

Consultation summary

Background

Industry consultation

The Peak Industry Councils for the cattle, sheep and goat industries are our industry representative organisations and play a critical role in providing direction and monitoring of industry marketing and research and development programs to MLA, to ensure they reflect the strategic framework of the red meat industry.

The Peak Industry Councils are:

- CA – Cattle Australia
- SPA – Sheep Producers Australia
- ALFA – Australian Lot Feeders' Association
- GICA – Goat Industry Council of Australia

MLA consults on how producer levies are invested

Decisions on levy investments, across all levy streams, are never made in isolation and MLA consults regularly with the peak industry councils on strategy, budget allocations and key performance indicators. The red meat industry provides MLA with advice on strategic direction for a wide range of programs including marketing, research, and development.

Regular consultation is a priority for MLA. The red meat industry Memorandum of Understanding specifies MLA's responsibility to develop a five-year business plan and an Annual Operating Plan in consultation with the peak industry councils.

Industry consultation arrangements

Livestock producers influence the investment of their levies through several industry consultation mechanisms and can do so through their State Farm Organisation or Peak Industry Council.

The [Red Meat Advisory Council](#) (RMAC) is the peak body that represents the collective interests of the Australian red meat industry.

RMAC is responsible for the development of [Red Meat 2030](#) (formerly known as the Meat Industry Strategic Plan, or MISIP) which provides the overarching strategic framework that enables the direction, measuring and reporting of overall industry progress for government and industry stakeholders.

Levy payers were consulted by RMAC during the development of the 10-year Red Meat 2030. The peak industry councils subsequently developed their own sector specific (grassfed cattle, feedlot, sheepmeat, goats, live export) industry plans.

MLA's five-year corporate planning is cascaded out of Red Meat 2030, industry strategic plans and Commonwealth national rural R&D priorities. MLA's five-year strategic plan is translated into annual investment plans that define MLA's marketing and research and development programs.

Examples of areas where consultation occurs include:

On planning and whole of red meat industry priority areas:

- [Red Meat 2030](#)
- [MLA Strategic Plan 2025](#)
- [MLA Annual Investment Plan](#)

On research and development:

- Research, development and adoption investment priorities
- The regional consultation model (NABRC, SALRC, WALRC)
- Sheep Genetics Advisory
- MSA Pathways
- Supply Chain Taskforce
- National Livestock Genetics Consortium
- BREEDPLAN Advisory Committee
- Beef and Sheep Genetics Technical Committee
- Producer Adoption Reference Group

On marketing and corporate affairs:

- Industry Corporate Affairs Taskforce
- Marketing and Market Access Taskforce

R&D consultation

MLA has implemented a regional consultation framework for directing research, development and adoption (RD&A) investment for grassfed cattle and sheepmeat levies. Producers can be involved through the regional councils of NABRC, SALRC and WALRC.

Introduction

MLA remains committed to effective and extensive consultation with our broad ranging stakeholder base with particular emphasis on levy paying producers' input into Research & Development priorities and programs.

The red meat industry and supply chains have changed and evolved since several consultation channels were established, including significant increases in live export and in lot feeding.

Many of the consultative committees were established in response to specific program and project needs which have changed. In line with these changes, MLA has reviewed how best to progress our consultation model to address the multiple components and touchpoints that cover all producers, and the whole supply chain.

With the lot feeding industry and goatmeat industry being more directly connected with their smaller number of constituents, the majority of our specific sector engagement is managed through those Peak Industry Councils.

MLA Strategic Plan 2025

Consultation with stakeholders was a critical component in the development of the MLA Strategic Plan 2025. Consultation included co-design workshops, one-on-one meetings and discussions with representatives from across the cattle, sheep and goat industry supply chains to explore their priorities and gather input into the MLA strategy. MLA shared our development process with levy payers, producers and other stakeholders through MLA's online communication channels and invited feedback on the emerging themes. The priorities, issues and outcomes from this consultation were considered in relation to MLA's purpose and formed a key input into the development of the plan.

Peak Industry Council Engagement Framework (detail in appendices)

MLA has implemented an engagement framework with the four production Peak Industry Councils (PICs) (Cattle Australia, Sheep Producers Australia, Australian Lot Feeders' Association and the Goat Industry Council of Australia). This framework provides the basis and support for PICs to consult with levy payers on industry needs and priorities for the sector. This information, as provided to MLA, in quarterly written reports and meetings and through other channels, informs MLA's investments across research, development, adoption and marketing. Peak Councils are also asked to communicate MLA priorities and key activities back to their sector.

Communication is managed by the Corporate Affairs and Media Manager for all production PICs.

Quarterly Consultation Updates with Peak Industry Councils and Research and Development Corporations (detail in appendices)

A quarterly meeting with the six red meat Peak Councils, AMPC and LiveCorp is held to present on MLA's quarterly performance and key activities, upcoming budgets and provides a platform for PICs

to present updates on the priorities and emerging issues of their sector. PIC consultation meetings are held quarterly with each of the individual production PICs. MLA's finance team also meet with each sector individually to discuss the budget for each levy stream.

To ensure regular communication and updates, weekly emails from MLA inform Cattle Australia, Sheep Producers Australia, Australian Lot Feeders' Association, Goat Industry Council of Australia as well as the Australian Meat Industry Council, Australian Meat Processors Corporation, Australian Livestock Exporters Council, LiveCorp and the Red Meat Advisory Council on MLA activities and outcomes and provide content to inform their members of MLA priorities.

Regional consultation model (detail in appendices)

MLA's [Regional Consultation](#) allows beef and sheepmeat producers to directly influence on-farm research, development, and adoption activities their levies are invested in. The process starts with any grassroots producer, who is encouraged to communicate with one of the 19 regional committees throughout Australia. These independent, producer-driven committees operate under three umbrellas: The North Australia Beef Research Council (NABRC), the Southern Australia Livestock Research Council (SALRC) and the Western Australia Livestock Research Council (WALRC).

The Regional consultation is overseen by the Red Meat Panel. This panel includes

- The independent Red Meat Panel chair
- The chairs from NABRC, SALRC and WALRC
- 2 producer members from each of NABRC, SALRC and WALRC
- 2 representatives from Sheep Producers Australia
- 2 representatives from Cattle Australia
- 1 representative from Meat and Livestock Australia

Program and project consultative committees

In 2020 MLA transitioned from a model where we consulted with more than 70 committees to a new Taskforce model. The new approach is designed to reduce duplication and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of this component of MLA's consultation.

Taskforce Model (detail in appendices)

The Taskforce model MLA has transitioned to provides a key mechanism for engaging with both the representative organisations and broader industry stakeholders. It provides a more efficient way of dealing with strategy and policy issues for Peak Industry Councils, provides expanded scope for strategic input and better connects stakeholders to MLA programs and projects. The Taskforces are aligned to the industry priorities outlined in Red Meat 2030.

Industry engagement

MLA runs and participates in numerous industry engagement activities each year which are now returning to face-to-face delivery after almost three years of virtual delivery. Examples include MLA hosted stakeholder events such as BeefUp and MeatUp forums, MSA Awards, MLA's annual Update series and AGM, beef industry breakfasts, cattle projections and sheep projections meetings, meeting with the Northern Pastoral Group, Red Meat Updates in Tasmania, Northern Territory Cattleman's Association conference, and senior MLA staff attending a range of industry-led events through the course of the year to speak and engage with producers and industry.

Australian Beef Sustainability Framework and Australian Sheep Sustainability Framework

The [Australian Beef Sustainability Framework \(ABSF\)](#) defines what 'sustainable beef production' looks like in practice and annually tracks how the industry is performing over a series of indicators. MLA provides funding and secretariat services for the ABSF.

A [Consultative Committee](#) including Australian and overseas retailers, banks, investors, environment and welfare non-government organisations, agribusiness, researchers, government, policy organisations and industry groups, meets twice a year and serves as a reference group for the Framework.

Sheep Producers Australia (SPA) and Wool Producers Australia (WPA) lead the [Sheep Sustainability Framework](#), with Australian Wool Innovation and MLA provide funding, strategic advice, and secretariat support. SPA and WPA have appointed a Sustainability Steering Group to lead the process. The framework will monitor and measure industry performance against priorities.

Appendices

1. Peak Industry Council engagement framework
2. Quarterly consultation cycle
3. Regional consultation and map
4. Taskforce model

Meat & Livestock Australia

Peak Industry Council engagement framework

August 2020

One of the guiding principles in MLA's 2025 Strategic Plan is that our strategy and programs undergo a constant cycle of review, refresh and inform that includes meaningful consultation with our stakeholders. MLA is committed to consultation with the Peak Industry Councils as representative organisations of their sectors of the red meat industry.

MLA echoes the sentiments and commitment of Minister Littleproud (11 June 2020) that well-resourced and high performing industry bodies are in everyone's best interests to bring value to the agricultural system, and we propose the following framework as an approach to working with our peak councils towards this outcome.

1. Purpose

This framework outlines the proposed guiding principles and establishes shared expectations of how MLA engages with Peak Industry Councils.

2. Duration

An annual plan for FY 2023-24, with progress to be reviewed quarterly against agreed measures of success and completion of milestones. There will be an option to extend the agreement for a further 12 months (FY2024-25) if mutually agreed.

3. Principles of engagement

Role of MLA

To foster the long-term prosperity of the Australian red meat and livestock industry, by collaborating with stakeholders to invest in research, development and marketing initiatives that contribute to producer profitability, sustainability, and global competitiveness.

Role of industry bodies in engaging with MLA

- a. Consult with levy payers on industry needs and priorities for the sector
- b. Provide guidance to ensure MLA strategy reflects industry needs and priorities
- c. Communicate to, and inform members and industry on MLA and industry priorities or outcomes
- d. Fostering collaborative and consultative work practices across the red meat supply chain.
- e. Peak Councils have no statutory role or oversight of the day-to-day operations of MLA. As referenced in the consultation cycle, MLA is committed to continued and regular engagement.
- f. The Peak Council role in the MoU is not statutory, it is to assess the performance of services delivered or arranged by MLA against Annual Investment Plans – as captured in the consultation cycle and the statutory reporting structure.

4. Shared behaviours

Clarity of purpose: Mutual understanding of required outcomes, resourcing, and responsibilities

Transparent: Honest, direct, open communication flow both ways between MLA and peak councils

Empathetic: Seek first to understand, listen to, and gain input from all parties

Mutual respect: Of agreed roles, agreed processes, and of stakeholder funding and the need to ensure the best allocation of resources to achieve outcomes

Collaborative: Leverage expertise and insights of all parties to ensure maximum impact and outcomes for the industry

Joint accountability: On time and in full delivery, with appropriate governance, on agreed timelines, milestones and projects and commitments

Responsive: Mutual intent to respond swiftly to contact.

Commercially focused: Focused on finding joint resolutions to matters that have positive outcomes for levy payers.

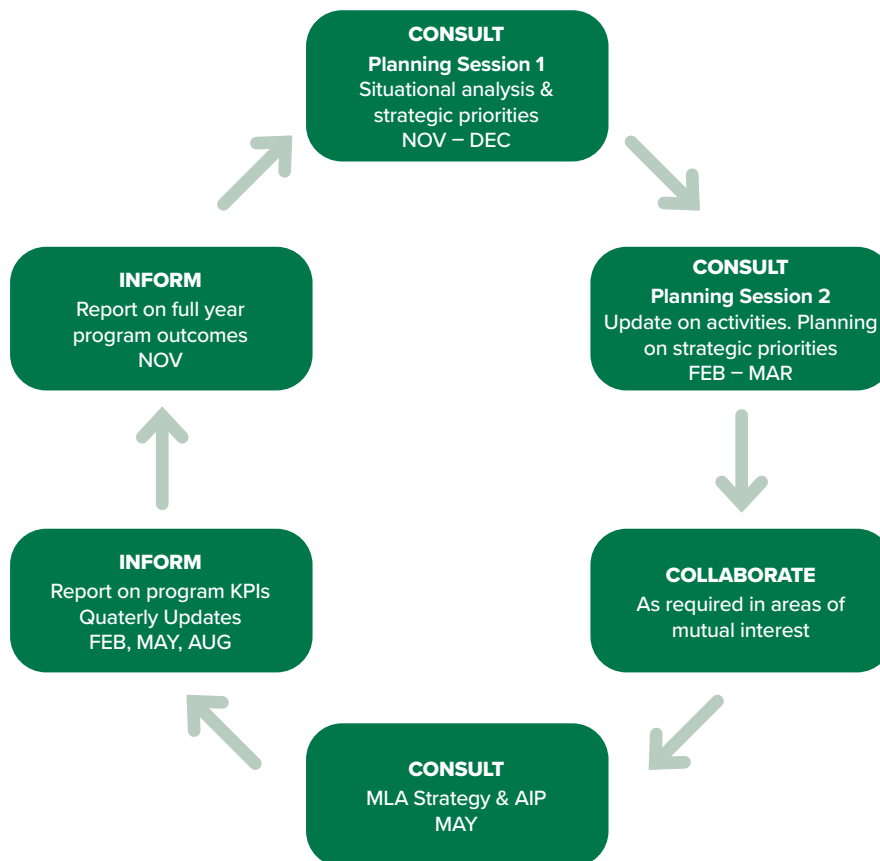
5. How we engage

MLA Key Contact – The key MLA contact for Peak Industry Councils is Brad Pfeffer, Corporate Affairs and Media Manager bpfeffer@mla.com.au.

- a. All requests for information, papers, speakers, and funding to be centralised via Brad. Requests will be triaged across key MLA staff as appropriate.

- b. Formal correspondence to the MLA Managing Director, Chair or General Managers to be copied to Brad.
- c. Direct Communication with MLA Program or Project Managers or other staff to be copied to Brad.

Annual cycle – MLA is committed to collaboration in a focused and structured way. An annual cycle is proposed that includes collaboration as required in areas of mutual interest.



6. Definitions

| | | |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Consult | <p>MLA ROLE: Provide an outline for discussion and input:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Industry challenges and opportunities ■ MLA strategic priorities <p>PIC ROLE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide feedback on industry challenges and opportunities, MLA strategic priorities | <p>OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ MLA strategy and programs have been developed taking into account industry priorities. |
| Collaborate | <p>MLA & PICs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clarify / agree on the problem to be solved or addressed ■ Share data, insights to identify challenges and opportunities ■ Agree on a course of action <p>MLA ROLE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implement the course of action and inform on progress <p>PIC ROLE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide feedback on implementation | <p>OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Direction of strategy and programs continue to meet industry priorities |
| Inform* | <p>MLA ROLE: Updates provided on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ MLA Strategy, AIP and program progress KPIs including joint programs ■ Market insights ■ Macro trends ■ Implications for industry ■ Draft or recommend communications to go to members <p>PIC ROLE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure all members are informed ■ Seek clarification where required | <p>OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stakeholders have a good understanding of the market environment, industry challenges, and MLA program progress, KPIs and results. ■ Solid platform from which to develop strategic priorities. |

*'Inform' activities will generally be shared through written reports rather than face-to-face meetings

7. Fee for service funding model - eligible activities

- All agreements are entered into directly with Peak Councils under a single annual agreement that details services to be provided, milestones, fees, and quarterly payment schedule for accountability and transparency.
- MLA and the Peak Councils conduct quarterly reviews of the annual service agreement to include:
 - Progress against annual plans
 - Successful achievement of service agreement milestones
 - Proposed variations to plans or contracts
- Fees for services provided replaced expenses and other payments previously paid across a range of programs, and with few exceptions are now the only payments to Peak Industry Councils.
- MLA funds four key areas under the service agreement
 - Consultation with Peak Industry Councils
 - Animal Health & Welfare Activities
 - Industry Leadership & Capability Building
 - Adoption of Research & Development Outcomes
- Separately, MLA also now funds a Corporate Affairs Unit, located with the PICs in Canberra and providing support in capacity building and issues and crisis management.

8. Consultation with Peak Industry Councils

MLA wishes to engage with Peak Councils so peak council representatives and their members are well informed and MLA has a forum to provide updates on MLA activities and industry priorities. Where necessary or appropriate, MLA will identify areas for consultation or collaboration.

The Peak Industry Council role is to provide consolidated feedback, in line with the Peak Council calendar of meetings (e.g., quarterly).

PIC representation on additional (non-PIC) committees

MLA funds PIC attendance at other committee/taskforce meetings only in line with the engagement principles/Terms of Reference of each committee.

Terms of Reference for each committee are consistent and align with MLA's policy of Payment of Expenses and Sitting Fees on MLA Committees.

MLA continually works with the Peak Councils to establish the most efficient and effective consultation process that allows communication of MLA information and constructive engagement with council/committees, nominees of the Peak Industry Councils and Peak Industry Council members.

9. Animal Health & Welfare

Activities to support animal health and welfare objectives as aligned with MLA animal health and welfare program, Red Meat 2030 and industry strategic plans.

10. Industry leadership & capability building

Engagement in a **corporate affairs unit** which is focused on capacity building, communications, and issues and crisis response. The unit is directly connected with the Peak Industry Councils on behalf of the red meat industry, funded by MLA with independent governance.

Training and capacity building of PIC staff and members is based on a prior agreed annual plan up to a maximum amount of funding defined in the agreement e.g., AICD, ARLP, Nuffield, formal or informal training or study, CA Rising Champions.

Participation in capacity building events e.g., TriLamb, Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, Five Nations Beef Alliance, BeefEx, Beef Australia, LambEx.

11. Adoption of Research & Development Outcomes

Activities to increase adoption in line with outcomes connected to MLA's strategic plan, and in line with MLA research based on a prior agreed annual plan up to a maximum amount of funding.

| Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>What: Annual Service Agreement progress review Who: MLA & Individual PIC CEOs When: October</p> <p>What: Quarterly Update Who: (All PICs and RDCs together) All PIC CEOs, PIC Councils, RDC CEOs, RDC Chairs, MLA MD and relevant General Managers When: November/December Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Report: MLA presents quarter 1 results, program KPIs and budget ■ Inform: MLA GMs present updates on key program activities, plans for next quarter/ remainder of FY against MLA strategic plan <p>Post-meeting Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PIC input considered for MLA AIP plans for next financial year ■ PICs disseminate information on key MLA program activities to key stakeholders and industry | <p>What: Annual Service Agreement progress review Who: MLA & Individual PIC CEOs When: January</p> <p>What: Quarterly Update Who: (All PICs and RDCs together) All PIC CEOs, PIC Councils, RDC CEOs, RDC Chairs, MLA MD and relevant General Managers When: Early February Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Report: MLA presents quarter 2 results, program KPIs and budget ■ FY22 AIP draft presented for all sectors ■ Inform: MLA GMs present updates on key program activities, plans for next quarter/ remainder of FY against MLA strategic plan <p>Post-meeting Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PIC input considered for MLA AIP ■ PICs disseminate information on key MLA program activities to key stakeholders and industry | <p>What: Annual Service Agreement progress review Who: MLA & Individual PIC CEOs When: April</p> <p>What: Quarterly Update Who: (All PICs and RDCs together) All PIC CEOs, PIC Councils, RDC CEOs, RDC Chairs, MLA MD and relevant General Managers When: May Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Report: MLA presents last quarter results, program KPIs and budget ■ Inform: MLA GMs present updates on key program activities, plans for next quarter/ remainder of FY against MLA strategic plan ■ Inform: MLA presents final AIP <p>Post-meeting Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PICs disseminate information on key MLA program activities to key stakeholders and industry | <p>What: Annual Service Agreement progress review Who: MLA & Individual PIC CEOs When: July</p> <p>What: Quarterly Update Who: All PIC CEOs, PIC Councils, RDC CEOs, RDC Chairs, MLA MD and relevant General Managers When: August Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Report: MLA presents last quarter and full year results, program KPIs and budget ■ Inform: MLA GMs present updates on key program activities, plans for next quarter against MLA strategic plan <p>Post-meeting Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PICs disseminate information on key MLA program activities and annual outcomes to key stakeholders and industry |
| <p>What: AIP Planning Meeting Who: MLA Finance & Individual PIC CEOs When: November/December Agenda:</p> <p>Levy projections Levy reserves and policy</p> | <p>What: AIP Budget Reviews Who: MLA Finance & Individual PIC CEOs When: Late February Agenda: Detailed AIP budgets presented for discussion specific to PIC sector for next financial year</p> | <p>What: AIP budget finalised Who: MLA Finance & Individual PIC CEOs When: May Agenda: Final AIP budget reviewed</p> | <p>What: AIP delivery Review Who: MLA Finance & Individual PIC CEOs When: July Agenda: AIP KPIs presented for discussion and review</p> |
| <p>What: MLA-PIC consultation Who: MLA MD, COO, Chair and GM Communication & Adoption, PIC CEO, Chair When: November What: PIC consultation on investment priorities and MLA programs</p> | <p>What: MLA-PIC consultation Who: MLA MD, COO, Chair and GM Communication & Adoption, PIC CEO, Chair When: February What: PIC consultation on investment priorities and MLA programs</p> | <p>What: MLA-PIC consultation Who: MLA MD, COO, Chair and GM Communication & Adoption, PIC CEO, Chair When: May What: PIC consultation on investment priorities and MLA programs</p> | <p>What: MLA-PIC consultation Who: MLA MD, COO, Chair and GM Communication & Adoption, PIC CEO, Chair When: August What: PIC consultation on investment priorities and MLA programs</p> |

MLA's Regional consultation

MLA's regional consultation gives producers a chance to have their say on how we invest in on farm research. This on-farm research includes grassfed cattle and sheepmeat levies.

Our consultation network includes 19 regional committees (7 SALRC, 11 NABRC, 1 WALRC)

- WALRC is Western Australian livestock Research Council
- NABRC is North Australia Beef Research Council
- SALRC is Southern Australia Livestock Research Council

These producer committees help us invest in research, development and adoption. The committees get together two times a year to:

1. Identify the priorities for research, development and adoption in their regions
2. Keep updated on and have input into research relevant to their region and priorities

This consultation is overseen by the red meat panel. This panel includes producers from each of the Research Councils who join the peak industry councils – Cattle Australia and Sheep Producers Australia. The red meat panel also has an independent chair.

The regional producer committees identify priorities which are consolidated by NABRC, SALRC and WALRC. MLA works with the Red Meat Panel and producer chairs of these committees to work out what research needs to be done to find solutions for these priorities.

Changes to our investment call

MLA's investment call helps fund research that will find solutions for producer priorities. These priorities come from the regional producer committees through the three Research Advisory Councils.

The investment call was updated to be flexible following a series of 11 workshops with the Red Meat Panel to develop the process, which was trialled in 2022–23. This flexible call means that when funding is available to fund targeted – few, bigger, bolder projects, there will be a call for proposals for development and adoption projects.

Snapshot of the new call process

The call is designed to

1. maximise producer input
2. give sufficient time for researchers to write effective research proposals including getting input from producers
3. accommodate MLA strategic partnership and MDC funding where appropriate

To ensure these objectives, the call

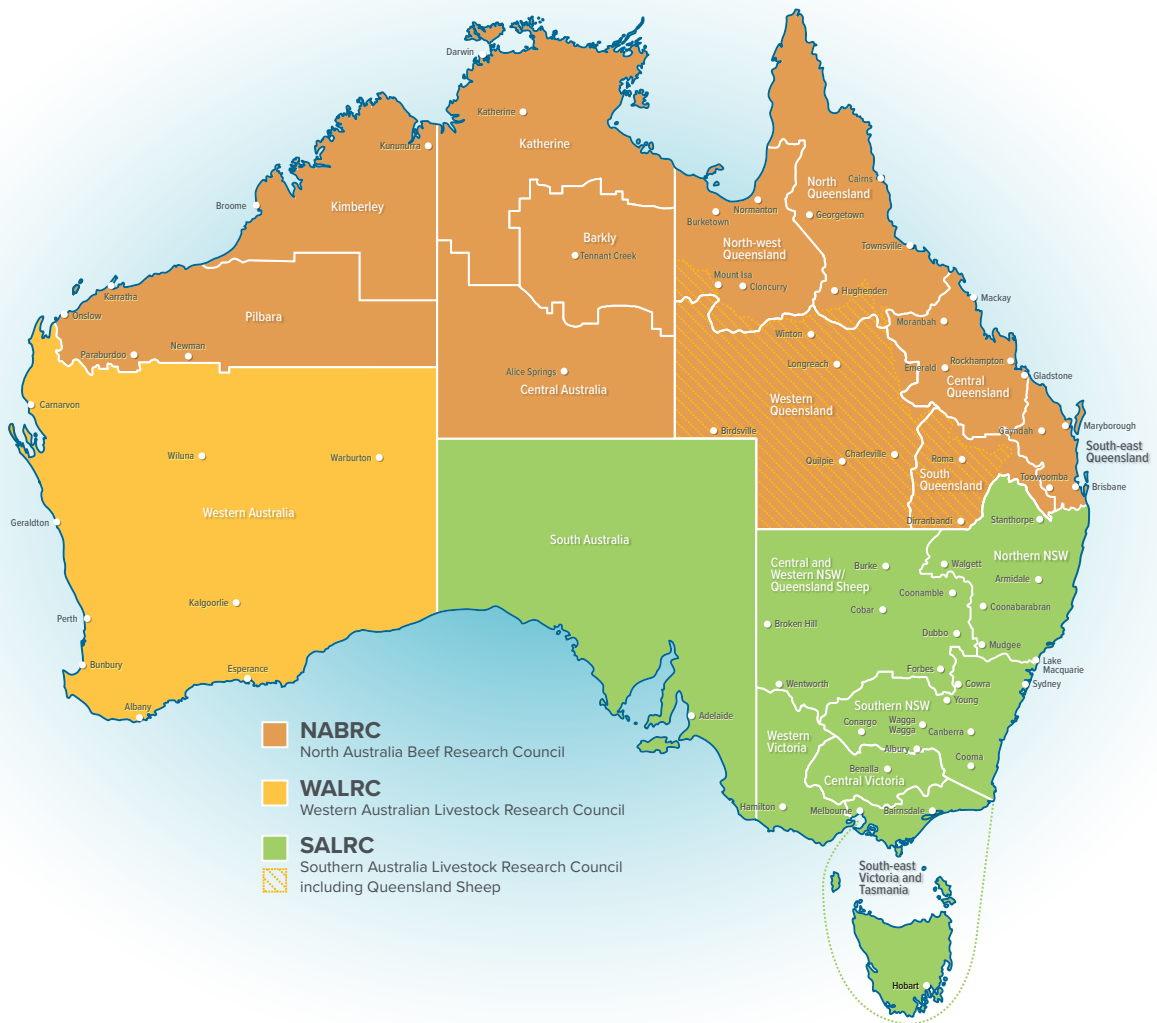
1. Include producers during reviewing of both preliminary and full proposals
2. Includes more time than previous calls to write and submit proposals
3. Includes more time for researchers to get input from producers and regional producer councils
4. Encourages collaboration between researchers and industry extension/adoption groups

See also:

[Southern Australia Livestock Research Council \(SALRC\)](#)

[North Australia Beef Research Council \(NABRC\)](#)

[Western Australian Livestock Research Council \(WALRC\)](#)

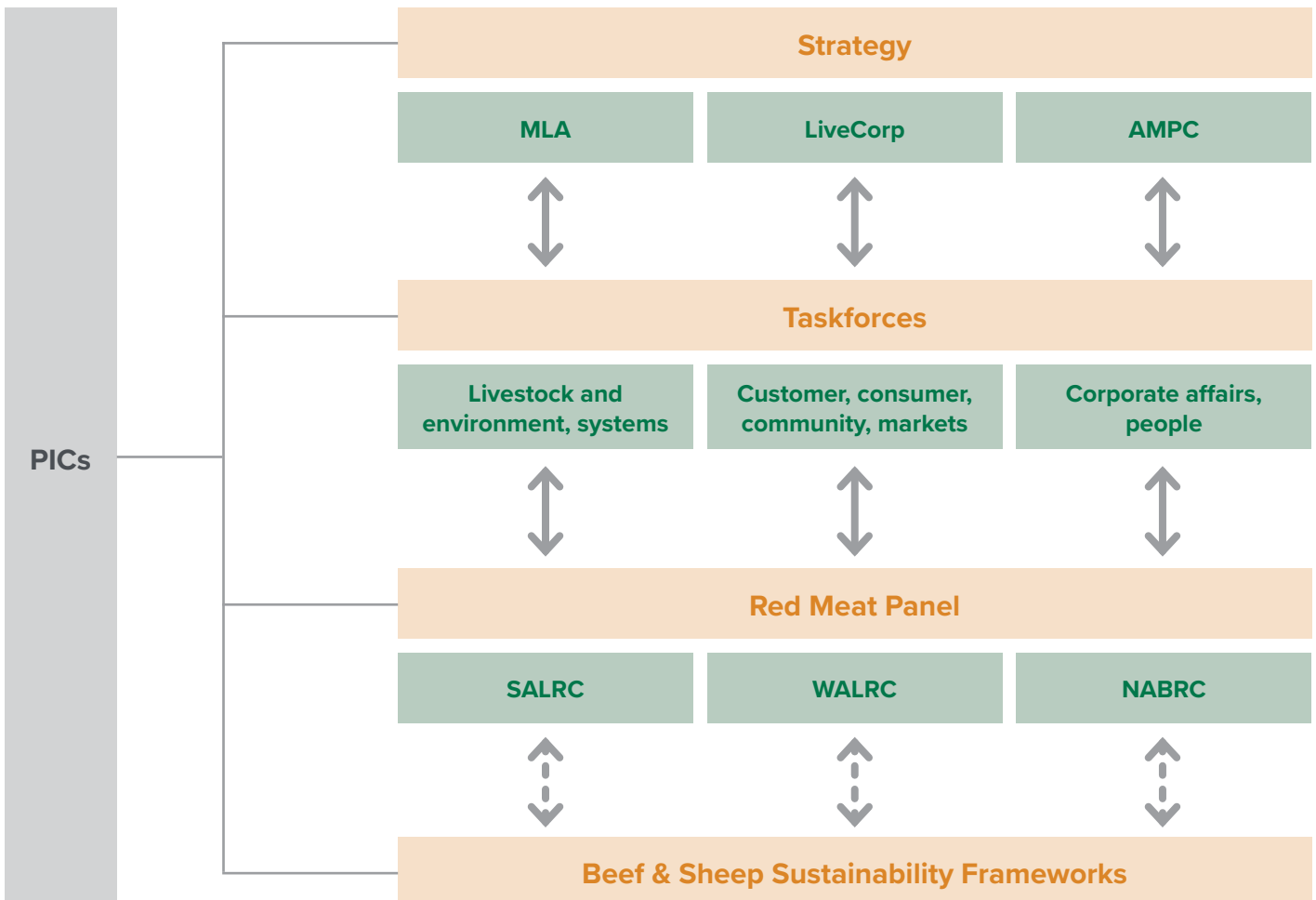


MLA Taskforce model

PIC Benefits

- More efficient way of dealing with strategy and policy issues
- Better use of representatives' time with less need for one rep to be across multiple committees
- Cover more ground in one go with broader scope of the taskforces
- Expanded scope for oversight and strategic input

- Consolidates committees under simple taskforce structure – proven effective for MSA and ISC
- Simpler, easier communication of outcomes.
- Clearer responsibility for actions and communication
- Consistent application across R&D, ISC, Marketing, Communication & Adoption
- Avoids duplication of effort, ensures the taskforces are fit for purpose under the new strategy, better connected to the stakeholders
- Supports the execution of the strategy



MLA Taskforce model

