

# AUSTRALIAN BEEF SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK (ABSF) - SUSTAINABILITY STEERING GROUP (SSG) *TERMS OF REFERENCE V3 AS OF 8 JUNE 2020*

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2014, the Australian beef industry was consulted on how to improve transparency of the industry and report across the broad areas of sustainability at an industry level. In 2015, the industry made the decision for the Red Meat Advisory Council (RMAC) to lead the development of a beef sustainability framework. This resulted in an industry wide social license review being undertaken. In 2016, RMAC appointed the Sustainability Steering Group (SSG) to lead the development of the first sustainability framework. At the same time, an update of a materiality review, originally conducted in 2011, was undertaken.

The Australian Beef Sustainability Framework (ABSF) was officially launched in March 2017. Its design and launch recognises that today's consumer wants to know where their food comes from and how it was produced. Increasingly, major customers, investors, and other stakeholders also require information on production practices. Since the launch of the ABSF in 2017, the current SSG has driven its implementation through continued consultation, engagement with experts and ongoing review of industry activity and data aligned with the ABSF.

The ABSF is funded by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and project directed by the Peak Industry Councils (PICs) that compose RMAC. The SSG has had three independent chairs since its inception in 2016. Members are appointed by RMAC from across the beef supply chain to lead the implementation of the ABSF.

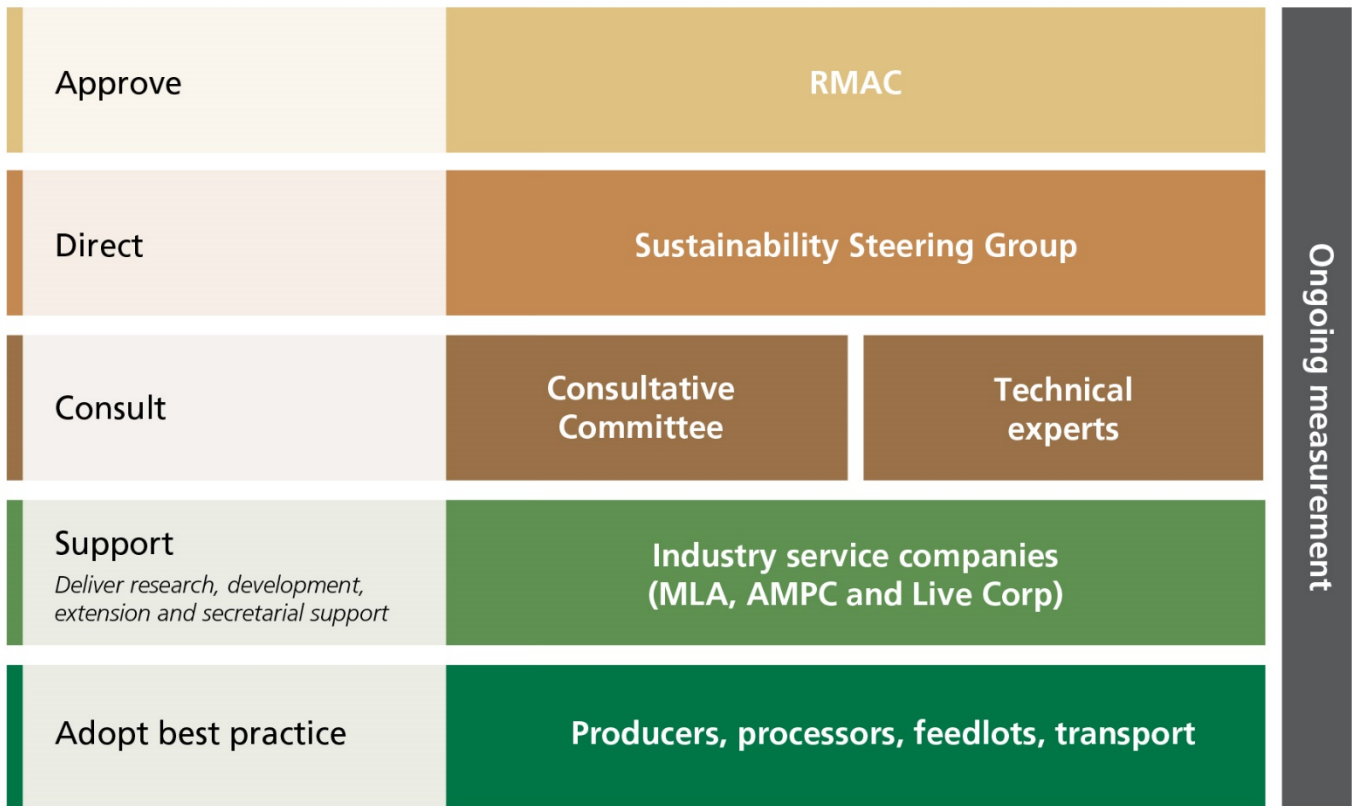
## **RELATIONSHIP TO RED MEAT 2030**

Red Meat 2030 (RM30) outlines a shared vision and direction for the Australian red meat and livestock industry over the next 10 years. It provides customers, consumers, and communities insight into the beef industry, and the proactive steps being taken to address global challenges.

The ABSF is a key indicator in RM30's environment, and customers, consumers, and community priorities. By advancing the ABSF and supporting adoption, the industry will demonstrate leadership in sustainability, delivering on community expectations in the areas of land, water, biodiversity, climate variability, and biosecurity.

## GOVERNANCE

The ABSF is an initiative of RMAC. For the purpose of governance, MLA acts as Project Manager in addition to the secretariat role.



## SCOPE OF THE SUSTAINABILITY STEERING GROUP

The SSG will develop and direct the implementation plan for the ABSF. They will lead the consultation program to ensure continued industry and external stakeholder support of the ABSF.

The boundaries of the ABSF are limited to issues over which the industry has direct influence and/or reasonable control. Outside of these areas of reasonable control are not within the scope of this process.

The scope comprises:

- Cattle farms
- Cattle feedlots
- Cattle transport
- Cattle live export
- Cattle processing

## SUSTAINABILITY STEERING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The SSG members are appointed based on their individual skills and expertise and their ability to operate strategically using a whole of industry lens. Members are not appointed as representatives of any bodies, companies or organisations. This ensures the SSG remains independent, objective, and non-partisan.

The SSG is appointed for a three-year term. The current term began December 2018. At this time the purpose, composition, role, and term of the group will be reviewed by RMAC. MLA will act as Secretariat to assist the SSG.

Group members are:

- Tess Herbert (Chair); Gundmain Pastoral Co, NSW
- Carl Duncan; Teys Australia, QLD
- Melinee Leather; Barfield Station, QLD
- Michael Maxwell; HFW, WA
- Kim McDougall; Harvest Road Beef, WA
- Stephen Moore; NAPCO, QLD
- Trevor Moore; NCMC, NSW
- Jenny O’Sullivan; Malabar Farm, VIC

## SUSTAINABILITY STEERING GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES



### The ABSF Annual Update

- To recommend priority areas industry should focus for the next 3-5-year period.
- To set and direct the implementation plan for the ABSF. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Identify and advise when expert groups are required to progress indicators
  - Identify the need for further exploration of adoption programs and advise appropriate industry rural research and development corporations
  - Identify activity gaps and collaboration opportunities and advise appropriate industry groups
  - Direct industry service companies on the development of priority data sets.
- Deliver the annual update on progress (May 2019, June 2020, May 2021), including:
  - Sourcing of data for indicators
  - Recommend case studies to relate the ABSF to all levels of industry
  - Source information for industry activities and progress
- Launch the annual update to industry through agreed events

### Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

- Set the communications strategy for the ABSF
- Oversee the framework website
- Become leaders, advocates, and spokespeople for the ABSF through events, media, and social media
- Through RMAC, keep the industry informed of progress of the ABSF
- Participate in the launch event of the annual update
- Oversee the establishment of the Consultative Committee and direct engagement with this group

### Meetings

- Attend up to six Face-to-face meetings per year, with the potential for videoconferencing to be utilised depending on circumstances
- Provide knowledge and expertise towards discussion items and actions identified in the agenda
- The schedule and location of meetings will be agreed to at the first SSG meeting for the year
- Meeting agendas and minutes will be provided and recorded by the secretariat and administrative support. Meeting agendas will be circulated in advance to all SSG members. Minutes will be distributed as soon as possible after each meeting
- Meeting will operate on a consensus basis

### Special Activities

- The group will be required to undertake special activities to ensure the integrity and continuance of the ABSF, as identified in the 10-Step Workplan for 2019-2021 developed by the SSG
- Produce annual workplan
- The scope of members' involvement in special activities will be determined on a case-by-case basis
- These activities may include:
  - Participation in targeted stakeholder interviews for materiality reviews
  - Participation in Expert Working Groups to undertake deep dives
  - Goal setting consultation for all ABSF priorities
  - Presenting to industry groups and stakeholders
- Provide written feedback about ABSF matters and action, and participate in teleconferences when required.

## **DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

Decisions will be taken by consensus. All decisions will comply with Australian laws and policies. The SSG will make decisions in the best interests of the beef cattle industry, and adhere to agreed decision making principles in all aspects of decision making. These principles are:

- **Relevance:** decisions and actions are important to customers, the Australian beef industry, and is within industry's scope of influence
- **Inclusive:** views of industry, customers, consumers, government, and community groups are valued and considered
- **Credible:** decisions are grounded in evidence. They can or have the potential to be monitored, measured, and managed
- **Practical:** decisions are realistic, allowing the industry to make changes that represent value in the value chain through continuous improvement
- **Transparency:** the SSG and industry can provide an open and honest picture of performance.

## **REVIEW**

These Terms of Reference are to be reviewed annually in conjunction with the work plan.

## **REMUNERATION**

Individual sitting fees for this SSG is set at \$400 per day. MLA will reimburse all reasonable travel expenses incurred for attending meetings upon receipt of a tax invoice with receipts. All claim invoices must be sent to MLA within 2 weeks of costs incurred.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY & CODE OF CONDUCT**

SSG members may receive confidential information of, or with respect to, MLA, RMAC, and other people. Members must only use such information in the proper performance of duties and must not use the information to gain advantage for themselves or someone else, or to cause detriment to anyone or any organisation. Members must maintain the confidentiality of such information and must not disclose such information to third parties without the prior permission of MLA or RMAC.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

All SSG members must declare any conflict of interest to the SSG at the commencement any meeting on matters pertaining to meeting agenda and will alert the group of any potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the meeting or action.