



## MEAT STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

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# Terms of Reference MSA R&D Sheepmeat Pathways Committee

Members of the MSA R&D Committee agree and abide by the Terms of reference.

## Introduction to MSA Governance Arrangements

MLA operates several science and industry consultative groups to oversee and assist with the direction of MLA's strategies and programs. These groups are key interfaces between MLA, industry and the scientific community and ensure that MLA's programs are robust and credible and seek outcomes that are relevant to and valued by industry.

The Meat Standards Australia (MSA) grading system is central to the Australian red meat industry's eating quality program - more closely meeting consumers' eating quality expectations is a strong demand driver.

Because of the importance of the program in building demand for sheepmeat, a series of governance arrangements has been put in place to help ensure that the program consistently meets consumer and industry expectations. These arrangements especially build on the MSA principles of:

- Consumer eating quality satisfaction is the key driver of the MSA program;
- The MSA system is based on sound science; and
- Integrity is critical to the credibility of the MSA system.

## Pathways (Sheepmeat) – Terms of Reference

### Introduction

The scientific credibility and integrity of the MSA model and associated R&D is of paramount importance to the program. The primary role of **Pathways (Sheepmeat)** will be to, amongst other things, peer review the latest results from meat eating quality R&D and consumer testing, and recommend changes to the model which maintains that credibility and integrity. The committee also plays a central role in ensuring that research and development (R&D) is undertaken to optimise the opportunity for the sheepmeat industry to base product description, grading, branding and marketing on consumer eating quality standards.

### Terms of reference

The role of the **Pathways (Sheepmeat)** will be to:

1. Develop, document and endorse protocols for consumer testing procedures;
2. Monitor consumer sensory response and ensure standards reflect consumer preferences;
3. Provide recommendations to MLA and the MSA Sheepmeat Taskforce on research priorities and methodologies to further the development of eating quality knowledge and expanded application of the model;
4. Recommend R&D projects that address these priorities to MLA;

5. Maintain the scientific credibility and integrity of the MSA model by peer review of the latest results from meat eating quality R&D and consumer testing;
6. Oversee and recommend amendments to the model to MLA and AUS-MEAT via the MSA Sheepmeat Taskforce, to ensure the model is based on the best available scientific evidence to accurately reflect consumer eating quality standards;
7. Monitor advances in international eating quality R&D;
8. Provide communication advice to stakeholders in relation to new research findings and MSA model improvements; and
9. Present results at scientific forums and to journals as appropriate.

## **Membership**

***Pathways (Sheepmeat)*** members will be chosen for their scientific expertise. At all meetings, members will express views that represent the science community, not their own organisations (employer).

- Committee membership shall include current members in the first instance;
- Changes to committee membership shall be recommended by the committee to MLA and MLA will appoint committee members;
- The committee Chair shall be recommended by the committee from its members and MLA will appoint the Chair;
- Committee membership and chairmanship shall be reviewed every two years by the committee, at which time succession planning will be carefully considered. The performance of, and processes for, the committee will similarly be evaluated every 2 years. A report will be provided to MLA;
- The committee may invite other technical advisors and/or international scientists to participate in committee deliberations; and
- MLA may at its discretion have MLA policy/technical staff attend committee meetings and partake in discussions. MLA staff will be non-voting members. AMPC will have a similar opportunity.

There is no set tenure for members.

## **Reporting, decision making and communication**

- The Chair shall report to MLA via an Eating Quality R&D team member;
- Committee decisions are made by consensus with six members required for a quorum;
- When advising changes to the MSA grading model, any dissenting views of committee members shall be documented and included with the advice to MLA and the Taskforce;
- To ensure integrity of the MSA grading model, no changes shall be made other than those explicitly advised by the committee;
- The committee Chair or alternate nominated by the committee shall attend Taskforce meetings when changes to the MSA grading model have been recommended by Pathways or when R&D issues and/or priorities are discussed; and
- The committee chair or alternate nominated by the committee shall be available to present progress to other industry stakeholder meetings as required.

## **Administration**

Support for the committee shall be as follows:

- MLA will cover the reasonable costs of members and technical advisors (as agreed) attending the meetings;
- Secretariat / executive services to the committee shall be provided by a party with the required technical understanding and administrative capability, under contract to MLA;
- Existing secretariat arrangements shall continue in the first instance;
- Changes to the party providing secretariat / executive services shall be made by MLA on recommendation from the committee or on MLA's recommendation having sought the opinion of the committee;
- Agenda and briefing papers will be despatched to members at least 7 days prior to meetings;
- Minutes shall be drafted by the secretariat, vetted by the committee Chair, circulated to committee members for comment and forwarded by the Chair to MLA and the MSA Taskforce within three weeks of a meeting;
- The process for reporting and managing 'conflicts of interest' will be emphasised at meetings. Any declarations should be reported in Minutes.
- MLA shall be responsible for the execution of all R&D contracts in a timely manner;
- The expectation is that two meetings will be held per annum. At least one meeting per year should coincide with a Taskforce meeting; and
- The Committee may meet in person or via a Teleconference.