Draft Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage Advisory Committee Handbook 2019
Limitations / Disclaimer

This Handbook contains information to assist in understanding the role and responsibilities of the Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage Advisory Committee.

It does not contain information relating to park management policies, management practices or attitudes of particular organisations or agencies of the NSW or Australian Governments. For more information on these matters, refer to the information provided by member organisations/agencies on their respective web sites.

An understanding of these matters will enhance the ability of committee members to contribute effectively and productively to advisory committee discussions.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Handbook

This Handbook has been developed based on the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) Government Boards and Committees Guidelines. The Guidelines require that each board or committee develop a handbook and code of conduct and undergo a five-yearly review.

The Handbook is designed to assist members of the Greater Blue Mountains Area (GBMA) World Heritage Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) to perform their role by setting out details of how legislation, policies, administrative arrangements and conventions affect the roles, responsibilities and duties of the Advisory Committee.

The Handbook fulfils the requirements in the DPC Boards and Committees Guidelines for a charter and incorporates the Code of Conduct which applies to Advisory Committee members. It also serves as a key tool in the induction of new members and to guide the effective governance and operation of Advisory Committee meetings.

1.2 Review of this Handbook

This handbook will be reviewed within five years of formal adoption by the Advisory Committee or at an earlier time if requested by the Advisory Committee.
2 Background

2.1 Establishment of the Advisory Committee

The Australian and NSW governments established a statutory community and scientific advisory committee for the Greater Blue Mountains Area, World Heritage property in 2006. The Advisory Committee’s role is to advise on matters relating to the protection, conservation, presentation and management of the GBMA, including strategic policies in relation to Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention.

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Strategic Plan, endorsed by the Advisory Committee, which was signed and launched in 2009 by the then Australian and NSW government ministers responsible for World Heritage, contains the terms of reference for the Advisory Committee and outlines the process for appointment. The terms of reference are updated in this Handbook to reflect:

- that the Chair is entitled to be paid at $350 per sitting day as per the Public Service Commission classification;
- that sitting fees will no longer be paid to Indigenous members in line with other NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) boards and committees; and
- inclusion of a new member position representing the NPWS Blue Mountains Branch Regional Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee plays a crucial role in establishing linkages with community, local government, Indigenous groups and local businesses. It also provides policy and scientific advice to both governments through the Greater Blue Mountains Area, World Heritage Management Committee (Management Committee).

2.2 Legislation

Section 3.5 of the Australian World Heritage Intergovernmental Agreement provides that the Commonwealth will:

a) enter into arrangements with the states regarding specific World Heritage properties under state control

b) appoint, in co-operation with the relevant state, the chair of property-specific advisory committees or boards be consulted, where appropriate, on the appointment of other members to the committees;

c) provide advice to World Heritage property managers on the development of World Heritage management plans or other management system.

2.3 Membership of the Advisory Committee

2.3.1 Membership

The Advisory Committee is to consist of:

- An independent chairperson,
- Two Aboriginal/Traditional Owner representatives
• Two local government (with terms rotating amongst jurisdictions¹)
• One tourism representative
• One non-government organisation from the conservation sector
• One representative of outdoor self-reliant nature-based recreation
• Three scientific representatives who specialise in either water quality, aquatic ecology, botany, ecology or zoology
• One archaeological/cultural heritage representative
• one representative from the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Regional Advisory Committee, Blue Mountains Branch.

Members and the Chair will be appointed for a three-year term and are eligible for reappointment. Members are appointed in their own right rather than strictly as representatives of their organisation or institution.

Under the terms of reference, committee members are to be recommended by the GBMA World Heritage property Management Committee and appointed by the NSW Minister responsible for World Heritage. An eligibility list of suitable nominees will be recommended for approval by the Ministers.

The Chair is jointly appointed by both the NSW and Australian government Ministers responsible for World Heritage as per Section 4.1 of the Australian World Heritage Intergovernmental Agreement.

2.3.2 Observers
• Up to two from each NPWS, Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust and the Australian Government.

2.4 Role of the Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee may make recommendations on matters relating to the protection, conservation, presentation and management of the Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage property, including strategic policies in relation to Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention.

The Advisory Committee may also be requested to consider and comment on issues that are likely to have some impact on the GBMA under the National Parks and Wildlife Act (NSW) or the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (Cwth) or on natural and cultural heritage conservation generally.

The activities of the Advisory Committee are co-ordinated by the Management Committee and the Management Committee seeks and considers its advice as appropriate.

¹ Twelve local government areas across the GBMA are: Blue Mountains City, Cessnock City, Goulburn Mulwaree, Greater Lithgow City, Hawkesbury City, Mid-Western Regional Council, Muswellbrook Shire, Oberon, Penrith City, Singleton Shire, Wingecarribee Shire and Wollondilly Shire
The Advisory Committee shall:

- consider and advise on the views of community interests;
- consider and advise on technical and scientific matters including scientific research priorities, relevant new information or developments in science, the scientific basis of management principles and practices, the appropriateness of current and proposed research, and the maintenance of the values and integrity of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Greater Blue Mountains Area; and
- provide advice to the Management Committee or the relevant Ministers on issues referred to it for consideration.

2.5 Responsibilities and commitments

2.5.1 Commitment of Advisory Committee Members

Members contribute to fulfilling the role of the Advisory Committee by diligent application of their expertise. This includes:

- supporting the Advisory Committee to perform its functions
- attending meetings and participating in decision making processes
- undertaking consultation or research to support and promote discussion of the agenda items.

Specifically, Advisory Committee members are committed to:

- recognise the primacy of the objectives of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Strategic Plan in all their deliberations
- provide professional and timely advice to the Minister and the Agencies
- attending all meetings of the Advisory Committee
- allow the necessary time to prepare for meetings
- provide well prepared, balanced, reasoned and informed input to Advisory Committee deliberations based on their area of expertise
- respect the diverse interests of the community and Advisory Committee members
- respect the integrity and confidentiality of Advisory Committee at all times, subject to decisions to publicly release meeting summaries or other documents as agreed by the Advisory Committee under 4.3 of this Handbook
- ensure that confidential Committee papers are disposed of appropriately
- demonstrate respect towards each other, the staff and any other person involved in Advisory Committee matters at all times
- abide by the NSW NPWS and NSW Government Board and Committee Members Code of Conduct and standards of ethical behaviour that are expected of NSW Government Board and Committee members
- cooperate with other members of Advisory Committee, the NPWS Blue Mountains Regional Advisory Committee, the Australian Government and NPWS representatives to execute the objectives of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Strategic Plan
Advisory Committee members will respect the confidentiality of the Committee’s deliberations. Items of a confidential nature are the minutes of the meetings and otherwise will be specifically identified, but may include:

- items which are of a commercial in confidence nature
- Government policies under formulation.

Advisory Committee members participate as individuals rather than delegates, taking into account the expertise and perspective of the stakeholder interest which has led to their appointment to the Advisory Committee where relevant.

Where an Advisory Committee member has been nominated by a particular stakeholder interest, it is expected that the member will maintain contact with that stakeholder group for the purpose of maintaining expertise and accurate understanding of the constituency to contribute effectively to formulating the positions of the Advisory Committee. Communication to that stakeholder interest about Advisory Committee business must not breach any decisions of the Advisory Committee about matters that are to remain confidential.

The potential for conflicts of interest to arise in Advisory Committee business is significant given that many Committee members are members of, and are nominated by, organisations that wish to influence government policy around matters in which the Advisory Committee has a formal role in providing advice to the Minister. And or are employed in their fields of expertise.

Guidance for managing actual or perceived conflicts of interest is provided in the Code of Conduct section of this Handbook.

**2.5.2 Commitment of the Chair**

The Chair is responsible for leading the activities of the Advisory Committee including:

- ensuring that the Advisory Committee performs its functions, acting within relevant statutory powers, legal obligations and complying with relevant policies (including whole of government policies)
- facilitating the conduct of meetings to allow frank and open discussion
- ensuring individual members make an effective contribution
- facilitate the development of research priorities that will contribute, in particular, to the protection and conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the GBMA
- work collectively with NPWS to induct and mentor new members
- facilitating the flow of information to members and stakeholders
- liaising with the relevant Ministers, Secretaries and Chief Executives
- as requested by the Minister or Chief Executive, represent the Advisory Committee at meetings.

Specifically, the Advisory Committee Chair is committed to:

- establish a sound working relationship with the GBMA Management Committee
- preside over and conduct Committee meetings in accordance with this Handbook
- ensure the Committee respects Aboriginal people’s rights and aspirations for the GBMA
- provide all members with the opportunity to effectively contribute to discussions
- ensure all members are informed of the Chair’s activities
• ensure that Committee discussions remain focussed and conclude with clear resolutions and/or recommendations
• encourage feedback from members
• implement actions arising from Committee meetings e.g. approval and signing of correspondence
• provide reports to the management agencies and NSW and Australian Government Ministers responsible for World Heritage, on the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of the cultural and natural heritage to future generations from the viewpoint of the community
• liaise with Advisory Committee secretariat staff to set agendas and finalise minutes
• represent the interests of Committee in public and private forums as requested by the Minister or Chief Executive
• represent the Committee on the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC) which will consider national and cross-cutting issues relevant to all World Heritage properties in Australia.

2.5.3 In the absence of the Chair
The Committee will nominate an acting Chair to chair the meeting should the Chair be absent.

2.5.4 Role of the Greater Blue Mountains Area, World Heritage Management Committee
The GBMA Management Committee comprises: Director Partnerships, Planning and Heritage Branch and Director Blue Mountains Branch NPWS; Administrator Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust and Assistant Secretary Heritage Branch, Department of the Environment and Energy. The Management Committee has a role in:

• establishing the Advisory Committee and recommending member appointments and terminations
• requesting the Advisory Committee to provide advice on a particular issue
• receiving reports from Advisory Committee undertaking or supporting periodic review of the Advisory Committee and supporting the implementation of review outcomes.

The Management Committee is committed to:

• ensuring appropriate senior executive representation at all meetings of the Advisory Committee
• making effective use of the Advisory Committee by seeking its advice through an established work program and on emerging issues
• wherever possible, early consultation when strategy and policy matters are being developed
• expeditiously seeking nominations to fill Advisory Committee vacancies.

2.6 Relationship with Regional Advisory Committees
The National Parks and Wildlife Act gives specific responsibilities to Regional Advisory Committees (RAC) with regards to providing advice on policies and plans; activities or proposed activities; and draft plans of management for the administrative region for which it was constituted. For the GBMA, this is the Blue Mountains Branch Regional Advisory Committee.
Although bringing different perspectives, the two bodies are expected to coordinate and work closely together, demonstrating mutual respect and support through:

- discussion of issues brought forward by the Blue Mountains Branch RAC member at Advisory Committee meetings
- referring issues to Blue Mountains Branch RAC for comment where appropriate
- providing feedback to the Blue Mountains Branch RAC on issues raised by them or issues on which their advice was sought
- providing a copy of the Advisory Committee Meeting Report for distribution to the Blue Mountains Branch RAC following each Advisory Committee meeting.
3 Governance

3.1 Induction

The Advisory Committee with support of the Management Committee provides an induction program to new members consisting of an information pack and a series of introductory sessions.

The standard information pack for incoming Advisory Committee members will contain e-copies of relevant documents including the following:

- Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage Strategic Plan;
- Management arrangements for the GBMA and its constituent parks and reserves;
- NSW Government priorities, the department’s Corporate Plan and any other relevant strategic direction;
- geographical maps of the GBMA including NPWS reserves and NPWS administrative boundaries;
- organisational chart with key contacts;
- information about agency responsibilities outside but impacting on the GBMA;
- contact list for all Advisory Committee members;
- meeting schedule;
- this Handbook; and

Should any significant updates be made, these documents will also be made available to all existing Committee members.

3.2 Operating framework

The following are the standard procedures for operation of the Advisory Committee. These procedures may be amended by formal resolution of the Advisory Committee, except where provided for in legislation.

3.2.1 Meetings

The Advisory Committee will normally meet three times throughout the year in various across the World Heritage area.

Changes to meeting dates may occur with the agreement of the Chair. Where NPWS needs to cancel a meeting, it will endeavour to give at least one month’s notice.

Extraordinary meetings may be held if required in order for the Advisory Committee to fulfil its role and if agreed to by Management Committee or requested by the Minister.

Committee meetings may be attended by telephone or video conference.
3.2.2 Attendees

The relevant Ministers will be welcome at every Advisory Committee meeting.

3.2.3 Observers

Other NSW and Australian Government representatives and other external experts may be invited to Advisory Committee meetings as appropriate for consultation on strategic matters of significance. The Chair should be consulted and give prior approval for the attendance of all observers. Uninvited and unapproved observers will be asked to leave the meeting.

3.2.4 Decision-making

A quorum will be a simple majority of members.

The diversity of opinion of Advisory Committee members is respected. Where possible, a consensus view is sought. However, in the absence of a consensus view, the Advisory Committee may choose to provide a range of views for consideration by decision makers.

Members who do not agree with the advice of the Advisory Committee may seek to have their views recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Where voting is required on an issue, a decision will be determined by a majority vote. The Chair will have a second or casting vote in the event of equal votes.

There is no provision for proxies.

3.2.5 Agenda

The agenda for regular meetings of the Advisory Committee will:

- allow for a Welcome to or Acknowledgment of Country
- Welcome members, present apologies and introduce any observers
- invite members to declare any real, perceived or anticipated conflicts of interest
- address issues identified in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Strategic Plan
- discuss issues of strategic or emerging significance for the management of the GBMA

Members will have the opportunity to raise other issues at Advisory Committee meetings by way of:

- raising the matter initially with the Chair, but no less than three weeks prior to the meeting if it requires the circulation of papers for the meeting
- raising a matter outside of a meeting with the Management Committee if they are not satisfied with the response of the Chair
- raising an item at the meeting in general business.

The Advisory Committee will determine whether or how the issue will be pursued.

3.2.6 Minutes and record keeping

Minutes of each meeting will be concisely recorded, referring to briefing notes circulated prior or during meetings with more detail and recommendations for the Committee’s consideration. Minutes will be distributed to all members of the Advisory Committee and Management Committees. Draft meeting minutes will be circulated within three weeks. Any early response may be sought for matters relating to priority issues where the Advisory Committee is confirming decisions as part of its advice to the Minister. Minutes will ordinarily be presented for adoption at the subsequent meeting.
Advisory Committee minutes are not public documents. However, the Advisory Committee may agree on a summary report at the conclusion of the meeting which, following approval of the GBMA Management Committee, can be released to the public and available from:
http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/protectedareas/AdvisoryCommitteeOfTheGBMWHA.htm

Records of each meeting will be maintained within the NPWS Blue Mountains Branch record management system with e-copies stored within the departmental central records (HPE Content Manager).

3.2.7 Secretariat

The World Heritage Executive Officer for the Greater Blue Mountains Area will provide executive and administrative support to the Advisory Committee for the conduct of its meetings including:

- providing adequate resourcing including administrative support to ensure papers are developed and circulated in sufficient time prior to meetings, and that minutes are prepared and distributed
- supplying incoming members with an induction package covering the role of the Advisory Committee as set out in this Handbook
- support the Committee Chair and members to undertake their duties.

3.3 Terminations

3.3.1 Expiry, reappointment and termination of appointments

Members may leave the Advisory Committee for a variety of reasons including where the member's term has expired, or the member has resigned. The NSW or Australian Government Ministers responsible for World Heritage may for any cause which to the Ministers seems sufficient remove from office any member.

3.3.2 Terminations prior to expiry

In some exceptional cases, a member's appointment may be reviewed and possibly terminated prior to the expiry of their term, for example where:

- the member is no longer able to commit adequate time to his or her role
- there has been a disagreement with other members that cannot be resolved
- there is a conflict of interest that cannot be mitigated in accordance with the hierarchy of strategies identified at 6.3
- the member no longer meets the minimum standards of participation such as:
  - no longer maintains appropriate contact with their relevant stakeholder interest to the extent the member is unable reflect the expertise and perspective of that constituency specific to their appointment criteria
  - is declared bankrupt
  - is convicted of a criminal offence
  - is unable to perform the duties of office due to illness or other commitments
  - has failed to attend two meetings in a row without providing an apology to the Advisory Committee Chair
• in the opinion of the Advisory Committee Chair and/or the Management Committee, has breached the Advisory Committee or NSW NPWS Code of Conduct

In these circumstances, the matter should be referred to the Management Committee and the Ministers by the Advisory Committee Chair, or by a delegation of at least three Advisory Committee members. The Ministers are not prevented from acting in the absence of a referral from the Advisory Committee.

A member of the Advisory Committee shall be deemed to have vacated the member’s office if the member:

a) dies
b) resigns the member’s office by writing under the member’s hand addressed to the Chair
c) becomes a temporary patient, a continued treatment patient, a protected person or an incapable person within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1958 or a person under detention under Part 7 of that Act
d) ceases to hold the qualification by virtue of which the member was appointed, or
e) is removed from office by the Minister(s).
4 Business planning

4.1 Advisory Committee Strategic Agenda

The Advisory Committee will develop and implement a Strategic Agenda aligned with the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Strategic Plan, NSW and Australian government priorities, and any other relevant strategic direction.

The Advisory Committee with guidance from the Management Committee will develop the Strategic Agenda.

The Strategic Agenda is to include:

- a statement of the Advisory Committee’s goals and priorities for the coming term
- a list of the major strategic issues to be addressed by the Advisory Committee
- a schedule of routine items
- performance indicators to support evaluation of the effectiveness of the Advisory Committee

The Strategic Agenda is to be formally adopted by the Advisory Committee at an ordinary meeting and reviewed annually.

The Agenda will remain flexible to address emerging priorities but will be closely tied to the goals of the Strategic Plan for the property. The Agenda may be amended by resolution of the Advisory Committee at a normal meeting following appropriate consultation with the Management Committee.

4.1.1 Advisory Committee performance indicators

A standard Advisory Committee Strategic Agenda should include the following routine indicators of performance effectiveness:

- priorities and measurable targets are identified and reached within the agreed timeframes, including statutory timeframes
- advice is provided in a timely manner, based on informed assessment and includes practical recommendations for action
- emerging and important issues are identified early and advice prepared for the attention of the NSW and Australian government Ministers responsible for World Heritage, utilising the expertise of the Advisory Committee
- where appropriate, Advisory Committee members play an advocacy role in the community to support the work of the National Parks and Wildlife Service across the GBMA and the Advisory Committee
- members maintain current and active contact with their stakeholder interests related to their nomination to the Advisory Committee where relevant
- new members are well informed about the functions of the Advisory Committee.
4.1.2 Process indicators

A standard Advisory Committee Strategic Agenda should include the following routine indicators of process effectiveness, primarily driven by the Executive Officer responsible for Advisory Committee matters:

- Advisory Committee papers are circulated to members at least two weeks prior to each meeting
- draft minutes are circulated within three weeks of the meeting
- resolutions and any background material are forwarded to the Management Committee expeditiously.

4.2 Public reporting

NSW Government boards and committees are encouraged to proactively release decisions of their meetings in accordance with the NSW Government’s Open Government policy unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

In keeping with this advice, the Advisory Committee will consider including in the Strategic Agenda:

- preparation of a public annual report, included in NSW NPWS reporting
- whether to make copies of Advisory Committee advice, meeting summaries or meeting minutes available to the public, including through proactive disclosure under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 through the NSW NPWS website or otherwise

If requested by the Advisory Committee, a draft public annual report can be prepared by the Executive Officer for consideration by the Advisory Committee.

As a courtesy, the Advisory Committee Chair may choose to notify the Management Committee of arrangements relating to the disclosure of categories of information or specific document(s).

The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) contains a right to information system for NSW Government to make government information more readily available and improve openness and accountability. The GIPA Act applies to all NSW government agencies, including boards and committees.
5 Resources

5.1 Remuneration

5.1.1 Remuneration

The members positions on the Committee are voluntary. No allowances or sitting fees to members or observers are paid. NPWS will fund accommodation and other related expenses directly.

However, in recognition of the extra work load that the Chair is expected to undertake, the Chair will be entitled to receive a daily sitting fee in accordance with Classification and Remuneration Framework for NSW Government Boards and Committees. The Advisory Committee is classified in Group C: Advisory Boards, Councils and Committees, Level 1 (criteria C1-i, iii and v) according to the above framework.

5.1.2 Out of pocket expenses

Advisory Committee members may be reimbursed for legitimate expenses incurred while carrying out their duties such as travel, accommodation and meals. Advisory Committee members may, in some instances, also receive an allowance for the use of a private motor vehicle.

Receipts must be provided for all amounts being claimed.

Arrangements relating to the reimbursement of expenses and payment of motor vehicle allowances must comply with relevant Department of Premier and Cabinet Memorandum and Circulars and Public Service Commission Directives.

Any reimbursement of expenses will be made to the individual Advisory Committee member.

The NSW NPWS Board Members Sitting Fee and Travel Reimbursement form is to be completed by members for travel claims and the Chair for sitting fees and travel claims.

On occasion, the Advisory Committee Chair or members may receive invitations to attend meetings as part of a wider government consultation processes. Payment of out of pocket expenses will only occur in these situations with the prior agreement of one of the NPWS members of the Management Committee.

5.1.3 Travel, accommodation and meals

Advisory Committee members are entitled to be reimbursed the amount of actual expenses incurred when required to travel on official business, such as attending Advisory Committee meetings. Travel arrangements must comply with the relevant NSW Treasury and Finance Circular and NSW NPWS policies.

Advisory Committee members will make every effort to minimise costs to the department.

5.1.4 Use of private motor vehicles

The Management Committee, or other appropriate approver, may authorise an Advisory Committee member to use a private motor vehicle when required to travel for official business where:

- it will result in greater efficiency or involve the department in less expense than if travel were undertaken by other means or
• the Advisory Committee member is unable to use another means of transport due to a disability.

The conditions for the payment of these allowances are the same as those under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2009*.

### 5.2 Secretariat support

Quality secretariat support is required to support the effective operation of the Advisory Committee. The NSW and Australian Governments will make resources available to ensure appropriate levels of service are provided.

Secretariat responsibilities include:

- preparing induction packages for incoming Advisory Committee members
- regularly asking members to update their Pecuniary Interest Declaration Form
- working with the Chair to develop agendas, manage meeting papers and prepare a range of documents to support the operation of the Advisory Committee
- circulating papers in advance of meetings
- providing Committee members with the option to receive large documents/files in either electronic or hardcopy formats
- taking minutes of the meeting including decisions, an overview of relevant discussion of the item and any dissenting views where appropriate
- preparing a meeting summary for publication on departmental websites
- organising meeting facilities and other meeting logistics
- if requested by the Advisory Committee, preparing a draft Strategic Agenda and annual review
- liaising with members to support the functions above.
6 Code of Conduct

This section defines the values and minimum standards of behaviour expected of Advisory Committee members. By accepting appointment to the Advisory Committee, each member has committed to abide by this Code of Conduct.

6.1 Expectations of conduct

As public officials, Advisory Committee members have a particular obligation to act in the public interest. All members of NSW Government boards and committees must have a clear understanding of their public duty and legal responsibilities and always act for a proper purpose and without exceeding their powers.

The Advisory Committee must also comply with a broad range of whole of government regulations and policies including those stipulated in legislation, regulations, Ministerial Memoranda, Department of Premier and Cabinet Circulars, Treasury publications and Public Service Commission policy documents. This includes the Government Information (Public Access) Act, the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, working with children checks (if required), rules relating to the contesting of elections, the lobbyist code of conduct, ethical decision making, management of conflicts of interest, efficient public expenditure and the adherence of a code of conduct.

6.1.1 Compliance with Codes of Conduct

Decisions of the Advisory Committee should be made in the light of applicable legislation, the NSW NPWS and NSW Boards and Committees Codes of Conduct, Government policy and agency objectives.

Decisions and outcomes must be in the public interest and be able to withstand public scrutiny. Conflicts of interest, including personal gain at public expense, must be avoided.

Advisory Committee members, as public officials, are subject to the NSW Government Conduct Guidelines for Members of NSW Government Boards and Committees. Advisory Committee members are also expected to comply with the NSW NPWS Code of Ethical Conduct where it is relevant to their activities.

Without limiting the application of these requirements, Advisory Committee members must:

- reflect on and reveal the values behind opinions offered and positions formed
- perform functions with integrity, impartiality, honesty, conscientiousness, care, skill, diligence and loyalty to the public interest
- ensure efficient and responsible expenditure of public funds in accordance with government legislation, policy and guidelines, including in regard to travel arrangements, and out of pocket expenses and, for the Chair, the payment of a sitting fee.
- attend all or as many Advisory Committee meetings as practicable, and allow the necessary time to prepare for meetings, and to arrange for an apology to be provided if unable to attend an Advisory Committee or committee meeting
- not disclose official information otherwise noted as confidential or documents acquired as a consequence of membership of the Advisory Committee other than is required by law or when the member has been given proper authority to do so
- neither represent, appear to represent nor speak on behalf of the Advisory Committee unless delegated to do so, when making public comment on issues
• not accept gifts, benefits or hospitality, which might be construed as compromising the member or Advisory Committee’s position on particular issues and where appropriate arrange for entries to be made in the Advisory Committee’s Register of Gifts
• as soon as practicable, disclose to the Advisory Committee Chair and the GBMWHA Management Committee in writing any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest, in relation to the member’s position or interest in an organisation or as an individual that might possibly conflict with the member’s function and role on the Advisory Committee
• report any corrupt conduct or suspected corruption to the Advisory Committee Chair, the Minister, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, NSW Ombudsman, or the NSW Auditor-General, as appropriate.

6.1.2 Dealing with sensitive information
All proceedings of the Advisory Committee are to be considered as confidential until the Committee has agreed otherwise, or where the provider of the information advises that it is publicly available and no restrictions apply to its release.

6.1.3 Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
The Advisory Committee is bound by The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPAA) which provides rights to information that are designed to meet community expectations of more open and transparent government. It encourages the routine and proactive release of government information, including information held by the providers of goods and services contracted by government agencies.

6.1.4 Privacy and personal information
The Advisory Committee is also bound by the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PIIPA) is about the collection, management and release of personal information. For the purposes of the PIPIPA, the BFCC (and consequently its subsidiary BFMCs) is taken to be a public sector agency. The PIPIPA requires that a public sector agency must not collect personal information about people unless:

a) the information is collected for a lawful purpose that is directly related to a function or activity of the agency, and
b) the collection of the information is reasonably necessary for that purpose.

There are specific requirements for the handling and access to any personal information that has been collected. Refer to the PIPPA for more information

6.2 Respectful behaviour
Members of the Advisory Committee have the right to be treated with respect in the exercise of their functions and have an obligation to treat others with respect in the workplace. Advisory Committee members are expected to meet the standards set out in the NSW NPWS Respectful Workplace Policy (2015), which states:

Respect at work means treating others as we would like them to treat us. To do this we must not treat others differently because of their sex, race, disability, marital status, pregnancy, sexual preference, age, carer responsibilities or gender status. We must act in a courteous and professional manner at all times and respect the right of others to express a view that might differ from our own view. We must also ensure that, by our actions at work, we don’t make others feel uncomfortable, isolated or unsupported.
The following definitions of unacceptable behaviour apply to Advisory Committee members:

- **Bullying.** Any behaviour that is unreasonable or undesirable at the place of work or outside of work, and that is intimidating, humiliating or undermining. Bullying is generally repeated, unwelcome or unsolicited. The target considers the behaviour to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening as would others who witness it or are affected by it.

- **Discrimination.** Any behaviour that treats someone differently because of their sex, race, disability, marital status, pregnancy, sexual preference, age or carer’s responsibilities. These characteristics apply whether presumed or perceived, and also apply to an associate or a relative. Harassment is a form of unlawful discrimination. In accordance with the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW) section 22A, sexual harassment includes any situation where there is a sexual advance, a request for a sexual favour or conduct of a sexual nature and where the advance, request or conduct is unwelcome, and a reasonable person would have anticipated that this would cause offence, humiliation or intimidation.

- **Harassment.** Unwelcome or unreciprocated behaviour which intimidates, offends or belittles. Harassment can occur in any work location, including places outside the usual place of work, and may occur while staff are in departmental premises, doing departmental work but not in departmental premises (such as field work or an overnight trip), participating in a social event organised by the employer including those held in the workplace (such as a Christmas party) or elsewhere (for example unwelcome visits, phone calls or letters to a person’s home).

  It is unlawful to discriminate in employment or in providing a service. It includes sexual or racist comments, taunts, propositions, jokes, questions about sex life, distribution of material such as cartoons, posters, emails and videos, and leering, sexual gestures, kissing, hugging or other touching of a sexual nature.

- **Intimidation.** Any behaviour that frightens someone.

- **Victimisation.** Any behaviour that exploits, excludes, isolates or treats someone so that they are a victim, scapegoat or belittled.

- **Vilification.** Any behaviour that tries to encourage hatred or contempt.

### 6.3 Conflicts of interest

Members of the Advisory Committee are appointed for their expertise and skill in particular areas. As a consequence, there may be the potential for conflicts of interest to arise between a member’s duties to Advisory Committee, and his or her personal interests (or his or her duties towards others).

A conflict of interest exists when it is likely that a member could be influenced by a personal or business interest. If a conflict of interest leads to partial decision making, it may constitute corrupt conduct. A conflict of interest, whether real, potential or perceived, may arise for example from:

- other directorships or employment
- professional and business interests and associations
- investment interests or the investment interests of friends or relatives
- family relationships
- participation in party political activities
- personal beliefs or attitudes that affect impartiality.
A member has a duty to declare any private interest that may impinge on an Advisory Committee deliberation. When an issue arises, the Advisory Committee member must as soon as practicable disclose full and accurate details of the interest or issue to the Advisory Committee.

A member must disclose interests to the Advisory Committee (which include positions and pecuniary interests) in corporations, partnerships or other businesses or organisations that may be relevant to the activities of the Advisory Committee. A member’s interests include those of an associate or close relative.

Disclosure should be made at the beginning of a member’s term and during the term as necessary. The Member’s Pecuniary Interest Declaration Form is available to disclose relevant interests.

Advisory Committee members should consider the following strategies to manage conflicts of interest: [Note: This is adapted from ICAC guidelines]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>What this strategy means</th>
<th>When it is most suitable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Register | You formally register details of the existence of a possible or potential conflict of interest | • For very low-risk conflicts of interest  
• Where recording the conflict of interest is sufficient to maintain transparency |
| Restrict | Restrictions are placed on involvement in the matter to oversee part or all of the process that deals with the matter | • Members can be officially separated from parts of the activity or process  
• The conflict of interest is not likely to arise frequently |
| Recruit | Use the expertise of a disinterested third party to oversee all or part of the process that deals with the matter | • It is not feasible or desirable for you to remove yourself from the decision-making process  
• In small or isolated communities where your particular expertise is necessary and genuinely not easily replaced |
| Remove | You choose to remove yourself completely from the matter | • For ongoing serious conflicts of interest, where restriction or recruitment of others is not appropriate |
| Relinquish | You relinquish the private interest that is creating the conflict | • Where your commitment to public duty outweighs your attachment to your private interest |
| Resign | You resign from your position on the Advisory Committee | • No other options are workable  
• Where you cannot or will not relinquish your private interest  
• Where you prefer this course as a matter of personal principle |

6.4 Public resources

6.4.1 Use of public resources

Furniture, equipment, staff and other resources may be provided to the Advisory Committee to perform its functions and should be used only in relation to those functions and in accordance with any departmental guidelines or rules about the use of those resources.

6.4.2 Use of official information

Members must not disclose official information or documents acquired as a consequence of their membership of the Advisory Committee, other than as required by law, or when the member has been given proper authority to do so.
6.4.3 Gifts and benefits

Members should be aware that it is illegal to seek, offer or receive money or gifts in order to obtain a benefit or favour. Members must also not accept gifts or benefits that could place them under an actual or perceived financial or moral obligation to another organisation or individual.

Gifts or hospitality of nominal value may be accepted in limited circumstances where the member’s position will not be compromised. Advisory Committee members may access the departmental Register of Gifts to provide a high degree of transparency.

6.4.4 Public expenditure

Members must ensure the efficient and responsible expenditure of public monies in accordance with legislation and Government policies and guidelines.

6.5 Corrupt conduct and maladministration

Corrupt conduct can be generally understood as the dishonest or partial exercise of public official functions. It may also involve the conduct of non-public officials which adversely affects the honest and impartial exercise of a public official’s functions.

For conduct to be considered corrupt under the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 definition it has to be serious enough to involve a criminal offence, a disciplinary offence, be grounds for dismissal or, in the case of Members of Parliament, involve a substantial breach of their Code of Conduct.

The Advisory Committee Chair is required to report corrupt conduct or suspected corruption to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). A report must be made to the ICAC as soon as you have a reasonable suspicion that corrupt conduct may have occurred or may be occurring. Matters must be reported to the ICAC regardless of any duty of secrecy or other restriction on disclosure. It is important that reports to the ICAC be made without advising the person(s) to whom the report relates and without publicity.

The Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 provides protection to public officials who voluntarily report suspected corrupt conduct. Advisory Committee members can make reports to the Chair or to the Chief Executive of the department. Members can also report directly to the following investigative bodies:

- disclosures concerning corrupt conduct should be made to the ICAC
- disclosures concerning maladministration should be made to the NSW Ombudsman
- disclosures concerning serious and substantial waste of public money should be made to the NSW Auditor General.
7 Terms of Reference\textsuperscript{2} Greater Blue Mountains Area, World Heritage Advisory Committee

**Membership**

There shall be thirteen members of the Advisory Committee, comprising:

- An independent chairperson;
- Two Aboriginal/Traditional Owner representatives;
- Two local government representatives (with terms rotating amongst jurisdictions\textsuperscript{3});
- One tourism representative;
- One non-government organisation from the conservation sector;
- One representative of outdoor self-reliant nature-based recreation;
- One water quality/aquatic environment;
- One botanical/ecological;
- One zoological/ecological;
- One archaeological/cultural heritage representative; and
- One representative from the NSW NPWS Regional Advisory Committee, Blue Mountains Branch.

**Observers**

Up to two from each from the NSW NPWS, the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust and the Australian Government department responsible for World Heritage/

The Advisory Committee may, from time to time, invite other observers to attend meetings, providing the Chair has given prior approval.

**Appointment**

Members of the Advisory Committee will be recommended by the Management Committee and appointed by the Minister for NSW responsible for World Heritage.

The Chair is jointly appointed by both the NSW Commonwealth Ministers responsible for World Heritage. The list of candidates and the reasons for supporting or not supporting their membership will be put to the ministers for their decision. An eligibility list of suitable nominees will be recommended for approval by the Ministers.

Members and the Chair will be appointed for a three-year term and are eligible for reappointment. Members are appointed in their own right rather than strictly as representative of their organisation or institution.

\textsuperscript{2} Formerly from the GBMWHA Strategic Plan

\textsuperscript{3} Twelve local government areas across the GBMA are: Blue Mountains City, Cessnock City, Goulburn Mulwaree, Greater Lithgow City, Hawkesbury City, Mid-Western Regional Council, Muswellbrook Shire, Oberon, Penrith City, Singleton Shire, Wingecarribee Shire and Wollondilly Shire
**Termination**

Other than by resignation, a person’s membership on the Advisory Committee can be terminated on the recommendation of the NSW minister responsible for World Heritage. Other than by resignation, a Chair can be terminated on the recommendation of the NSW minister responsible for World Heritage with the agreement of the Australian Government minister responsible for World Heritage.

**Role of the committee**

The Advisory Committee will provide advice, either at the request of the relevant Ministers, or the Management Committee, or of its own volition, on matters relating to the protection, conservation, presentation and management of the GBMA.

The Advisory Committee shall:

- Consider and advise on the views of community interests;
- Consider and advise on technical and scientific matters including scientific research priorities, relevant new information or developments in science, the scientific basis of management principles and practices, the appropriateness of current and proposed research, and the maintenance of the values and integrity of the GBMA;
- provide advice on and monitor the implementation and review of the strategic plan; and
- Provide advice to the Management Committee or the relevant Ministers on issues referred to it for consideration or of its own volition.

**Operation**

The Advisory Committee shall operate according to the following procedures:

- A quorum shall be a simple majority of members
- The Committee shall meet as necessary, or at the request of the Ministers or the Management Committee, or if the majority of members request a meeting, provided that at least two meetings are held each calendar year
- NPWS will provide secretariat support
- The Committee will nominate an acting Chair to chair the meeting, should the Chair be absent.
- Procedure for the conduct of business shall be by agreement. Where consensus is not attainable the minutes of the meeting shall record the number of members supporting a particular view and note the differing views of members not supporting a recommendation
- There is no provision for proxies
- A report of each meeting shall be forwarded to the Advisory Committee and Management Committee within one month of each meeting

The NSW and Australian Governments shall bear the costs of their agency members and observers attending meetings. No allowances or sitting fees to members or observers are paid. The Chair is entitled to be paid at $350 per sitting day as per the Public Service Commission classification. NPWS will fund accommodation and other related expenses directly.
8 References

The following resources have been consulted in preparation of this Handbook:

Advisory Committee Review 2011, *Draft Outcomes Paper*

Audit Office of NSW 1998, *on board: guide to better practice for public sector governing and advisory boards*

Australian Government 2010 *Australian World Heritage Intergovernmental Agreement*

Department of Environment and Climate Change 2009, *Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Strategic Plan, DECC*


Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) 2013, *Government Boards and Committees Handbook*

Department of Premier and Cabinet Conduct 2011, *Guidelines for Members of NSW Government Boards and Committees*

Department of Premier and Cabinet 2015, *NSW Government Boards and Committees Guidelines*


Department of Premier and Cabinet 2015 *Classification and Remuneration Framework for NSW Government Boards and Committees*


Environment and Heritage Portfolio 2015, *Respectful Workplace: Policy and procedures for addressing workplace issues and formal grievances*

Independent Commission Against Corruption 2012, *Identifying and managing conflicts of interest in the public sector*

Memorandum of Understanding NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service of Office of Environment and Heritage Department of Premier and Cabinet and Regional Advisory Committees 2012 – 2017


Office of Environment and Heritage 2015, *Code of Ethics and Conduct*


Public Service Commission 2013, *Appointment Standards Boards and Committees in the NSW Public Sector*
9 Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AWHAC</td>
<td>Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWHIN</td>
<td>Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBMA</td>
<td>Greater Blue Mountains Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPWS</td>
<td>NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service</td>
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</table>
10 Appendices

10.1 Map of the Greater Blue Mountains Area
10.2 Useful information and hyperlinks

Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/

The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention
https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/

Managing World Heritage in Australia

Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC)

Greater Blue Mountains Area - UNESCO World Heritage Centre
https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/917

Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

GBMWHA Strategic Plan (2009)

GBMWHA Strategic Plan addendum (2016)

NPWS plans of management:

Blue Mountains National Park

Gardens of Stone National Park

Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve

Kanangra-Boyd National Park

Nattai National Park

Thirlmere Lakes National Park

Wollemi National Park

Yengo National Park

Values for a new generation

World Heritage Outlook IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) GBMA
https://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/explore-sites/wdpaid/220294
10.3 Good meeting practice guide

10 Ground Rules for Meetings

1. **Show up on time and come prepared**
   - Be prompt in arriving to the meeting and in returning from breaks.
   - Be prepared to contribute to achieving the meeting goals.
   - Come to the meeting with a positive attitude.

2. **Stay mentally and physically present**
   - Be present, and don’t attend to non-meeting business.
   - Listen attentively to others and don’t interrupt or have side conversations.
   - Treat all meeting participants with the same respect you would want from them.

3. **Contribute to meeting goals**
   - Participate 100% by sharing ideas, asking questions, and contributing to discussions.
   - Share your unique perspectives and experience, and speak honestly.
   - If you state a problem or disagree with a proposal, try to offer a solution.

4. **Let everyone participate**
   - Share time so that all can participate.
   - Be patient when listening to others speak and do not interrupt them.
   - Respect each other’s’ thinking and value everyone’s contributions.

5. **Listen with an open mind**
   - Value the learning from different inputs, and listen to get smarter.
   - Stay open to new ways of doing things, and listen for the future to emerge.
   - You can respect another person’s point of view without agreeing with them.

6. **Think before speaking**
   - Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
   - Avoid using idioms, three letter acronyms, and phrases that can be misunderstood.
   - It’s OK to disagree, respectfully and openly, and without being disagreeable.

7. **Stay on point and on time**
   - Respect the group’s time and keep comments brief and to the point.
   - When a topic has been discussed fully, do not bring it back up.
   - Do not waste everyone’s time by repeating what others have said.

8. **Attack the problem, not the person**
   - Respectfully challenge the idea, not the person.
   - Blame or judgment will get you further from a solution, not closer.
   - Honest and constructive discussions are necessary to get the best results.

9. **Close decisions and identify action items**
   - Make sure decisions are supported by the group, otherwise they won’t be acted on.
   - Note pending issues and schedule follow up meetings as needed.
   - Identify actions based on decisions made, and follow up actions assigned to you.

10. **Record outcomes and follow up**
    - Record issues discussed, decisions made, and tasks assigned.
    - Share meeting reports with meeting participants.
    - Share meeting outcomes with other stakeholders that should be kept in the loop.

MeetingSift | get your meeting tools at meetingsift.com