



## ACCESS-NRI Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes #28

---

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1.30 – 3.00pm, AEST

### Attendees

**Chair:** Andy Hogg

**Rapporteur:** Natalia Bateman

**SAC Members:** Charmaine Franklin, Rachel Law, Paul Spence, Claire Vincent, Tilo Ziehn, Oscar Alves, Ariaan Purich, Lenneke Jong, Andrew Robinson, Adele Morrison, Laurie Menviel

**Invitees from Community Working Groups:** David Hutchinson, Ed Doddridge, Ryan Holmes, Yi Huang, Yue Sun, Tennessee Leeuwenburg, Felicity McCormack, Matt Woodhouse, Andrew Kiss, Chen Zhao, Christine Chung, Ian Harman, Mat Lipson, Sanaa Hobeichi, Shayne McGregor, Vassili Kitsios, Spencer Wong, Micael Oliveira, Mike Tetley, Heidi Nettelbeck, Claire Carouge, Chris Bull

**ACCESS-NRI Observers:** Victoria Allen, Kelsey Druken, Martin Dix

**Apologies:** Tilo Ziehn, Claire Vincent, Tennessee Leeuwenburg, Ariaan Purich, Charmaine Franklin, Matt Woodhouse, Felicity McCormack, Paul Spence, Oscar Alves, Andrew Robinson,

### 1. Welcome & Acknowledgment of Country

### 2. Previous Minutes of SAC Meeting September

The previous minutes have been approved and uploaded on the [ACCESS-NRI website](#).

### 3. Future of SAC

The main aim of this meeting is to get feedback from the ACCESS Community Working Groups (CWGs) and current members of the SAC on how to improve the operation of the ACCESS-NRI Scientific Advisory Committee. These include:

1. Progressing from the initial needs of ACCESS-NRI when the SAC was first established to a more robust governance model;
2. The need to improve the flow of information between ACCESS-NRI and SAC, and for the SAC to have a genuine advisory role;
3. To ensure ACCESS-NRI is incorporating advice from the research community, and from its Community Working Groups, in its planning and prioritisation.

Andy asked for comments and suggestions on the proposed principles, and discussion points outlined on the agenda. Comments during the meeting focussed on 4 primary themes:

1. SAC should represent the research community, not the institutions, and include people at diverse career stages. How can we ensure strong governance via interactions between ACCESS-NRI Board, SAC and Community Working Groups?
  - Consider the value of having people outside the Australian research community, such as international collaborators or other people who run similar models. We will be stronger if we have some international members (maybe by an invitation process).
  - SAC should have people who represent different communities. Is there a way to ensure that each research community is equally represented on the SAC?
    - Suggestion to include one member nominated by each CWG plus independent extra people to ensure community-wide representation. That is, 6 CWG representatives plus 4 independents.
  - What is the difference between the Board and the SAC?
    - Board discusses budgets, risk management, representing their institutions, they never get to the strategy around science. SAC should have a strategic scientific role. SAC is an advisory board – recommendations from the SAC would carry significant weight, but it won't be a formal decision body. Many decisions are considered operational and the ACCESS-NRI Director has delegation to make such decisions. Decisions go to the Board when partner input is needed or if.
  - Why don't we go directly to the CWGs without an intermediary (SAC)?
    - The CWGs are open for all to join. There is feedback that comes through the CWGs and this works well for some communities informally, but this does not consider views from other groups. We need consensus about priorities of the wider community, rather than dividing our resources along disciplinary grounds. We also need the SAC to share information between CWGs.
  - On the authority of the SAC role as opposed to the community needs:
    - It could create frustration and inefficiency if the SAC is driving how we decide/ put in funding applications but doesn't truly represent community needs and funding priorities.
    - There is lots of work to do to take those needs into account in the right way. We need to create clear SAC terms of reference, and to include a diversity of views and experience.
  
1. The Chair should be independent from ACCESS-NRI. This is to ensure the community will have a voice if the direction of ACCESS-NRI changes. As this role will be significant, should we provide financial compensation for this role?
  - This is a good point; we need to ensure the direction meets community needs in the future.
  - Maybe have a deputy chair as well, and spend one term as deputy and chair elect, before becoming chair. This will help to create some continuity. The Chair should be someone that has experience on the SAC.
  - We need to clarify the time expectations envisioned for that role – this is important for organisations such as CSIRO and the Bureau.
  - Having flexibility for shorter initial terms would be advantageous, with a chance to review and assess before committing to a longer term.

- The Chair should be elected by members of the SAC. The Chair needs to balance the needs of a wide range of different modelling components. Maybe consider rotational expertise to avoid stagnation.
2. **Should SAC meet less frequently – but more in depth and focus on long term development of ACCESS-NRI. Should the SAC be responsible for drafting an ACCESS Roadmap?**
    - Less frequent meetings make sense, but we need to make sure to have an in-person meeting once a year, as an effective outcome from this committee requires building strong relationships.
    - We can draft an ACCESS-NRI roadmap collaboratively through the SAC.
    - The SAC can exert a lot of influence by making recommendations and scientific input that we can then point out in our roadmap. This recommendation carries weight for our funders (NCRIS), influencing how the money is spent.
    - The Roadmap would then be endorsed by the Board.
  3. **Open and transparent nomination process How long should terms (for Chair & Members) be?**
    - The nomination process is important, as the SAC will be providing advice on how ACCESS-NRI resources are spent.
    - Terms should be around 2-4 years – enough time to make significant contribution. A second term should be allowed to retain experience, but we need to include term limits.
    - Include a clause, within the Terms of Reference, ensuring that people can't belong to both the SAC and Board at the same time.
    - It is important to set it up in a way that doesn't involve replacing all the members in one go.

## Next steps from here

**ACTION (Andy): Revise the Terms of Reference for the SAC and distribute them to this group for comment. These Terms of Reference will be presented to the Board in December.**

Andy is very happy to have further input from individual CWGs or members, throughout this next phase.

## 4. ACCESS Community Workshop

The 2025 Workshop was very successful according to the feedback (both formal and anecdotal). The venue, program and participation were all considered to be successful. The program committee was strongly engaged this year, which was reflected in a great program and increased student participation.

However, ACCESS-NRI would like to consider carefully what we want to do with our workshops in the future. The proposal is to consider biennial major ACCESS Community Workshops with multiple smaller workshops targeted at specific topics during the alternate year. Smaller workshops have different purposes and doing the larger Workshop every year can get too frequent and repetitive.

Smaller workshops also allow people to go to several of them according to their interest or just one. They are easier to run and save some of our resources and choose the time of the year that fits each community.

Potential topics might include: CMIP7, Cordex downscaling, and COSIMA interlinking with Cryosphere.

## COMMENTS ON PROPOSAL

- Don't plan a Cryosphere /COSIMA in August, as there are other Conferences happening at that time.
- Consider holding the Cryosphere/COSIMA workshop during the Antarctic Science Conference
- An ACCESS Workshop every two years makes it very special, also it involves less work for the subcommittees.
- General feedback from the Atmosphere community is that they oscillate between AMOS and ACCESS workshops. They love the collaborative nature of the ACCESS Workshop, but if they can substitute with smaller collaboration workshops, that is a good compromise. They also found the Melbourne location very convenient, suggesting it should be considered as a location again in the future.
- The idea is to still support the CWGs, so next year all the CWG meetings can still happen.
- Consider not planning all the CWG meetings on the same day, as this doesn't work for people that belong to different working groups. A good option is to have one day for each CWG and a second day where they can interact with others.
- For the proposed CMIP7 workshop, it could be pitched as having a Coupled modelling focus, to broaden interest and appeal to the Machine Learning community.
- Could we have a special session at AMOS in these areas, as opposed to ACCESS-NRI organising it? It is late for 2026, but we could consider it for future years.
- Consider the travel restrictions for BoM and CSIRO. In terms of budgeting, we are only allowed to travel a few times a year.

Andy asks if there is consensus to go ahead with the new proposal (biennial ACCESS Community Workshops and smaller topic focused Workshops on the alternate years) – **This was approved by all participants.**

**ACTION (Andy): Write to the individual CWGs to explain what we discussed here and ask for their input on location and timing for 2026 Workshops. You will hear from Andy in the coming weeks, and we will finalise the process at the next SAC meeting.**

## 5. Any other Business

None

## 6. Next Meeting

11 December 2025