1. Introduction

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World’s Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention) was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in Paris on 16 November 1972. The World Heritage Convention came into force in 1975. The World Heritage Convention promotes cooperation among nations, in order to identify and protect heritage that is of Outstanding Universal Value and ensure its conservation for current and future generations.

In August 1974, Australia ratified the Convention. The Riversleigh portion of Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park, together with Naracoorte Caves National Park, were jointly added to the World Heritage List as the Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (Riversleigh/Naracoorte) in 1994. The Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (AFMS) inscription was based on outstanding natural heritage values, representing major stages in the earth’s history, and outstanding representation of significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development, particularly, of terrestrial and freshwater communities of plants and animals. The Riversleigh component of the Australian Fossil Mammal Sites World Heritage property has produced some of the world’s most outstanding fossils, not only in their preservation, but also in their quantity and diversity. It is the richest fossil mammal deposit in Australia and few, if any, other fossil deposits in the world have so contributed to our knowledge of prehistoric mammal communities.

Day to day management and protection of the World Heritage property is carried out under the provisions of the Nature Conservation Act 1992. Australia’s World Heritage properties are protected under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). World Heritage properties are recognized as a matter of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act’s assessment and approval provisions.

Riversleigh has one advisory committee, the Riversleigh Community and Scientific Advisory Committee (RCSAC). The RCSAC and the Riversleigh Executive Officer are funded by the Australian Government and administered by the Queensland Government as articulated in the Australian World Heritage Intergovernmental Agreement and the Australian Government World Heritage Grant Funding Agreement.
The day-to-day management of Riversleigh AFMS is the responsibility of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), whilst the strategic management and policy is the responsibility of the World Heritage Management Unit, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP).

2. **Purpose of the Riversleigh Community and Scientific Advisory Committee**

The purpose of the advisory committee, as outlined in the Australian Government World Heritage Grant Funding Agreement, is to provide advice to the management agencies and the State and Australian Government Ministers responsible for World Heritage on matters relating to:

- The identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the natural and cultural heritage of the Riversleigh section of the Australian Fossil Mammal Sites from the viewpoint of the community
- The identification of research priorities which will contribute particularly to the protection and conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property
- New information or developments relevant to protection, conservation or presentation of the property
- Input into the presentation of World Heritage Periodic Reports, Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value and State of the Conservation reports
- The scientific basis of management principles and practices

The AWHIN considers national and cross-cutting issues relevant to World Heritage properties in Australia from the Traditional Owner perspective. This includes advice on the review and implementation of Riversleigh WH plans, strategies or management issues which impact on communities.

The Committee does not formally ‘vote’ on issues, but may indicate to management that recommendations are unanimous, or represent a majority view. When committee members have dissenting or divergent views, the various viewpoints should be identified and conveyed to management. It is up to the RCSAC Chair and the members to ensure the minutes of meetings accurately reflect the Committee’s viewpoint. At times this may involve a ‘show of hands’ on an issue but this will be seen by the management agency as a guide rather than a vote. In this way the management agency becomes aware of divergent or minority views.

The Committee should function as more than just a sounding board on issues. Members should use their best endeavors to understand other points of view and try to move issues in the direction of a consensus outcome, or at least identify in the first instance the aspects of issues which prevent a consensus outcome.

As membership of the Committee is on an honorary basis, the Australian and Queensland Governments are appreciative of any time commitments made by members. Although no minimum time commitments are set, it is expected that Committee members will attach a priority to attending Committee meetings and allocating appropriate preparation time for reading of agenda papers etc.

Committee members are not expected to be ambassadors for the Riversleigh section of AFMS or its management, although individual members may elect to assume this role in their own sectors of representation.

Members at their own discretion can also function as information providers to their sectors of representation on Riversleigh World Heritage issues. At times there may be a conflict
between providing information to the community and respecting the confidentiality of some of the information provided to the RCSAC. It is the responsibility of members to identify such conflicts and seek direction, either during Committee meetings or through the Riversleigh Executive Officer.

Only the RCSAC Chair has the authority to make statements on behalf of the Committee.

3. **Membership**

Membership of the Committee primarily reflects broad sectors of community interest relevant to the Riversleigh section. These will include up to 11 representatives chosen from the following sectors: Waanyi Traditional Owners, palaeontology (or other research relevant to Riversleigh), outback tourism, local government, tour operators, natural resource management, and local community including neighbours.

An independent Chair will also be appointed in addition to the 11 representatives. The Chair is an independent, non-government person, with no current direct financial or political vested interest in the way in which Riversleigh is managed.

Consideration should also been given to gender balance and other equity issues within the Committee. It is not intended that members be ‘representative’ in the strict sense of the word. Rather it is intended that members will be broadly across the issues relevant to their sector of representation and thus able to provide informed advice.

Australian and Queensland Government observers may attend meetings with the agreement of the Chair. Other guests, observers and specialist advisers may be invited to attend and to provide advice.

The Executive Officer for Riversleigh will provide administrative and technical support at the RCSAC meetings.

The Chair of RCSAC may also represent Riversleigh on the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC), which will consider national and cross-cutting issues relevant to all World Heritage properties in Australia.

Two Waanyi Traditional Owner members (male and female) may also represent Riversleigh on the Australian World Heritage Indigenous Network (AWHIN).

4. **Appointment of Members**

Members shall be appointed by the Queensland Minister who is responsible for World Heritage.

The independent Chair will be selected with the agreement of both the State and Australian Government Ministers responsible for World Heritage.

Expressions of interest for new Committee members will be publicly advertised.

Nominations will be encouraged from individuals who have a capacity to provide multiple levels of advice to the Committee or from nominees who might offer a high level of advice from a particular sector. Similarly, individuals nominating for the Committee will be encouraged to seek endorsements from as many relevant organisations as possible.
New membership selection will also be mindful of the RCSAC's corporate memory and may give additional consideration to ensuring some continuity of membership between the outgoing and incoming committees.

5. **Term of Appointment**

Members are appointed for a three year period. Members may resign at any time they feel unable to offer informed advice regarding their nominated sector of representation. Members will be eligible for reappointment in another term.

The Chair is appointed for a three year period. The Chair may resign at any time they feel unable to offer informed and independent advice. The Chair will be eligible for reappointment in another term.

6. **Meeting Attendance**

Members are strongly encouraged to attend all meetings.

A member unable to attend a meeting may seek approval from the Chair for a stand-in to represent his/her interests at the meeting. This request should be in writing and should explain the reasons for non-attendance and identify a preferred stand-in. A proxy cannot attend more than two meetings in any term.

Membership of the Committee will lapse if a member fails to attend two consecutive meetings without valid reasons acceptable to the Director, Strategic Environmental Programs, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and/or the Chair.

If the Chair is not present at a meeting of the Committee, the members present will elect one of their members to preside at the meeting.

7. **Termination**

Other than by resignation, termination of membership of the RCSAC shall be by the Queensland Minister responsible for World Heritage and, in the case of the Chair, by both the State and Australian Government Ministers responsible for World Heritage.

Grounds for termination include:
- Unauthorised representation of the Committee
- Misconduct and inappropriate behavior
- Misuse of any information provided for the operation, deliberation and decision-making process of the Committee
- Breach of confidentiality
- Other reason at the discretion of the Minister responsible for World Heritage.

8. **Meeting Cycle**

The Committee shall meet up to four times each financial year. An annual schedule of meetings will be made available at the first meeting of the RCSAC each year. A quorum shall be a simple majority of members.
1. **Roles and Responsibilities**

**Chair** is responsible for:
(a) chairing meetings in accordance with formal meeting protocols
(b) speaking on behalf of the Committee
(c) code of conduct at the meetings.

**Members** are responsible for:
(a) ensuring they fully represent the view of their respective sector
(b) endeavoring to reach a consensus view on issues discussed where possible
(c) ensuring outcomes of the Committee are conveyed to their respective sector and/or stakeholder group as appropriate
(d) following up on Committee actions as per the minutes
(e) maintaining confidentiality on identified sensitive issues.

**Executive Officer** is responsible for:
(a) assisting the Committee to operate in accordance with the principles and requirements of legislation, policies, strategies and guidelines appropriate to Australian Fossil Mammal Sites-Riversleigh World Heritage property
(b) assisting the committee to maintain a focus on addressing the requirements of the RCSAC
(c) coordinating committee meetings, ensuring an appropriate level of administrative support and processing payments
(d) dissemination of information to members and other relevant stakeholders
(e) providing the level of background information reasonably considered necessary to assist the members in their deliberations
(f) ensure relevant recommendations of the Committee are provided to the Minister/s.

2. **Agendas and Minutes**

The Riversleigh Executive Officer shall call for agenda items from members and the Chair, the QPWS Regional Director and Principal Ranger responsible for Riversleigh, and relevant officers within the World Heritage Management Unit of EHP, to identify specific matters on which the advice of the Committee is sought. The final agenda is to be approved by the Chair. The agenda will be distributed by the Riversleigh Executive Officer to members at least one week prior to the meeting and include agenda papers and all supporting documentation.

The Riversleigh Executive Officer will take the meeting minutes. Final minutes are to be approved by the Chair prior to distribution to members. At the following meeting, members may resolve to accept the minutes as a true and accurate record or accept with amendments.
All minutes shall be distributed to the Chair and members within 10 working days of the meeting and cc’d to the following:

1. Director, Natural Heritage, Department of the Environment (DoE)
2. Desk Officer for Riversleigh, Natural Heritage, (DoE)
3. Director responsible for World Heritage (EHP)
4. Manager, World Heritage Management (EHP)
5. Principal Ranger, Central Region (QPWS)
6. Principal Project Officer, World Heritage Management (EHP)

Minutes may also be made publicly available on the EHP, QPWS and/or DoE websites.

3. Committee Spokesperson

The Chair is the only authorised spokesperson on issues concerning the operations, deliberations and decisions of the Committee. No other member may act as the spokesperson for the Committee in a relation to a media inquiry on any committee matter.

Unauthorised and/or deliberate misrepresentation of the Committee is grounds for termination.

4. Reporting

The Committee will report to the State agency responsible for World Heritage through the Chair or post-meeting briefs prepared for the Committee by the Executive Officer. The Chair or Executive Officer will report back to the RCSAC on any decisions or other relevant matters made by the agency responsible for World Heritage.

The Chair may after each meeting convey to the Department responsible for World Heritage a report on the agenda items considered at the meeting. The report should include the Committee’s advice.

5. Committee Operating Expenses

The Riversleigh Executive Officer provides secretariat support to the Committee. This position is employed by EHP and is responsible for applying for Australian Government funding to cover the Riversleigh Executive Officer salary and Committee operating expenses.

In accordance with State Government policy, sitting fees will not be paid to Committee members. The Chair, in recognition of his/her extra work load, will be paid a sitting fee at the current State Government remuneration rate.

Costs of travel and living expenses associated with the attendance to meetings will be met at the standard State Government rate, or at rates approved by EHP. Members will be reimbursed the actual cost of meal expenses (excluding alcoholic beverages) not provided by the Queensland Government. The reimbursement of tax invoices for meals will be capped at the standard meal allowances as per the Queensland Government Domestic Travel and Relieving Directive (as of May 2016 the rates are: Breakfast- $21.15 Lunch- $24.20; Dinner-$41.65). Personal vehicle mileage claims and tax invoices for reimbursements should be provided to the Executive Officer within six weeks.

Members and chair are also entitled to an incidental allowance of $17.30 per overnight stay.
Invited guests, observers and specialist advisers attend at their own costs unless otherwise approved by the Manager, World Heritage Management, EHP.

6. **Code of Conduct**

All members are to act honestly and fairly and with respect and proper regard for the rights and obligations of others.

Members must abide by the following committee principles:
- Promotion of open discussion
- Recognition of respective roles and responsibilities of each member
- Management of issues in a consistent and effective manner.

7. **Fraud Awareness**

Members of the Committee are required to undertake Fraud Awareness training by reading a Fact Sheet provided by the Executive Officer and signing a Short Induction Checklist.

8. **Conflict of Interest**

A member of the Committee who has a direct or indirect conflict of interest in a matter being considered or about to be considered by the Committee shall, as soon as practicable after the relevant facts have become known to the member, disclose the nature of the member’s conflict of interest.

A disclosure of a conflict of interest (pecuniary or otherwise) shall be recorded in the minutes and the member shall not, unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson of the Committee, be present during any discussion with respect to that matter or contribute to or influence any advice the Committee may provide on that matter.

9. **Confidentiality**

All documents provided to members (except those normally available to the public) are to be considered by members as confidential working documents unless otherwise indicated.