



# CHARTER OF OPERATIONS

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## **CONTENTS**

<b>1. BACKGROUND</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. PRE-REQUISITES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. STRUCTURE OF THE PARTICIPATORY PLANNING SYSTEM</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. REGIONAL BEEF RESEARCH COMMITTEES (RBRCS)</b>	<b>4</b>
4.1 FUNCTIONS OF RBRCS	
4.2 MEMBERSHIP OF RBRCS	
4.3 RBRC CHAIRS	
4.4 RBRCS - SECRETARIATS AND COSTS	
4.5 MEETING FREQUENCY	
4.6 REPORTING	
<b>5. NORTH AUSTRALIA BEEF RESEARCH COUNCIL (NABRC)</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1 FUNCTIONS OF NABRC (INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING)	
5.2 MEMBERSHIP OF NABRC	
5.3 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR	
5.4 NABRC CHAIR/DEPUTY CHAIR	
5.5 SECRETARIAT	
5.6 NABRC OPERATING COSTS	
5.7 MEETING FREQUENCY	
5.8 REPORTING	
<b>6. TRAINING</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>	<b>9</b>
7.1 MEMBERSHIP OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	
7.2 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR	
<b>8.0 REVIEW</b>	<b>10</b>



## 1. BACKGROUND

Throughout this document, research is used in its broadest context and includes research, development, extension, education and training (RDEET). The northern beef industry needs to be innovative to ensure a bright future for the industry, its participants and the regions in which it operates.

The North Australia Beef Research Council (NABRC) aims to drive innovation for the northern beef industry using the operational guidelines detailed in this document. A continuing key function for NABRC is to provide an efficient and effective mechanism for productive interaction and networking, and development of professional relationships within and between the following industry sectors:

- providers of research services (State Departments, CSIRO, Universities, CRCs and other groups);
- funders of research (Commonwealth and State sources, Rural Industry Research Funders (RIRFs), other groups); and
- end-users of the research (beef producers, transporters, processors and traders).

The major questions, however remain to be answered on a cyclical basis, in an ever more complex and competitive environment.

- What research is needed?
- What are the relative priorities for the various research areas?
- How should the existing resources be deployed to maximise the potential benefit to the beef industry in both the short and long term?
- How should research best be done in the most efficient and effective manner?
- How can we optimise industry learning and adoption?
- How formal mechanisms to monitor and facilitate progress in the research effort might be employed?
- What are the education, training and wider learning needs in the various sectors?
- How do we improve participation of more “grass roots” producers at the local industry level in the R&D and learning process?

This Charter presents a structure and functions to provide the necessary ingredients to develop relevant strategic plans for research for the north Australia beef industry at the regional and north Australian scales. In addition it incorporates the needs recognised at the ‘grass roots’ level in the major beef producing regions of north Australia, prioritising these needs in a rational, explainable and acceptable framework.

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## 2. PRE-REQUISITES

These include recognition of the following:

- A participatory planning approach will be used to identify 'grass roots' attitudes and opinions of all the participants.
- The research needs of the north Australia beef industry are a collection of the research needs of the major beef producing regions of north Australia.
- That needs have to be translated into viable research opportunities that are incorporated into better integrated, strategic activities.
- The need to identify priorities within regional, State and National perspectives.
- There must be a commitment by the participating organisations to the principles and aims of the Regional Beef Research Committees (RBRCs) and NABRC.

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## 3. STRUCTURE OF THE PARTICIPATORY PLANNING SYSTEM

As the beef industry is strongly affected by regional factors, the participatory planning system must be structured by regions. Ideally, regions will reflect areas of differing beef production potential.

There are six regions in Queensland, with three regions in the Northern Territory, and two in Western Australia. The boundaries of these regions should be reviewed and changed as necessary, to reflect any changes in productions systems, sociology or jurisdictional arrangements, or to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of NABRC in general.

There are currently 11 major beef producing regions of north Australia, which have both geographical and administrative identities.

1. Kimberley (Western Australia)
2. Pilbara (Western Australia)
3. Katherine (Northern Territory)
4. Barkly (Northern Territory)
5. Central Australia (Northern Territory)
6. North Queensland
7. Central Queensland
8. South Queensland
9. South East Queensland
10. West Queensland
11. North West Queensland

Each of these regions is represented by an RBRC: eg north Queensland by the North Queensland Regional Beef Research Committee (NQRBC); Katherine by the Katherine Pastoral Industry Advisory Committee (KPIAC).



For regional issues, the RBRCs are the bodies with whom the participatory organisations would be expected to interact. For broader and national issues, the equivalent body would be NABRC. Regional Committee members and Council members will facilitate input at all levels and stages of development of the strategic plan by all interested parties including users, providers, funders and trainers. Each RBRC is represented on the Council by a producer member, and RBRCs are urged to have continuity in representation to increase the efficiency of NABRC operations.

This structure provides the essential opportunities for 'grass roots' involvement in the identification of needs and problems, and participation in the analysis and discussion on relative priorities and resource allocation.

Council members are responsible for communicating the outcomes of NABRC and the RBRCs to their various industry and research organisations. Strategies involving support of other Council members or structures in achieving this will vary on a case-by-case basis, but should be used where possible and productive.

The structure facilitates a true participatory planning approach through which all participating organisations share in the decisions and therefore have confidence in, and a commitment to, the outcomes. The participating organisations also have a far better understanding of the pressures and responsibilities of other member organisations.

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## **4. REGIONAL BEEF RESEARCH COMMITTEES (RBRC)**

### **4.1 FUNCTIONS OF RBRC**

1. To undertake a five-yearly strategic planning process for RDEET in the beef industry in the region.
2. To identify problems and needs, and opportunities that may be solved by research, development, extension, education and training, and assess the relative importance of these and the potential benefits to the region.

In the development of regional strategic plans and regional research needs and opportunities, committees should consider and develop strategies to manage the following functions as appropriate:

- To encourage a participative approach in the development and conduct of research carried out in the region.
- To recommend research portfolio distribution at a regional level across providers as an efficient integrated strategy.
- In particular circumstances, to assess the resources required for research, and recommend ways in which these may be acquired.
- To ensure appropriate consideration of the likely impact of any new technology on the local environment in both the short- and long-term.
- To facilitate the dissemination of research results to the region and to provide feedback on the adoption of new technologies.
- To provide input to participating organisations to assist with the development and review of their strategic plans.
- To provide input to assist the development of project proposals when necessary.
- To encourage appropriate training for individual RBRC members and/or the RBRC as a group.
- To report to NABRC on achievements against these functions and objectives.



- To raise awareness of the RBRCs and NABRC amongst producers and RD&E agencies at the regional level.
- To provide feedback on issues raised at NABRC to RBRC members and other interested people.

## 4.2 MEMBERSHIP OF RBRC

The membership of each RBRC should be appropriate to the needs and circumstances existing in the region. The membership provides for majority representation of the industry sector, which is in keeping with the industry focus and the basic philosophy of the participatory planning approach.

Core members		Additional members (at the discretion of the core group)	
Beef Producers (*)	up to 6	Other relevant regional groups eg NRM	1
Processors/Marketers	up to 2	Department of Natural Resources	1
CSIRO	1	Australian Live Exporters' Council	1
State Departments of Ag/Primary Industries	2	Australian Lot Feeders Association	1
Universities	1		
(*) Producers are to be selected on their geographic location and skills. Producers with cross-membership of other regional groups would aid in improving linkages and communication within the region.			

Members are elected for a term of three years or a term prescribed by a State/Territory jurisdiction with a maximum of two terms or longer if approved by the Committee. In addition, **Invited Observers** may be included at the discretion of the core group. Invited observers could include representatives of Meat & Livestock Australia, Finance and/or Agribusiness sectors, other Rural Industry Research Funders, or producer groups such as Landcare or Beef Improvement Association.

Producer members of RBRCs (up to a maximum of six) are paid a sitting fee for attendance at meetings. In addition, RBRC Chairs are paid a sitting fee to attend NABRC meetings.

People are members of RBRCs because they:

- are interested and enthusiastic about the future of the industry and their region,
- are open to change, challenge, learning and innovation,
- enjoy working in a team with people of varying ages, gender, personalities and interests, and
- enjoy working strategically to achieve regional and north Australian beef industry goals and objectives.

Where possible and/or appropriate, vacant positions should be advertised and nominations reviewed by a selection sub-committee before being ratified by the committee.

## 4.3 RBRC CHAIRS

- The Chair must be a producer member of an RBRC. Chairs are elected for a term of three years or a term otherwise prescribed by a State/Territory jurisdiction subject to the committee's confirmation at an RBRC meeting.
- All RBRC Chairs shall be ineligible to complete more than two consecutive three year terms unless approved by the committee.
- If an RBRC Chair is unable to carry out his or her duties, then a Deputy RBRC Chair should represent him or her.
- RBRCs should have a succession plan in place to ensure a smooth transition between Chairs.



- RBRC Chairs should be accountable for the functions of the RBRC as set out in the Charter of Operations, and report regularly to NABRC on achievements against the stated functions.

If an RBRC Chair becomes vacant, a selection committee comprising one producer, one other member of the RBRC and the Chair of NABRC will call for nominations for the position from the producer members of the RBRC. If a suitable candidate is not available from within the current producer membership, the position may be advertised externally.

#### **4.4 RBRC - SECRETARIATS AND COSTS**

The secretariat for each RBRC will be provided by the relevant Regional State/Territory Department Office unless the relevant RBRC and the Management Committee agree to another arrangement. Where possible, there should be some rotation of secretarial responsibilities among available personnel. Ideally, the secretariat position should be held for a maximum of two consecutive three year terms.

Non-producer representatives or their organisations are responsible for their own attendance costs. This involves CSIRO, Universities and State Departments. Producer members' travel and accommodation will be paid with the NT and WA members claiming from their State/Territory

Departments and Queensland members being paid through a reimbursement system administered by the NABRC secretariat, and funded through the QDPI, CSIRO and MLA.

#### **4.5 MEETING FREQUENCY**

RBRCs should meet at least twice per year with additional meetings at the discretion of each RBRC.

Meetings can be face-to-face, via teleconference or by other means appropriate to each RBRC.

#### **4.6 REPORTING**

RBRC Chairs or their representative shall report on activities to each NABRC meeting.

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## **5. NORTH AUSTRALIA BEEF RESEARCH COUNCIL (NABRC)**

This Council is the collective representation of the RBRCs, R&D providers and funders, which consolidates and supports the planning and prioritising activities of the RBRCs and collates them into a perspective that reflects State and National objectives.

### **5.1 FUNCTIONS OF NABRC (INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING)**

- To provide an efficient and effective mechanism for productive interaction and networking, and development of professional relationships within and between industry sectors.
- To collate the outputs from RBRCs and to develop a statement of issues, priorities and objectives, including an analysis of resource needs for research for the north Australia beef industry.
- To operate strategically to a five (5) year strategic planning cycle.
- To facilitate the acquisition of the necessary resources to achieve the stated objectives.
- To promote the research needs of the beef industry.
- To continually improve the process of R&D planning and management in the north Australian beef industry.



- To liaise with appropriate bodies responsible for external funding of research.
- To consult with other influential committees and bodies relevant to the beef industry.
- To receive reports from RBRCs and to interact with them.
- To be a focal point for expert opinion on research needs for the north Australia beef industry.
- To commission appropriate reviews of north Australia beef research programs and projects
- To influence decision-making in all areas that affect beef research including decisions about the implementation of the findings.
- To promote education and training courses in research prioritisation, project management and assessment etc, to enhance the overall research effort and to maximise the benefits from the participatory planning process.
- To commission special studies to assist it to achieve its objectives.
- Develop and foster effective networks between R,D&E funders and providers, the beef industry and other key stakeholders.
- Substantially influence and guide the future direction of R & D for the Northern beef industry and to manage change through modern extension and learning methods.
- Monitor the performance of the RBRCs and provide guidance on ways to improve their functioning and effectiveness.
- Grow, or at least maintain, the resources necessary for operation of the RBRCs and NABRC.

## 5.2 MEMBERSHIP OF NABRC

Core members			
Chair	1	RBRC producers Chairs or their nominee	11
Queensland Department of Agriculture Forest and Fisheries (QDAFF)	1	Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries (NTDPIF)	1
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Western Australia (DAFWA)	1	Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA)	1
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	1	University of Queensland/ Queensland Animal Agriculture and Fibre Institute (UQ/QAAFI)	1
James Cook University (JCU)	1	Central Queensland University (CQU)	1
University of Western Australia (UWA)	1	AgForce Queensland (AgForce)	1
Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association (NTCA)	1	Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen’s Association (KPCA)	1
In addition, <b>Invited Observers</b> may be included at the discretion of the core group.			

## 5.3 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The position of Chair should be advertised and a panel (dominated by industry but including provider representatives) should conduct interviews etc to identify a candidate who meets the agreed selection criteria. The NABRC Management Committee is responsible for considering the panel’s recommendations and making the final selection and appointment. The NABRC Chairman is to be appointed for a term of three years (3) and is ineligible to complete more than two consecutive three (3) year terms.



The NABRC Management Committee (without the Chairman) is to conduct an annual performance appraisal of the NABRC Chair and submit a recommendation for reappointment to the Council at the Annual General Meeting.

If the Chair is unable to carry out his duties then he is to be represented by the Deputy Chair depending on current issues and their availability. If the Chair and Deputy Chair are unavailable, then Regional Chairs will be asked to deputise.

#### **5.4 NABRC CHAIR/DEPUTY CHAIR**

The Chair of NABRC is expected to:

- play an influential RD&E leadership role, providing vision, flair and pragmatic industry leadership, and working with a wide cross-section of the North Australian and National beef industry;
- communicate widely about RDEET capacity, needs and opportunities in North Australia;
- Deputy Chair – The Chair of the Management Committee will be the Deputy Chair of NABRC and will support the NABRC Chair in these roles.

#### **5.5 SECRETARIAT**

A part-time Secretariat with full office facilities is to operate under contractual arrangements. The Secretariat's primary responsibility is to provide effective, timely and professional administrative and secretarial services to the Council Chair, the Council, and RBRCs as directed.

The Council Chair is responsible for overseeing operation and efficiency of the Secretariat. Operating costs and performance of the Secretariat are to be reviewed by the Management Committee.

#### **5.6 NABRC OPERATING COSTS**

Funding to cover Council and Secretariat operating costs are sourced from the following stakeholders with funding levels determined by each stakeholder's level of involvement in NABRC or their relevance to beef industry research:

- State Departments (Agriculture/Primary Industries/Natural Resources/Environment)
- CSIRO
- Universities
- Beef Producers, Processors and Industry Organisations
- Meat and Livestock Australia and other Rural Industry Research Funders

The Management Committee is responsible for assessing the level of funding required and developing an annual income and expenditure budget.

#### **5.7 MEETING FREQUENCY**

The Council meets twice per year, or more frequently if required.

#### **5.8 REPORTING**

The Council will report to each meeting on its activities, expenditure and any other issues deemed relevant. An auditor is to be appointed annually.

## 6. TRAINING

To maximise the performance of both the RBRCs and the Council, NABRC is to ensure that suitable training is available for Council and RBRC members and prospective members. It is important that this training is relevant for the current and changing needs of the Council and RBRCs. The training should build capacity within the regions, contribute to continuity of membership, and succession planning.

## 7. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The role of the Management Committee is to:

- Oversee the preparation of the annual budget and make recommendations on income and expenditure at the Council’s Annual General Meeting.
- Carry out an annual performance appraisal of the Council Chair and submit a recommendation for reappointment to the Council at its Annual General Meeting.
- Annually review the Council’s funding base and make recommendations on the level of the member’s financial commitment.

### 7.1 MEMBERSHIP OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Members of the Management Committee will be appointed annually from the council members.

Management Committee Members	
RBRC Producer Chairs	2
Representatives of each of the State Departments of Ag/Primary Industries	3
Representative of research organisations (eg CSIRO)	1
Representative of the Universities	1
Representative of MLA	1
Chair of NABRC (ex officio)	
Secretariat (ex officio)	

### 7.2 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Chair of the Management Committee will be appointed annually from the elected members of the committee. Responsibilities of the Chair of the Management Committee include:

- Ensuring that the Committee conducts an annual performance appraisal of the NABRC Chair, and submitting a recommendation for reappointment to the Council at the Annual General Meeting.
- Ensuring that the Committee meets at least twice a year either in person or via teleconference to address budgets and any other financial matters before the Council.
- Overseeing the preparation and financial reporting of NABRC’s financial accounts.



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## 8.0 REVIEW

The structure, functions and achievements of the RBRCs and the Council should be subject to a major review every five years.