



BARAPA BARAPA WAMBA WEMBA  
Water for Country Project

## BARAPA BARAPA WAMBA WEMBA WATER FOR COUNTRY STEERING COMMITTEE

### TERMS OF REFERENCE



BARAPA BARAPA WAMBA WEMBA  
Water for Country Project

### BACKGROUND

The Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba Steering Committee was established in 2013-2014 financial year as the project governance body to oversee the Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba Water for Country project.

The Steering Committee supports the delivery of the Water for Country project.

In 2021-2024, the steering committee aims to increase First Nations people's influence over water policy and decision-making; providing opportunities for employment and economic development to Barapa Barapa and Wamba Wemba Peoples; and promoting First Nations values, heritage, and practice to be part of government policy and practice.

Since 2013-2014 financial year there have been notable achievements, including:

- Employment of an Aboriginal Water Officer
- Community knowledge sharing and healing activities
- Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba development and implementation of culturally appropriate monitoring programs for Environmental Water Management Program (EWMP), Seasonal Watering Proposal (SWP), Water Resource Plans (WRP - long term watering plans) and cultural watering plans.

This Terms of Reference has been endorsed by agreement of the Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba Steering Committee members in June 2022.

### PURPOSE

The Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba Water for Country Steering Committee has been established for the purpose of:

- Providing effective decision making to the delivery of the Water for Country project which represents the interests of the Barapa Barapa and Wamba Wemba Peoples.
- Advocating for First Nations people's rights through connections to land, water and continued cultural practices.
- Guiding the implementation of the Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba Water for Country project and its annual Action Plans.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Steering Committee are to:

- To oversee and guide the implementation of the Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba Water for Country project and to provide support to the work of the Aboriginal Water Officer.
- To advocate for project funding, development, decisions, and outcomes for the benefit of all Barapa Barapa and Wamba Wemba People as it relates to the Water for Country project
- To provide cross-cultural and inter-generational learning opportunities for Barapa Barapa and Wamba Wemba Peoples to connect, work and share knowledge on Country, where culturally appropriate.
- Assist with the development of cultural management objectives/plans and reduce the risk of destruction of registered and unknown Cultural Heritage sites (refer to *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*) from commercial and recreational activities.
- To facilitate opportunities for Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba Peoples to engage meaningfully with government agencies involved in the management of land and water, and respond to emerging opportunities
- To provide advice, guidance and direction to North Central CMA and other government staff as it relates to Land and Water
- To increase community awareness and promotion of Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba cultural values

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The role of the North Central CMA is to:

- Facilitate operation of the Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba Water for Country Steering Committee
- Responsible for taking minutes during meetings
- Advocate to other Government agencies on issues impacting on Barapa Barapa and Wamba Wemba Traditional Owners,
- to follow guidance and direction from the Steering Committee
- Support North Central CMA staff to work in agreement with the Steering Committee on the planning, development, and delivery of projects on Country
- Advocate and encourage early engagement by external government partners and agencies relating to natural resource management on Barapa Barapa and Wamba Wemba Country
- Promote a culturally safe and respectful environment

The role of the Steering Committee members is to:

- Represent and act in good faith to the interests of Barapa Barapa and Wamba Wemba men, women, and children
- Work collaboratively with North Central CMA staff and members of the Board and be committed to the Water for Country project outcomes.
- Inform North Central CMA staff and other agencies on land and Water issues.
- Champion the work of the Water for Country project and Steering Committee to the Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba Traditional Owners, other Nations, government agencies, and broader community
- Chair committee meetings
- Read all written papers and documents
- Attend regular meetings
- Keeping confidential all sensitive, commercial, and personal information that the members encounter while being a member of the group.

Members of the Steering Committee will expect to:

- Receive information (including minutes and agenda) in a timely manner – at least one week prior to each committee meeting
- Given enough time to make decisions and to talk together

- Adherer to the Terms of Reference behaviors and Code of Conduct
- Told of any potential risks or issues that might arise while implementing Water for Country projects
- Have open and honest conversations as a group and with each other, that is inclusive and respectful

## **BEHAVIOURS AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

All members, North Central CMA staff and invited guest must comply with the following behaviors:

- Treat everyone with respect at all times.
- Respect others when they are talking and allow one person to speak at a time
- Respect everyone's time including limiting each person to talk for no more than 3 minutes at a time – this will ensure everyone has time to speak
- No discriminatory content, foul or offensive language to be used by members
- No bullying, discrimination, or inappropriate remarks
- Members reserve the right to not engage with third parties that do not show appropriate respect to the Steering Committee, members, guests, or Country.
- Members have a duty not to improperly use position or information. The work of the Committee is for our Countries and our Peoples.
- All members have a duty to care for Country; and a duty to recognise the cultural values and responsibilities of Barapa Barapa Wamba Wemba Elders and the importance of men's business and women's business.

All reports of disrespectful behaviors will be taken seriously, will be noted, and where necessary either a written warning will be issued, or members will be removed from the Committee.

For the safety of all members, all matters will be dealt with in a Culturally Safe and timely manner.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Members of the Steering Committee are:

- Barapa Barapa Traditional Owners
- Wamba Wemba Traditional Owners

North Central CMA staff attend and participate in Steering Committee meetings (but have no voting rights). Steering Committee membership is capped at 12 regular members – with other members attending as alternate members when a regular member is unable to attend. Alternate members are paid a sitting fee only when representing an absent member.

The Steering Committee agreed the Committee is to be made up of six Barapa Barapa and six Wamba Wemba 'regular' members a total of 12 committee members and 12 alternate members who may be selected by the regular member and approved by the committee, final sign off for alternate members will be approved by the North central CMAs Strategy and Partnerships Executive Manager.

The Steering Committee will nominate alternating Chairs to run the meetings, this will be a Barapa Barapa Traditional Owner for meetings occurring on Barapa Country and Wamba Wemba Traditional Owner for meetings occurring on Wamba Wemba Country. Where a chair is not in attendance the Aboriginal Water Officer is responsible for Chairing meetings. Both Chairs will be supported by the Aboriginal Water Officer and the North Central CMA staff where relevant. The person Chairing the meeting will be paid a higher sitting fee rate.

If the Chair is a Barapa Barapa or Wamba Wemba Traditional Owner, and is working for the North Central CMA, they will not have a voting right as a Traditional Owner.

The Aboriginal Water Officer will be a Designated Aboriginal Position (DAP) – this position will ideally be filled by a Barapa Barapa or Wamba Wemba Traditional Custodian; however, if no Traditional Owner applies for the role, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person may fill it.

The Steering Committee will review its Terms of Reference and membership list annually at the first meeting of the year.

North Central CMA's Partnerships and Strategy Unit will provide administrative support to the Steering Committee.

Members will cease to be a member of the Steering Committee if they:

- Voluntarily resign;
- Fail to attend **three** consecutive meetings without providing apologies in advance;
- Fail to attend at least one meeting, in person, each financial year (June to July); or
- Are removed by way of majority vote for breaching this Terms of Reference
- The North Central CMA have the right to act on any serious OHS/behaviors issues

A letter will be sent to members who fail to attend and adhere to the above and will be given 4 weeks' notice.

### **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROCESS**

Membership is via an Expression of Interest process, held every two years.

A new member may request to join the Steering Committee at any other time through submitting a written expression of interest.

An expression of interest will be advertised through the local newspaper, media (including North Central CMAs social media pages) and via emails to community members.

The Expression of interest must be open for a minimum of four weeks and all EOIs to be submitted to the North Central CMA at [info@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@nccma.vic.gov.au).

### **PROCESS**

A small working group has been formed to assess Expression of Interests. This is made up of two Barapa Barapa Elders and two Wamba Wemba Elders.

The North Central CMA's Community and Relationships Manger will be an observer to the working group, which includes

- Uncle Neville Whynam – Barapa Barapa, Elder
- Uncle Ron Galway – Barapa Barapa, Elder
- Mia Korp – Wamba Wemba, Traditional Owner
- Uncle Kenny Stewart – Wamba Wemba, Elder

The working group will be responsible for reviewing all applications and using the EOI matrix to shortlist applications.

The shortlist will then be reviewed by the Steering Committee at the next available meeting and a final blind vote Yes/No to accept new members.

The newly nominated members will be submitted to the North Central CMAs Strategy and Partnerships manager for final endorsement.

The Aboriginal Water officer will be responsible for informing applicants if their EOIs were successful. Any approved new members of the Steering Committee will not be able to participate in meetings until relevant forms have been signed and submitted to the North Central CMA.

### **MEETINGS**

The Steering Committee will meet seven times per year for general meetings.

Meeting locations will alternate between Swan Hill (Wamba Wemba Country), Barham and Kerang (Barapa Barapa Country), with other locations agreed upon by the Steering Committee.

Members must not miss more than **three** consecutive meetings, without a prior apology.

Should a member be unable to attend meeting, they must provide a written apology to the Chair at least 48 hours prior to a scheduled meeting (without unforeseen circumstances).

A member that is unable to attend a meeting may nominate an alternate representative (already nominated) to attend on their behalf by advising the Aboriginal Water Officer.

The quorum for meetings will be by a majority of the members.

Steering Committee members shall make decision by majority, and these will be recorded in a resolution.

The Steering Committee works to deliver projects funded by the Victorian Government, use of funds and development of partnerships through the Water for Country project.

Decisions made by the Steering Committee will be in the best interests of Barapa Barapa and Wamba Wemba Peoples.

**This Terms of Reference is effective from January 2023.**