

AUSTRALIAN BEEF SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK STEERING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1 Background and Purpose

- 1.1 The Australian Beef Sustainability Framework (**ABSF**) Steering Group (**SG**) is established by the Australian Beef Sustainability Framework Advisory Board with relevant research, development and adoption (RDA) activities funded by Meat & Livestock Australia (**MLA**) and Australian Meat Processors Corporation (**AMPC**).
- 1.2 The SG is accountable to ABSF Advisory Board comprising representatives of the peak industry bodies (**PIB**): Cattle Australia (**CA**), Australian Lot Feeders' Association (**ALFA**) and Australian Meat Industry Council (**AMIC**).
- 1.3 The SG acts in an advisory capacity in accordance with these terms of reference (**TORs**).
- 1.4 The objectives of the SG are to:
 - (a) continuously strengthen the impact and relevance of the ABSF through material issue examination and robust annual reporting; and
 - (b) communicate Australian beef sustainability credentials on the domestic and global stage, ensuring a science-based objective representation of material topics to the industry.

2 Role and responsibilities of the SG

- 2.1 The role of the SG is to provide advice and make recommendations to the ABSF Advisory Board on the:
 - (a) design, development, and delivery of the ABSF;
 - (b) development and delivery of the strategic and operational plan for the ABSF;
 - (c) delivery of outputs, ensuring achievement of the ABSF's desired outcomes;
 - (d) priority areas for sustainability research, development and adoption (RDA) activities to drive and measure progress in material sustainability areas, as guided by the ABSF strategic plan;
 - (e) outcomes of the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (**GRSB**) meetings and other sustainability conferences;
 - (f) communications and engagement plan for approval;
 - (g) ABSF Annual Updates for approval; and
 - (h) other issues relating to the ABSF as the SG and Advisory Board considers appropriate.
- 2.2 The role of MLA is to support the ABSF and the SG by providing:
 - (a) Ongoing resources including, but not limited to, secretariat services and unique website, newsletter and social media maintenance;
 - (b) Consultation with and access to relevant expertise, information and data;
 - (c) Provision of an annual budget for approved project work, including materiality studies, meeting and event support, sitting fees and expenses, and any relevant RDA activities; and

(d) Procurement and project management of RDA activities in accordance with MLA Policy.

2.3 The role of AMPC is to support the ABSF and the SG by providing:

- (a) Consultation with and access to relevant expertise, information and data;
- (b) Provision of budget for approved project work; and
- (c) Procurement and project management of RDA activities in accordance with AMPC Policy.

3 Membership

3.1 The SG must comprise of a Chair plus a minimum of seven (7) Members, up to a maximum of nine (9) Members, which represent various sectors of the beef supply chain, including grass-fed production, lot feeding and processing. The SG Chair must have knowledge of environmental, social and governance reporting frameworks and experience in the beef value chain.

3.2 One (1) observer from each PIB is able to attend SG meetings, with the purpose of providing a formal communication conduit between the SG and PIBs. These observers are appointed by the relevant PIB and do not have voting rights.

3.3 The role of a Member is to:

- (a) Use their experience, skills, and knowledge of specific topics or sectors to support the continuous improvement of the ABSF;
- (b) Represent relevant parts of the value chain, state or region in which they are active with regards to matters relating to the ABSF;
- (c) Assist in developing Consultative Committee and Industry Forum agendas;
- (d) Review and recommend ABSF Annual Updates to be approved by ABSF Advisory Board;
- (e) Identify priority areas for sustainability;
- (f) Endorse terms of references for any relevant project work;
- (g) Review and comment on relevant final project reports of MLA and AMPC concerning RDA activities relating to the ABSF;
- (h) Attend working groups for the GRSB, and other sustainability forums as nominated by the SG Chair; and
- (i) Develop and recommend indicators aligned with domestic and international sustainability reporting standards to the ABSF Advisory Board.

3.4 The role of the SG Chair, in addition to items listed in 3.3, is to:

- (a) Lead the SG to ensure sound administration and delivery of the ABSF;
- (b) Effectively manage the SG's activities and report its advice and outcomes to the ABSF Advisory Board;
- (c) Facilitate events and present on the SG's activities to internal and external stakeholders;
- (d) Be the primary spokesperson for the ABSF, in consultation with the ABSF Advisory Board;
- (e) Obtaining SG consensus for terms of reference for ABSF endorsed priorities. Represent the ABSF on the GRSB board of directors when elected (or appoint a proxy member to undertake these duties) and/or similar domestic and international conferences;

- (f) Nominate SG Members for GRSB working groups;
- (g) Approve digital, social and print media releases in alignment with the ABSF approved communications plan, in collaboration with MLA and AMPC, and inform the ABSF Advisory Board of upcoming external communications; and
- (h) Meet and report to the ABSF Advisory Board on a Quarterly basis or as required.

3.5 The collective expertise of Members must include:

- (a) ESG reporting;
- (b) Data confidence and objectivity, and scientific literacy;
- (c) Domestic and global markets and positioning;
- (d) Communications;
- (e) Beef cattle production and processing;
- (f) Knowledge of sustainability principles and experience relative to the industry sectors represented by CA, ALFA and AMIC; and
- (g) Sufficient representation of diversity and industry geography.

3.6 Attendance Policy

- (a) If a Member is absent for two consecutive meetings without first notifying the SG Chair, or if a Member is absent for three consecutive meetings having notified the SG Chair, that Member is in breach of their obligations and the SG Chair shall consult them to discuss this matter, and:
 - (i) If the Member's difficulties are resolvable, then the SG Chair shall attempt to resolve them; or
 - (ii) If no mutually satisfactory resolution is possible, and if the Member wishes to continue on the SG, then the Member's response will be put to the ABSF Advisory Board for determination at its next meeting.

4 Recruitment/Selection

- 4.1 The SG Chair and Members will be recruited via a call for Expressions of Interest or direct nomination by the ABSF Advisory Board.
- 4.2 The tenure for the SG Chair and Members will be 12 months, with a maximum of 3 consecutive terms.

5 Code of Conduct

- 5.1 In performing the duties and responsibilities of the SG, Members will:
 - (a) act in accordance with the terms set out in the Letter of Appointment;
 - (b) act in the best interests of the industry;
 - (c) have a duty of care and diligence in fulfilling their functions;
 - (d) treat all fellow stakeholders with courtesy and respect;
 - (e) be provided with well researched, complete, accurate and meaningful information in a timely manner prior to meetings;

- (f) be open and honest during discussions;
- (g) work constructively with all members towards achieving consensus on decisions;
- (h) not make improper use of information acquired as a member of the SG; and
- (i) not distribute confidential information acquired as a member of the SG outside the SG without the prior written consent from the ABSF Advisory Board.

6 Safety

- 6.1 Members of the SG must ensure that its activities comply with all applicable materials, food, product and consumer safety laws and regulations, all applicable occupational health and safety laws and regulations and all other applicable industry codes of practice and Australian Standards relating to safety.

7 Meetings

- 7.1 The SG must meet at least six (6) times each year or more frequently as required.
- 7.2 A quorum for SG meetings is at least 50% of Members, including the SG Chair.
- 7.3 The SG will endeavor to make decisions by consensus. If a consensus decision is not possible and a matter is voted on, a decision of the SG will be effective if passed by a vote of 75% of those members present and voting on the matter.
- 7.4 The SG may meet in person or by telephone or other means of audio or audio-visual communication, or any combination of these.
- 7.5 A representative from MLA and AMPC is entitled to attend and participate in the SG's meetings as an observer.
- 7.6 The SG may invite any other persons to attend and participate in meetings, as required.
- 7.7 The SG Chair and eligible members are entitled to sitting fees in accordance with MLA's sitting fee policy and reimbursement of expenses associated with membership of the SG (as described in the Letter of Appointment).

8 Conflict of interest

- 8.1 If, at any stage, a conflict of interest arises or appears likely to arise, the Member must:
- (a) notify SG Chair, MLA and AMPC representatives immediately in writing;
 - (b) make full disclosure of all relevant information relating to the conflict; and
 - (c) take such steps, as the SG Chair reasonably requires, to resolve or otherwise deal with the conflict.
- 8.2 The process for reporting and managing conflicts of interest will be a standing agenda item and emphasised at the start of each meeting.
- 8.3 At the commencement of each meeting, each member must declare (and provide sufficient details) if they have a conflict of interest or likely conflict of interest that may in any way impact the member's role in relation to any of the meeting agenda items.
- 8.4 If during a meeting, a conflict of interest, or likely conflict of interest is declared:
- (a) the SG Chair must record details of the conflict in the minutes of the meeting and the conflict register;

- (b) the declaring member must make full disclosure of all relevant information relating to the conflict;
- (c) the declaring member must take such steps, as the SG Chair reasonably requires, to resolve or otherwise deal with the conflict; and
- (d) the SG Chair must record the steps taken/required to resolve or otherwise deal with the conflict.

9 Anti-competitive conduct

- 9.1 Members of the SG must not engage in any collusion, anti-competitive or similar conduct with any other SG member or person. This includes (but is not limited to) discussion between competitors or potential competitors of prices, bids, production plans, customers or suppliers or sharing confidential or competitively sensitive information.

10 Access to information and advice

- 10.1 The SG may request information from MLA and AMPC as it considers necessary for the performance of its role and responsibilities.
- 10.2 The SG may obtain such other information and advice as it considers necessary for the performance of its role and responsibilities, subject to obtaining the prior approval of MLA and AMPC as to any costs to be incurred in obtaining that information or advice.

11 Reporting

- 11.1 The SG will arrange for minutes of its meetings to be prepared by the MLA secretariat and will provide the ABSF Advisory Board, MLA and AMPC with copies of them following each meeting.
- 11.2 When providing any advice or recommendation in accordance with these TORs, the SG will:
- (a) provide information and material substantiating the advice or recommendation;
 - (b) provide any other information requested by the party receiving the advice or recommendation; and
 - (c) if the advice or recommendation did not result from a consensus decision, provide details of SG voting on the matter.
- 11.3 Any media enquiries received by SG members should be conveyed to the SG Chair and SG Secretariat, who will notify the ABSF Advisory Board and relevant MLA and AMPC staff as required.

12 SG Secretariat

- 12.1 MLA will provide secretariat support to the SG as required.

13 TOR Review

- 13.1 The ABSF Advisory Board may review these TORs from time to time to keep them up to date and consistent with the SG's role and advice. The ABSF Advisory Board will notify MLA, AMPC and each Member of the SG of any changes to these TORs.