



Landcare ACT Members Council

Terms of Reference

(from Appendix A Landcare ACT Governance Charter)

Purpose

The Members' Council supports the board of Landcare ACT in ensuring the effective representation of members in developing policy and other positions relating to issues management and advocacy on behalf of members.

Background

Landcare ACT is the peak organisation for community Landcare in the ACT representing Landcare on behalf of its members, which, at its establishment, are the three landcare networks in the ACT region (catchment groups), the ACT Rural Landholders Association and an organisation representing traditional Aboriginal custodians who can speak for country in the ACT.

One of Landcare ACT's roles is advocacy on behalf of its members. Effective advocacy requires demonstration to its members and key stakeholders, including government, that there has been substantial input by a significant proportion of the broader Landcare membership in the ACT in developing policy positions and promoting views on issues of relevance to Landcare.

Authority

The Members' Council is established pursuant to Article 55(a) of the Landcare ACT Constitution.

Role

The Members' Council is the key representative forum for the identification, evaluation, debate and resolution of issues for Landcare in the ACT. The Council will:

- support the Landcare ACT board in its advocacy role and the representative nature of its policies and negotiations with government and other stakeholders
- provide insights, advice and recommendations to the board relating to policy and in respect of emerging issues and their likely impact on Landcare operations, effectiveness and funding
- identify, investigate and evaluate matters of interest and concern to members. It will be "the eyes and ears" of the board, ensuring that the board is properly informed of the views of the Landcare community in the ACT
- establish a system for regular consultation and engagement of members and stakeholders. In achieving this, the Council should extend the reach of its consultation through member organisations and their local networks and related organisations.

Responsibilities

The Committee will operate in accordance with these terms of reference. The Council will undertake roles such as:

- Identify priorities and members' desired or expected outcomes on a regular basis.
- Identify and assess the likely impact of issues and emerging issues as well as matters raised by members relating to Landcare policy, operations and funding.
- In fulfilling its role, the Council will:
 - Develop evidence based policy positions to support advocacy.
 - Support establishment of a data base to provide evidence of the achievements of Landcare ACT.
- Recommend / Determine research, investigation, external advice and/or consultation required to produce evidence to develop and support recommendations to the board in respect of proposed policy positions and other advice and recommendations to the board.
- Utilise the professional expertise of member organisations, where appropriate, to support the work of the Council and its consultative processes.
- Support the development of the strategic plan by the board and recommend long and short-term objectives to the board.
- The Council may establish additional forums, sub-committees and/or ad hoc task forces to spread the workload and engagement and ensure that there is substantial contribution from the widest possible number of members and stakeholders. All such sub-committees and task forces must operate in accordance with Terms of Reference approved by the Council. The Council will be responsible for monitoring the progress of its sub-committees and task forces, ensuring that they have appropriate membership and terminating their operation as required.

Members

- Council members will be nominated by the members of Landcare ACT.
- Up to five members may be nominated by each of the Initial members of Landcare ACT.
- Members may nominate any person who is associated with Landcare whom they believe will be an effective member of the Council, including employees of member organisations.
- The board will approve the appointment of all members to the Council, having regard to the purpose and role of the Council and its responsibilities.
- Members may identify observers to be observers to some sections of the meeting
- Members may identify alternate members to attend meetings of the Council if the nominated members are unable to attend a meeting.
- The CEO or his/her delegate will attend all meetings of the Council in an ex-officio capacity.

Requirements of members

- Council members must be able to commit sufficient time and effort to support its work.

- The Council will rely substantially on member organisations to provide the professional expertise to support the consultative processes required to achieve broad representation.

Term of appointment

- Members shall be appointed for a period of two years with a maximum of 3 consecutive terms.
- Retirement of Council members shall be managed by the board so that no more than one-third of the Council retires at any one time.
- The board should review the composition of the initial Council after two years from its commencement.

Council Chair

- The Chair of the Members' Council will be appointed by the board from amongst the Council members nominated by Landcare ACT members and approved by the Board.
- Council members may make a recommendation to the board regarding their choice of candidate for this position. The board will take account of these views but must have regard to the overall requirements of the position.

Chair skills and qualities

In appointing the Chair, the board should have regard for the skills and qualities required of the role, including:

- ability to efficiently and effectively organise the business of the Council, to determine priorities and to plan an effective agenda and program of meetings
- ability to develop and manage effective working relationships with the CEO, Council members and the board
- ability to effectively conduct meetings with a large number of participants and to manage evidence and arguments to achieve resolutions that are widely supported
- ability to analyse, synthesise and evaluate information and reports based on consultation with members and stakeholders
- understanding of the external operating environment and its possible impact on decisions of the Council.

Council Decisions

- Decision-making should be based on consensus wherever possible.
- Where a consensus cannot be achieved, the Council should consider the implications of the divergent views, and reach a decision based on a two-thirds majority of the total membership of the Council.
- Decisions should be supported by formal resolutions of the Council.
- Contrary views should be noted in the minutes of the Council's meetings and brought to the attention of the board.

Reporting

- The Council reports to the board and must keep the board informed of its work and activities.
- The Council must advise the board of
 - Issues and proposals submitted to the Council for consideration;
 - Issues and proposals accepted or rejected and the basis for the decision;
 - Work in progress, scheduling and arrangements for consultation; and
 - any other relevant matters.

Meetings

- The Council will meet at least four times each year and will hold additional meetings as required.
- The number of Council members whose presence is necessary to constitute a quorum will be 50 per cent of the total number of members.
- A member who is unable to attend a meeting may appoint an alternate person to attend on their behalf. Alternatively, a member may give their proxy to any other member in respect of any matter. This advice should be provided to the Chair prior to the commencement of the meeting.
- Any member of the Council may request the Chair to convene a meeting of the Council at any time, provided that 14 days' notice is provided to members after receipt of that request.

Administrative Arrangements

- The Chair will work with the CEO to arrange Council meetings, approve the agenda, ensure that any papers are distributed at least one week prior to meetings, approve minutes and ensure that they are distributed within two weeks of each meeting.
- Meetings can be held in person, by telephone, webinar or video conference.

Review

This charter and the performance of the Council will be reviewed each year.