

Animal Ethics Governance and Policy (GAP) Committee

Terms of Reference – Feb 2021

1. Definitions

- 1.1. "Animal Ethics Committee" (AEC) shall mean an AEC, as outlined in the 'Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes' under Part 3 of The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and Regulations 2019.
- 1.2. "Committee" shall mean the "The Alfred Research Alliance AEC Governance and Policy Committee".
- 1.3. "Member" shall mean a person appointed to the Committee by the organisation.
- 1.4. "Proposal" shall mean a written application to carry out a project for consideration by an AEC as specified in The Australian Code.
- 1.5. "Project" shall mean a scientific activity or activities that form a discrete piece of work. A project cannot commence until it has been approved by the AEC as specified in The Australian Code
- 1.6. "Scientific procedures" shall be defined as in Part 3 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986.
- 1.7. "The Australian Code" shall mean the current edition of The Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes.
- 1.8. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and Regulations 2019 shall mean that as located at <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-legislation/prevention-of-cruelty-to-animals-legislation>.
- 1.9. "Licence Holder(s)" shall mean the Institution(s) within the Alfred Research Alliance that hold a Scientific Procedures Premises Licence (SPPL), Specified Animals Breeding Licence (SABL) or Scientific Procedures Fieldwork Licence (SPFL) administered by the Alfred Research Alliance AEC.

Licence Holders (as at 1 Feb 2021):		
Licence number	Institute	Licence holder
SPPL20259	Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute	Professor Tom Marwick
SPPL20212	Monash Central Clinical School	Professor Terence O'Brien
SPPL20234	Burnet Institute	Professor David Anderson
SPPL20216	AMREP AS	Ms Debra Ramsey
SPPL20414	CCLabs Pty Ltd	Dr Brett Kagan
SABL20361	AMREP AS	Ms Debra Ramsey
SPFL20059	Alfred Health	Professor Terence O'Brien

1.10. "Quorate meeting" shall mean a meeting consisting of:

- The chair of each AEC
- An external member of an AEC (i.e., Category C or D member)
- A representative of the Research Office
- A representative of the animal facility
- A scientific representative from Baker and Monash.

Note: Members may hold dual roles e.g., they might represent both the AEC Chair and be a scientific representative of an institution.

2. Function of the GAP Committee

The primary function of the Committee is to facilitate consistent operation across the two AECs in accordance with The Australian Code and relevant Victorian Legislation, on behalf of all Licence Holders at the site.

The Committee will:

- 2.1. Determine and approve policies for the operation of the AECs.
- 2.2. Communicate relevant decisions to the AECs, animal users, animal Licence Holders, AMREP AS board, Alfred Research Alliance Council, and any other stakeholders.
- 2.3. Review reports on post-AEC approval monitoring of project compliance
- 2.4. Review audit reports from Animal Welfare Victoria and actions arising from audit reports.
- 2.5. Based on review of the annual AEC Report to Licence Holders, monitor the performance of AECs and make recommendations for improvements.
- 2.6. Serve as the first point of contact for the resolution of disputes and complaints involving AEC members and/or applicants to the AEC that cannot be resolved at the AEC level.
- 2.7. Monitor the AECs review of guidelines for the care of animals that are bred, held, and used for scientific purposes on behalf of Licence Holders.

3. Responsibilities of Committee members

The primary responsibility of members is to ensure the AECs operate in accordance with the requirements of The Australian Code.

3.1. Confidentiality:

Intellectual property interests of the institutions, individual privacy and maintenance of commercial-in-confidence obligations may be the subject of confidentiality and in-camera policy may be applied during meetings. Members may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

3.2. Conflict of Interest:

A member with any direct or indirect interest in any matter of business before the Committee, which may be construed as a potential pecuniary or other gain, shall declare that interest to the Committee. The Chair shall decide what action to take.

4. Membership of the Committee and term of office

- 4.1. While the term of office of each member will vary, the general expectation is that a member will sit on the Committee for at least 12 months.
- 4.2. The Committee shall comprise members with a genuine interest and commitment to the ethical use of animals for scientific purposes.

- 4.3. The composition of the Committee will resemble, but not be restricted to, that defining an AEC in the Australian Code.
- 4.4. The composition of the Committee will be such as to meet the requirement for a quorum at Committee meetings (See 1.10)

5. Nomination and appointment of members to the Committee

- 5.1. Before appointment, all members shall acknowledge in writing their acceptance of these Terms of Reference of the Committee and any requirements for confidentiality.
- 5.2. Members shall be appointed by the Chair of the Committee in consultation with Licence Holders.
- 5.3. Licence Holders will appoint a Chair able to consider governance and policies impartially, to communicate, negotiate and resolve conflict, and to understand the relevant ethical and animal welfare issues.
- 5.4. Members must declare any actual or potential conflict of interest that could affect their objectivity.
- 5.5. New members shall be given copies of minutes from the last three Committee meetings and a copy of the Terms of Reference.
- 5.6. In the event of a member leaving during their term on the Committee, the Animal Ethics Office, or the relevant institution as appropriate will seek nominations for a replacement.
- 5.7. In performance of their duties, the Chair will:
 - 5.7.1. Ensure that the Committee operates in accordance with the principles and requirements of the Australian Code, the relevant policies of the Alfred Research Alliance and the agreed Committee procedures.
 - 5.7.2. Use their authority to exclude a member based on their declaration of any actual or potential conflict of interest. (See 5.4).
 - 5.7.3. Oversee all requirements of the AEC to report and review its operations as outlined in the Australian Code.
 - 5.7.4. Provide an annual report to the Licence Holders on business conducted by the Committee.
- 5.8. In the absence of the Chair at any meeting of the Committee, the members present shall appoint as acting Chair.

6. Meetings

- 6.1. The Executive Officer(s) of the AECs or other member of the Baker Institute Research Office will support the Committee and the Chair in scheduling meetings, developing the agenda, distributing paperwork before meetings, and preparing minutes of meetings.
- 6.2. The Committee will meet at least three times per year.
- 6.3. The date and venue of meetings shall be determined by the Chair to coincide with the availability of AEC Chairs.
- 6.4. The Executive Officer of the AEC or other nominated person (See 6.1) shall:
 - 6.4.1. Prepare an agenda in consultation with the Chair, who will confirm content at least 15 business days before the scheduled meeting.
 - 6.4.2. Advise third parties of the deadline, set at 3 days before distribution of paperwork to members, for submission of updates and reports.

- 6.4.3. Distribute the agenda, any papers (for member comment) and updates and reports at least 7 business days before the scheduled meeting.
- 6.4.4. Prepare and circulate to members within 15 days of the meeting, minutes of the meeting. Acceptance of the minutes will be an agenda item at the next meeting of the Committee.
- 6.5. Actions arising from the meeting will be dealt with as appropriate by email, teleconferencing, via the Committee’s Cloud site or face to face.

7. Grievance procedures within the committee:

In the case of dissension within the Committee the Chair may:

- 7.1.1. Attempt to resolve the matter with the dissenting person(s).
- 7.1.2. Seek an opinion from the Licence Holder(s).
- 7.1.3. Place the matter for resolution before all Licence Holders at a formal meeting.

8. Insurance of members

Under 14 (3) of the Accident Compensation Act 1985, a member of the Committee is deemed to be an employee of the Crown while attending meetings or while undertaking any directed or approved activity on behalf of the Committee. Members will be covered by WorkCover.

9. Revision of terms of reference and operating procedures

These Terms of Reference and operating procedures will be reviewed every 3 years, or as necessary in response to changes in the legislation, institutional policy or concerns expressed by members of this Committee.

I,

 ___ agree to comply with the Terms of Reference detailed above.

Signed: _____ Date: _____