



TELETHON KIDS INSTITUTE ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE (AEC)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Preamble

The Telethon Kids Institute is committed to ensuring the ethical, humane and responsible care and use of animals in research.

The use of animals for scientific purposes and teaching is governed by both the Western Australian *Animal Welfare Act 2002* (the Act) which is administered by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, and the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th Edition 2013* (the Code) of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

The primary responsibility of the AEC is to ensure, on behalf of the Institute, that all activities relating to the care and use of animals is conducted in compliance with the Code.

The AEC applies a set of principles, outlined in the Code, that govern the ethical conduct of people whose work involves the use of animals for scientific purposes. The role of the AEC is to ensure that the use of animals is justified, provides for the welfare of those animals and incorporates the principles of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement.

1. Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the AEC are defined in the Code.

The AEC must:

- i. review applications for projects and approve only those projects that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code;
- ii. review applications for activities associated with the care and management of animals in Telethon Kids Institute facilities, including procedures applicable to breeding programs integral to the maintenance of an animal line, and approve only those activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code;
- iii. conduct follow-up review of approved projects and activities, and allow the continuation of approval for only those projects and activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code;
- iv. monitor the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in Telethon Kids Institute facilities;
- v. take appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events;
- vi. take appropriate actions regarding non-compliance;
- vii. approve guidelines for the care and use of animals on behalf of the Institute;
- viii. provide advice and recommendations to the Institute; and
- ix. report on its operations to the Institute.

2. Accountability

The AEC is accountable to the Executive Director, Telethon Kids Institute.

3. Composition of the AEC

The AEC comprises:

- Chair (see also Section 4 below)
- At least one member of Category A¹
- At least one member of Category B¹
- At least one member (external to the Institute) of Category C¹
- At least one member (external to the Institute) of Category D¹

The AEC may co-opt people with specific expertise to provide advice as required.

In addition to the members specified above, the following should be in attendance at AEC meetings to provide appropriate support and advice (non-voting members):

- Head, Research Governance and Platforms
- Manager, Research Governance
- Animal Ethics Officer
- Animal Welfare Officer
- Bioresources Team Leader

4. Quorum

At least one member from each of Categories A, B, C and D will be present at meetings to establish a quorum. Categories C and D must together represent at least one-third of those members present. If unable to reach a quorum, then the meeting will be rescheduled.

To enable quorate meetings video-linking or teleconferencing may be used for individual members unable to be present in person. The Chair is not counted for the purposes of determining whether a quorum is present.

The Institute may nominate suitably qualified Category A members to serve as Category B members on request if this will assist with achieving a quorum during all or part of a meeting (See *Operating Procedures of Telethon Kids Institute AEC*, for more detail).

5. The Chair

The Chair is appointed by the Executive Director of the Institute and the Executive Director should consider an appointment of a person who holds a senior position in the Institute. If the chair is an external appointee, the Institute must provide the chair with the necessary support and authority to carry out the role. The chair may be appointed in addition to Category A to D members¹. The Executive Director should consider appointing a chair who is independent of the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. The chair is responsible for impartially guiding the operation of the AEC, resolving conflicts of interest related to the business of the AEC, and representing the AEC in any negotiations with the Institute's management.

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Category A—a person with qualifications in veterinary science that are recognised for registration as a veterinary surgeon in Australia, and with experience relevant to the Institute's activities or the ability to acquire relevant knowledge.

Category B—a suitably qualified person with substantial and recent experience in the use of animals for scientific purposes relevant to the Institute and the business of the AEC. This must include possession of a higher degree in research or equivalent experience.

Category C—a person with demonstrable commitment to, and established experience in, furthering the welfare of animals, who is not employed by or otherwise associated with the Institute, and who is not currently involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. Veterinarians with specific animal welfare interest and experience may meet the requirements of this category. While not representing an animal welfare organisation, the person should, where possible, be selected on the basis of active membership of, and endorsement by, such an organisation.

Category D—a person not employed by or otherwise associated with the Institute 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.

If the Chair is not available, then an acting Chair will be chosen from the committee members. If the need for an acting Chair is identified between meetings, then an acting Chair will be chosen by the Chair or the Executive Director or by consensus of a majority of the committee members by email.

6. Method and Term of Appointment of Members

The members of the AEC will be appointed (or re-appointed) by the Executive Director of the Institute who will oversee the appointment, reappointment and retirement of members. The term of office of appointed members is three years with a maximum of two consecutive terms (i.e. six years). In some circumstances the functioning of the AEC will be enhanced by one or more current members having the opportunity to serve more than two terms, should they agree.

Before appointment, all members of the AEC must acknowledge in writing their acceptance of the terms of reference of the AEC and the Institute's *Confidentiality Policy*.

Members and attendees must maintain confidentiality regarding the content of applications and the deliberations of the AEC.

Co-opted members may be appointed for up to one year at a time and may be re-appointed at the end of that period.

Further details can be found in the Institute's *Procedures for the appointment, reappointment and retirement of AEC members*.

Under the Institute's *Licence to use animals for scientific purposes*, the CEO of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development must be notified of all changes to the structure of the AEC within 30 days of the changes being made. Examples of changes to be notified include:

- i. Retirement or resignation of existing members
- ii. Appointment of new members, and
- iii. Reappointment of an existing member to a different category of membership.

7. AEC Executive²

An Executive of the AEC may be established. According to the Code, it must comprise the AEC Chair and at least one member from Category C or Category D. The quorum will be two. The AEC Executive may co-opt people with specific expertise to provide advice as required.

8. Pre-submission Review

The Institute may adopt a pre-submission review process to provide scientific, animal welfare and / or statistical advice to the applicant about project applications prior to ethics review. The pre-submission review process does not preclude the AEC from discussions of scientific, animal welfare or statistical merit.

9. Reporting

9.1 Reporting of projects

Investigators must provide the following to the AEC:

- i. an annual report for an approved project, regardless of the duration of AEC approval for the project;
- ii. prompt notification of any unexpected adverse events;
- iii. a final report on outcomes as soon as practicable after completion or discontinuation of a project;
- iv. reports on the creation and maintenance of genetically modified animals; and

² See also separate statement *AEC Executive Terms of Reference*

- v. any other reports as required by the AEC.

9.2 Institutional Reporting

The AEC will provide copies of Minutes of its meetings to the Risk and Compliance sub-committee of the Board of the Telethon Kids Institute.

The AEC will report annually on its operations to the Risk and Compliance sub-committee of the Board and will advise on:

- i. numbers and types of projects and activities assessed, and approved or rejected;
- ii. the physical facilities for the care and use of animals by the Institute;
- iii. actions that have supported the educational and training needs of AEC members and people involved in the care and use of animals;
- iv. administrative or other difficulties experienced; and
- v. any matters that may affect the Institute's ability to maintain compliance with the Code and, if appropriate, suitable recommendations.

10. Revision Requirements

The Terms of Reference and AEC Operating Procedures will be reviewed every three years or as necessary in response to changes in the legislation, institute policy or concerns expressed by AEC members.

Changes and amendments to the Terms of Reference will require the endorsement of the AEC and approval of the Institute.

11. Version History

Version	Approved By	Endorsed By	Approval Date	Review Date	Sections Modified
1.0	AEC	-	2007	-	-
2.0	AEC Chair	-	March 2009	-	-
3.0	AEC Chair	-	22/09/2010	-	-
4.0	AEC	-	14/05/2014	-	-
5.0	AEC	-	9/12/2015	-	Addition of AEC dispute resolution process
6.0	AEC Chair	-	25/02/2016	-	Update of position title
7.0	AEC Chair	Institute Executive Director	19/06/2017	19/06/2018	All sections reviewed
8.0	AEC	Institute Executive Director	18/06/2018	18/06/2019	Addition of Manager Res Gov to in attendance
9.0	AEC	Executive Director	19/08/2019	19/08/2022	All sections reviewed
10.0	AEC	Executive Director	16/09/2019	16/09/2022	Section 4 (Quorum), addition of the possibility of having a appointed AEC member with the capacity of Category A and B to resolve a quorum.