Wimmera
Catchment Management
Authority

WIMMERA CMA - ADVISORY COMMITTEES

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Abbreviations:
CMA – Catchment Management Authority
CEO – Chief Executive Officer
NRM – Natural Resource Management
RCS- Regional Catchment Strategy

1. Background

The following Terms of Reference apply to Wimmera CMA Advisory Committees.

Wimmera CMA is the peak advisory body on conditions, directions and priorities in catchment management in the Wimmera. The Authority is responsible for the coordination of integrated catchment management and sustainable land and water use, involving relevant government agencies and the community. It also has responsibility for advising the government on catchment issues and the condition of the catchment and its natural resources.

Wimmera CMA provides leadership for natural resource management in the Wimmera region through the roles of:

- Advocacy;
- Facilitation and Coordination;
- Information and knowledge brokerage;
- Strategic planning for NRM activities within the region;
- Arranging investments for priority NRM outcomes;
- Engaging communities and stakeholders in strategic partnerships for managing natural resources;
- Project design, implementation and reporting;
- Monitoring change in resource condition through implementation of strategic actions.

The Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) provides a vision for the future landscape of the region. The strategy is designed to be a valuable tool for all stakeholders in the planning and prioritising of works and to provide guidance in moving towards a common regional vision.

The Wimmera CMA Board has adopted a structure whereby it holds responsibility for strategic decision making and has delegated responsibility for day to day operations of the Authority to the operational staff through the Chief Executive.

The Wimmera RCS identifies the community as one of the most important assets in the management of our environment. As part of its community engagement strategy the Wimmera CMA has established a group of advisory committees to provide advice on the development and implementation of the RCS. The committees are structured on three geographic regions in relation to integrated catchment management and one whole of region Advisory Committee representing Landcare.

The Advisory Committees are:

Upper-mid Catchment
Western Catchment
Northern Wimmera Catcment
Landcare Implementation (whole of region)

The regions are based on similarities of natural land use and future program delivery.
** Refer to map of 'Advisory Committee Regions'.

2. Purpose of Advisory Committees

Catchment Management Authorities (CMA's) are responsible for improving the natural environment in accordance with regional priorities. CMA's are specifically charged with ensuring that the local community is actively involved in the processes of identifying regional issues and priorities.

Advisory committees are a forum for community views to be heard, and a mechanism in which advice and suggestions can be provided to Wimmera CMA Board in developing its strategies, programs and direction.

Advisory committees have members representing a broad range of community interests. This provides another way for regional views and priorities to be incorporated into the decision making processes of Wimmera CMA.

3. Role of Advisory Committees

Advisory Committees provide advice to the Wimmera CMA Board.

They have been established to provide defined input and direction to the Board on specific issues. The Board will be guided by the opinions and advice of Advisory Committees, but is not bound to accept the advice. Advisory Committees create a formal construct whereby the Board can proactively seek advice and feedback on specific issues in relation to Wimmera CMA policy, objectives and activity.

Advisory Committee members provide advice to the Board on:

- The implementation and review of local NRM programs in their area.
- Local & emerging issues in the development and ongoing review of NRM plans;
- The delivery of the RCS.
- Emerging and existing catchment issues; and
- Board initiated reviews.

4. Membership

- Advisory Committee's shall consist of a number of community representatives depending on skills, expertise and interest and at least one Wimmera CMA Board member to act as a communication link from the Board to the Advisory Committee.
- Where positions can not be filled with suitably skilled persons, additional appointments can be recommended by the Appointment Panel over time.
- Appointment is for a single term of two years.
- Members may not serve more than two terms, this will be reviewed by the Board annually.
- To maintain appointment to the committee a member must have maintained a satisfactory attendance record in the previous financial year.
- No more than two (2) agency/authority staff to act as ex-officio.

- Members are to be appointed by the Wimmera CMA Board following a call for 'Expression of Interest' from the Wimmera Community;
- Appointment of community members to the Advisory Committees is made by the Board following an expression of interest process on the basis of a variety of skills and knowledge representing the range of issues relevant to the Advisory Committee;
- Equal opportunity principles apply;
- To be eligible for appointment to a Advisory Committee a candidate must have a selection of skills and/or knowledge in one or more of the following areas:

Leadership	Farming	Landcare Experience
Communication skills	Sustainable Agriculture	Business Management
Natural Resource Management	Land Use Planning	Local knowledge
Indigenous & Cultural Heritage	Biodiversity (ecological knowledge)	

5. Appointment Process

Interested public will be invited to complete an 'expressions of interest' form to nominate their Advisory Committee area and to highlight the skills they bring to the role.

The following process will be used to appoint members to Advisory Committees:

An Appointment Panel consisting of CMA Program Managers, and Board members, will:

Produce a list of preferred candidates.

The Board will review the list and make further comments.

Appointments will be made by the Board.

6. Appointment of the Chair

- The Chair is appointed for a term not to exceed two years;

7. Meeting Frequency

- Advisory Committees will meet at a minimumof three times per year, or at strategically set times as determined by the chairperson;
- Each Advisory Committee should have at least one joint meeting with the other Advisory Committees per year, in addition to the minimum of three set meetings;

8. Attendance Requirements

- Members are expected to attend all meetings unless an apology is tendered.
- Unsatisfactory attendance may lead to termination of their appointment.

9. Termination of Appointment

The Board reserves the right to terminate membership of any member after implementing a conflict resolution process.

10. Meeting Procedures

- Advisory Committees will develop an annual meeting agenda and allocate key tasks for the year against each of the meetings. The agenda will be informed by the Board the set against the key activities, deliverables and timelines of Wimmera CMA. Naturally unexpected issues will come up and these may need to be dealt with promptly;
- Where possible decisions are to be made by consensus;
- Meetings will be conducted to a forwarded agenda. The Agenda should be structured to address decisions up-front, followed by discussion/information papers;
- Formal minutes are to kept as a record and forwarded to the Board for information;
- Advisory Committee's will review their performance/achievements annually as part of their business;
- It is expected that members will devote time outside meetings for reviewing agendas, strategies and other material that is to be discussed at meetings;
- Executive support will be provided by Program Managers or other Wimmera CMA staff where appropriate;
- Chairpersons of Advisory Committees or nominated delegate/s may be required to attend Board meetings to provide Board reports on an as needs basis and represent the committee on other committees.

11. Meeting Location & Times

Meeting locations and times will be decided by the members of the Advisory Committees.

12. Administrative Support

Wimmera CMA will provide administrative support for the Advisory Committees as required.

13. Representing Wimmera CMA

- Members of advisory committees are representatives of their regional community. Members are encouraged to communicate with the broader community regarding the work, views and actions of Wimmera CMA, however, they are not the sole body responsible to achieve this. Members form part of a broader program aimed at engaging, involving and educating Wimmera residents and key stakeholders.
- It is the role of Wimmera CMA Board Chair, CEO or their delegates to make public statements on behalf of Wimmera CMA in relation to policy development or strategic matters.
- The Chairperson or delegate of the Advisory Committee or the Relevant Program Manager shall sign all correspondence generated by the Committee.

14. Communications Protocol

- The following outlines the normal responsibilities in relation to Advisory Committee members communicating with members of Wimmera CMA Board, CMA staff, Government and media persons.

- At times, Advisory Committees may discuss confidential matters. These issues should not be discussed with others outside the meeting. During all communications each member is to show courtesy and respect, allowing individuals to express their viewpoints. If in doubt about how to apply the protocol, members should seek advice from the Chairperson.

- Communications with others:

1. Wimmera CMA Staff

Communication with CMA staff will be via the Chairperson. In addition, staff are likely to attend Advisory Committee meetings to discuss specific issues.

2. Board Members

Communication with Wimmera CMA Board members will be via the Board representative present on the Advisory Committee. A standing item relating to Advisory Committee issues will be listed on the Board papers and all formal feedback sought from Advisory Committees will be formally responded to by the Board. Advisory Committee members or chairs may be invited to attend specific Board meeting to provide advice and information

3.. The Government

In their role as an Advisory Committee member, all contact with government bodies is to be undertaken by staff and Board members and approved by the CEO.

4.. The Media

In their role as Advisory Committee members, all media contact is to be conducted via the Wimmera CMA Communications Officer and be approved by the CEO

15. Sitting fees and Meeting Expenses (as of Dec 2008)

- Expenses incurred in attending authorised meetings and carrying out Advisory Committee business can be claimed. Please note that rates are subject to change from time to time, as specified by the Victorian Government. This includes travel, accommodation, meals and some training.

- Advisory Committee members will be paid sitting fees in accordance with current Wimmera CMA policy for each of the formal Advisory Committee meetings per year and attendance at any other authorised Wimmera CMA meetings where payment is authorised by the Authority.

- Travel expenses will be paid in accordance with the cents per kilometre motoring costs published by the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (please refer to Wimmera CMA policy for rates). Payment will be made to attendees on the completion of claim forms. Car-pooling is to be encouraged.

The table below outlines the conditions where reimbursement is authorised.

	Ordinary Meetings	Sub Committee meetings	Chair requests for Wimmera CMA meetings, presentations	Members requested to represent Wimmera CMA at function or activity	Members invited by choice to attend a function or activity
Mileage	√	√	√	√	Mileage to pick-up point
Sitting Fees	√	x	√	x	x
Training/ Conference Fees				√	Discretionary
Accommodation				√	Discretionary