

## Terms of Reference

### Gondwana World Heritage Advisory Committee (Qld Section)



The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention) was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in Paris on 16 November 1972 and came into effect in 1975.

The World Heritage Convention promotes cooperation among nations, in order to identify and protect heritage that is of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and ensure its conservation for current and future generations.

In August 1974, Australia ratified the Convention. The Gondwana Rainforests of Australia (Gondwana) was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1988, with extensions to the property added in 1992, to acknowledge its natural heritage of outstanding universal value. It exhibits outstanding examples of major stages of Earth's evolutionary history, ongoing geological and biological processes and exceptional biological diversity. A wide range of plant and animal lineages and communities with ancient origins in Gondwana survive in this collection of reserves. The Gondwana Rainforests also provides principal habitat for many threatened species of plants and animals.

Gondwana is culturally significance with approximately 14 different First Nations groups having active cultural connections to the area. The Australian, New South Wales and Queensland governments acknowledge that the Outstanding Universal Value of the Gondwana Rainforests have been managed sustainably by First Nations peoples for many generations.

Gondwana is a serial property comprising the major remaining areas of rainforest in south-east Queensland and north-east New South Wales. It currently includes parts of 41 protected areas located largely on the Great Dividing Range and eastern escarpment, extending from Main Range National Park in south-east Queensland to Barrington Tops National Park in north-east New South Wales. The Queensland section of the property includes Springbrook National Park, Lamington National Park, Mt Barney National Park, Mt Chinghee National Park and Main Range National Park.

Management and protection of the World Heritage property is carried out under the provisions of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. Australia's World Heritage properties are protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). World Heritage properties are recognised as a matter of National Environmental Significance under the EPBC Act's assessment and approval provisions. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Queensland section of the property. It also has cooperative arrangements in place with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) including an MOU that enables coordinated on-ground management between jurisdictions.



## **Purpose of the Gondwana World Heritage Advisory Committee (Qld Section)**

The Gondwana World Heritage Advisory Committee (Qld Section) (Committee) provides advice to management agencies and State and Australian Government ministers responsible for World Heritage on matters relating to the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations, of cultural and natural heritage.

Advice may include the review and implementation of plans and strategies, research needs or management activities. This advice is to be communicated to the Queensland and Australian Government ministers responsible for World Heritage in the form of:

- a communique prepared after each meeting of the Committee
- written communication from the Chair on an as required basis.

Only the Chair has the authority to make statements on behalf of the Committee.

## **Committee scope and responsibility**

The primary focus of the Committee is the development of advice that encompasses a broad range of opinion based on evidence, experience and understanding of the issues that may impact on the management and protection of the Gondwana World Heritage Area.

The operational management and protection of the World Heritage property is carried out under the provisions of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and is the responsibility of Department of Environment and Science (DES) and First Nations partners, and not the Committee.

However, in developing and providing expert advice, the Committee may consider plans, strategies and management issues which are the responsibility of DES or any agency, as it determines.

## **Stakeholder engagement**

The Committee will develop a stakeholder engagement framework to support Committee discussion, information gathering and exchange external to the Committee in order to strengthen analysis of issues while framing member input and advice.

Within this framework, members can also provide information to their sectors of representation on Gondwana World Heritage issues. At times there may be a conflict between providing information to the community and respecting the confidentiality of some of the information provided to the Committee. It is the responsibility of members to identify such conflicts and seek direction, either during Committee meetings or through the Chair and Executive Officer.

## **Committee membership**

The Committee members provide advice on the management and protection of the Gondwana World Heritage Area (Qld Section). Membership will consist of First Nations peoples, scientific and community interests and expertise relevant to the management of the property.

Membership interest and expertise will broadly be reflected by up to a total of 17 representatives as follows:

- The Chair is an independent, non-government person, with no current direct financial or vested political interest in the way in which Gondwana World Heritage Area is managed (they may be a member of one of the groups below).
- Two Yugambah People
- Two Yuggera Ugarapul People

- Two Githabul People
- Up to five members (who may also be First Nations people) with community interest/expertise, including representatives of the following sectors:
  - tourism
  - recreation
  - residential
  - conservation
  - natural resource management
  - local government
- Up to five members with scientific expertise for example in relation to:
  - botany
  - zoology
  - general ecology
  - geomorphology
  - cultural heritage/archaeology/anthropology
  - stewardship and governance of social-ecological systems
  - sustainable tourism/visitor management
  - protected area management/biosecurity
  - implementation of the operational guidelines
  - social science
  - climate/climate change.

### **Gender balance**

The Committee is to consist of at least 50% women.

### **Appointment of Chair and members**

#### **Chair**

The Chair will be selected:

- a) after a publicly advertised expressions of interest process
- b) a mandatory search of the Queensland Register of Nominees
- c) with the agreement of both the Queensland and Australian Government Ministers responsible for World Heritage.

The Queensland Minister responsible for World Heritage will communicate the Chair's selection via a letter of appointment.

The Queensland Minister, with the agreement of the Australian Government Minister responsible for World Heritage, may appoint an acting chair in the event of an unforeseen vacancy in the role of chair (without meeting a) and b) requirements).

#### **Members**

The members will be selected:

- a) after a publicly advertised expressions of interest process
- b) a mandatory search of the Queensland Register of Nominees
- c) at the discretion of the Queensland Minister responsible for World Heritage.

Committee members are appointed by the Queensland Minister responsible for World Heritage via a letter of appointment.

### **Term of appointment**

The Chair and Committee members are appointed for a three-year period commencing on the date advised in the letter of appointment.

The Chair and Committee members may resign at any time and are eligible for reappointment in another term.

### **Termination of appointment**

In the case of the Chair, termination of membership shall be by both the Queensland and Australian Government Ministers responsible for World Heritage.

Other than by resignation or lapse of membership, termination of membership of the Committee shall be by the Queensland Minister responsible for World Heritage.

Grounds for termination of appointment may include:

- a) Unauthorised representation of the Committee.
- b) Misconduct and inappropriate behaviour.
- c) Misuse of any information provided in confidence for the operation, deliberation and decision-making process of the Committee.
- d) Breach of confidentiality or of the Code of Conduct<sup>1</sup>.
- e) Other reason at the discretion of the Queensland Minister responsible for World Heritage.

### **Duties and functions**

Chair responsibilities:

- a) Chair meetings in accordance with formal meeting protocols.
- b) Liaise with the Executive Officer as required to develop agendas and approve meeting notes.
- c) Facilitate discussion on the agenda items, seeking consensus on issues and providing advice to the Ministers.
- d) Facilitate participation of all Committee members in the meeting and encourage members to share and exchange information with each other and the Executive Officer.
- e) Maintain adherence to the Code of Conduct<sup>1</sup> at meetings.
- f) Speak on behalf of the Committee.
- g) Present the Committee's advice via a Communique to the Ministers within six weeks of each meeting.
- h) Represent (or proxy) Gondwana on the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC), which will consider national and cross-cutting issues relevant to all World Heritage properties in Australia.

*Note 1: Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service*

Committee Member responsibilities:

- a) Attend and participate in Committee meetings and ongoing deliberations.
- b) Direct their expertise and experience towards advancing the views of their respective sector or community interest and provide appropriate advice in relation to the management of the World Heritage Area.
- c) Provide up-to-date advice at meetings when requested on issues identified on the agenda.
- d) Work cooperatively and endeavour to reach a consensus view on issues discussed where possible.
- e) Convey outcomes from the Committee meetings to their respective sector(s) and/or stakeholder group as appropriate.

- f) Follow up on Committee actions appropriately.
- g) Behave professionally, adhere to the Code of Conduct, maintain confidentiality and declare any perceived or actual conflicts of interest.
- h) Defer to the Chair, as the only authorised spokesperson, on issues concerning the operations, deliberations and decisions of the Committee.
- i) Members representing Yugambeh, Yuggera Ugarapul and Githabul People may also represent Gondwana on the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN).

## Meetings

### Meeting attendance

Although no minimum time commitments are set, it is expected that members will attach a priority to attending and participating in Committee meetings. It is also expected that members will allocate appropriate preparation time for the reading of agenda papers and responding to issues where the Committee's advice is sought.

If a Committee member is unable to attend a meeting, they may seek approval from the Chair for a proxy to represent their interests at the meeting. This request should be in writing (email) and should explain the reasons for non-attendance and identify their preferred proxy.

Membership on the Committee may lapse if a member fails to attend two consecutive meetings without valid reasons communicated to the Chair and/or the Director, responsible for World Heritage management, DES.

If the Chair is not present at a Committee meeting, the members present will elect one of their members to preside at the meeting.

All out of pocket travel expenses incurred by Committee members to attend meetings is reimbursed. In recognition of the additional workload required of the Chair, a payment is made per meeting. All reimbursements and payments are made in accordance with the *Remuneration procedures for part-time chairs and members of Queensland government bodies*.

### Time and place of meetings

The Committee shall meet up to four times each year. An indicative, annual schedule of meetings will be made available at the first meeting of the Committee with specific dates and times decided in consultation with the Chair and members of the Committee in advance of each meeting. Meetings may be held anywhere that is a convenient location and can include within the World Heritage area, the Gold Coast, Beenleigh, Brisbane or virtually or by teleconference.

### Quorum

A quorum for a meeting shall be a simple majority of members, including at least one member with First Nations cultural expertise.

### Attendance of guests at Committee meetings

Local, Queensland and Australian Government **observers** and **advisers** may attend meetings with the agreement of the Chair. The Executive Officer will provide administrative and technical support at each of the Committee meetings. Other guests, observers and specialist advisers may be invited to attend and to provide advice.

### Secretariat support

DES will provide independent secretariat support to the Committee. DES plays a critical role in assisting the Australian Government to meet Australia's obligations to manage and protect the Gondwana World Heritage property. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) is responsible for the day-to-day management, while the

World Heritage Unit provides World Heritage policy, strategic direction and administrative support to World Heritage Advisory Committees.

**Executive Officer responsibilities (role continues under the Intergovernmental agreement - *Project Agreement for World Heritage Management*)**

- Coordinate Committee meetings, provide administrative support, including the processing of payments, disseminating information to members and other relevant stakeholders.
- Liaise with the Chair to develop agendas, meeting papers, take meeting notes, assist in the implementation of actions where necessary and ensure Communiques of the Committee are presented to relevant stakeholders promptly.
- Provide relevant information to assist the members in their current deliberations.
- Assist the Committee to operate in accordance with the principles and requirements of legislation, policies, strategies, and guidelines appropriate to the Gondwana World Heritage Area.
- Assist the Committee to maintain a focus on meeting the Terms of Reference.
- Process Committee reimbursements, where possible, within four weeks of when the expense incurred. Invited guests, observers and specialist advisers attend at their own cost unless otherwise approved by the Director, responsible for World Heritage management, DES.

**Example Stakeholder Engagement framework**

1. Stakeholder identification—the Committee has a list of stakeholders (broad/specific) that members may consult.
2. Topic identification—the Committee has a list of topics/themes that members may discuss.
3. Issue prioritisation—within topics/themes, the Committee agrees on which should be prioritised for member engagement with stakeholders.
4. Stakeholder views—members are empowered and encouraged to seek stakeholder views and provide information as endorsed by the Committee.

The purpose of stakeholder engagement is to support the provision of expert advice to ensure that Australia continues to meet its obligations under the World Heritage Convention to protect, conserve and present the Gondwana World Heritage area (Qld Section).

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**Administering agency: Department of Environment and Science**

**Approval authority: Queensland Minister responsible for World Heritage**