

Summary of progress
as of
28/4/2017

AUSTRALIAN ORGANIC INDUSTRY WORKING GROUP

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8/12/16 Government convened Organic Industry meeting at Parliament House

Government Lead: Britt Spyrou

Attendees

Representatives affiliated with the Organic Industry Standards and Certification Council, the Organic Federation of Australia and the Australian Organic Traders Association: Adams Australia; Australian Organic; Australian Organic Meats; AUS QUAL; Biodynamic Research Institute; NASAA; Queen Fine Foods; Organic Advisory Service; Organic Food Chain; Organic Mushroom Farm; and Right Food Group.

Agreed Next Steps

- Revised issues and stakeholder views paper incorporating all comments – mid January.
- Industry to explore activities that could be undertaken as a group to further grow the sector, including potential funding options, for presentation at a future meeting.
- Department to develop draft timeline and process for conducting Regulation Impact Statement for single standard and future regulation of organic exports.
- Convene next meeting in late January to discuss more detailed proposition to put to the Deputy Prime Minister.

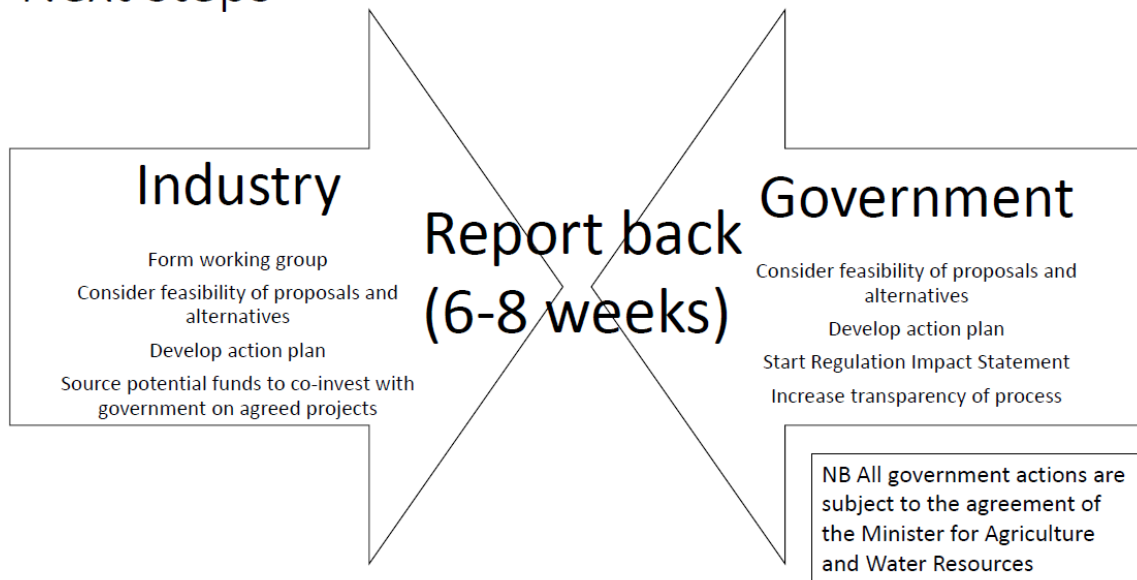
Documents circulated post meeting: Organics Summary of Discussions 8th Dec & Organics Outcomes of Meeting 8th Dec.

30/1/17 Government convened Organic Industry meeting at Parliament House

Attendees; Adams Australia, Australian Food and Grocery Council, Australian Organic, Australian Organic Meats, AUS QUAL, Biodynamic Research Institute, JAS ANZ, NASAA Organic, OBE Organic Beef, Organic Advisory Service, Organic Food Chain, Organics Systems and Solutions, Right Food Group, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

Agreed Next Steps

Next steps



Documents circulated post meeting: Organics outcomes of meeting 30th Jan & Government Discussion Paper Titled Accessing Premium Markets: Australian Organics Discussions with industry on implementing the Australian Government Agricultural Competitiveness Policy

3/2/17 Government proposed that a working group be convened, subsequently known as AOIWG.

AOIWG is an acronym for Australian Organic Industry Working Group

Extract of Britt Spyrou email on 3/2/17

‘Thanks for your expression of interest in participating in the working group to develop an industry action plan over the next 6-8 weeks.

A number of people suggested alternative (new) membership for the working group. Given the time frame, I suggest we consider going with those already involved who put up their hand and work on a list of people to call together for focus groups to test the action plan.

The proposal on how the working group will operate for you to consider and decide at the first teleconference is:

- 3-4 teleconferences over the next 4-5 weeks of 1-2 hours duration
- break working group up to work with focus groups in weeks 5-6
- come back together for teleconference/face-to-face in weeks 6-8 to finalise the industry action plan. ‘

A draft discussion paper was released by Government for public consultation. Comments were invited by 28 February 2017.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DeptAgNews/status/827044389381771264>

Web: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/organic-bio-dynamic/accessing-premium-markets-australian-organics>

13/2/17 First teleconference of AOIWG held

Greg McNamara was appointed by Government as Independent Chair

Attendees

Participants: Greg McNamara (Chair); Anni Brownjohn; Sam Hilmsted; Chris McLoughlin; Andrew Monk; Casie O'Brien; Greg Paynter; Keith Morris; Simone Tully; Marg Will; Dalene Wray

Observers: Britt Sprou; Ian Lyall

Action 1: Chris agreed to lead a small group to develop a one page proposal on a new self-funding body or structure for discussion at the next teleconference. Other people that Chris will contact in developing the one pager are: Simone, Andrew (nominee), Anni (nominee) and Keith (nominee). Nominees to be identified within 48 hours.

Action 2: Andrew Monk to speak with Kelly Lewis about taking notes at the Organics Industry Working Group teleconferences from this point onwards.

Action 3: Britt to assess availability of the working group to hold the next teleconference on Monday 20 February rather than Tuesday 21 February.

Documents circulated post meeting: Draft Minutes of the meeting & AOIWG Contact List

14/2/17 Dropbox folder created to share some of the documents used by the AOIWG

Chris and Sam shared their thoughts with the AOIWG by email & Chris prepared a document titled Industry Structural Blueprint Draft

20/2/17 Second teleconference of AOIWG held

Attendees

Participants: Greg McNamara (Chair); Sam Statham (SS); Keith Hilmsted (KH); Chris McLoughlin (CM); Andrew Monk (AM); Keith Morris (KM); Simone Tully (ST); Marg Will (MW); Dalene Wray (DW); Wayne Shields (WS); Mark Anderson (MA).

Observers: Britt Spyrou (BS); Ian Lyall (IL).

ACTION 1: SS (nominee) and CM (nominee) will start the process of reviewing international models ie. NZ, USDA NOP, Sweden etc . The updated report will be due for presentation prior to the next Open invitation to work through the process, CM and SS to provide the update prior to the next scheduled working group meeting scheduled for 1st March 2017.

Documents circulated post meeting: Draft Minutes of the meeting & ORGANIC WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION PAPER by Sam Statham

1/3/17 Third teleconference of the AOIWG held

Attendees

Participants: Greg McNamara (Chair); Sam Statham (SS); Chris McLoughlin (CM); Andrew Monk (AM); Simone Tully (ST); Dalene Wray (DW); Greg Paynter (GP); Wayne Shields (WS); Mark Anderson (MA).

Observers: Ian Lyall (IL); Britt Spyrou (BS)

ACTION: DW will speak with ST offline who will share some of the work OFA has commissioned with consultants. DW to speak to other parties to find out who they used as consultants, how much it costs and whether they have any recommendations for how the industry ought to be used. DW to canvas the group and ascertain how much money is likely to be able to be raised in order to appoint the necessary consultants.

10/3/17 Agenda struck for face-face meeting of the AOIWG later in the month of March.

Item 1.	One voice to government/Australian consumers/international markets: on what topics? How can this be best structured? How can this be best funded?
Item 2.	Standards, Certification and Accreditation - delivering market compliance and market access: what we have and what we might need still?
Item 3.	R&D - funding the future - delivering well targeted organic specific producer level R&D to resolve productivity challenges for organic: How we tap into levies to fund? How to structure this?
Item 4.	Promotion, education, development of industry: for industry to do - how to fund this? How to structure this?
Item 5.	An agreed where to from here
Item 6.	Teleconference call with Britt for the last 15 minutes of the meeting to update her on progress.

10/3/17 Notification of opportunity for AOIWG to apply for the Federal Government’s Package for Small Exporters (PASE) grant, which had applications closing 27 March

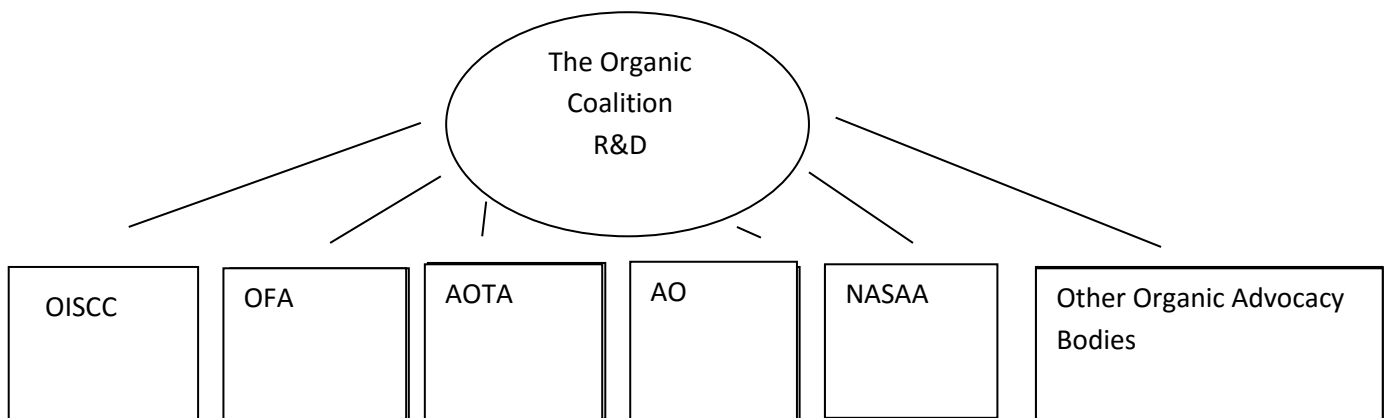
20/3/17 Face to face meeting of the AOIWG in Sydney

Action item: An agreement reached to seek the expertise from a consultant, with primary objective of reviewing and recommending a path forward to developing a organisational structure that can represent the views of a united Organic Industry.

20/3/17 Marg Wills Discussion Paper tabled in Sydney titled ‘Discussion Paper for The Organic Industry’

Purpose: The purpose of the document was to provide suggestions for the strategic evolution of the Australian Organic Industry.

Proposed Structure. We propose that an R&D body be founded – for the purpose of today it will be referred to as “The Organic Coalition”. Existing Organic Industry bodies would then be members of this R&D Body.



22/3/17 Consultant Natalie Collard appointed to: Prepare a discussion paper & to prepare & submit a PASE funding application

Exert of email from Greg McNamara to the AOIWG on 22/3/17

‘Chris, Dalene and myself have selected and engaged Natalie Collard to undertake the attached agreed proposal, we have also included some information on Natalie.

Natalie's availability and past experience in working with the dairy industry on a similar project will be of enormous benefit. Natalie will commence on Friday and would like to speak with as many stakeholders as possible, this also includes anyone outside the working group.

Please also note that we have asked Natalie to apply on behalf of the group for some funding which needs to be in by the 27th March, Britt was kind enough to let us know about the grant opportunity.

We have also discussed the option of another face to face meeting or teleconference call whereby Natalie would present her report, we can determine this once we have the completed report.'

Scope of Natalie's engagement;

1. A concise discussion paper outlining the ideal structure for the peak organics representative body and research, development and extension (R,D&E) body for the organic industry in Australia. This paper will:
 - a. take a first-principles approach;
 - b. be informed by consultation with interested working group members, identified industry stakeholders and independent desk top research;
 - b. provide a high level assessment of industry collective objectives and opportunities;
 - c. provide a high level outline and assessment of structural options;
 - b. recommend a preferred industry structure/s model;
 - c. be the basis of presentation and discussion at a meeting of the working group;
 - d. support the working group to make a collective decision; and
 - e. include an executive summary of 1-2 pages.
2. Funding application to the Federal Government Package Assisting Small Exporters (PASE) grants process.

27/3/17 PACE funding application prepared and submitted by Natalie Collard on behalf of the AOIWG.

PASE Grant Application and Risk Management Plan

- Submitted via government online portal on 27 March 2017
- Project name: Australian Organic Export Industry Market Readiness and Market Access Project
- Applicant: Organic Federation Australia (OFA) in trust on behalf of the Australian Organics Industry Working Group, Contact name: Greg McNamara Independent Chair, AOIWG
- Total funding request: up to \$436,000.
- The Australian Organic Export Industry Market Readiness and Market Access Project ('The Project') comprises a suite of complementary initiatives to position the Australian organics sector to leverage the strong fundamentals for growth and international demand. These initiatives will address the barriers to harness short, medium and long term export opportunities and therefore the barriers to the growth of the organics sector.
- The specific initiatives proposed for delivery are:

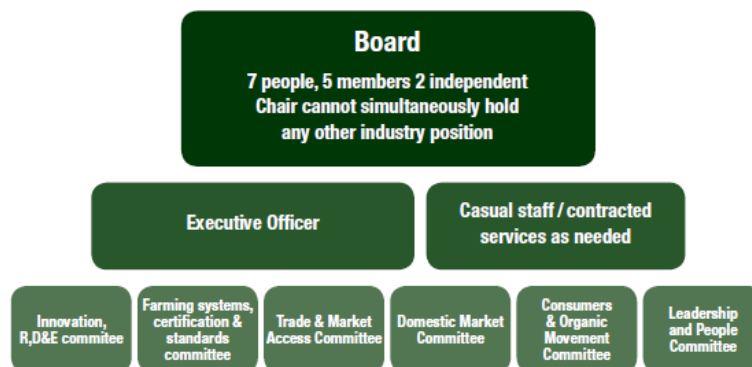
1. Analysis of the levy contribution (including matching funds) by organic farmers and the return on investment (ROI) of these funds;
2. Report on the industry need for a standardised organic certification standard (or Regulatory Impact Statement if approach already agreed), the impact on existing certifiers and holders of certifications and transition process;
3. Development of an Organic Industry Research and Development Strategy for 2018 – 2023;
4. The development of an Australian Organics Industry Exports Strategy, including priorities, encompassing target markets by commodity, country and region to align government, industry and commercial efforts;
5. Analysis of the market readiness needs specific to Australian organic farmers, training and upskilling required and most cost-effective delivery options;
6. Delivery of a market guide for how the organic industry can differentiate their products in competitive export markets; and
7. Market knowledge report on premium markets for Australian organic products and services by commodity, country and demographic. This will include competitive advantages and disadvantages of organics with respect to market access, consumer preferences and demographics.
8. Inaugural Organics Industry Summit, an industry-wide formal consultation and communication process open to all Australian organic export industry participants, for the purposes of contribution and gaining buy-in to the Organic Industry Research and Development Strategy, Australian Organics Industry Exports Strategy, and an agreed organic certification standard.

We will be advised formally in May or June if we are successful in obtaining all or part of the funding requested.

12/4/17 Collard Report completed & emailed to AOIWG for consideration.

Report Title: Examining the Ideal Structure for a Peak Organic Representative Body - Report to the Australian Organic Industry Working Group

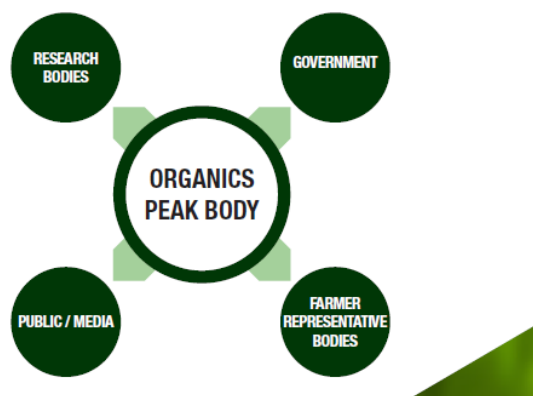
A new peak body to represent the organics sector in Australia was recommended as described in the images below. If agreed, a two-phase implementation process was recommended.



Three sources of revenue



Four primary external stakeholder groups



Consideration process:

Written feedback via email by midday 17 April, addressed to Greg McNamara using 'reply all' function.

Teleconference 1, Tuesday 18 April, 2pm – 3:20pm

Teleconference 2, Monday 24 April, 1pm – 2:20pm (tbc)

Face to face meeting, first half of May date TBC

12/4/17 – 18/4/17 Collard Report feedback tabled via email from the AOIWG

18/4/17 Fourth teleconference of the AOIWG to consider recommendations of the Collard Report & discuss feedback.

The Chair invited each participant to provide a short summary of their feedback to the report.

Attendance:

Greg McNamara (Chair)	Brei Montgomery
Mark Anderson	Keith Morris
Anthony Bauer (part of call)	Casie O'Brien
Liz Clay	Greg Paynter
Jan Denham	Wayne Shields
Lorraine Gordon	Britt Spyrou
Quentin Kennedy	Sam Statham
Peter Longhurst	Simone Tully
Ian Mack	Marg Will
Chris McLoughlin	Dalene Wray
Andrew Monk	

Natalie Collard (minutes)

Key points and actions

The Chair thanked all participants for their feedback. He asked the group how we get all organic producers in the room to contribute to decision-making. He noted that we all have a responsibility to reach out to those in our networks to inform them of the process and give them the opportunity to contribute.

He noted that everyone has agreed they want a peak body the question is how you get there. The Chair noted that he and Natalie will soon drop out of the process and it's up to the industry to drive it forward.

Actions:

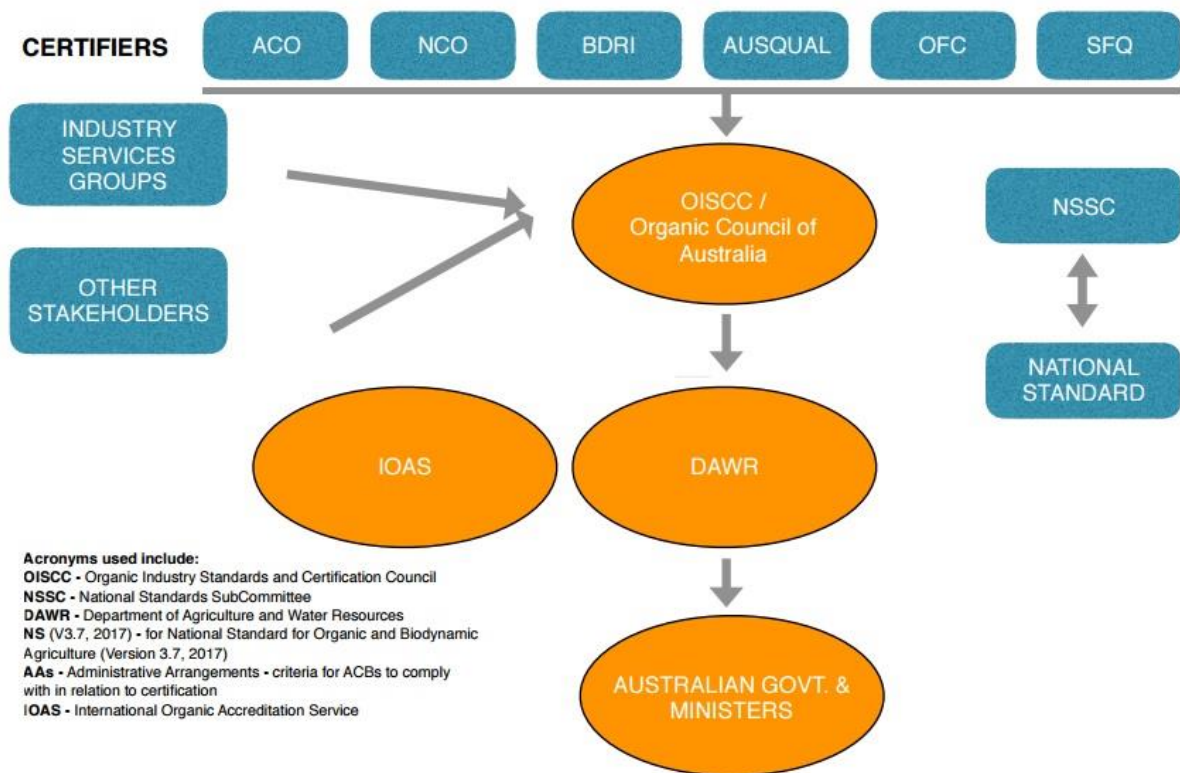
1. Submit to the group via email or dropbox alternative models for consideration and/or pros and cons of current organic industry bodies by COB Friday 21 April for consideration at Monday teleconference. **(All)**
2. Provide additional feedback/comments via email to the AOIWG by COB Friday 21 April . **(All)**

Documents circulated post meeting: Draft Minutes of the meeting

[24/4/17 Sam Statham Discussion Paper emailed to AOIWG](#)

An alternative proposal written for the Organic Industry Working Group by Sam Statham. Expanded from the basic ideas presented by Wayne Shields "Organic Industry Peak Body Structures" 24 April 2017

Edited extracts from the discussion paper: Sam, Andy and Wayne propose that we are so diverse that direct representation is not practical and a "Council of Organisations" structure is not only possible, as shown in the present OISCC forum, but better as the basis for a Peak Body, as long as it has limited and well defined remits. The basic setup is presented in this image:



Sam's proposal is that we work with this setup, which is what we already have in the form of the OISCC Council, but to also improve it to make OISCC's role more clearly defined as a limited peak body, in a sense "OISCC Plus": The "Pluses" being:

- "plus clarity of purpose"
- "plus clarity of process and governance"
- "plus improved funding and capacity"
- "plus closer government liaison"
- "plus better public liaison on its defined areas of representation".

As defined by Wayne, OISCC presently represents industry to government for the following LIMITED core areas:

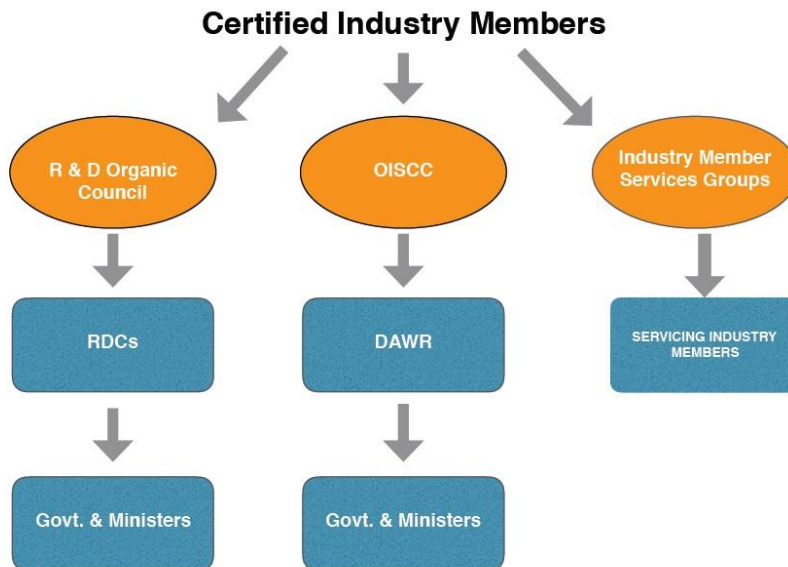
1. Organic Standard - managing the National Standard on behalf of and in liaison with DAWR
2. Accreditation Systems - liaising with accreditors (including IOAS, DAWR, etc) on AAs
3. Market Access - identifying and working with DAWR on international market access
4. Market Integrity - identifying and preventing organic fraud, managing certification systems

WHAT IT IS NOT

Also per Wayne, there are additional services that can be supported but not delivered by OISCC/Organic Council structure, because they are not necessarily key Peak Body roles in our industry and are (or could be) provided well by some of the existing diversity of organic industry service organisations.

1. R&D Peak Council - driving organic specific R&D investment via committee of industry stakeholders. Eg, OFA's existing "Trust", or a new working group created to develop this with the support of OISSC.
2. Other Industry Services : network events, lobbying, etc may still be delivered by industry services organisations such as OFA who may or may not be members of OISSC but may be supported or funded by it. For example, organising an industry conference is not necessarily the role of a peak body, though the peak body would endorse it.

This idea is well summarised in the diagram from Wayne, below:



Proposed new OISSC 'Plus' Membership criteria:

As OISSC is an indirect membership "peak" organisation, individuals and for-profit corporations are ineligible for membership of the Council. I believe that the entry of more members to the Council should be limited to a workable maximum and that each member organisation must:

1. have greater than 100 members
2. have audited governance procedures complying with all relevant laws and standards
3. be Not-for-profit
4. be dedicated to organic operators and not a "front group"
5. be nominated by 2 existing Council members
6. be approved by 70% vote of existing Council members
7. undertakes to support the Council's aims and role

24/4/17 Fifth teleconference of the AOIWG to consider alternative peak body models & agree on next steps.

Chair summarized as follows: We now have the Collard Report. We left last weeks meeting seeking suggestions of an alternative peak body structure or an improvement on what is already there.

Andy, Sam and Wayne subsequently presented another document today, titled 'Sam Statham Discussion Paper on Peak Industry Body'

Motion: That the 3 draft documents (Marg Wills, Collard Report, Statham Discussion Paper) are considered to be in the mix for future consideration by the AOIWG as we continue to move along our pathway. Moved Wayne, Seconded Chris. Motion carried unanimously.

Action Items

1. Seven proposed members of the Steering Committee to share information about themselves with the AOIWG by email.
2. Dalene to draft a one pager summarising the work of the AOIWG & proposed next steps and share with AOIWG by COB Wednesday.
3. If accepted, this one pager, can be shared with a wider audience by Friday at the latest. It can be used to support the call for funding for the next steps.
4. Dalene to re-share link to dropbox.
5. AOIWG participants to all send Greg an email to confirm how much money they are willing to contribute to next steps. It was confirmed that the group cannot employ someone unless we have the funds committed in writing.
6. In two weeks, we reconvene and the steering committee will give the broader AOIWG a brief of what progress has been made. – Britt to send doodle to check dates.

Participants

Greg McNamara	Independent Chair
Mark Anderson	General Manager, National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia Ltd
Jan Denham	Chairman NASAA, Owner Karra Organic Farm
Lorraine Gordon	Program Director, Farm Co-operatives and Collaboration Pilot Program – Southern Cross University
Quentin Kennedy	Owner & Managing Director – Kialla Pure Foods and Ausorganic Feeds, Director – Australian Organic
Peter Longhurst	Director – Primal Foods Group Pty Ltd
Ian Mack	Adams Australia
Chris McLoughlin	Director Organic Federation of Australian, Owner & Director, The Organic Mushroom Farm
Andrew Monk	Chairman – Australian Organic
Brei Montgomery	National Sales Manager – The Organic Farm Gate Pty Ltd
Keith Morris	Managing Director, Organic Food Chain

Narelle Chenery	Miessence
Greg Paynter	Organic Advisory Service (Australia) – Consultancy, Board Member – Organic Federation of Australia
Marg Will	Organic Systems & Solutions
Wayne Shields	President – Victorian Farmers’ Markets Association, Owner / Director / Market Gardener, Peninsula Fresh Organics
Britt Spyrou	Director, Exports Division – Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
Sam Statham	Director – Rosnay Organic Wines Pty Ltd, Member – National Standards Sub Committee
Simone Tully	Australian Organic Meats, OFA
Marg Will	Chief Executive Officer – Organics Systems & Solutions
Dalene Wray	General Manager – OBE Beef Pty Ltd

24/4/17 Next steps agreed by the AOIWG

1. Consider the establishment of a steering committee to guide the AOIWG through the next phase of the pathway to an organic industry summit in September 2017 - The proposed pathway is detailed on pages 20-24 of the Collard Report.
2. Steering committee to appoint a business manager for 3 days per week /3 months (36 days) to deliver:
 - a. Terms of Reference and secretariat services for Steering Committee
 - b. Coordinate Summit Pathway Proposal, including applications for grants, funding and other contributions
3. Canvas industry participants for contributions which total approximately \$54,000 to support the operational costs of the group over the next 3 months.
4. Indicative 3 month timeline as proposed in the Collard Report is tabled below.

Indicative three month timeline

Appoint AOIWG Steering Committee	1 May 2017
Confirm and Confirm funding arrangements and collect funds in trust	3 May 2017
Appoint Business Manager	3 May 2017
Prepare media release and key messages for meeting with Minister (if new peak body agreed, include public call for Board EOIs and subscribe to communications mailing list)	In time for meeting of AOIWG with Minister
Develop monthly communication template and mailing list	7 May 2017
Submit Leadership in Agriculture Grant Application	17 May 2017
Develop Terms of Reference for AOIWG Steering Committee	20 May 2017
Confirm Position Description & recruitment process for Transition Project Manager	23 May 2017
Plan and coordinate integrity workshop with government and OISC	To be held in June 2017
Plan and coordinate R&D workshop with RDCs and SCU (& others as appropriate)	To be held in July 2017
Plan and coordinate market innovation workshop with in-kind partners	To be held in August 2017
Plan and coordinate Organic Industry Summit	To be held in September 2017
Appoint Project Manager to lead transitional arrangements and oversee any successful PASE or other grant initiatives	August 2017

5.

26/4/17 Biographies of candidates for the proposed Steering Committee of AOIWG submitted for consideration.

(Note: Peter Longhurst's bio is yet to be included)

Document circulated: Biographies of candidates for the proposed Steering Committee of AOIWG

Proposed Candidates: Dr Andrew Monk, Narelle Chenery, Wayne Shields, Chris McLoughlin, Mark Anderson, Dalene Wray, Peter Longhurst