INDIGENOUS GROUNDWATER DECLARATION

PREAMBLE

We recognise and reaffirm that Indigenous people of Australia have not ceded their sovereignty over their lands and waters and have been connected to these for over 65,000 years. Each respective Nation holds their own cultural and spiritual identity, songs, dances, and stories, which are expressions of their connections to their lands and waters and the species that depend on them.

The Australian Chapter of the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH) has put forward this declaration on the 22 November 2022 at this Australasian Groundwater Conference (AGC) in good faith, with Articles prepared below, for signatories to acknowledge, champion and support, through actions for the betterment of including and respecting Indigenous knowledges in groundwater activities, deliberations, decisions, and policies.



PATHWAYS TO WATER (GALI) B. MOGGRIDGE (KAMILAROI) 2006

Article 1

We acknowledge, as per the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Indigenous peoples' right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard. We recognise Indigenous peoples' right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences.

Article 2

We acknowledge the deep and ancient cultural and spiritual connection of Indigenous people to the land and waters of Australia. This connection includes the groundwater that is stored within, and emerges from, the earth, and places of cultural significance formed by groundwater processes.

Article 3

We acknowledge that groundwater remains an important component of Indigenous life and ways of knowing and being. Deep cultural and spiritual connections to groundwater are maintained through Lore, language, stories, songs, and dances (also known as Songlines and Dreamtime).

Article 4

We recognise and respect the role of Indigenous people as knowledge-holders and stewards of groundwater resources, for which they have customary law, the first law, which they have upheld and relied upon for thousands of years.

Article 5

We recognise the value of groundwater research and teaching that incorporates Indigenous knowledge and highlights the role of groundwater in Indigenous communities. We support the inclusion of Indigenous voices in decision making regarding groundwater, so that Indigenous people's values and uses of groundwater can be protected.

Article 6

We recognise the importance of effective, respectful engagement of hydrogeologists and water scientists with Indigenous people, to produce and share groundwater knowledge and to develop solutions to the groundwater-related problems that impact Indigenous people and their land and water resources.

Article 7

We declare our intention to walk together so that Indigenous and western scientific knowledge can inform the ways of learning and collecting data. Through this two-ways approach to hydrogeology and science we achieve our common goal of protecting and securing groundwater for the future.