

Murray Local Land Services – Murray Aboriginal Technical Group (MATG)

Terms of Reference

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Terms of Reference (ToR) is to ensure that the governance arrangements and operational framework are in place so that the MATG is able to operate effectively and efficiently.

2. GOVERNANCE

MATG is a committee that reports to the Murray Local Land Services (Murray LLS) Board (the Board). MATG acts as an advisory body under the overall direction and guidance of the Board. Note - as a formal sub-committee of the Board all MATG Members are required to comply with all relevant policies and procedures of Murray LLS and the NSW Government. (Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct Specifically)

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF MATG

- 3.1 Recognition of Traditional Owners in the Region and the primacy of their role in cultural heritage, cultural economy, cultural knowledge & connection to Country.
- 3.2 Recognition that the Aboriginal community within the NSW Murray Region is diverse and includes many individuals and groups who have an interest in natural resource management and have a connection to the NSW Murray Region even though they may not be Traditional Owners.
- 3.3 Members must work in the interest of the whole community rather than specific organisations or other individual/personal interests
- 3.4 Recognition of legislative responsibilities such as the Local Land Services Act 2013, Native Vegetation Act 1995, National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 along with the roles of statutory bodies such as Local Aboriginal Lands Councils and policies such as Closing the Gap and OCHRE.
- 3.5 Australia is a signatory to a range of International conventions such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- 3.6 Participation in MATG will include transparency of communication into and out of the community and Murray LLS.
- 3.7 Recognition that Aboriginal People's cultural, economic, social and spiritual needs and views may differ from other groups and that these differences need to be considered in natural resource management and social and economic developmental opportunities.
- 3.8 The role that traditional ecological knowledge can play in environmental management will be promoted for incorporation into natural resource management.

4. FUNCTIONS OF MATG

4.1 Provide advice to MLLS to assist the Board and staff

- Identify relevant Aboriginal issues
- Assist with the development of policy and strategic direction in relation to Aboriginal matters
- Build relationships
- Establish a pathway between the Aboriginal community and the Board.

- Liaise and work cooperatively with the LLS program team to achieve identified MATG functions and objectives
- Promote the importance of the protection, management and enhancement of Aboriginal cultural values will be fostered and promoted amongst the broader community.
- Other matters as directed by the Board.

4.2 Support MLLS planning for

- The development of Murray LLS's policies, programs and projects in line with strategic documents.
- Aboriginal participation and involvement across MLLS business
- Aboriginal Stakeholder collaboration in the delivery of MLLS services
- Capacity assessment, development and training support for Aboriginal communities in natural resource management.
- Engagement and consultative structures to support Aboriginal community input across a range of scales, industries and issues
- Working with groups for project delivery and capacity support including a framework for developing and establishing partnership agreements between Aboriginal communities, Murray LLS and other agencies.
- The development of an associated investment strategy
- Identification of priority natural resource management actions
- Identification of social and economic development opportunities
- Sound cultural heritage management outcomes ensuring Due diligence under NSW Acts across all areas of MLLS business and operations.
- Communications with our customers and stakeholders.
- Responding to our customer needs.
 - Design and delivery of targeted community projects
 - Advice in applying for relevant grants.
 - Development of response on relevant legislation and policy.

4.3 Assist in reporting the outcomes from MLLS processes for collaboration and community ownership

4.4 MATG may agree to provide advice to external stakeholders for non-MLLS activities (For example OEI Consultation and Engagement via EWAG)

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Membership will comprise:-

- A maximum of 7 Aboriginal community members. Alternates will not be permitted.
- Members must be able to demonstrate Aboriginality and ongoing connection to the NSW Murray Region.
- MLLS in consultation with the MATG may alter the number of members and the membership at any time.

5.2 Appointment of members

- Membership is skills based and will be determined through a comprehensive selection process.
 - Organisations within the Murray LLS region will be approached to propose a potential member.
 - The Board may seek members to address geographical, skills or industry gaps.
 - Once appointed it is expected that members will apply their skills, experience and community feedback mechanisms to support the development of an effective regional approach.
- Appointment to MATG will be through a formal letter of offer from the Board.
- Appointment of members will be based on suitable skills to serve on the group and coverage of the interests of the local community and stakeholders in the region

Consideration will be given to:

- Geographic spread across the region.
- Demonstrated ability to engage with traditional owners and other Aboriginal groups.
- The diversity of Aboriginal organisations and individuals within the Region.
- Aboriginal cultural heritage knowledge.
- Relevant community connection and networks and the ability to network with a wide range of community organisations
- Knowledge of MLLS services and community partners
- Communication/engagement and networking skills
- Understanding of challenges and opportunities for Aboriginal community organisations working in NRM and sustainable agriculture
- Leadership and team work.
- Good written and oral communication skills

Other desirable attributes of MATG members are:-

- Demonstrated experience with Investment/funding proposals/finances.
- Experience in leading and developing social or economic programs
- Demonstrated experience in working with community.
- Experience on committees, boards of management or similar.

6. SEEKING EXTERNAL ADVICE

Additional input may be sought at meetings from individuals with specific knowledge or skills to assist MATG on issues. These persons will not have voting rights and will act only in an advisory capacity to MATG.

7. TERM OF APPOINTMENT

Members will be appointed to the Group for an initial term of three (3) years, with the Board reserving the right to extend the appointment where mutually agreed.

The Board reserves the right to amend or terminate the term of appointment.

Group members may resign from the Group by serving one month's written notice to the Board.

8. MEETING PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

- MATG will meet up to four times a year. (additional meetings by agreement)
- Location of meetings to be central to the region or by mutual agreement between members.
- An agenda with relevant supporting material will be forwarded to members at least one week prior to the meeting.
- MATG meetings are to be minuted. The summary of the meeting outcomes and key actions will be placed on the MLLS website
- Further Meeting protocols are contained in Appendix 1.

Decision making process

- Decision making should be by consensus wherever possible.
- Quorum is minimum of half the current membership

Process for addressing disputes or resolving delayed decision processes

- Timely decision making is required to ensure MATG can fulfil its role effectively and efficiently. In the event of a dispute or similar, the matter should be raised in the meeting and dealt with accordingly.
- If decisions are delayed or the Group cannot reach a consensus in a timely manner, the Board reserves the right to intervene and provide direction to the Group

9. MLLS

- MLLS Board member appointee will attend meetings as an “ex-officio” member.
- The MLLS General Manager or representative/s will attend meetings as ex-officio members.
- MLLS will provide staff resources to support the operation of the MATG including secretariat associated with meetings.
- MLLS will provide a convenor for MATG meetings.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

From time to time, members may be provided with information from sources in both the LLS and Aboriginal communities that is of a confidential or culturally sensitive nature, e.g. sacred sites, verbal reports and draft documents. This information is not for general circulation in the broader community and members must be prepared to maintain this confidentiality until Murray LLS and/or the MATG approves the release of material for community information and/or comment, or otherwise.

11. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Participation on the Group may result in individuals being provided with information that could provide a commercial or intellectual benefit to the individual or stakeholder groups they work with. Similarly individuals may be participating in decision making that provides a benefit to the individual or stakeholder group. In all cases the individual must declare a conflict of interest (conflicts of interest may be real or perceived) to the Group Chair and the Murray LLS. Upon the declaration of a Conflict of Interest the committee will determine the appropriate response which may include individuals removing themselves from the meeting for certain deliberations.

All declarations of Conflict of Interest will be minuted.

12. TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- Individuals attending in a voluntary capacity will be recompensed for sitting, travel and approved out of pocket expenses.
- Approval will be sought for recompense to Government employees attending in their own time.
- Accommodation will be booked on behalf of the delegate and the appropriate NSW government rate for mileage will apply to private vehicle travel.
- Sitting fees will be paid in accordance with NSW Government rates.

13. REVIEW

The operation of the MATG and the Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Murray LLS Board.