

Policy Title - Project Review Team – Terms of Reference

Version: 2	Approved by: CEO
Effective Date: 29 th March 2016	Administered by: Program Manager - Research
Review Date: 1 st January 2018	

Purpose

The Project Review Team (PRT) is a high level technical and advisory group that provides expert review of WaterRA project concepts and proposals, including recommendations to the WaterRA Board. The purpose of PRT review is to ensure due diligence and transparency for proposals seeking WaterRA funding or in-kind participation, prior to consideration by the WaterRA Board.

Membership

1. The membership of the PRT includes:
 - a. WaterRA CEO
 - b. WaterRA Research Program Staff
 - c. Up to 4 Industry member representatives
 - d. Up to 3 Research member representatives; and
 - e. In the case of a Solicited Request for Proposals call arising from the Community of Interest Process, up to 4 representatives from the Community of Interest. Representatives should represent the interests of those organisations providing funding for the Solicited RFP call.
2. The industry and research representatives on the PRT are rotated to ensure all industry and research members have an opportunity to participate on the Project Review Team. To ensure continuity, a staggered approach is taken to rotation of industry and research members by rotating up to half of the PRT every two years. This does not preclude team members from serving more than 1 term continuously. The PRT membership is ultimately determined by the WaterRA CEO.
3. WaterRA endeavours to ensure that the PRT is represented by members that cover the breadth of urban, regional and remote water issues at the national scale.
4. Members of the PRT must:
 - a. Understand the strategic implications and outcomes of projects presented for funding and ensure the requirements of WaterRA and its members are met
 - b. Have a broad understanding of project management issues and the approach being adopted so as to provide guidance to the project proponents and users of the project's outputs
 - c. Be impartial at all times and act in the best interest of WaterRA
 - d. Declare any potential conflicts of interests prior to making comments or voting on a project proposal (if eligible). For the purposes of the PRT, WaterRA defines a direct project interest (i.e. where the PRT Member is part of the project team or their work team comprises team members) and precludes members from voting in these circumstances (although the PRT Member may comment on the proposal after declaring their interest). PRT Members that have an indirect interest, as defined by their organisation having an



- involvement in the project, but not their work team, may vote on the proposal after declaring their organisational interest.
- e. Identify improvements to WaterRA research processes; and
 - f. Work together as a team to help WaterRA achieve its strategic objectives.

Functions

5. The PRT will assess Project Proposals against defined Project Selection Criteria and classify each of the Project Proposals into one of the following categories:
 - a. Project Proposals recommended to the WaterRA Board for approval to proceed.
 - b. Project Proposals recommended to the WaterRA Board for approval to proceed subject to clarification of minor points, but not requiring reconsideration by the PRT.
 - c. Project Proposals that require significant revision and/or further information prior to reconsideration by the PRT before a recommendation can be made to the WaterRA Board.
 - d. Project Proposals requiring external peer review and assessment of reviewer comments by the PRT before a recommendation can be made to the WaterRA Board.
 - e. Project Proposals that are not recommended for approval to proceed. These may include Project Proposals deemed not to comply with WaterRA Prioritisation criteria, and those which are considered to be poorly developed and not of adequate quality for assessment.
6. For Project Proposals falling into categories 5 a. or 5 b., the PRT will rank the proposals against the WaterRA Selection criteria. WaterRA staff will forward the PRT recommendations together with a summary of the PRT discussions to the WaterRA Board.
7. For Project Proposals falling into category 5 c., WaterRA staff will communicate issues and deficiencies identified by the PRT to the Project proponents and request submission of a revised Project Proposal or supplementary information addressing these points.
8. For Project Proposals falling into category 5 d., WaterRA staff will seek appropriate peer review of the Project Proposal and communicate the review outcomes to the PRT.
9. For Project Proposals falling into category 5 e., WaterRA staff will forward the PRT recommendations together with a summary of the PRT discussions to the WaterRA Board. Projects falling into this category may be revised and further developed by their proponents for resubmission at a future date.
10. The PRT may also provide advice on general issues relating to the WaterRA research program and relevant policies and procedures.

Meeting Procedures

11. The WaterRA CEO or delegate has the authority to call PRT meetings and the meeting duration will be dependent upon the number of project proposals that are under consideration.
12. The PRT may meet several times per year to consider project concepts. These meetings are generally held 2 weeks before a Board meeting to allow staff to prepare issues for Board decision. This timetable will be negotiated with the PRT.
13. Meetings are usually held via teleconference and/or email. Face-to-face meetings will be considered and arranged as required, including opportunities that bring PRT members together for other research related purposes.
14. Where PRT Members are requested to vote on a proposal via email without the opportunity to discuss the proposal at a meeting, no more than one PRT Member can lodge a 'dissenting' vote for the proposal to be recommended to go to Board for approval to proceed. More than half of the PRT Members (non-WaterRA staff) must vote for the recommendation to Board to be considered valid, except where they are prohibited to do so due to a direct conflict of interest.



15. WaterRA will provide secretariat support for meetings, including distribution of meeting papers and taking Minutes.
16. WaterRA will arrange for external experts, as required, to undertake independent peer reviews of project proposals at the request of the PRT.
17. WaterRA will circulate meeting papers including project proposals at least 5 working days prior to a PRT meeting to allow members enough time to assess the proposals against the selection criteria and document their assessment.

Approved

Paul Pretto
Chief Executive Officer

Date 29 March 2016

Function	Project Review Team (PRT)
Individual Project Assessment	Yes A core PRT function
Science Quality	Yes Assessed at project level for WaterRA funding consideration
Science Scope	Limited Assessment of Request For Proposal (RFP) documents
Science Communication	Limited Advice provided to WaterRA staff on effectiveness of project communication plans
Research Processes & Documentation	Yes Input and feedback on RFP scope & research processes provided to staff
Board Interaction	Limited Input restricted to 'Issue For Determination' Board papers on specific project recommendations for WaterRA funding consideration
Staff Interaction	Yes Advice given on project proposals and RFP documents