

WANTOK 2014 (MACKAY)



# National ASSI Governance Work Group

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a proposal for discussion



A vehicle to take ASSI communities from Wantok 2014 through to the adoption of a Constitution for an incorporated national body.

**National ASSI Governance Work Group: a proposal for discussion**  
**Dated: 24 March 2014**

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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is evident from the Wantok 2012 and Wantok 2013 documents that in regards to formulating a National Body representing the collective interests of Australian South Seas Islanders (“ASSI”), the gathered communities, amongst other things, aspire to:

- provide a coherent national voice for Australian South Sea Islanders while recognising community diversity and local interests;
- engage from across the nation as many ASSI people, organisations and community groups to participate in the decision making process;
- acknowledge, accept and share the wisdom of Elders;
- engage and nurture the involvement of established community organisations;
- develop innovative strategies to encourage direct engagement and retain involvement of ASSI youth (under 33s);
- assist with the sustainability and cohesion of state, regional and local ASSI organisations,

In light of concerns regarding adequate regional representation, the question “*who is representing us as president,*” and the possible exclusion of some ASSI communities, it appears that the governance model ‘adopted’ at Wantok 2013 did not meet these requirements

It is proposed that a pathway forward would be for:

- a **National ASSI Governance Work Group** (“NASSIG Work Group”) be formed as a non-incorporated committee/work group until an Association is incorporated;
- an ASSI organisation participating in the Wantok process (an “Allied Organisation”) volunteers to provide **Interim Administration** support;
- a **Friends of NASSI initiative** be undertaken.

The NASSIG Work Group is to:

1. be bound by specific instructions (Terms of Reference) to guide its activities;
2. further facilitate the development of a truly representative and inclusive national body for the representation of Australian South Sea Islanders (“National ASSI Association”) which can coexist with state, regional and local ASSI organisations;
3. distribute and circulate widely within Australia’s ASSI communities a Constitution for the establishment of an incorporated National ASSI Association together with any necessary explanatory memoranda;
4. call for potential members of a National ASSI Association and nominations for election to the Association’s decision making body;
5. decide who will conduct the conference at which the resulting Constitution is to be adopted and the first election to the association's decision making body is held;
6. within nine (9) months of the conclusion of Wantok 2014 (Mackay) hold a meeting to adopt the Association Constitution;
7. be of limited life.

## **2 NASSIG WORK GROUP**

### **2.1 Role of a NASSIG Work Group Member**

The role of NASSIG Work Group Member is to:

- assist with the final development of a Constitution for a national Association for adoption by Allied Organisations and Friends of NASSI;
- assist with and ensure the delivery of a conference to adopt the Association's Constitution.

### **2.2 Selection Criteria for Membership of the NASSIG Work Group**

During the course of Wantok 2014 (Mackay) criteria for membership of the NASSIG Work Group will be developed.

The criteria will, amongst other things, include:

- demonstrated commitment to the welfare and development of ASSI communities
- availability of time
- requisite skills

### **2.3 Membership of the NASSIG Work Group**

Up to nine (9) ASSI identifying and identified persons may be appointed to the NASSIG Work Group. No more than two of these nine persons may be from any one geographic region.

At Wantok 2014 (Mackay) three (3) conference attendees will be selected by the conference to be the first members of the NASSIG Work Group.

In regards to the remaining six (6) NASSIG Work Group members, expressions of interest will be sought and invitations sent by Allied Organisations to persons who may meet the necessary criteria for membership of the NASSIG Work Group.

Within 30 days of the conclusion of Wantok 2014 (Mackay), the presidents of Allied Organisations to meet and decide which of the persons expressing interest best meet the criteria and would best form the NASSIG Work Group.

The presidents of Allied Organisations may decide upon one or more of their own number.

The Interim Administration is an ex officio (by right of holding an office) non-voting member of the NASSIG Work Group.

The NASSIG Work Group may seek specific expert advice and co-opt up to three (3) additional non-voting Work Group members.

### **2.4 Chair of the NASSIG Work Group**

The role of Chair of the NASSIG Work Group is to:

- lead the NASSIG Work Group in the process for the final development of the Association Constitution
- chair NASSIG Work Group meetings and the meeting in which the Association Constitution is adopted

The Chair is not a National Spokesperson for ASSI communities.

## **2.5 Selecting the Chair of the NASSIG Work Group**

From the list of persons expressing interest in participating in the NASSIG Work Group and who meet the criteria, presidents of Allied Organisations to decide who would best Chair the group.

## **2.6 Meetings of NASSIG Work Group**

Meetings of the NASSIG Work Group may be called and organised as sought fit by the Chair in consultation with the Interim Administration.

The Chair may conduct meetings as is appropriate and is to seek consensus where possible.

In the case of a tied vote of the NASSIG Work Group, the Chair may use a casting vote.

In the absence of the Chair, the NASSIG Work Group may agree to or elect a meeting Chair. This meeting Chair is not permitted a casting vote.

## **2.7 NASSIG Work Group Meeting Quorum**

A quorum of the NASSIG Work Group for decision making purposes is half of the Work Group members plus one (1). Any decision of the NASSIG Work Group must receive the support of half of the Work Group members plus one (1).

A quorum of the NASSIG Work Group does not include the Interim Administration or any co-opted members.

## **2.8 NASSI Work Group Specific Instructions**

As part of facilitating the development of a truly representative and inclusive national body for the representation of Australian South Sea Islanders, amongst other things and before the next Wantok meeting, the NASSI Work Group instructions are to:

- 120 days prior circulate a draft Association Constitution to Friends of NASSIG seeking comment together with notice of date and venue of meeting to adopt Constitution for an incorporated Association;
- 90 days prior close the 'comment period' and consider submissions;
- 30 days prior circulate final draft Constitution, motions and papers;
- conduct an election process for the Association's decision making body as set out in the draft Constitution.

Further specific instructions will be developed at Wantok 2014 for the NASSIG Work Group.

## **2.9 Casual Vacancy**

In the case of a Work Group member being unable continue in the role, the Chair will first refer to previously received expressions of interest to undertake the role to confirm existing interest. If no person from the list is interested or does not meet the criteria, the Chair to consult with the presidents of Allied Organisations to seek their advice regarding the replacement.

In the case of the Chair, presidents of Allied Organisations will meet and decide on a person who best meets the criteria.

### **3 INTERIM ADMINISTRATION**

#### **3.1 Role of Interim Administration**

The role of Interim Administration is to:

- provide administrative support to the NASSIG Work Group
- be an ex officio (by right of holding an office) non-voting member of the NASSIG Work Group
- administer the Friends of NASSI initiative
- keep and maintain a Register of Friends of NASSI
- keep and maintain a 'trust account' for any monies received for the operation of the NASSIG Work Group and for donations received by Friends of NASSI
- engage and communicate with Friends of NASSI regarding the development of the national body
- continue advocacy work with government that is already in progress
- assist in the delivery of the conference to adopt the Association's Constitution

It is best to think of the Interim Administration role as being similar to the function of a Chief Executive Officer.

An Allied Organisation of 'stature' is to undertake the role.

It is expected that the successful organisation will provide a range of personnel and resources to fulfil this administrative role.

#### **3.2 Selection as the Interim Administration**

An Allied Organisation self-nominates to undertake this role.

The presidents of Allied Organisations to determine whether the self-nominated Allied Organisation meets the criteria. If so, the self-nominee is thus appointed.

If more than one Allied Organisation volunteers, then the presidents of Allied Organisations will decide which is best able to fulfil the role.

#### **3.3 Casual Vacancy**

In the case of an organisation being unable continue to provide such support, the presidents of Allied Organisations meet and request another Allied Organisation who meets the criteria to undertake the role.

## **4 FRIENDS OF NASSI INITIATIVE**

A Friends of NASSI Initiative is to be undertaken and administered by the Interim Administration.

The Friends of NASSI list will form the basis for the initial intake of members into the Association.

A Friend of NASSI is entitled to:

- receive and comment on a draft Association Constitution
- receive notices and papers for the conference to adopt the Association's Constitution
- vote on final draft Constitution and in the first election of the Association

### **4.1 Eligibility to be considered a Friend of NASSI**

In the case of an ASSI identifying and identified person or organisation that has already joined a Wantok list held by Australian South Seas Islanders (Port Jackson) ("ASSI.PJ") an invitation to join Friends of NASSI will be issued by ASSI.PJ to those list members. Receipt by the Interim Administration of a duly complete acceptance of the invitation will be sufficient for the Interim Administration to enter the person or organisation on the register of Friends of NASSI.

In the case of a person, to be considered a Friend of NASSI the person must:

- be ASSI identifying and identified
- complete a membership form witnessed by two Friends of NASSI
- forward the completed membership form together with a donation to the Interim Administration
- receive from the Interim Administration confirmation of entry on the Register of Friends of NASSI

In the case of an organisation, the organisation must:

- be ASSI identifying and primarily service an ASSI community or communities
- complete a membership form witnessed by another two ASSI organisations who are Friends of NASSI
- forward the completed membership form together with a donation to the Interim Administration
- receive from the Interim Administration confirmation of entry on the Register of Friends of NASSI

### **4.2 Wantok Lists Held by ASSI.PJ**

It is acknowledged that the Wantok Lists held by ASSI.PJ are covered by privacy legislation and cannot be provided to a third party without consent.

ASSI.PJ has indicated it will assist in facilitating the issuing of invitations to join Friends of NASSI via these Wantok Lists.