

Great Artesian Basin Coordinating Committee

OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

Revised September 2017

1. ORIGIN

- 1.1 In November 1995 a forum of some 60 stakeholders in the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) was held in Brisbane. The Forum recommended the formation of the Great Artesian Basin Consultative Council and proposed an initial purpose, role, and membership. The relevant Government Ministers of the States overlying the Basin and the Australian Government agreed to form the Council, in accordance with the recommendations of the Forum.
- 1.2 The Great Artesian Basin Consultative Council operated from 1997 to December 2002 and one of its main achievements was the preparation of 15-year Strategic Management Plan for the GAB. The Plan was endorsed by all jurisdictions.
- 1.3 Following a review of governance and funding arrangements of the Great Artesian Basin Consultative Council in 2002, the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council agreed in 2004 to the establishment of new body – the Great Artesian Basin Coordinating Committee (the Committee) to report to the Ministerial Council. The Committee held its first meeting on 25 and 26 May 2004. Its major function has changed from providing advice to Ministers through preparation of a whole of Basin Strategic Management Plan to one more of providing advice on implementation of the agreed Plan.

2. ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The primary role of the Committee is to provide advice to Australian, State and Territory Ministers¹ on efficient, effective and sustainable whole-of-resource management of the GAB and to coordinate activity between stakeholders.
- 2.2 To assist the Committee to deliver on its primary role, the Committee is to undertake the following activities:
 - Undertake objective analysis of policy matters and provide advice to State and Territory departments responsible for water management
 - Coordinate policy across sectors where appropriate
 - Prepare and submit recommendations to Australian, State and Territory Ministers on GAB and cross-border issues

¹ Provision of advice to Ministers (as opposed to the previous Ministerial Council) as an interim arrangement until a new Great Artesian Basin Strategic Management Plan has been agreed.

- Review and report on the progress of relevant programs
 - Review and report on the implementation of the Strategic Management Plan
 - Liaise with other bodies on relevant Strategic Management Plan issues
 - Provide promotion/publicity and communication about whole-of-Basin values against an agreed workplan
 - Facilitate, coordinate, assess and monitor technical activity (e.g. standards and research).
- 2.3 Activities undertaken by the Committee must be consistent with its primary role.
- 2.4 The Committee does not have a management or lobbying role. Operational matters are primarily the responsibility of State/Territory agencies. The Committee supports and complements State advisory committees rather than being part of a hierarchical reporting structure.
- 2.5 The Committee as a whole is accountable to State and Territory Ministers and reports through State and Territory Senior Officers.
- 2.6 The Committee shall remain operational until the 2017 Great Artesian Basin Strategic Management Plan and supporting governance arrangements are agreed by Ministers.
- 2.7 Individual members of the Committee are accountable to their respective nominating bodies. Committee members will bring an understanding of GAB issues from their nominating bodies and other relevant stakeholders and reciprocally, inform nominating organisations of Committee outcomes.

3. REPRESENTATION

- 3.1 The Committee comprises industry sector bodies and community representatives. Government representatives from Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Northern Territory and the Australian government hold the status of observers and provide advice to the Committee as required.
- 3.2 Members will be appointed for a fixed 3 year term and may be subsequently appointed for a further term or further terms.
- 3.3 An Operating Protocol to manage Committee appointments and reappointments under the Operating Arrangements may be developed by the Senior Officials Committee.
- 3.4 Non-government and non-industry sector appointed members of the Committee are eligible to receive Sitting Fees as prescribed in the Guidelines for Remuneration of Part-Time Office Holders of a Category 2, subject to the conditions specified in that Guideline.
- 3.5 Consequently, a Sitting Fee may be payable for:
- 3.5.1 Time spent at a properly constituted formal meeting of the Committee
 - 3.5.2 Reasonable time spent, if any, in travelling to and from such as meeting
 - 3.5.3 Time spent representing the Committee at a conference or other forum
Provided it is authorised and registered by the Chair or in the Case of the Chair, by the Secretariat

- 3.5.4 A member is exempt from GST if the Sitting Fee is paid directly through the Department's payroll system. PAYG tax deductions and tax instalments will be withheld at the relevant rate from Sitting Fees
- 3.5.5 Sitting Fees will be paid direct into members' nominated accounts by the Secretariat after each meeting
- 3.5.6 The Chair will assess on a case-by-case basis, the need for the payment of additional Sittings Fees to support intersessional work undertaken by Committee members and will make recommendations to the Secretariat accordingly. The Secretariat will support the Chair's recommendations, provided:
- 3.5.6.1 sufficient funding is available in the Committee Budget for the purpose
- 3.5.6.2 the need/ appropriateness/ alternatives test, as required by standard government procedure, is met.
- 3.6 Each member must be an active and participative member. Each member will be expected to contribute between meetings to particular tasks or projects of the Committee in accordance with the Committee's priorities and agenda.
- 3.7 Representation on the Committee is by nomination and approval processes listed at **Attachment A**.

4. THE CHAIR

- 4.1 The Chair is appointed by the Australian Government Minister responsible for the water portfolio following agreement by State and Territory Ministers..
- 4.2 The role of the Chair is to:
- provide leadership for the Committee and a focus for Basin-wide matters
 - work collaboratively with and actively support the members of the Committee to fulfil the purpose and role of the Committee
 - convene and conduct Committee meetings
 - ensure the continuation of Committee business between meetings in liaison with the Secretary and in collaboration with Committee members as appropriate
 - be the primary representative of the Committee and coordinate Committee media contact e.g. press releases etc.
 - consult with one or more Committee members to represent Committee at meetings, conferences etc. in accordance with the guidelines for attendance at Conferences and other forums as outlined in Clause 10 of this document
 - liaise with State advisory and sector bodies as necessary and appropriate, in conjunction with the Chair of the State advisory body
 - report regularly to the Ministerial Council and individual Ministers as necessary
 - provide a written report to the Committee concerning activities carried out by the Chair between meetings. The report will include details of any travel undertaken, contact with the media, contact with other organisations, and the formation or dealing with any working group in relation to Committee matters.

- 4.3 The Chair is appointed for a fixed 3 year term, although the Chair may be subsequently appointed for a further term or further terms.
- 4.4 The Chair may resign from office by giving written notice of resignation to the Australian Government Minister responsible for the water portfolio. The resignation will take effect on the day and at the time the notice is received by the Australian Government Minister responsible for the water portfolio or such later day and time as is stated in the notice.
- 4.5 The Chair may be removed from office by the Australian Government Minister responsible for the water portfolio, following consultation with the relevant State and Territory Ministers. The reasons for the proposed removal must be fully revealed and the Chair must be given a full and fair opportunity to show cause why the removal should not take place. The Chair has no right of appeal against any removal carried out under this Sub-clause.

5. ACTING CHAIR

- 5.1 In the event of the Chair being temporarily unable or unavailable to carry out the role of Chair as provided for under the Operating Arrangements of the Committee, or if there is no Chair in place, the Committee may appoint an Acting Chair.
- 5.2 The Acting Chair will assume the role and responsibilities of the Chair, as outlined in Clause 4 for the period of acting.

6. THE TREASURER

- 6.1 The Treasurer is an officer of one of the agencies that fund the operation of the Committee.
- 6.2 Initially the Treasurer will be provided by the Australian Government Minister responsible for the water portfolio. Subsequently, the Treasurer will be determined by the funding agency members of the Committee.
- 6.3 The Treasurer shall produce a financial statement for inclusion in the Chair's annual report.

7. THE SECRETARIAT

- 7.1 The Committee's Secretariat is to be provided by the Australian Government water portfolio.
- 7.2 The Secretariat is the initial point of contact for the Committee and shall provide Secretariat support (arrange travel and accommodation, meeting venue and catering, process sitting fee payments and travel allowance).
- 7.3 A Facilitator will be engaged to support the Chair of the Committee. The Facilitator will organise meetings, maintain a permanent record of minutes of meetings, prepare high level meeting agenda papers and briefing, correspondence and submissions. The Facilitator of the Committee will also manage and provide secretariat services to Committee's Sub-Committees and business of the Committee between meetings.

8. FUNDING

- 8.1 The annual contribution by agencies to fund the Great Artesian Basin Program which includes the operations of the GABCC is determined by the GABSOC's consideration of an annual GAB Program budget.

9. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 The agency of which the Treasurer of the Committee is a member will provide financial management within the agency to deal with contributions from funding bodies and Committee expenditure.
- 9.2 The contributing jurisdictions will provide funds periodically in response to calls by the Treasurer. Expenditure of funds is to be consistent with the financial administration and auditing requirements of the jurisdiction providing the Treasurer.
- 9.3 Subject to Sub-clauses 8.1 and 9.2, the Treasurer may keep Committee funds in one or more accounts and may expend funds for purposes approved under the Committee Budget from such account or accounts as the Treasurer considers proper.

10. GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES & OTHER FORA

- 10.1 Invitations and opportunities to attend or present at conferences can benefit the work of the Committee and the GAB. In particular, attending conferences can be useful in:
- promoting the better management of the Basin to community members
 - learning from the experience and expertise of others
 - making contact with others working in similar fields
 - showcasing technical and management achievements in the Basin.
- 10.2 These guidelines are to assist in determining whether attendance at the Committee's expense is justified. They apply to proposed conference attendance by the Chair or Committee members where the member is attending as a Committee member or as a representative of the Committee.
- 10.3 For Committee-sponsored attendance to be considered and/or approved, conferences must relate to one or more of the following topics:
- groundwater management
 - groundwater/artesian basins
 - groundwater dependent ecosystems
 - rangeland management
 - utilisation/economic uses of artesian groundwater
 - natural resource management.
- 10.4 The Committee may resolve to sponsor a member to attend a conference within the Committee's budget allocation and taking into account the relevance of the conference.

- 10.5 A condition of approval will be that the attendee must present a report to Committee at the next scheduled Committee meeting following attendance. The report should provide details of all information relevant to the GAB that is obtained or delivered, including tabling of the Proceedings, if applicable.
- 10.6 Where a Committee member participates in a Conference as a representative of Committee, as a keynote or invited speaker, through the presentation of a paper or poster, or at the expense of Committee, public pronouncements and/or the content of the paper/poster must be consistent with explicit decisions of Committee. In other circumstances, the poster/paper must include the disclaimer that the content is the views of the author(s) and does not necessarily purport to be the views of Committee.

11. TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR MEMBERS

- 11.1 If nominating bodies have difficulty in meeting travel expenses incurred by sector members in the performance of their Committee responsibilities, on written request by the nominating body, such members will be paid from Committee funds, reasonable transport and accommodation costs in accordance with the travel allowance provision of the jurisdiction providing the Treasurer role.
- 11.2 Officers of State, Territory or Australian Government agencies will not be paid travel expenses from Committee funds.

12. CALLING OF MEETINGS

- 12.1 The Committee Facilitator will call meetings at the direction of the Chair.
- 12.2 Members are to be given at least 30 days' notice of meetings.
- 12.3 Meeting dates should preferably be set at the prior meeting.
- 12.4 It is expected that there will be up to three meetings per year.

13. MEETING AGENDA

- 13.1 A draft agenda shall be circulated to members at least 30 days prior to the meeting for which it is intended.
- 13.2 Members should notify the Committee Facilitator of additional agenda items within 21 days of the meeting.
- 13.3 The Committee Facilitator will dispatch a final agenda 14 days prior to the meeting.

14. RULES OF CONDUCT FOR MEETINGS

- 14.1 The Committee may use any committee system effectively and efficiently to focus discussion on core business at meetings. This should be achieved by delegating detailed discussions and work to the Sub-Committees, allowing the Committee to focus on making decisions on recommendations at meetings.
- 14.2 No votes, resolutions or recommendations shall be passed by the Committee unless a quorum of members (not including observers) is present. A quorum in respect of the Committee shall comprise half of the number of members plus one.

- 14.3 In all cases when considering any matter the Committee shall use its best endeavours to achieve a recommendation by consensus, and the Chair will only put a matter to a vote of those members present if it is considered that such a consensus cannot be achieved.
- 14.4 A motion will be passed if at least 75% of members present support the motion. A member may instruct another member or the Chair in writing to vote for the instructing member if the instructing member is unable to be present at a meeting.
- 14.5 A member may nominate, in writing, an observer to attend a meeting if the member is unable to be present at a meeting. An observer is not entitled to take part in a vote on any issue.
- 14.6 General observers will not be admitted. The only non-members able to attend will be those with a particular purpose such as Australian, State and Territory water department officers, invitees to make presentations, Ministers observers on behalf of absent Members, and officials with a special interest.
- 14.7 At the request of a Committee member, any dissenting views and abstentions with regard to a motion shall be recorded in the minutes.
- 14.8 The Committee shall make resolutions and recommendations only on such matters as are listed on the agenda for that meeting, unless all members present at the meeting agree otherwise. Other business can be raised for discussion at a meeting with the approval of the majority of members present.

15. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

- 15.1 Minutes shall be taken at every Committee meeting. Minutes of meetings shall summarise discussions and shall record any decision taken or recommendations made by the Committee, and shall not purport to be a transcript of proceedings.
- 15.2 Draft Minutes shall be circulated to members within 14 days of the meeting concerned.
- 15.3 A final draft of Minutes shall be circulated within 60 days of each Committee meeting.

16. REPORTING

- 16.1 The Chair shall prepare an annual report for submission to State and Territory Senior Officers. The annual report will cover the financial year and be due by December 31 each year.
- 16.2 The annual report is to be considered by the Committee before transmission. The report will:
- record the activities and achievements of the Committee;
 - convey the views of the Committee on management issues in the Great Artesian Basin relevant to the Committee's responsibilities; and
 - contain a financial statement.
- 16.3 The Committee will report the summary of key outcomes from each meeting to nominating bodies, Ministers and others as appropriate.

17. MEDIA CONTACT

- 17.1 The Chair is the primary spokesperson for the Committee in responding to media enquiries and making public comment on Committee activities and matters that fall within its roles.
- 17.2 Committee members should refer requests for media comment to the Chair. Where this is not possible members should provide only statements of fact on behalf of the Committee. It should be made clear to the media representative that other comments given are personal comments or comments made on behalf of the organisation the member represents.
- 17.3 The Chair will endeavour to consult with relevant members of the Committee before issuing media releases.

18. COMMITTEE SUPPORT

- 18.1 The Committee may establish standing or short-term Sub-Committees and working groups from time to time to address specific issues. Such Sub-Committees and working groups will report back to the Committee, providing its response to the issue.
- 18.2 The Committee or its Sub-Committees may co-opt other new or existing groups or individuals to obtain advice in technical, social or environmental areas as required to support the Committee. Mining and petroleum involvement in technical aspects of GAB management is to be encouraged.

19. AMENDING THESE OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

- 19.1 These Operating Arrangements may be amended by agreement of sponsoring Ministers at any time.
- 19.2 The Committee may recommend amendments to Ministers, which may, with agreement by sponsoring Ministers amend the Operating Arrangements.

20. REVIEW OF THE OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

- 20.1 The Operating Arrangements shall be reviewed after a period of no longer than five years or at such earlier time as determined by the Committee.
- 20.2 Any changes to the Operating Arrangements as a result of such review will be forwarded to Ministers for consideration in accordance with Sub-clause 19.2.

GREAT ARTESIAN BASIN COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

MEMBERS	NOMINATING BODY (1)	APPROVAL/NOTIFICATION PROCESS
Chair	Australian Government Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources	Minister requires unanimous agreement of State and Territory Ministers
Community Representatives		
Queensland	Department of Natural Resources and Mines	Notification to Chair
New South Wales	Department of Primary Industries and Water	
South Australia	Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources	
Northern Territory	Department of Environment and Natural Resources	
Regional Representatives		
Agriculture	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources	Notification to Chair
Environment	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources	
Sector Representatives		
Agriculture	National Farmers Federation	Nomination to the Australian Government Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources who, if he/she agrees, must obtain unanimous agreement from all State and Territory Ministers
Environment	National Environment Consultative Forum	
Local Government	Australian Local Government Association	
Mining	Minerals Council of Australia	
Petroleum	Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association	
Indigenous	Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources on advice from the Indigenous Land Management Facilitators	
Technical Support Representative		
Member, Technical Working Group	Australian Government Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources	Notification to the Chair

GREAT ARTESIAN BASIN COORDINATING COMMITTEE - AGENCY OBSERVERS

Agency Observers		
Queensland	Department of Natural Resources and Mines	Notification to Chair
New South Wales	Department of Primary Industries and Water	
South Australia	Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources	
Northern Territory	Department of Environment and Natural Resources	
Australian Government	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources	

¹ A reference to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and the Australian Government Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in these Operating Arrangements is also a reference to any subsequent Australian Government Minister(s) whose portfolio responsibilities cover similar responsibilities.