

**DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT.**

**CORPORATE EXECUTIVE**

**ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION NO. 31**

**OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN  
PLANNING, AND THE MANAGEMENT OF ADVISORY BODIES.**

**INTRODUCTION**

These guidelines must be read in conjunction with the Department's Policy Statement No. 15, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, and Policy Statement No. 1. PLANNING

The public participation policy statement outlines a range of strategies that can be used. It is important to select the appropriate or combination of strategies for the situation at hand. It is equally important not to rigidly implement one strategy across your region or district, solely for the sake of completeness.

To assist in the choice of public participation strategies these guidelines provide information about each, and their implementation.

## **consultative Committees**

Consultative committees are non-statutory bodies which are established to exchange information between different organisations, authorities or departments.

They are different to a management committee, which has an executive role in cooperative management.

Other government agencies (whether Federal, State or Local), authorities or organisations are as legitimate in the public participation process as any recreation or environmental group. They can be offended if not consulted adequately but can be extremely helpful if the consultation is effective. A consultative committee should not substitute for direct liaison but it can be very useful where several agencies are involved, provided it is set up early in a project.

Members of a consultative committee can provide important advice of a technical nature, information about public preferences and they may also affect the overall political climate in which a decision is made.

The reasons for establishing a consultative committee will vary with each situation, for example:

- . CALM may need advice in dealing with a contentious public issue.
- CALM may have overall responsibility for administering an area in which other agencies also have an interest.
- CALM may need to communicate with agencies managing neighbouring areas.
- CALM may be dealing with a new situation that other agencies have previous experience with.

Before beginning the process of establishing a consultative committee some thought should be given to whether the committee is appropriate or needed. Information exchange of a routine nature between agencies and short term issues may be adequately handled without the need for a committee. eg, in workshops, forums or informal meetings.

Guidelines for establishing a consultative committee:

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- (i) Consultative committees are convened at the invitation of the Minister or Executive Director.
  - (ii) Consultative committees do not have a management function or a decision-making responsibility, but allow different agencies to exchange information about an issue of common interest.
  - (iii) The committee must have a clearly stated objective: for example, “to discuss the proposed roadworks **program** in the .....**National Park.**”
  - (iv) The period of operation of the committee should be determined at the commencement of the committee. It should be disbanded when:
    - the issue is resolved or project completed: or
    - further discussion is of no further interest or value to participating agencies.
  - (v) Membership of any committee should be restricted to twelve or less to allow for effective discussion. In selecting participating agencies, ensure all those who have an interest in the issue are represented. It is advisable to also identify all those agencies whose support is necessary to implement a decision.

It is not usually possible to select the individuals representing the various agencies, but it is desirable that representatives be articulate people, well informed of their agency's position on an issue, in a position to commit their organisation, and able to communicate back to the agency the essence and outcomes of the discussion.
  - (vi) The chairperson will usually be the person representing the convening agency but there may be some advantage in rotating the chairperson, having the committee elect its own chairperson, or the Executive Director may invite a particular representative (for example, from a 'leading' agency) to be chairperson.
  - (vii) Minutes should be kept of each meeting and copies distributed to each participating agency, to the attention of the individual representative: a copy should also be sent to the Executive' Director, CALM, unless otherwise directed.
  - (viii) A consultative committee should invite specialist assistance where needed, and co-opted persons might include technical experts and those who can guide a group task (for example, problem-solving, consensus building).

## **Aboriginal Park Councils**

Aboriginal Park Councils are non-statutory bodies which are established under formal agreement with the Minister for the Environment to provide meaningful management input from Aboriginal people with traditional affiliation to land managed by CALM.

Aboriginal people have customary responsibilities for the management of land for which they have traditional ties. Where CALM is responsible for controlling such land, eg Purnululu National Park, traditional custodians have sought recognition and equal status with CALM in the development of planning, policy and procedural guidelines for the management of that land.

Aboriginal Park Councils could be established where such traditional associations exist with any classifications of CALM managed land.

Aboriginal Park Councils are likely to be established in areas where traditional aboriginal owners have a long established and current involvement in the area, and where lines of descent are clearly recognised, documented and accepted. In addition it is also required that aboriginal owners form a legal corporation.

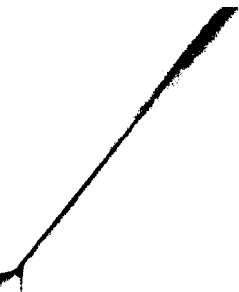
The establishment of an Aboriginal Park Council does not preclude the establishment of other park bodies, such as advisory committees, which would represent a broader constituency.

The functions of an Aboriginal Park Council will generally be in line with the Cabinet decision on the establishment of Purnululu Park Council, dated 21 August 1987. They are:

- \* prepare and advise proposals for a draft Plan of Management for the park/reserve for consideration of the Minister.
- \* acknowledging the provisions of the CALM Act, in association with CALM and subject to the Minister, to participate in the implementation of the Management Plan as approved, including the development of policy in relation to Aboriginal interests in the park/reserve.
- \* provide advice to the Minister in all issues and matters relating to Aboriginal involvement in the park/reserve, eg, hunting and gathering, cultural sites, access, fire, living areas, etc.

Guidelines for the establishment of Aboriginal Park Councils:

- (i) Aboriginal Park Councils are constituted by the Minister for the Environment.
- ii) The Council will usually comprise equal representation from CALM and the traditional custodians, with other representatives as required.

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- (iii) The Council is required to meet no less than four (4) times in any year.
- (iv) The CALM representative on the Council will be required to brief the NPNCA on determinations and advice arising from the Council, so that the NPNCA can consider such determinations and advise the Minister independently, as it sees fit.
- (v) The establishment of detailed guidelines on the scope and conduct of Park Councils and their meetings, are usually provided for in a formal agreement, and are negotiated on an individual basis.
- (vi) The Aboriginal corporation will be responsible for nominating its own representatives to the Council.

### Advisory **Committees**

Advisory committees established by CALM are created to provide a regular forum to hear public opinion and exchange advice on management issues.

Traditionally, advisory committees have been established in connection with the management of land vested in CALM. However the role of advisory committees is not restricted to the management of vested lands. Advisory committees may be established to provide advice and exchange information on a particular issue. For example, wildlife management and research, recreation, tourism, etc.

An advisory committee may be constituted for more than one area of CALM estate. Some advisory committee may be based on geographical boundaries to provide advice on a number of areas of land.

Advisory committees will be appointed by and advisory to the Executive Director, through the appropriate regional or district manager. Such committees are not empowered to administer management programs or activities, or direct departmental staff. The Department will, however, provide as much information as possible to help the committee fulfil its role and function.

An advisory committee will:

- provide advice on issues referred to the committee, through the regional or district managers or by the Department, Minister, Authority or Commission;
- 0 advise on the preparation and implementation of management plans:

- bring before the Executive Director, and provide advice on matters of public concern or interest:
- assist the Department in promulgation of information to the public;
- provide liaison between the Department, local government and the community.

Guidelines for establishment of an advisory committee:

#### MEMBERSHIP

- (i) Advisory committee members will be selected primarily on the basis of expertise, experience, personal interest and public profile, and in the case of geographical committees, location.

Government representation will be kept to a minimum. CALM representation will usually be confined to one officer. However there will be cases when an advisory committee needs additional support and advice from CALM.

- (ii) All members of the public should feel in some way represented on the advisory committee: men and women, urban and rural dwellers, all ages, ethnic and geographic communities, as well as special interest groups. In addition it is generally desirable to have a representative from the local council or shire. Of course to have each of these categories individually represented would produce a committee of unworkable size. It is necessary to group different interests together (for example, 'minor forest product users', 'outdoor recreation groups', etc.) and nominate people who can, to some extent, represent many interest groups.

The most appropriate persons can- be identified by drawing up a matrix of interest groups versus community categories: entered into the matrix are those individuals possessing:

- a high public profile:
- commitment to the interest and work of the committee.

It should be possible to see on the matrix those persons representing a broad spectrum of interests and communities within a region who could be nominated, and those with narrow interests who could be excluded.

- (iii) Members of advisory committees will be appointed by the Executive Director. Recruitment of prospective members can be achieved by either:

a) recommendation of interested persons by the district, regional manager or relevant Director..

b) advertising, selecting and recommending applicants.

As part of the advertising process the following organisations should be invited by letter to submit names for consideration to the park /reserve advisory committee.

Bushfires Board of Western Australia  
Conservation Council of Western Australia  
The local Land Conservation District  
Western Australian Farmers Federation  
The Local Shire/s  
Relevant government departments

Non-departmental membership will be for a period of three years, with a view to rotating membership to ensure that the committee includes people who have an understanding of current community concerns and interests.

Retiring members are eligible to reapply for reappointment either immediately or in the future.

- (iv) There are no limits to the size of an advisory committee, however it is recommended that a maximum of ten (10) committee members be appointed for ease of management. (N.B: This number does not include the Chairperson and CALM representative.)
- (v) New committees will require appointment of members for differing periods to allow for staggered retirement, and thereby ensuring ongoing retention of committee experience.
- (vi) The Chairperson will be appointed by the Executive Director.

#### CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

- (i) The Department will provide a venue for the committee meeting as well as secretarial and other support as needed.
- (ii) Committees should meet not less than once every three months, although advisory committees can and do meet more regularly, or as required.
- (iii) Meeting procedures adopted by a committee should be consistent with sound meeting practice and ensure that all members are provided with the opportunity to participate.
- (iv) The Departmental representative should be the most senior appropriate officer available, and they or their representative must be in attendance for the meeting to occur.

- (v) A quorum will be formed if at least half of the committee are present as well as the Chairperson or his/her designate.
- (vi) Advisory committees should attempt as much as possible to reach consensus on issues. Where consensus is not possible resolutions should be passed on an absolute majority. Proxy votes will not be permitted. The Chairperson has a casting vote.
- (vii) Except as provided for in these instructions, advisory committees should develop their own procedures for calling meetings and the conduct of meetings, including the circulation of agenda and minutes.
- (viii) In most instances, the functioning of the committee will be best served by having meetings closed to the public and the media. Where there is a great deal of public interest in a matter, public meetings may be called by the committee in order to hear community opinions or concerns and to permit the committee to inform the public about its work. In such cases the prior approval of the Executive Director is required.

## RESOLUTIONS

- (i) Resolutions arising from meetings will be forwarded by the chairperson to the Executive Director.
- (ii) Only issues of substance should be taken to the stage of a resolution. Minor issues should be resolved at a local level.

## LIAISON WITH THE DEPARTMENT

- (i) Normally, contact between the committee and the Department will be through the chairperson and the departmental representative.
- (ii) The Department will provide to the committee information which the Department or the Government believes will help the committee to fulfil its role and functions. Furthermore the Department will provide as much additional relevant information as possible, subject to:
  - a) the committee requesting the information as part of a resolution, and
  - b) the normal functioning of the Department is not unduly interfered with.
  - c) the information requested is not of a confidential nature.



- (iii) The Department will present issues for discussion and resolution by the advisory committee on Form CLM 197. This form provides a summary of the issue/s, outlines CALM objectives and policy stance, and the highlights areas that CALM is seeking direction and advice from the committee (draft copy attached.)
- (iv) The Department will convene an annual forum of Advisory Committee chairpersons.

#### LIAISON WITH OTHER BODIES.

- (i) Members of the committee can act as private individuals in their relations with government or the media, but may not speak for the committee unless explicitly authorised by a resolution of the committee and approved by the Executive Director.
- (ii) Advisory committees can only correspond with individuals, other government departments or organisations through the Department.

#### FORWARD PLANNING

- (i) It is recommended that at the commencement of each year the advisory committees should plan a program for the coming year.

The program should focus on priority areas and issues, and provide for coordination with Departmental programs. Planning should be consistent with the Department's current programs and objectives.

#### ADMINISTRATION

- (vi) Membership of advisory committees is honorary: there will be no financial reward for services. The Department will, however, reimburse committee members (at equivalent Public Service rates) for the following expenses:

- travelling expenses when attending committee meetings:
- travelling expenses when on other committee business:  
incidental expenses for its operation.

Reimbursement must be authorised in advance by the regional or district manager.

To assist in controlling costs, chairpersons should encourage committee members where possible to travel together, travel with departmental officers or claim actual expenses. Where possible, staff should plan committee activities so that meal and accommodation costs are minimised.

## **Public Involvement in the Planning Process**

There is a statutory requirement for CALM to consult with the public in the preparation of management plans (Sections 53 - 61, of the CALM Act 1984). However, the Department takes on public participation not only because of legal obligations but also because better decisions are made because of the participation and these decisions may be implemented more effectively and efficiently.

Public participation is an integral part of planning and management, not a separate function. There are many opportunities to involve the public in district, regional and departmental planning exercises, as well as in the preparation of particular land management plans.

Effective public participation in planning involves the following steps:

(i) Determine clear objectives

communicate these first within the Department and proceed no further until all levels of the organisation have a common understanding of the planning objectives.

(ii) Identify the major public issues

this will require some local knowledge, talking to community leaders and reviewing media coverage: consideration of previous experience both locally and elsewhere is essential.

Identify Departmental resources available for public involvement.

(iii) Identify those public groups, stakeholders and individuals who will be concerned

it will help the planner to focus on matters of vital concern and decide what techniques to use.

(iv) Develop a comprehensive plan of action

set realistic goals;

allow adequate time to complete each phase of the planning process: and

budget carefully, allowing for the costs of publishing, advertising, mailing, hiring venues, etc.

(v) Communicate openly and honestly at all times both within the Department and with the public; this will enhance credibility.

(vi) Present a full range of alternatives to the public

do not indicate Departmental preferences or prejudices.

(vii) Encourage input from a broad range of public groups, including those outside the geographic locality, and also minority groups who may historically have not been considered.

This wider public can be involved by employing various techniques appropriate to the issue, including:

- media statements:
- advertisements;
- posters:
- displays:
- newsletters:
- brochures/leaflets;
- key issue booklets:
- public forums:
- household mail:
- public meetings;
- lectures:
- advisory committees:
- workshops;
- surveys and questionnaires:
- field days:
- routine contact.

The planner must decide which of these techniques will best suit the target group for a particular issue, and must always remain flexible to modify the techniques as the process develops.

(viii) All public responses must be systematically analysed

the analysis should provide a complete summary of the nature, content and extent of public comment.

the criteria used to guide the analysis should be clearly stated.

(ix) Consider all available data in the evaluation

evaluation should be recognised as somewhat subjective: interpretation following the analysis requires technical skill, sensitivity and perception.

(x) All decisions reached, with supporting justification, should immediately be made public

people who have contributed deserve a response, including Departmental staff as well as the wider public.

The Corporate Relations Division will provide support to Planning Branch and the regions/districts in the public participation process by:

- a) Training Departmental staff in effective communication techniques.
- b) Ensuring good promotion in the media and at appropriate venues.
- c) Producing appropriate publications, posters and displays.
- d) Ensuring that management plans are suitable documents for the broader community.

The Community Involvement Coordinator will provide support to the Planning Branch by:

- a) Contributing to a register of interested groups and individuals.
- b) Liaising with regions and districts regarding establishment and operation of advisory committees, friends groups and volunteer projects.

Syd Shea  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Department of Conservation and Land Management

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUMMARY SHEET**

**Issue Name:**

**Outline of Issues/Concerns/Proposal:**

**Current CALM policy &/or objectives relevant to this issue:**

**Summary of options available:**

**Proponent/contact:**

**Deadlines:**