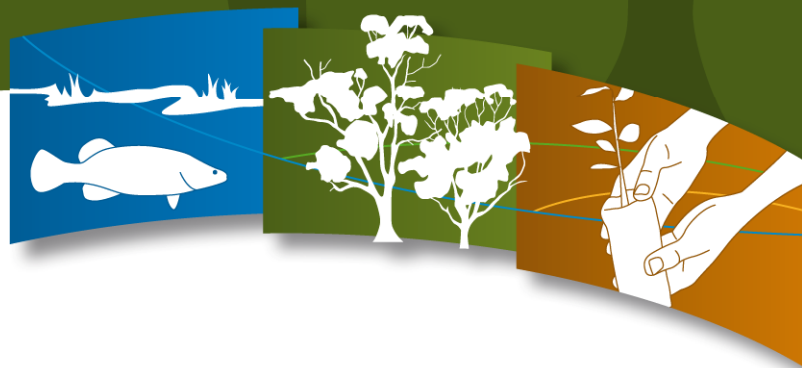


*Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People*

# NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OPERATING PROTOCOLS SEPTEMBER 2011 v2



**NORTH CENTRAL**  
Catchment Management Authority  
*Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People*

## **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Natural Resource Management Committee (NRMC) Operating Protocols is to provide a clear operating standard.

The Operating Protocols should be read in conjunction with the NRMC Charter (DM 54870).

## **2. ROLE OF THE NRMC**

The role of the NRMC is to provide a community and local perspective to the functions of the CMA that have a community interface. The NRMC considers the views of the community, scientific input, government policy and management in delivering the Regional Catchment Strategy. In making decisions, the NRMC acts in the best interest of the region as a whole.

Within this context, the role of the NRMC is to provide the Board with a community and local perspective on:

- Appropriate engagement mechanisms for projects
- Direction and focus of the Regional Catchment Strategy
- Identifying annual priorities for investment
- Reviewing the community engagement aspects of project
- Developing and implementing a community engagement strategy
- Project performance.

The NRMC's role is guided by a Charter, which further details its roles and responsibilities. These operating protocols are intended to provide specific operating guidelines for the NRMC.

## **3. OBLIGATIONS AND MEETING GUIDELINES**

### **2.1 Obligations**

In performing their role, it is expected that NRMC members will:

- a. Act honestly, in good faith, and to the best of their ability in the interests of the North Central CMA.

- b. Comply with any laws, in particular, the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* and the *Water Act 1989*.
- c. Members are required to have a minimum attendance record of 80% in each calendar year. If a member is unable to meet this commitment then membership will be withdrawn. Exemptions to this attendance requirement will apply in extenuating circumstances.
- d. Make informed and reasonable recommendations to the North Central CMA Board in the best interest of the environment, government and community.
- e. Be as informed as possible about the process and strategic functions of the NRMC.
- f. Accept a duty to avoid a conflict of interest and the associated duty not to misuse their position or information that comes to the NRMC
- g. Inform the community about the activities and plans of the North Central CMA; and
- h. Act in a reasonable and fair manner, which is not discriminatory on the basis of gender, religion and race or contrary to the Equal Opportunity Employment Act 1995.

## **2.2 Meeting guidelines and procedures**

### **2.2.1 Agendas**

Agendas will be coordinated by the EO from information supplied by CMA Managers, NRMC Portfolio Representatives and the NRMC Chair, who will approve the final agenda. The agenda will be focused around items that directly contribute to the achievement of the NRMC annual work plan.

### **2.2.2 Minutes**

Minutes will be taken by the Executive Support officer. The draft minutes shall be referred to the EO for first approval then Chairman for final approval.

The approved draft minutes will be circulated to the NRMC committee with the Agenda papers and endorsed at the next meeting.

### **2.2.3 Quorum**

A quorum will be reached by a simple majority of voting members.

### **2.2.4 Making a motion and/or Making Recommendations to the Board**

A motion is a proposal made at a meeting and intended to be considered and decided upon. All new business is introduced by making a motion. One person to move and another to second a motion is required prior to a motion being put to the vote.

***Moving a motion:***

A member of the Committee will move a motion to either:

- Adopt the recommendation put forward in a CMA officer's paper or to
- Move a new motion (i.e. one that has not been accompanied by a paper or recommendation). Once moved, the motion needs to be seconded before being put to the vote.

***Making Recommendations to the Board:***

Recommendations to the Board can be made through the official NRMC minutes.

The NRMC may only make recommendations to the Board directly relating to their Charter. The official minutes of the meeting must record who made the recommendation, name of person who seconded the recommendation before it goes to vote.

***Communicating Recommendations to the Board:***

NRMC recommendations will be communicated to the Board via a Board paper produced by the Executive Officer accompanied by a management note.

### **3. COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL**

#### **3.1 Media Contact**

*Speaking on behalf of the NRMC*

- a. The Chairperson is the NRMC spokesperson. All media should be coordinated through the North Central CMA Community and Media Liaison Officer. The Chief Executive Officer must be notified in advance of all instances when the Chairperson will be speaking to the media on behalf of the NRMC.
- b. NRMC members are authorised to speak to the media on behalf of the NRMC within any area for which they have been allocated responsibility and the area of their portfolio. Advance approval must be provided by the Chairperson or the Chief Executive Officer.

*NRMC media activity*

- c. All North Central CMA media releases, including those communicating NRMC matters, must be approved by the Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer.
- d. When a media release quotes a particular NRMC member by name, prior approval must be obtained from the member.
- e. A weekly update of all North Central CMA media coverage will be emailed to NRMC members.

## **4. CORRESPONDENCE**

### **4.1 General**

As appointed community representatives, NRMC members need to be not only responsive to community views, but adequately communicate NRMC activity to their community. There may be times when a NRMC member, as an individual, disagrees with a majority decision of the NRMC and wants to make this known. NRMC members are entitled to present their own views, but in doing so NRMC members should acknowledge that:

As a member of the NRMC there is respect for the decision-making process, which is based on a decision of the majority of the NRMC

An overriding aim is to achieve a balance in the matters that are communicated and an outcome that presents the NRMC as effective and cohesive

Information of a confidential nature must not be communicated

Information concerning adopted policies, procedures and decisions should be conveyed accurately.

### **4.2 Inward correspondence**

NRMC members may at times receive correspondence from individuals and/or organisations.

The following records management procedure has been developed to ensure the integrity of the NRMC's correspondence.

- All inward correspondence addressed to the Chairperson or NRMC member and any outward correspondence on behalf of the Chairperson or NRMC member will be included in the NRMC agenda papers for acknowledgement.
- If the Chairperson or NRMC member would like to make available a copy of any inward or outward correspondence which has been addressed or sent from their private mailing address they shall make this available to the Executive Officer for inclusion in the NRMC agenda.
- Regardless of to whom the item is addressed, all items of NRMC member inwards correspondence received by the North Central CMA are opened by the staff member responsible for records. The item is then registered and forwarded to the Executive Officer.
- The Executive Officer shall discuss the correspondence with the NRMC member and, if applicable, provide a copy to the NRMC.

- The only exceptions to this policy are items marked confidential or personal.
- Any item of correspondence received from a community member that requires a response is initially acknowledged by the North Central CMA staff member. The acknowledgement letter identifies the appropriate officer to action. .

*Correspondence addressed to the Chairperson*

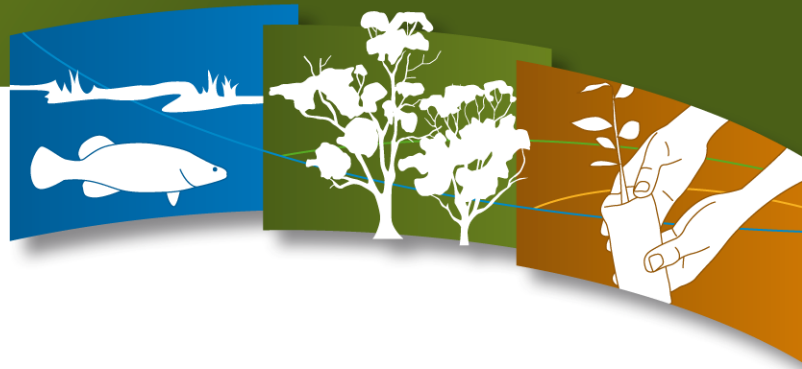
- Any item of correspondence addressed to the Chairperson, not marked private and confidential will be registered by the records officer and directed to the Executive Officer, with a copy being provided to the Chairperson
- The Executive Officer will discuss correspondence directly with the Chairperson and make a decision of appropriate reply and signatory of response if required
- Correspondence addressed to an NRMC member
- Any item of correspondence addressed to a particular NRMC member by name will be registered by the records officer and directed to Executive Officer, with a copy being provided to the NRMC member concerned. The Executive Officer must discuss the correspondence with the NRMC Member.
- The Executive Officer, in discussion with the Chairperson, will reply on behalf of the North Central CMA. However, the particular NRMC member may also choose to acknowledge receipt of the letter.

*Confidential items*

- Any item of correspondence addressed to a particular NRMC member or Chairperson by name which is marked either confidential or personal will be directed unopened to that NRMC member.
- The NRMC member concerned may then redirect correspondence to the records officer to be dealt with in the normal manner.

*Invitations*

- An invitation addressed to a particular NRMC member by name will not be registered by the record officer, but will be directed to that NRMC member. An invitation which is not addressed to a particular NRMC member will be redirected to the Chairperson.
- All invitations addressed to the Chairperson will be registered and directed to the Chairperson.



#### *Meeting papers*

- Any meeting papers received from external organisations for which a NRMC member is the delegate or representative will be copied to the official North Central CMA file, with the original being directed to the NRMC member for their retention.

### **4.3 Outwards correspondence**

#### *Copies*

- All items of outwards correspondence prepared by the Executive Officer on behalf of the Chairperson or an individual NRMC will be recorded in the appropriate section of the document management system licensed to the North Central CMA.

#### *For the Chairperson's signature*

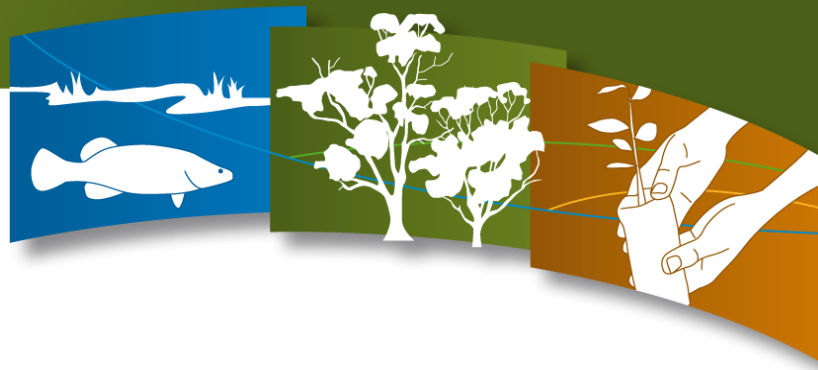
- In most instances, correspondence from the NRMC will be signed by the Chairperson.
- Any items of correspondence addressed to State or Federal politicians or persons from other CMAs drafted by a NRMC member will be submitted through the Executive Officer for signature by the Chairperson.

#### *NRMC member correspondence*

- Any item of North Central CMA correspondence requiring a NRMC member's signature will be processed through the Executive Officer's assistant to ensure that the appropriate file copies are retained.

## **5. USE OF INFORMATION**

There is an expectation that NRMC members will make reasonable and informed decisions and recommendations on matters presented at meetings where a community perspective is sought. In the decision-making process, the NRMC members are provided with information that may at times be confidential. NRMC members need to be:



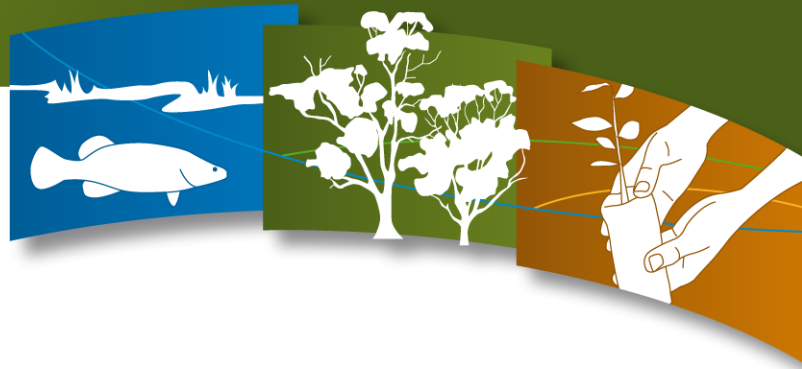
- Aware that they are only entitled to access information which is relevant to matters before the NRMC
- Mindful that, except on matters before the NRMC, they enjoy the same access rights to information as any other member of the community
- Prudent in the use of information that they acquire as NRMC members
- Observant of any specific policies that the NRMC has on the use of North Central CMA information
- Respectful of the status of any information treated as confidential by the NRMC until a matter ceases to be confidential
- Careful that information is not used in a way which may cause detriment to others.

## **6. Confidentiality**

The NRMC, through its functions and responsibilities, seeks to ensure that the public is well informed about issues under consideration and the nature of decisions made by the NRMC and its special committees. The North Central CMA's commitment to open decision-making requires the NRMC processes and procedures to accommodate this aspect of the North Central CMA operations.

To this end, the number of matters considered by the NRMC in closed sessions is relatively few. However, it is necessary at times to consider some matters in closed sessions. Only matters which have been classified as confidential can be considered in closed sessions. Items classified as confidential generally relate to commercial in confidence information that has been provided to the NRMC by tenders, contractors, joint ventures, or other confidential information which is a confidential right prior to a public announcement.





A policy on confidential information and processes relating to the policy has therefore been developed because of:

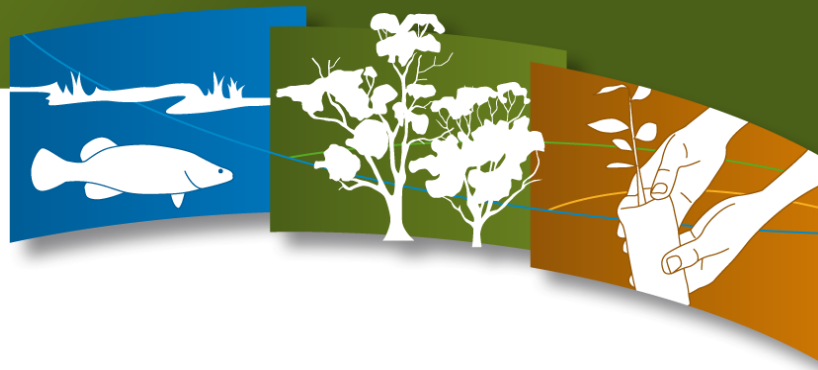
- a. the confidential nature of certain materials which comes before the North Central CMA and its committees
- b. the need for NRMC members to be clear as to what material is properly characterised as confidential, to lessen the likelihood of an inadvertent breach of the provisions relating to improper use of information
- c. the necessity to ensure that any confidential information to which NRMC members and officers have access remains confidential for as long as required, in order not to prejudice any negotiations or compromise the position of the other parties who may be involved.
- d. Having determined information as confidential, it is necessary that the NRMC ensure that appropriate processes are in place for dealing with confidential material. The following policy describes the process.
- e. The NRMC operates in an environment of public accountability and scrutiny. The North Central CMA seeks to comprehensively inform the public on issues under consideration and the nature of decisions made by the NRMC and its committees as appropriate.
- f. In order to contribute to the environment of open decision-making, the NRMC aims to ensure that the number of matters which are considered by the NRMC in confidential sessions are kept to a minimum.

Confidential information shall not be:

- a. disclosed to any third party without the NRMC's consent
- b. incorporated in the agenda or minutes of any NRMC or committee meeting (except by reference) unless it is the agenda or the minutes of a closed meeting of the NRMC or committee.

The following procedures will apply to the preparation of confidential material:

- a. managers or committee chairpersons will make recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer as to the categorisation of confidential material
- b. material will be clearly identified as confidential



- c. the reason for confidentiality will be set out on the front page of each document categorised as confidential.

Confidential information shall, where possible, be subject to a sunset provision, which provides that the information is no longer subject to the restrictions set out in this policy.

Where it is not possible to stipulate a date after which information is no longer confidential, it may be possible to specify a particular event, the occurrence of which removes the confidentiality restrictions.

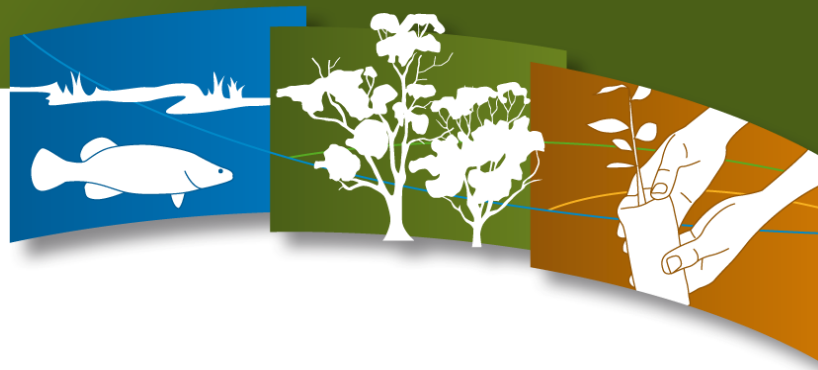
## **7. RELATIONSHIP WITH STAFF**

The relationship between NRMC members and North Central CMA staff is crucial to the success of the NRMC. In achieving this, NRMC members are expected to:

- a. accept their role as providing community advice, not management or administration
- b. acknowledge that the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for staff
- c. acknowledge that they have no capacity to individually direct members of staff to carry out particular functions
- d. refrain from using their position to improperly influence members of staff in the duties or functions or to gain advantage for themselves or others
- e. refrain from criticising staff in a way that casts aspersions on their professional competence and credibility.

## **8. DRESS CODE**

NRMC members and officers are required to dress professionally at NRMC meetings and functions attended as North Central CMA representatives. If NRMC members are outdoors, i.e. attending a tour of parts of the North Central CMA region, they are expected to adhere to OH&S standards that require protective footwear and appropriate protective clothing according to weather conditions.



## 9. ALCOHOL

North Central CMA accepts its responsibility to provide a safe, secure and healthy workplace for all employees, Board members, NRMC members, contractors and visitors. This responsibility extends to North Central CMA social functions whether conducted on the authority's property or elsewhere. The conduct of social functions entails many risks. In order to mitigate these risks all North Central CMA social functions must be conducted in accordance with the Authority's Functions Policy HR007, including the responsible serving of alcohol. All NRMC members will receive an induction on the Functions Policy.

## 10. PARTNER ATTENDANCE

NRMC members may be required to attend evening events or stay overnight as a result of NRMC-related business. In some instances partners will be formally invited to events. In the case of ordinary NRMC meetings, members' partners are not expected to attend. A formal request for a members' partner to accompany him/her to an ordinary NRMC meeting or an event requiring an overnight stay, citing the reasons, must be made to the Executive Officer at least one week in advance.

Expenses incurred as a result of partners attending an NRMC meeting or event where a formal invitation has not been extended will be borne by the member. This may be deducted from the members' remuneration.

## 11 GRIEVANCE PROCESS

The Authority's Grievance Policy (HR003) aims to ensure that all employees have a fair and transparent process available to them through which their concerns can be promptly addressed. The Grievance Policy provides a framework to assist NRMC members to understand the procedures available to resolve issues in a timely and positive manner. All NRMC members will receive an induction on the Grievance Policy.

-ENDS-

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read, understood and agree to the NRMC operating protocols

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_