Community Advisory Groups - Terms of Reference

Background

Community Advisory Groups are established under Section 33(a) of the Local Land Services Act 2013 which requires Local Boards to ‘communicate, consult and engage with the community in developing plans and in respect of the delivery of programs and services in the region’.

The South East Local Strategic Plan guides service delivery for South East Local Land Services at a whole of region level. In implementing the South East Local Strategic Plan, the South East Local Board has adopted a local service delivery model based on eight local areas that reflect the socio-economic clusters of the region. These eight local areas have been further grouped into four sub-regions for operational delivery. In turn these four sub-regions roll up into two landscapes, as described in the South East Local Strategic Plan - coastal and tablelands. The attached map illustrates the local area boundaries and management units and their nested interrelationship.

In November 2014, the South East Local Board resolved to establish four Community Advisory Groups at the sub-regional landscape scale to align with existing sub-regional management units. Each of these management units has a Team Leader and team of locally based staff delivering information, advisory and on-ground services identified as a priority in the South East Local Strategic Plan.

The four Community Advisory Groups to be established in 2015 are:

* **South Coast/Highlands** - Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, Shoalhaven and Wingecarribee local government areas (LGAs)
* **Southern Tablelands** - Crookwell, Goulburn, Boorowa, Yass and Upper Lachlan LGAs
* **Far South Coast** - Bega Valley and Eurobodalla LGAs
* **Monaro/Palerang** - Palerang, Queanbeyan, Cooma-Monaro, Bombala and Snowy River LGAs.

The four Community Advisory Groups will provide advice to assist South East Local Land Services in its delivery of services and functions.

Purpose

The purpose of this Terms of Reference is to inform the Community Advisory Groups of the:

1. functions of each group
2. objectives
3. membership
4. remuneration
5. roles of individual members
6. role of the chairperson
7. South East Local Land Services support staff
8. meetings
9. record of meetings
10. managing confidentiality and conflict of interest
11. review and evaluation

to ensure that they can operate effectively and efficiently and are accountable to the South East Local Board.

**Functions**

The function of each Community Advisory Group is to provide advice and enable improved communication, consultation and engagement with key customer and stakeholder representatives. Specifically, the Community Advisory Groups will:

1. provide feedback and direction on Local Area Plans that support the implementation of the South East Local Strategic Plan
2. identify emerging issues that may impact on the effective delivery of Local Area Plans
3. support effective communication between local stakeholder groups and South East Local Land Services
4. provide advice to South East Local Land Services on Local Land Services functions and service delivery at a local scale, including:
   - productive agriculture advisory services
   - plant and animal biosecurity
   - emergency management
   - natural resource management.

**Objectives**

Community Advisory Group activities will include:

1. a strong collaborative partnership approach to delivering Local Land Services functions and services
2. identification of priority services and collaborative projects for the sub-region in line with the South East Local Strategic Plan
3. a thorough, inclusive and consultative approach to stakeholder communication, consultation and engagement across functional areas
4. timely and effective information exchange between stakeholder organisations and South East Local Land Services
5. informed collaborative delivery and responsiveness to emerging issues.

**Membership**

Membership of each Community Advisory Group will be representative of the functional areas of Local Land Services (ie productive agriculture advisory services, plant and animal biosecurity, emergency management and natural resource management).

Representatives will be selected on the following criteria:

- experience in relation to productive agriculture, natural resource management, biosecurity or emergency management
- experience in strategic planning, and/or facilitation and/or leadership
- experience in engaging in community committees
- experience developing partnerships and collaborations with organisations.

The size of each Community Advisory Group will be limited to up to seven members in the interest of group dynamics and productivity.

Membership will be for a period of up to three years. Membership of the Community Advisory Groups may be expanded at any time to ensure appropriate membership.
**Remuneration**

Non-government representatives will be recompensed for travel and relevant out of pocket expenses, in line with NSW Government policy.

South East Local Land Services will provide catering and staff resources to support the operation of the Community Advisory Group as required.

South East Local Land Services will provide, where appropriate, opportunities for professional and leadership development opportunities to Community Advisory Groups members.

**Role of individual members**

Community Advisory Group members are expected to:

- seek to understand the functions and services of Local Land Services
- have the support of, and ability to represent, their community in the collaborative delivery of the set functions of Local Land Services
- act as a conduit for information between their community and the South East Local Land Services, including the information flow to and from the Community Advisory Group
- contribute to building a cooperative, collaborative and effective Community Advisory Group
- develop background knowledge on relevant emerging issues and communicate this to the broader Community Advisory Group.

**Role of the chairperson**

The chairperson will be selected by the selection panel.

The broad responsibilities of the chairperson will be to:

- manage the Community Advisory Group meeting in accordance with the agenda
- ensure discussion items reach an agreed conclusion and outcomes are documented and assigned for further action
- review and approve meeting minutes before distribution
- report to South East Local Land Services.

**South East Local Land Services support staff**

South East Local Land Services will provide resources to enable to effective and efficient operation of Community Advisory Groups.

The South East Local Land Services general manager (or his delegate) will attend Community Advisory Group meetings in an ex-officio capacity. Similarly other South East Local Land Services staff, including members of the senior management team and team leaders may attend meetings to provide advice to the group.

South East Local Land Services team leaders and appropriate local staff will support the Community Advisory Group in an administrative capacity.

South East Local Land Services directors may attend meetings as available to support and enhance the community engagement process.
Meetings

Each Community Advisory Group will meet three to four times a year. The location of meetings will be rotated around the sub-region and may be timed to coincide with South East Local Board meetings to facilitate interaction between the Local Board and each Community Advisory Group.

An agenda together with relevant supporting material will be forwarded to members at least one week prior to the meeting to enable consideration of key issues. Community Advisory Group representatives will be required to provide RSVPs for all scheduled meetings.

Record of meetings

All scheduled Community Advisory Group meetings are to be recorded and minuted by an allocated South East Local Land Services staff member. The summary of the meeting outcomes and key actions will be placed on South East Local Land Services Open (online engagement hub) within three weeks of each meeting and members will be notified of the website posting by email.

The status of key actions will be tabled at the subsequent meeting of the group for consideration or further action as appropriate.

Managing confidentiality and conflict of interest

From time to time, members may be provided with information from South East Local Land Services and from external sources that is of a confidential nature. This information is not for general circulation in the broader community. Members must be prepared to maintain this confidentiality until South East Local Land Services approves the release of material for community information and/or comment, or otherwise.

Participation on the Community Advisory Group may result in individuals being provided with information that could provide a commercial or intellectual benefit to the individual or stakeholder groups they represent. 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 and remove themselves from the meeting during discussion of that issue.

Review and evaluation

The operation of the Community Advisory Group and Terms of Reference will be reviewed and evaluated at least annually.