matters concerning water demand and use. The following non-voting members will provide a link:
- (a) One person qualified as a water resource planner nominated by NRETAS;
 - (b) One person qualified as a groundwater scientist / engineer nominated by NRETAS;
 - (c) One person qualified as a water conservation specialist nominated by NRETAS; and
 - (d) One person qualified as a horticultural specialist nominated by DPIFM.

5. Alternates / Proxy Members

Members of the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee may, prior to a meeting, nominate to the Chairperson (in writing), an alternate to attend meetings in their place if they are unable to attend a part or the whole of a meeting. The alternate has the same participating and voting rights as the member for the duration of the meeting.

6. Operating Arrangements

- 6.1** Meetings shall be held quarterly or as often as necessary to conduct the business of the ASWAC.
- 6.2** A quorum in respect to the ASWAC shall comprise half the appointed members and/or alternates.
- 6.3** A motion will have passed if 75% of members and alternates present support the motion.
- 6.4** Confidentiality will be maintained by all participants at all times.
- 6.5** The Chairperson leads and generally represents the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee.
- (a) The Chairperson must reside in the Alice Springs Water Control District and must not be an employee of the Northern Territory Government.
 - (b) The Chairperson is nominated by a public process and appointed by the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage.

- (c) Affirmation of the Chairperson's appointment by the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee is required on an annual basis, whereby re-appointment is not necessary or, where the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee decides to call for nominations, nominations for Chairperson shall be received by the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee and a recommendation shall be made for appointment by the Minister.
- (d) The Chairperson has ordinary voting rights as a member of the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee.
- (e) In the event that the Chairperson is not able to attend a meeting, s/he shall nominate an alternate Chairperson, or if this is not possible, the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee shall select a Chairperson from those members present at the meeting.
- (f) The Chairperson is the primary media spokesperson for the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee.
- (g) The Chairperson shall be responsible for the preparation of the annual report to the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage.

6.6 An Executive Officer (EO), funded by the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts, shall be appointed to provide administrative support to the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee:

- (a) The EO will be the point of contact for all official correspondence.
- (b) The EO will operate in a professional and independent mode, directed by the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee.
- (c) Under the direction of the Chairperson, the EO will be responsible for organising meetings, preparing agendas, minutes and meeting correspondence and carrying out other duties as directed.
- (d) The EO shall, at 30 June each year, provide an audit of records and details of how the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee can access these.

7. Review

The Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee is envisaged as a dynamic group which will develop and improve with experience and as technical support and research findings progress.

Review of the Terms of Reference and Operating Arrangements may therefore be initiated from time to time by the Alice Springs Water Advisory Committee or by the Controller of Water Resources (NRETAS).