

## Statement of intent – Upper-Namoi “Water in the Landscape Initiative”

This document expresses the intention of the participating organisations to collaborate in projects to support the water and landscape interests of stakeholders in the upper-Namoi, and sets out the basic principles of the arrangement. This document does not create legally binding obligations on any party. Binding commitments may be established for particular projects or agreements to which parties subsequently commit. This statement does not authorise the participants to refer to the organisations who ratify this statement in communications or documents concerning this initiative.

### Overview

This collaboration is called “The Upper-Namoi Water in the Landscape Initiative”, and may be referred to as the “WITLI”. Its purpose is to develop and facilitate collaborative projects, programs or initiatives to optimise economic, social and environmental value and sustainability of freshwater in upper-Namoi catchments, (roughly 250 metres or more above sea-level).

The Upper-Namoi Water in the Landscape Initiative is to be community (rather than expert or politician) led. The principal stakeholders are non-government landholder organisations, rural communities, and rural industries, and the University of New England as a provider of knowledge and supports, and as a stakeholder in research and other opportunities which may arise from WITLI activities. Local Governments, State or National Government agencies with a concern for the interests of the principal stakeholders may fully participate in this initiative.

This statement is intentionally broad. The first general meeting of the entity shall happen between March 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 and April 30<sup>th</sup> 2024 at which the signatories may decide whether it should be replaced, amended or retained.

1.	Scope	With particular regard to the upper-Namoi catchments as defined: a. Within-tenure and trans-tenure work to manage and use water to maximise sustainable production and ecological values, with particular attention to resilience in the face of rainfall variation. b. Community and urban water management initiatives, to improve reliability, sustainability and community welfare, and production value from water. c. The development and application of relevant knowledge, capabilities, technology and other intellectual resources to these ends. d. Systematic application, testing and refinement of knowledge, technology and methods relevant to its purpose. e. Public and community education on water in the landscape/landscape resilience in the Upper-Namoi.
----	-------	---

		f. Strengthening the social capital of the region, through collaboration and cooperation, and the conduct of joint endeavours.
2.	Steering Group	The activities of the WITLI shall be managed by a steering group representing the following stakeholders a. Private rural landholders. b. Public agencies which are rural landholders. c. Urban water users (including industry). d. The University of New England. The Steering Group may invite observers or other stakeholders to advise or participate.
3.	Steering Group selection	Other than the initial interim Steering Group listed in Appendix 1, Steering Groups shall be selected at the Annual Meetings of WITLI
4.	Program supervision	The Steering Group shall be responsible for the strategic direction of WITLI projects within an overall program. Individual projects shall have a Project Management team, accountable to the Steering Group. Appendix 2 lists 5 initial program opportunities which the WITLI intends to pursue. The Steering Group shall also be responsible for monitoring and evaluating projects and programs, and for communication related to these. It is intended that the work of WITLI will be supported by external grants and other funding, to the maximum extent possible.
5.	Education and capacity building	A role of the WITLI is to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to manage water in the landscape, consistent with its purpose, and to carry out specified projects. Capacity building shall be addressed at levels from schooling through to community capacity building, extension and university research.
6.	Data and information	A role of the WITLI is to ensure that stakeholders and decision makers can access reliable monitoring and testing data, and useful models. Part of this is to ensure that stakeholders can access appropriate information to inform their decisions and actions. It is a general principle of WITLI that (to the maximum extent feasible) data and information shall be freely accessible to stakeholders.
7.	Policy development and advocacy	A role of the WITLI is to support the development of supportive local, state and national policies, particularly those concerning the Murray-Darling catchments, rural lands and environment management, and community water management.
8.	University of New England	Subject to specific agreements and to financial feasibility, the University of New England will provide research and education services, information and facilities. It is intended that WITLI will provide the university with opportunities of benefit to students and researchers, and opportunities to demonstrate community engagement and research impact.
9.	Facilities	A Tamworth "Service Hub" with community access to appropriate resources will be provided by arrangement with the University of New

		<p>England, or otherwise if the university is unable to provide this. These resources may include literature, online access to digital resources, maps, and access to models. Community or student generated intelligence, good practice demonstrations, and information about practices and technologies.</p> <p>By agreement WITLI participating stakeholders may also have a presence through these facilities.</p> <p>The WITLI shall facilitate the availability of local demonstration and testing sites, for the purposes of this collaboration.</p> <p>Other facilities may be developed including potentially an urban water and energy smart demonstration house.</p>
	Governance	<p>The Steering Group shall be the ultimate decision makers for the operation of WITLI, but shall not have the power to bind individual stakeholders contractually.</p> <p>It is intended that decisions shall be taken through consensus, and if this is not feasible then steering group shall organise a meeting of all participating stakeholders to determine that matter.</p> <p>The Steering Group may develop agreements and governance arrangements subject to ratification by all participating stakeholders.</p>
11	Ratification	<p>Participants can confirm their participation, or withdraw at any time, at <a href="https://unesurveys.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1z4QGleYXHpcEu">https://unesurveys.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1z4QGleYXHpcEu</a>.</p>

## Appendix 1: Additional information

Interim Steering Group (contact for further details):

*Wayne Chaffey (Tamworth Regional Landcare) M: 0400 358 217. Email: [wayne\\_chaffey@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wayne_chaffey@yahoo.com.au)*

*George Macdonald (Wallabadah Community) M: 01414851302. Email: [georgem181059@gmail.com](mailto:georgem181059@gmail.com)*

*Martin Thoms (University of New England) M: 0423 780 516. Email: [mthoms2@une.edu.au](mailto:mthoms2@une.edu.au)*

*Paul Martin (University of New England) M: 0416015161. Email: [pmartin9@une.edu.au](mailto:pmartin9@une.edu.au)*

*Paul Bennett (Tamworth Regional Council) M: (02) 6767 5555. Email: [p.bennett@tamworth.nsw.gov.au](mailto:p.bennett@tamworth.nsw.gov.au)*

*Bruce Logan (Tamworth Regional Council) M: (02) 6767 5555. Email: [b.logan@tamworth.nsw.gov.au](mailto:b.logan@tamworth.nsw.gov.au)*

Publicly available background files can be found at:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2bp2vst0pkhwqpg/AABXixldwixC8kXYHR\\_0pa6ta?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2bp2vst0pkhwqpg/AABXixldwixC8kXYHR_0pa6ta?dl=0)