



Land and Water Management Plan Recognition Framework

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Table of Contents

Version history	1
Procedure	2
1.0 Introduction.....	2
2.0 LWMP Recognition Framework.....	4
Responsibilities	7
Definitions	8
Legislation	10
Attachments	11
Attachment A - Relationship between a person using a recognised program and NRW.....	11
Attachment B - Recognising a program.....	12
Attachment C - Example terms of reference for program assessment.....	15
Attachment D - Recognition standards.....	16
Attachment E - Agreement principles.....	27

Version history

Version	Date	Comments
1	25/08/08	Final

Procedure

1.0 Introduction

This document outlines a framework to recognise property-level management programs that assist a person meet the requirements of a land and water management plan (LWMP) under the *Water Act 2000*.

Sections 1.1 and 1.2 outline the purpose of the framework and the background to its development.

Section 2 provides a summary of the framework. It outlines recognition levels and the outcomes sought from these levels.

Attachment A outlines what it means for a person participating in a recognised program in terms of their relationship with NRW concerning their LWMP application and approval. This relationship should be understood by a program provider concerning recognition.

Attachment B outlines the process to recognise a program.

Attachment C provides an example of the terms of reference for an assessment panel concerning an application for program recognition.

Attachment D outlines the recognition standards to be met by a program for recognition.

Attachment E provides general principles for an agreement between a program provider and NRW concerning ongoing recognition terms and conditions.

Terminology definitions are provided in the definitions section of this procedure.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this recognition framework is to provide a mechanism that can be used by the Queensland Government, specifically the Department of Natural Resources and Water (NRW or the Department) to recognise a property-level management program (such as a property management system (PMS) program or farm management system (FMS) program).

Programs are developed by non-government organisations (for example, rural industry, regional NRM bodies or community groups) to assist a person meet the requirements of a LWMP under the *Water Act 2000* (the Water Act).

Here the term program refers to a program in its entirety or its relevant components.

Recognition formally acknowledges that the desired outcomes of the standards and processes used by a program are compatible with the desired outcomes of government standards and processes for the LWMP government system.

By recognising a program, NRW provides an opportunity for an individual to engage in an endorsed alternative pathway to meet the LWMP requirement.

The participation of a person in a recognised program can be for a regulatory or voluntary purpose.

There are four recognition levels. They are tiered and build upon each other. These are summarised as follows.

Acknowledgement: This level of recognition provides acknowledgment that a program has incorporated the relevant LWMP guideline into a standard that can be used by a person to develop a LWMP.

Level 1 recognition: In addition to the requirements for program acknowledgment, Level 1 recognition includes a process compatible with the relevant LWMP process to assist a person develop their LWMP.

Level 2 recognition: In addition to the requirements of level 1 recognition, level 2 recognition includes a process compatible with the relevant LWMP process to verify that the LWMP is being implemented on-farm as stated in the plan.

Accreditation: In addition to the requirements of level 2 recognition, accreditation includes processes compatible with the relevant LWMP processes used to facilitate the maintenance of LWMP approval requirements by a person over their approval period.

1.2 Background

A property-level management program such as a PMS or FMS program provides property and business level management processes. A program can be used by individuals in a systematic way to develop a property-level management plan such as a PMS or FMS.

The purpose of a property-level management plan is to identify and manage risks that may occur as a result of farming operations. It is intended that this is undertaken within a continuous improvement context. That is, farm management is improved by focussing attention on implementing recommended management practices and reviewing progress made against targets.

The Queensland Government has recognised the role of initiatives such as PMS and FMS as a means for individuals to balance their economic, social and environmental risks. The following commitments have been made by the Queensland Government in this regard:

- The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF) relating to FMS. The MoU recognises industry-led FMS approaches as a key component of the policy mix in delivering profitable and sustainable primary industries.
- Under the Smart State Strategy, to work in partnership with the QFF to actively promote and support adoption of FMS by the intensive farming sector in Queensland.
- Under the ClimateSmart Adaptation 2007-12, to continue to work with the agribusiness sector to have climate change consideration included in FMS and whole-of-property risk planning.
- Under the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, and in partnership with the Australian Government, to build on existing policies and industry and community initiatives to reverse the decline in water quality entering the Great Barrier Reef. The plan focuses on measures to encourage good planning and assist property managers in adopting best management practices that are both profitable and environmentally sustainable.
- Delivery of programs to assist property managers understand and improve their land management, including the grazing land management program in partnership with Meat and Livestock Australia; the PMS Initiative under the auspices of the Blueprint for the Bush and in partnership with industry and regional bodies; and the FutureCane initiative.

Work on the government recognition of property-level management programs initially began within the context of the FMS MoU between the Government and QFF. In this context, the aim of recognition is to provide alternative industry delivered pathways for individuals to meet property-level regulatory requirements.

Recognition mechanisms started with the development of an accreditation policy followed by an accreditation framework. The accreditation framework facilitates the accreditation of industry FMS programs that allow individuals to meet and maintain property-level regulatory requirements.

The development of the accreditation framework was led by NRW in consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) and the intensive agricultural sector. It became NRW policy in September 2005.

Under the Water Act, a FMS can be approved as a LWMP where the FMS has been certified against an accredited FMS Program administered by an organisation prescribed in the *Water Regulation 2002* (the Water Regulation).

The Australian Cotton Industry's Best Management Practices (BMP) Program was accredited as a FMS program in the Water Regulation in December 2007. Cotton Australia was prescribed as the organisation that may provide the FMS Program.

The Cotton BMP Program is the first program developed by a non-government organisation recognised by the Queensland Government for a property-level regulatory purpose.

Accreditation was achieved by Cotton Australia through the industry body demonstrating that it could meet the standards outlined in the accreditation framework and maintain these standards over time through an accreditation agreement with the Department.

2.0 LWMP Recognition Framework

The LWMP Recognition Framework draws on the foundations and principles of the accreditation framework. It also incorporates learning's from the accreditation of the Cotton BMP Program.

The framework breaks down the requirements in the accreditation framework into four recognition levels. The highest recognition level is accreditation.

While the accreditation framework is generic catering for multiple property-level requirements, this recognition framework is specific to the LWMP requirement.

To achieve recognition, the desired outcomes of a program must be compatible with those of the LWMP government system at the level of recognition sought.

Attachment D outlines the relevant recognition standards that a program must meet.

A recognition agreement is developed between NRW and the program provider once relevant recognition standards are met. The agreement maintains recognition requirements for an approved recognition term. The recognition term is up to 10 years.

An agreement contains the terms and conditions relevant to the level of recognition sought. It contains program requirements and contextualises their delivery by the program provider over time. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of the program provider and NRW and how the two parties interact concerning the maintenance of recognition requirements. It also ensures the ongoing alignment of the program with the relevant components of the LWMP government system.

2.1 Program compatibility with the government LWMP system

Program recognition can be achieved where a program provider can demonstrate that their program incorporates the relevant LWMP guideline. In addition, the program has processes compatible with the desired outcomes of government processes that allow a person to meet the LWMP guideline.

Under the Water Act, a person is required to have a LWMP (or a deferral) approved by NRW before water can be used for irrigation under certain circumstances, or where a Water Resource Plan (WRP) requires it for an approval to construct works to capture overland flow.

The purpose of a LWMP is to ensure that irrigation water allocated by the State does not cause land and water degradation on or off farm.

A LWMP is a property-level plan. It consists of a written report and maps. The plan identifies natural resources, risks from water use and land and water management practices to minimise risk associated with

potential or actual land and water degradation. It outlines the types of actions to be undertaken, any implementation timeframes and monitoring and reporting requirements.

A LWMP is developed within the context of meeting the relevant LWMP guideline; that is the government irrigation standard for land and water management.

For the Department, facilitating the adoption and maintenance of land and water management practices and desired outcomes, within the context of the relevant LWMP guideline, involves the processes outlined in Table 1 <attachments/lwmp_recog_table1.pdf> .

A program can achieve recognition by incorporating the relevant LWMP guideline. In addition, the program must provide processes compatible with the desired outcomes of government processes outlined in Table 1 that allow a person to meet the LWMP guideline. Table 2 <attachments/lwmp_recog_table2.pdf> outlines how a program can do this, dependent on the level of recognition sought.

2.2 Summary of program recognition levels

A person may use a recognised program to:

- meet the LWMP requirement, where triggered for a LWMP
- meet the LWMP requirement now, where anticipated to be triggered for a LWMP in the future
- voluntarily meet the LWMP requirement for a non-regulatory reason, either business or personal

There are four recognition levels. These recognition levels are tiered and build upon each other.

All recognition levels require the incorporation of the relevant LWMP guideline into a program.

Recognition level 'acknowledgment' and levels 1 and 2 concern the LWMP government processes prior to the approval of a LWMP by NRW.

Accreditation concerns the LWMP government processes prior to and post LWMP approval by NRW.

Sections 2.2.1 to 2.2.4 outline the purpose of each of the four recognition levels.

Attachment D outlines the relevant recognition standards that a program must meet.

2.2.1 Acknowledgement

This level of recognition provides acknowledgment that the program has incorporated the relevant LWMP guideline into a standard that can be used by a person to develop a LWMP.

2.2.2 Level 1 recognition

In addition to the requirements for program acknowledgment, Level 1 recognition includes a process compatible with the relevant LWMP process to assist a person develop their LWMP.

2.2.3 Level 2 recognition

In addition to the requirements of level 1 recognition, level 2 recognition includes a process compatible with the relevant LWMP process to verify that the LWMP is being implemented on-farm as stated in the plan.

2.2.4 Accreditation

In addition to the requirements of level 2 recognition, accreditation includes processes compatible with the

relevant LWMP processes used to facilitate the maintenance of LWMP approval requirements by a person over their approval period.

2.3 Benefits of recognition

The benefits of government recognition of property-level management programs concerning the LWMP requirement for a person, the program provider and the government include:

- recognition of an alternative pathway for a person to meet the LWMP requirement that may be more suited to the person's needs
- the relationship between government and the program provider is recognised
- flexibility for non-government organisations in implementing processes to meet outcomes desired by the organisation and government
- the alignment of government policies and programs to complement key PMS and FMS program initiatives facilitating better targeted approaches
- better supported and streamlined processes; a combined non-government organisation and government approach can be expected to be more cost and time efficient and effective than stand-alone government initiatives
- better supported and stronger partnerships for enhancing the effectiveness and credibility of PMS and FMS programs
- program alignment with government regulatory requirements may leverage support and promotion for program uptake by individuals.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the relevant policy and operational managers both in the central office and within regions, the LWMP and OnePlan policy units, LWMP officers and OnePlan officers to be aware of this procedure.

It is the responsibility of the Manager, Land Management to maintain the currency of this procedure.

Definitions

Accreditation Framework means, LMU/2005/2181, 'Accreditation Framework for Farm Management System Programs'.

Certified Farm Management System approved as a Land and Water Management Plan means, the documented components of a certified FMS as equivalent to a LWMP under the *Water Act 2000*. A FMS is certified against a program accredited by the chief executive and delivered by a program provider approved by the chief executive as defined in the *Water Regulation 2002*.

Initial certification and ongoing certification against an accredited property-level management program (such as a PMS or FMS program) means, the successful result of a property visit or audit of a LWMP to determine compliance with the natural resource management practice standards and outcomes outlined in the accredited program relevant to the LWMP regulatory requirement under the *Water Act 2000*.

LWMP means, a property-level plan developed using a LWMP Guideline.

LWMP Guideline means, a guideline issued by the chief executive of NRW under s.72 of the *Water Act 2000*.

Property-level management program (such as a PMS program or a FMS program) means, property-level management programs are a range of programs developed by non-government organisations (for example rural industry, regional NRM bodies or community groups) that aim to facilitate continuous improvement in the management performance of individuals (those responsible for natural resource management such as landholders and/or managers).

This is through the implementation of recommended management practices and the verification of progress made against desired outcomes and/or targets.

Definition based on that provided in the accreditation framework.

Property Management System (PMS)/ Farm Management System (FMS) means, a voluntary, property and business level management process used by individuals (those responsible for natural resource management such as landholders and/or managers) to identify and manage risks, particularly environmental risk, that may occur as a result of their farming operation.

Systems aim to achieve continuous improvement in management performance by focussing attention on implementing recommended management practices and reviewing progress made against targets.

Definition based on that provided in the accreditation framework.

Recognised/ accredited program means, the recognised standards, policies, procedures and activities of a property-level management program (such as a PMS or FMS program) that facilitate a person achieve practice standards and outcomes consistent with the LWMP regulatory requirement under the *Water Act 2000*.

Recommended Management Practice (RMP) means, cost effective, on-farm practices recommended by industry and/or government for the management of an activity to avoid and/or minimise the activity's environmental harm, improve sustainable resource management, and improve production efficiencies.

Definition based on that provided in the accreditation framework.

Property visit or Audit means, systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which criteria are fulfilled. Criteria are used as a reference against which evidence is compared. Criteria could include a set of policies, procedures or requirements. Evidence could include records, statements of fact or other relevant information that is factual

and verifiable. Evidence may be qualitative or quantitative.

Definition based on that provided in the accreditation framework.

Standards means, accepted specifications that define materials, methods, processes and practices to ensure consistent and acceptable levels of quality and performance are achieved.

For the LWMP government system, this includes the details outlined in the relevant LWMP guideline issued under section 72 of the *Water Act 2000*. It also includes those LWMP government processes supported by relevant legislation, policy and procedures relevant to program recognition.

Legislation

Water Act 2000

Water Regulation 2002

Attachments

Attachment A - Relationship between a person using a recognised program and NRW

Recognition is imbedded within a three way relationship between a person and NRW, a program provider and NRW, and a person and a program provider.

This section of the framework outlines the relationship between a person and NRW concerning their LWMP application and approval. This relationship should be understood by a program provider when considering recognition.

This relationship is also influenced by program recognition.

Program recognition involves a program provider delivering processes compatible with LWMP government processes regarding approval requirements, and their maintenance in the case of accreditation. This is articulated in a recognition agreement.

The following points outline NRW requirements concerning its obligation to administer a LWMP approval. These points, where relevant outline how these requirements are influenced by program recognition.

The points include:

- NRW has a statutory requirement to regulate the allocation, management and use of natural resources and ensure compliance with the legislation it administers. This ability is not negated concerning a LWMP approval based on participation in a recognised program.
- NRW assesses all applications for a LWMP approval. This includes an application for a LWMP approval based on participation in an accredited program.
- When assessing an application for a LWMP approval, NRW has the ability to request additional information and undertake a property visit(s). The extent to which this could occur is entirely based on the quality of the LWMP produced regardless of which pathway a person chooses to participate in; a recognised program or the LWMP government system.
- Participation in a recognised program to develop a LWMP does not equate with an instant approval for that LWMP. As mentioned above, when assessing a LWMP, NRW has the ability to request additional information and undertake a property visit(s). While it is expected that products produced through a recognised program should be of a high standard, the quality of the LWMP produced is also dependent on the level of engagement of a person with the recognised program. This is independent of the quality of the program.
- The confidence level in the quality of the LWMP developed as an outcome of participating in a recognised program should increase with the recognition status of the program. This is associated with the level of interaction by the program provider in processes with a person to assist them in meeting approval requirements. As a program moves from acknowledgment to level 1 and level 2 recognition on to accreditation, the program incorporates additional processes that verify the meeting of approval requirements. For example, the request for additional information should occur less frequently for a LWMP developed through a level 2 recognised program compared to a LWMP developed through lower recognition levels. The request for additional information for a LWMP developed through an accredited program is anticipated to occur very infrequently, if at all.
- Participation in a recognised program allows for flexibility in the LWMP format. The format will reflect how the recognised program incorporates the relevant LWMP guideline into their program.
- Participation in an acknowledged program through to a recognised level 1 to level 2 program requires the submission of a complete LWMP. This is required for NRW to assess the plan and to also undertake administrative duties concerning the LWMP post approval.
- The number of on-farm property visits required for LWMPs is the same regardless of whether a LWMP approval is based on participation in a recognised program or the LWMP government system.

- Program accreditation allows a person to meet and then maintain the LWMP requirement based on certification against the accredited program. The program has accredited pre-approval processes for the development, assessment, and verification that LWMP requirements have been met or can be met. Post approval, the program has accredited verification processes to facilitate the ongoing maintenance of LWMP requirements for the LWMP approval period.
- Participation in an accredited program still requires a person to have a documented LWMP product. However, a person can provide a certificate as evidence that a LWMP has been developed to the level required of an accredited program, to gain a LWMP approval.
- NRW may undertake on-farm property visits of LWMPs as a mechanism to verify that accreditation is allowing a person to maintain the LWMP requirement, post approval. To undertake property visits NRW will require access to a persons' LWMP and may require relevant additional information to demonstrate a person is maintaining their approval requirements.
- The process used by NRW to verify that approval requirements are being met is the same as that undertaken for a LWMP approval under the government system.
- The number of NRW on-farm property visits of LWMPs developed through an accredited program should be less than the number required by the LWMP government system. As outlined, lower recognition levels do not involve any processes post approval and that once approved LWMPs developed through these pathways are then administered by NRW post approval.
- Where a person participates in an accredited program and their certification is withdrawn by the program provider, NRW will take action to ensure the ongoing administration of the LWMP approval.

Participation in a recognised program for a voluntary purpose

Where a person is not triggered to do a LWMP, they can participate in a recognised program to meet the LWMP government standard; that is the relevant LWMP guideline without having to gain a LWMP approval.

Program recognition requires an agreement that ensures program requirements are amended as required to ensure ongoing program alignment with the LWMP government system.

Program recognition would require changes in recognition requirements to be reflected in the LWMP product developed using the recognised program. However, it would be up to the program provider to ensure this occurred. This would be separate to any government requirements.

Attachment B - Recognising a program

1.0 Process to recognise programs

Programs eligible for recognition aim to facilitate continuous improvement in the management performance of individuals through the implementation of recommended management practices. Programs eligible for accreditation also verify progress made against desired outcomes and/or targets over the LWMP approval period.

The process by which NRW will consider and recognise a program is divided into four stages. These are:

- Stage 1 - Pre-application discussion and negotiation
- Stage 2 - Application
- Stage 3 - Assessment (meeting standards)
- Stage 4 - Agreement preparation, sign-off and implementation (standard maintenance and agreement management)

In order for a program to gain and retain recognition, the requirements of the stages above must be met.

Sections 1.1 to 1.4 outline the requirements of each stage. Suggested advice and actions are provided in 'commentary boxes'.

These boxes provide guidance on government expectations.

Section 2 outlines the requirements to maintain and manage program recognition.

A program is recognised when an agreement is signed between an organisation and NRW. An agreement contains the terms and conditions relevant to the level of recognition sought.

Accreditation also requires the proclamation in the Water Regulation of the accredited program, and organisation approved by NRW to administer the program.

1.1 Stage 1 - pre-application discussion and negotiation

It is recommended a non-government organisation contact NRW when interested in seeking recognition concerning the LWMP requirement under the Water Act. Contact must be made with the General Manager responsible for the business area that administers the LWMP requirement. This is to organise a meeting with the practitioners of this framework.

Where it is determined recognition is desirable, it is recommended that a joint NRW and program provider working group is formed to progress recognition. The purpose of the working group, led by NRW is to address how the organisation's program can meet recognition requirements. The working group should establish terms of reference suitable to both parties concerning how the parties engage and how the results of this engagement are progressed.

It is recommended that the same Departmental representatives on the working group are part of the assessment panel established when the organisation determines it is ready to formally apply for recognition (refer to Stage 2 below). This will maintain the continuity of knowledge concerning the organisation's program and discussions on how the program meets recognition requirements.

Depending on the level of recognition sought, discussion and negotiation between the Department and an organisation seeking recognition could occur over an extended period. It is important that pre-application discussions and negotiations are undertaken within a structured partnership process.

Commentary: Stage 1 - Pre-application discussion and negotiation

- *To expedite assessment and improve the chances of recognition it is recommended that prior to a formal application for recognition, the program provider:*
 - *is aware of the information outlined in Attachment A*
 - *has successfully trailed with intended end-users the standard or standard and processes it is seeking recognition for*
 - *engages NRW and other relevant stakeholders in the development of the standard or the standard and processes it is seeking recognition for*
 - *where program accreditation is sought:*
 - *widespread and strong support should be sought from intended end-users*
 - *the program provider should have a long term commitment to the program*
- *should ensure that the recognition standards outlined in Attachment D, and the general agreement principles outlined in Attachment E can be met.*

1.2 Stage 2 - Application

- To initiate the application process the program provider is required to write to the General Manager responsible for the business area that administers the LWMP requirement. The letter is to state which level of recognition the program provider is seeking concerning the LWMP requirement under the Water Act.
- The letter is to contain an adequate description of the program with attached material. This material must demonstrate how the program meets the requirements of the applicable recognition level outlined in this framework.
- The Department will respond in writing acknowledging the program providers desire to seek recognition

and confirm that the Department will consider the program for recognition. The letter should outline the process and timing for the formation of an assessment panel. Additional information requests may be made during the assessment stage.

Commentary: Stage 2 - Application

- *The description of the program should:*
 - *describe the program provider, e.g., industry, regional body or community group, including its role and focus. If other organisations, such as research and development corporations are also involved in the program, these linkages and their responsibilities should be detailed*
 - *outline the program and its development*
 - *detail the end-users of the program (e.g. landholders in the Fitzroy catchment, dairy farmers, etc), as well as existing (if known) or planned uptake of the program*
 - *demonstrate the organisation's capacity and capability to deliver the program (e.g. the organisation must have sufficient expertise, knowledge, resources, etc to deliver the program)*
 - *provide any other information considered relevant.*

1.3 Stage 3 - Assessment

- An assessment panel will be established to assess an organisation's program. The panel will meet on an as needs basis for the duration of the assessment process.
- The panel will consist of relevant government representatives (systems thinkers and technical experts) as well as, where desired, recognised external experts in relevant subject areas. It is recommended that Departmental officers involved in pre-application discussion and negotiation be represented on the assessment panel.
- The primary function of the panel is to assess whether the program is of a sufficient standard to be recognised, concerning the requirements of Attachment D.
- Terms of reference must be established by the Department for the assessment panel. These must be provided to the applicant for their information concerning the decision making process used by the panel. Example terms of reference are provided in Attachment C.
- Recommendations on how a program meets recognition requirements are developed by the assessment panel. The organisation will be given the opportunity to discuss these with the panel. Additional information may be requested from the organisation by the panel to assist in its deliberations.
- Where the panel is satisfied that the program meets the requirements of Attachment D, the panel will make a recommendation that the assessment process proceed to the next stage; agreement preparation.
- During the assessment of the program, negotiation on how recognition standards will be maintained over time may occur. The outcome of these discussions is to be progressed in the agreement preparation stage.
- Where the panel is not satisfied that a program is of a sufficient recognition standard, the panel will outline its reasons in writing to the organisation. The panel may also suggest areas where improvement could occur. The organisation will be given the opportunity to discuss the Department's recommendations with the panel. Further assessment and progression of the program to agreement stage may be put on hold. Where this occurs, the assessment panel should recommend a course of action concerning program recognition.

Commentary: Stage 3 - Assessment

- *Systems thinkers should be involved in the overall coordination of the assessment process to ensure standards and processes are integrated and aligned.*
- *Recognised technical experts are considered to be any person who has recognised qualifications relevant to the subject areas of the program and/or the LWMP regulatory requirement and/or has substantial experience in a field of work involving the relevant subject areas. Relevant qualifications and/or experience in a field of work could be in the areas of agribusiness, rural land management, natural resource management, and environmental science/management. Experts sourced need not necessarily be public sector employees.*

1.4 Stage 4 - Recognition agreement preparation

- Following recommendation by the panel that the program has met the recognition standards, the Department and the organisation negotiate the terms of accreditation (refer to Attachment E). These terms are recorded in a signed agreement between the Department and the organisation. They include any negotiated outcomes from Stage 2.
- The agreement includes contractual and operational provisions and responsibilities of each party relevant to the level of recognition sought.
- The development of an agreement is co-ordinated by the NRW Legal Services team. This occurs in partnership with the business area responsible for administering the LWMP recognition framework.
- Upon the signing of the agreement the program will be deemed to be recognised. Where accreditation is sought, proclamation in the Water Regulation of the accredited program and the organisation administering the program effects accreditation.

2.0 Maintaining and managing recognition

- Once a program is recognised, in order to maintain the program's recognition status for the life of the recognition term, the organisation must meet the requirements of the recognition agreement (refer to Attachment E).
- The recognition agreement defines an implementation process that ensures the program remains aligned with the LWMP government system. It ensures any variations to either the program or the LWMP government system over the recognition approval period are taken into account.
- For recognition level 2 and accreditation, a steering group must be established to facilitate this process. A steering group is comprised of the relevant NRW and organisational representatives. The terms of reference for the steering group are established during the agreement preparation stage.

Attachment C - Example terms of reference for program assessment

Assessment of a property-level management program for LWMP recognition standards (refer to Attachment D)

Assessment panel - Terms of reference

Roles and responsibilities

- Review the application

Assess the property-level management program to the level of recognition sought. Assessment is against the recognition standards outlined in Attachment D of the document, 'Land and Water Management Plan Recognition Framework' (the recognition framework).

- Negotiation concerning the accreditation agreement

Provide advice and recommendations on the terms of a recognition agreement, as required. This agreement is to be signed between the program provider and NRW.

Guiding principles

These principles guide the operation of the assessment panel, the role of which is divided into two categories. These are:

- the review of the application
- advice and recommendations concerning the recognition agreement

Review the application

1. The panel is chaired by a Departmental Officer considered to be suitable by the General Manager responsible for the business area that administers the LWMP requirement.
2. The panel chair is responsible for coordinating the assessment process.
3. Panel members include Government representatives involved in the pre-application discussion and negotiation stage for program recognition.
4. Where Government representatives involved in the pre-application discussion and negotiation stage are not available for panel membership, the panel is guided in their deliberations by these officers.
5. The assessment panel may request additional information from the applicant.
6. The applicant must be provided with the opportunity to negotiate on the deliberations of the assessment panel.
7. Panel members progress the assessment process in a timely and efficient manner.

Negotiation concerning the accreditation agreement

1. The panel chair coordinates any negotiation by the panel on how the requirements of the recognition standards are met over time. The panel chair ensures these discussion outcomes are included in the context of the formation of a recognition agreement.

Attachment D - Recognition standards

1.0 Standards for recognition

The following recognition standards must be met by a program before progression to a recognition agreement (Attachment E).

1.1 Recognition levels

There are four recognition levels. They are tiered and build upon each other.

All recognition levels require the incorporation of the relevant LWMP guideline into the program.

Program acknowledgment and recognition levels 1 and 2 allow a person to develop and submit a LWMP consistent with regulatory requirements. They concern the LWMP government processes prior to the approval of a LWMP by NRW.

Accreditation allows a person to develop, and then maintain post approval a LWMP consistent with regulatory requirements. It concerns the LWMP government processes prior to and post LWMP approval by NRW.

Where a person participates in an acknowledged program or a level 1 or 2 recognised program they must provide NRW with a LWMP product in support of an approval. This is required as a reference point for ongoing performance monitoring and approval administration by NRW.

Where a person participates in an accredited program a certificate can be provided instead of a LWMP to receive an approval. This can occur as the program provider undertakes ongoing performance monitoring. NRW may however, also undertake performance monitoring to verify accreditation is allowing a person to meet the LWMP requirement.

The format of a LWMP can be a PMS, an FMS, a LWMP or any other format desired. The format will reflect how the recognised program incorporates the relevant LWMP guideline into their program.

The assessment process for all program recognition levels requires the submission of a LWMP product as an outcome of using the recognised program standard. It is intended this facilitates clear articulation of

approval requirements and expectations to be built into the program from an output perspective.

The number of LWMP products required will be representative of risk scenarios for the enterprise type(s) being targeted by the program and the potential number of individuals that may adopt the program.

All recognition levels also require the review by relevant Departmental officers of the actual or trial processes used by a program. This includes attendance at workshops and on-farm property visits or audits.

The attendance frequency of these processes will be representative of the number of individuals that may adopt the program. The number of property visits or audits to be attended will also be representative of risk scenarios for the enterprise type(s) being targeted by the program.

The attendance frequency of the above processes will be at the discretion of the assessment panel.

1.1.1 Program acknowledgement

Standard 1: Program standard - LWMP natural resource management practice standards and desired outcomes

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
The program has documented natural resource management practice standards and desired outcomes consistent with those of the relevant LWMP guideline(s).	The program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has standards consistent with the natural resource management practice standards and desired outcomes in the relevant LWMP guideline(s)

1.1.2 Level 1 program recognition

Standard 1: Program standard - LWMP natural resource management practice standards and desired outcomes

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
The program has documented natural resource management practice standards and desired outcomes consistent with those of the relevant LWMP guideline(s).	The program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has standards consistent with the natural resource management practice standards and desired outcomes in the relevant LWMP guideline(s)

Standard 2: Program process - LWMP development process to assist a person incorporate program standards into a LWMP

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
The program has documented procedures to assist a person incorporate program standards into their LWMP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The desired outcomes of the process used by the program are compatible with the desired outcomes of the LWMP government process, underpinned by relevant legislation, policy and procedures. The program has a process that allows for a systematic and documented gathering of information by a person to develop a LWMP that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates how program standards are being met, and/or provides commitments with defined actions and timeframes to undertake improvements in natural resource management to demonstrate program standards can be met. The program provides templates to individuals to complete the various components of their LWMP.

Specific criteria

Minimum requirements	Specific criteria
<p>The desired outcomes of the process used by the program are compatible with the desired outcomes of the LWMP government process underpinned by relevant legislation, policy and procedures.</p>	<p>The process ensures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm management areas covered by the relevant LWMP guideline(s) are addressed by the program in a way that is compatible with those guidelines. • Acceptable farm management actions are developed that address the risk to land and water arising from the use of water on land, and are compatible with the relevant LWMP guideline(s). • Any existing industry codes of practice for water use are taken into account. • Any policies developed through consultative processes with local communities for the use of water are taken into account. • Any relevant public interest issues are taken into account.
<p>The program has a process that allows for a systematic and documented gathering of information by a person to develop a LWMP that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates how program standards are being met; and/or • provides commitments with defined actions and timeframes to undertake improvements in natural resource management to demonstrate program standards can be met. 	<p>The process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes a person through a valid learning experience that imparts knowledge and prompts them to ask relevant questions. • Encourages a person or group to describe their knowledge and beliefs on local natural resources and their resilience. • Allows a person or group to describe their experiences with current on farm water use management practices. • Allows a person or group to reflect on the natural resource outcomes of current farm management actions. • If required, provides specific knowledge (such as economic and technical) on alternative water use management practices that may improve natural resource outcomes. • Allows a person time to reflect and develop action plans in specific areas of their farm management to appropriately manage natural resource outcomes from on farm water use.

Standard 3: Program administration - competency for the LWMP development process

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program has documented procedures that define the selection and performance verification processes for individuals involved in the delivery of the LWMP development process. • The program has linkages to capacity building mechanisms that allow for the transference of technical support to a person using the program to develop a LWMP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals have suitable qualifications. • Individuals have a sound knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the industry an enterprise is a part of • program standards • program processes • Individuals engage in a manner that upholds standards for competent practice in a profession, occupation, role, or skill. • Individuals engage in a manner that ensures consistency and autonomy in decision-making. This concerns verifying whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the practice standards and desired outcomes for natural resource management outlined in the LWMP are being met, and/or • there are commitments with defined actions and timeframes to demonstrate practice standards and desired outcomes can be met, as outlined in the LWMP. • The qualifications and competence of individuals can be verified.

Specific criteria

Minimum requirements	Specific criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals have suitable qualifications. • Individuals have a sound knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the industry an enterprise is a part of • program standards • program processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For individuals, outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimum competency standards and expectations • how skill sets will be assessed through selection and recruitment • how skill sets will be periodically assessed over time, outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • criteria used • assessment frequency • consequence of not meeting skill set requirements • how skills sets will be maintained over time • how training is linked to, and maintains required skill sets • how minimum competency standards and expectations would be met by current personnel • Code of Ethics/ Code of Conduct • relevant contractual arrangements • For minimum competency standards and expectations, as a minimum an individual must have the following skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technical capacity in relation to relevant natural resource management practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a minimum land, water and natural systems • understanding responses to farm management • property planning • knowledge in relevant local and regional natural resource management issues • knowledge of existing industry codes of practice for water use • knowledge of policies developed through consultative processes with local communities for the use of water • knowledge of any relevant public interest issues • knowledge of program standards • knowledge of legislative frameworks relevant to the LWMP process • adhere to relevant program standards, policies, procedures, processes, and related products and activities, for e.g., ongoing delivery of the process required of standard 2 in accordance with the criteria outlined. • adhere to a relevant Code of Ethics/ Code of Conduct • For the program, describe the mechanisms used, including technical and extension networks and partnerships that support individuals in gaining, maintaining and delivering expertise.
<p>Individuals engage in a manner that upholds standards for competent practice in a profession, occupation, role, or skill.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals are periodically assessed over time to ensure skill sets are maintained. • Individuals receive ongoing technical training.
<p>The qualifications and competence of individuals can be verified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records are maintained.

1.1.3 Level 2 program recognition

Standard 1: Program standard - LWMP natural resource management practice standards and desired outcomes

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
The program has documented natural resource management practice standards and desired outcomes consistent with those of the relevant LWMP guideline(s).	The program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has standards consistent with the natural resource management practice standards and desired outcomes in the relevant LWMP guideline(s)

Standard 2: Program process - LWMP development process to assist a person incorporate program standards into a LWMP

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
The program has documented procedures to assist a person incorporate program standards into their LWMP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The desired outcomes of the process used by the program are compatible with the desired outcomes of the LWMP government process, underpinned by relevant legislation, policy and procedures. The program has a process that allows for a systematic and documented gathering of information by a person to develop a LWMP that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates how program standards are being met, and/or provides commitments with defined actions and timeframes to undertake improvements in natural resource management to demonstrate program standards can be met. The program provides templates to individuals to complete the various components of their LWMP.

Specific criteria

Minimum requirements	Specific criteria
The desired outcomes of the process used by the program are compatible with the desired outcomes of the LWMP government process underpinned by relevant legislation, policy and procedures.	The process ensures that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm management areas covered by the relevant LWMP guideline(s) are addressed by the program in a way that is compatible with those guidelines. Acceptable farm management actions are developed that address the risk to land and water arising from the use of water on land, and are compatible with the relevant LWMP guideline(s). Any existing industry codes of practice for water use are taken into account. Any policies developed through consultative processes with local communities for the use of water are taken into account. Any relevant public interest issues are taken into account.
The program has a process that allows for a systematic and documented gathering of information by a person to develop a LWMP that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates how program standards are being met; and/or provides commitments with defined actions and timeframes to undertake improvements in natural resource management to demonstrate program standards can be met. 	The process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes a person through a valid learning experience that imparts knowledge and prompts them to ask relevant questions. Encourages a person or group to describe their knowledge and beliefs on local natural resources and their resilience. Allows a person or group to describe their experiences with current on farm water use management practices. Allows a person or group to reflect on the natural resource outcomes of current farm management actions. If required, provides specific knowledge (such as economic and technical) on alternative water use management

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> practices that may improve natural resource outcomes. Allows a person time to reflect and develop action plans in specific areas of their farm management to appropriately manage natural resource outcomes from on farm water use.
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Standard 3: Program process - LWMP verification process (property visit or audit) that confirms program standards have been, or can be met on farm

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
The program has documented procedures to verify whether program standards are being met, or can be met on-farm as outlined in the LWMP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The desired outcomes of the process used by the program are compatible with the desired outcomes of the LWMP government process underpinned by relevant legislation, policy and procedures. The program has a property visit or audit process that allows for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a systematic, documented gathering of information or evidence and the objective unbiased assessment of that information to reach a valid conclusion of whether the LWMP is of a suitable standard. That is whether natural resource management practices and desired outcomes stated in the LWMP are being met or can be met on-farm. This includes any commitments made in the LWMP with defined actions and timeframes support, or its facilitation to a person to address any areas where the LWMP is inadequate in meeting program standards.

Standard 4: Program administration - competency for the LWMP development process and the LWMP verification process

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program has documented procedures that define the selection and performance verification processes for individuals involved in the delivery of the LWMP development process. The program has linkages to capacity building mechanisms that allow for the transference of technical support to individual using the program to develop a LWMP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals have suitable qualifications. Individuals have a sound knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the industry an enterprise is a part of program standards program processes Individuals engage in a manner that upholds standards for competent practice in a profession, occupation, role, or skill. Individuals engage in a manner that ensures consistency and autonomy in decision-making. This concerns verifying whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the practices and desired outcomes for natural resource management outlined in the LWMP are being met, and/or there are commitments with defined actions and timeframes to demonstrate practices and desired outcomes can be met, as outlined in the LWMP. The qualifications and competence of individuals can be verified.

Specific criteria

Minimum requirements	Specific criteria
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals have suitable qualifications. • Individuals have a sound knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the industry an enterprise is a part of • program standards • program processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For individuals, outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimum competency standards and expectations • how skill sets will be assessed through selection and recruitment • how skill sets will be periodically assessed over time, outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • criteria used • assessment frequency • consequence of not meeting skill set requirements • how skills sets will be maintained over time • how training is linked to, and maintains required skill sets • how minimum competency standards and expectations would be met by current personnel • Code of Ethics/ Code of Conduct • relevant contractual arrangements • For minimum competency standards and expectations, as a minimum an individual must have the following skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technical capacity in relation to relevant natural resource management practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a minimum land, water and natural systems • understanding responses to farm management • property planning • knowledge in relevant local and regional natural resource management issues • knowledge of existing industry codes of practice for water use • knowledge of policies developed through consultative processes with local communities for the use of water • knowledge of any relevant public interest issues • knowledge of program standards • have an ability to identify what is happening on-farm • knowledge of legislative frameworks relevant to the LWMP process • adhere to relevant program standards, policies, procedures, and related products and activities, for e.g., ongoing delivery of the process required of standard 2 in accordance with the criteria outlined. • adhere to a relevant Code of Ethics/ Code of Conduct • For the program, describe the program mechanisms, including technical and extension networks and partnerships that support individuals in gaining, maintaining and delivering expertise.
<p>Individuals engage in a manner that upholds standards for competent practice in a profession, occupation, role, or skill.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals are periodically assessed over time to ensure skill sets are maintained. • Individuals receive ongoing technical training and training in undertaking a property visit/ audit.
<p>Individuals engage in a manner that ensures consistency and autonomy in decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for the undertaking of property visits/ audits is consistent with the latest Australian and New Zealand Standards for auditing in relation to environmental management systems published by Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand. • Property visit/ audit training must incorporate training in relation to the identification of natural resource management issues including the verification that program standards are being met, or can be met.

The qualifications and competence of individuals providing technical support can be verified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records are maintained.
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1.1.4 Accreditation

Standard 1: Program standard - LWMP natural resource management practice standards and desired outcomes

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
The program has documented natural resource management practice standards and desired outcomes consistent with those of the relevant LWMP guideline(s).	The program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has standards consistent with the natural resource management practice standards and desired outcomes in the relevant LWMP guideline(s)

Standard 2: Program process - LWMP development process to assist a person incorporate program standards into a LWMP

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
The program has documented procedures to assist a person incorporate program standards into their LWMP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The desired outcomes of the process used by the program are compatible with the desired outcomes of the LWMP government process, underpinned by relevant legislation, policy and procedures. The program has a process that allows for a systematic and documented gathering of information by a person to develop a LWMP that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates how program standards are being met, and/or provides commitments with defined actions and timeframes to undertake improvements in natural resource management to demonstrate program standards can be met. The program provides templates to individuals to complete the various components of their LWMP.

Specific criteria

Minimum requirements	Specific criteria
The desired outcomes of the process used by the program are compatible with the desired outcomes of the LWMP government process underpinned by relevant legislation, policy and procedures.	The process ensures that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm management areas covered by the relevant LWMP guideline(s) are addressed by the program in a way that is compatible with those guidelines. Acceptable farm management actions are developed that address the risk to land and water arising from the use of water on land, and are compatible with the relevant LWMP guideline(s). Any existing industry codes of practice for water use are taken into account. Any policies developed through consultative processes with local communities for the use of water are taken into account. Any relevant public interest issues are taken into account.
The program has a process that allows for a systematic and documented gathering of information by a person to develop a LWMP that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates how program standards are being met; and/or 	The process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes a person through a valid learning experience that imparts knowledge and prompts them to ask relevant questions. Encourages a person or group to describe their knowledge

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides commitments with defined actions and timeframes to undertake improvements in natural resource management to demonstrate program standards can be met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and beliefs on local natural resources and their resilience. Allows a person or group to describe their experiences with current on farm water use management practices. Allows a person or group to reflect on the natural resource outcomes of current farm management actions. If required, provides specific knowledge (such as economic and technical) on alternative water use management practices that may improve natural resource outcomes. Allows a person time to reflect and develop action plans in specific areas of their farm management to appropriately manage natural resource outcomes from on farm water use.
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Standard 3: Program process - LWMP verification process (property visit or audit) that confirms program standards have been, or can be met on farm (initial certification and ongoing certification)

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
<p>The program has documented procedures to verify whether program standards are being met, or can be on-farm as outlined in the LWMP for initial certification and ongoing certification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The desired outcomes of the process used by the program are compatible with the desired outcomes of the LWMP government process underpinned by relevant legislation, policy and procedures. The program has a property visit or audit process that allows for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a systematic, documented gathering of information or evidence and the objective unbiased assessment of that information to reach a valid conclusion of whether the LWMP is of a suitable standard. That is whether program standards are being met or can be met on-farm. This includes any commitments made in the LWMP with defined actions and timeframes support, or its facilitation to a person to address any areas where the LWMP is inadequate in meeting program standards prior to an application by a person for a LWMP approval following LWMP approval, is undertaken within timeframes and at intervals compatible with the LWMP government property visit or audit process for ongoing performance monitoring. The program can provide a certificate to a person in support of a LWMP approval (initial certification) as evidence that a LWMP has been developed consistent with program standards. The program can provide a certificate to a person as evidence that the approved LWMP has been periodically monitored for performance.

Standard 4: Program process - follow-up action process to ensure action is taken where on-farm action or in-action is not meeting program standards

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
<p>The program has documented procedures to facilitate the meeting of program standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The desired outcomes of the process used by the program are compatible with the desired outcomes of the LWMP government process supported by relevant legislation, policy and procedures. The program has a process that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> facilitates action being taken on-farm where the LWMP is not meeting program standards verifies on-farm action has been, or is being taken to a level necessary to maintain the certification status of the LWMP determines any withdrawal of certification where

	program standards are not being met
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Standard 5: Program process - dispute resolution

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
The program has documented procedures for dealing with disputes arising from program processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program has procedures for dealing with disputes between relevant parties concerning program delivery.

Standard 6: Program administration - change in circumstances concerning certification

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
The program has documented procedures for any change in a persons' circumstance concerning certification against the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program has a process that accommodates changes in the circumstances of a person concerning certification against the program, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> certification withdrawal by the program provider where a condition of certification is not met voluntary withdrawal from the program change of ownership of land

Standard 7: Program administration - competency for the LWMP development process (pre-certification preparation) and the LWMP verification process (certification)

Required Outcome	Minimum Requirements (assessment criteria)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program has documented procedures that define the selection and performance verification processes for individuals involved in the delivery of the LWMP development process and the LWMP verification process. The program has linkages to capacity building mechanisms that allow for the transference of technical support to a person using the program to develop a LWMP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals have suitable qualifications. Individuals have a sound knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the industry an enterprise is a part of program standards program processes Individuals engage in a manner that upholds standards for competent practice in a profession, occupation, role, or skill. Individuals engage in a manner that ensures consistency and autonomy in decision-making. This concerns verifying whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the practices and desired outcomes for natural resource management outlined in the LWMP are being met, and/or there are commitments with defined actions and timeframes to demonstrate practices and desired outcomes can be met, as outlined in the LWMP. Certification regarding the LWMP verification process (initial certification and ongoing certification) is only awarded after practices and desired outcomes outlined in the LWMP are demonstrated as having been met, or can be met with defined actions and timeframes. The qualifications and competence of individuals can be verified.

Specific criteria

Minimum requirements	Specific criteria
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals have suitable qualifications. • Individuals have a sound knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the industry an enterprise is a part of • program standards • program processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For individuals, outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimum competency standards and expectations • how skill sets will be assessed through selection and recruitment • how skill sets will be periodically assessed over time, outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • criteria used • assessment frequency • consequence of not meeting skill set requirements • how skills sets will be maintained over time • how training is linked to, and maintains required skill sets • how minimum competency standards and expectations would be met by current personnel • Code of Ethics/ Code of Conduct • relevant contractual arrangements • For minimum competency standards and expectations, as a minimum an individual must have the following skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technical capacity in relation to relevant natural resource management practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a minimum land, water and natural systems • understanding responses to farm management • property planning • knowledge in relevant local and regional natural resource management issues • knowledge of existing industry codes of practice for water use • knowledge of policies developed through consultative processes with local communities for the use of water • knowledge of any relevant public interest issues • knowledge of program standards • have an ability to identify what is happening on-farm • knowledge of legislative frameworks relevant to the LWMP process • adhere to relevant program standards, policies, procedures, and related products and activities, for e.g., ongoing delivery of the process required of standard 2 in accordance with the criteria outlined • adhere to a relevant Code of Ethics/ Code of Conduct. • Describe the program mechanisms, including technical and extension networks and partnerships that support individuals in gaining, maintaining and delivering expertise.
<p>Individuals engage in a manner that upholds standards for competent practice in a profession, occupation, role, or skill.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals are periodically assessed over time to ensure skill sets are maintained. • Individuals receive ongoing technical training and training for undertaking a property visit/ audit.
<p>Individuals engage in a manner that ensures consistency and autonomy in decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for the undertaking of property visits/ audits is consistent with the latest Australian and New Zealand Standards for auditing in relation to environmental management systems published by Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand. • Property visit/ audit training must incorporate training in relation to the identification of natural resource management issues including the verification that program standards are being met, or can be met.

The qualifications and competence of individuals providing technical support can be verified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records are maintained.
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Attachment E - Agreement principles

The following general principles should be reflected in a recognition agreement. An agreement is not limited to these general principles and will reflect a case by case negotiation relevant to the level of recognition sought.

The contractual terms of a recognition agreement can be discussed initially in general terms at the time an organisation seeks to meet with the Department and express their interest in recognition.

The operational terms to be negotiated and recorded in the agreement include the:

- Recognition term; an up to 10 year recognition approval timeframe.
- Establishment of a defined implementation process to ensure ongoing program alignment with the LWMP government system.
- This concerns any variations to the program or the LWMP government system over the recognition approval period:
 - Arrangements for any planned changes to the requirements outlined in the LWMP recognition framework.
 - Arrangements for any planned LWMP legislative and policy changes.
 - Arrangements for any planned program changes concerning the recognised standard for the relevant LWMP guideline.
 - Arrangements for any planned program changes concerning the purpose and structure of recognised processes.
- Establishment of a steering group for level 2 recognition and accreditation to evaluate progress, raise matters and work through barriers or blockages relevant to the recognition agreement. Terms of reference for the steering group must be established.
- Arrangements for the exchange of information and data between the organisation and NRW for administrative purposes. This concerns simplifying and streamlining processes regarding the administration of a LWMP approval based on participation in a recognised program
- Arrangements for the reporting requirements of the organisation and NRW regarding the maintenance of recognition standards over the recognition approval period.
- Content of a certificate provided to a person as evidence of certification against an accredited program.
- Arrangements concerning program accreditation for NRW to verify that the accredited program allows a person to maintain the requirements of their LWMP approval.
- With regard to program accreditation, NRW may undertake random on-farm property visits of a person's LWMP at a level determined as an outcome of recognition assessment. The purpose of on-farm property visits would be to collect aggregated information. This would be in support of any program changes and/or improvement to ensure LWMP approval requirements are maintained.
- Arrangements concerning program accreditation for follow-up action to be taken on-farm concerning any performance issues detected by NRW during a random on-farm property visit. Performance is assessed against the LWMP guideline that the program standard has been recognised against.
- Arrangements concerning program accreditation for NRW to ensure the ongoing administration of a LWMP approval where a person has had their certification withdrawn against the accredited program by the program provider.
- Timeframes and focus of an evaluation by NRW of the performance of a recognition agreement concerning the purpose of recognition.
 - An evaluation must include recommendations to address constraints, gaps and opportunities for improvement in the provision of the recognised alternative process.
 - The program provider must participate in the design, and facilitate the implementation of an evaluation by NRW. This includes the collection and provision of information for an evaluation.
 - NRW will evaluate the agreement twice during the recognition approval period. Any more than two

evaluations and the terms of an evaluation must be agreed to by NRW and the program provider.

- Requirement by the program provider to maintain accurate and sufficiently detailed records of all documentation relating to the recognised program for the duration of the recognition approval period.
 - Records must be made, identified, captured and retained in their original form and in an accessible and useable format that preserves the evidential integrity of those records.
 - Where property visits or audits are undertaken the results of these must be recorded. A sufficiently detailed record of a property visit or audit includes, and is not limited to, the recording of investigations undertaken, observations made, conclusions formed and action taken.
- Arrangements in the event that the program, for whatever reason, loses its recognition status during its recognition term.
- Any other matters deemed necessary.