



## Office of Environment and Heritage Animal Ethics Committee Information for Category D (independent) appointment

### Background

All research and education activities involving live non-human vertebrates and cephalopods in NSW are controlled by legislation which aims to ensure that projects are conducted ethically and with full regard to the welfare of animals. The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) is responsible for reviewing, approving and monitoring all animal research and teaching activities undertaken by OEH staff.

The OEH AEC oversees a range of projects that involve capture and handling of wildlife (native and introduced) as well as those that use observational techniques (such as bird surveys, spotlighting or remotely operated cameras). The purpose of the research is usually related to improving our knowledge and management of native and introduced fauna in the landscape of NSW. Each committee member is required to assess these projects by balancing the potential benefits to humans, animals or the environment with the potential impact on the well-being of the animals involved. OEH is **not** involved in medical or agricultural research involving animals.

### Selection criteria for membership

The AEC is made up of members with expertise in veterinary medicine (category A), wildlife research (category B), animal welfare (category C) and independent members (category D) who represent the views of the broader community. The OEH AEC has two members in each category. Appointments to the OEH AEC are for a three-year term with an option for a second three-year term.

Membership criteria are set down by Section 2.2.4 of the *Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* (NHMRC 2013).

The criteria for category D membership is:

A person not employed by or otherwise associated with the institution and who has never been involved in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities, either in their employment or beyond their undergraduate education. Category D members should be viewed by the wider community as bringing a completely independent view to the AEC, and must not fit the requirements of any other category.

In addition to the above, the Animal Research Review Panel makes the following recommendations:

As well as being independent of animal research and teaching, Category D members should bring an 'independence of thinking' to the AEC. The members of this category should therefore be people who do not have a background of biological scientific training and who can thus contribute a different perspective to the deliberations of the AEC.

A curriculum vitae is required to be submitted to the Panel, demonstrating the relevant independence.

The Code does not define what constitutes 'otherwise associated with' the establishment, and a judgement on this may be required to be made. As a guide, any possible association, such as previous employment by the establishment, or a relative employed by the establishment, would be considered to preclude a person from Category D membership for that establishment.

## **Meeting schedule and workload**

Meeting dates are set on an annual basis. There are eight scheduled meetings of the committee each year. It is important that members can commit to attend most meetings as a quorum is required for decisions to be enacted. Meetings are held on Tuesdays commencing at 10:00 am at the government offices in Sydney or Parramatta. Meetings usually conclude by 3:00 pm. Additional meetings are occasionally held elsewhere and optional travel to research locations in regional NSW is sometimes offered.

Members should become familiar with the relevant animal research legislation and guidelines. OEHL provides support to assist this process. Members are expected to familiarise themselves with all project applications and other reading material before each meeting.

Occasionally it may be necessary to review material outside of normal meetings and an email response may be required at short notice. You will need access to a reliable internet service.

## **Sitting fees**

A sitting fee of \$220 is paid plus transport costs to and from meetings.

## **Appointment process**

Members of the public are invited to submit a short Expression of Interest by email to the Team Leader Animal Research Ethics (details below) by **4 June 2019**. This should demonstrate how you fulfil the requirements set out above. A short relevant curriculum vitae is also required.

The OEH Chief Executive will make a nomination after an internal review process of applications. This review process may take several months. All appointments to AECs are reviewed by the Animal Research Review Panel with final approval being granted by the Secretary Department of Primary Industries.

**For more information about animal ethics committees see:**

<http://www.animaletics.org.au/>

**For more information about the OEH AEC or to submit an Expression of Interest contact:**

[aec@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:aec@environment.nsw.gov.au).