


ACCESS-NRI Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) – Terms of Reference

Adopted December 2025

1. Background and Context



ACCESS-NRI is funded by NCRIS to develop and maintain Australia’s Earth system model capability in support of climate, weather and Earth System Science research.

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of ACCESS-NRI will be formulated to support the Board and the Director in determining strategic directions, improving communication within the community and evaluating the effectiveness of the organisation. The SAC will make recommendations to the Board around key matters like the prioritisation of resources, and the scope of the ACCESS platform being supported by the ACCESS-NRI.

2. Role of the Scientific Advisory Committee



The role of the Scientific Advisory Committee is to:

1. Advise the ACCESS-NRI Board on strategic plans for ACCESS development on 2-year, 5-year and 10-year time scales.
2. Advise the ACCESS-NRI Board on the scope of models that should be listed on the ACCESS Model Register, and be managed and maintained by ACCESS-NRI.
3. Provide advice on the review and evaluation of applications for Merit Allocation of ACCESS-NRI resources.
4. Share progress and experiences on ACCESS-based research with other research community leaders.
5. Improve engagement and potential alignment between ACCESS-NRI and international research organisations working on climate and weather models and simulators.
6. Act as a point of liaison between ACCESS-NRI and its Community Working Groups, encompassing Australian researchers that use ACCESS; and as ACCESS community leaders, representing and promoting ACCESS in workshops, forums and other public settings.



7. Advise the ACCESS-NRI Director on advancements in software engineering, computer science and underpinning infrastructure (including high performance computing and data) relevant to improving and transforming ACCESS-NRI models; and on the priorities and needs of the community of ACCESS users.

3. Scientific Advisory Committee Chair

The role of the SAC Chair is to convene the meetings and activities of the SAC in a proactive, consultative and collegial manner. The Chair will act as a national leader for, and representative of, the ACCESS community – and will receive a standing invitation to observe ACCESS-NRI Board meetings.

Nominations for the SAC Chair will be sought from members of the SAC. It is expected that nominees will have served on the SAC for at least 1 year, to ensure sufficient familiarity with the committee’s work and priorities. If multiple nominations are received, the Chair shall be decided by vote of the SAC. The term of the Chair will be for 2 years; no candidate may serve more than 2 consecutive terms.

The SAC will also have a Deputy Chair. The role of the Deputy Chair is to convene the SAC when the Chair is unavailable and to support the Chair. There is an expectation that the Deputy Chair will nominate for the role of Chair once the Chair’s term is complete. The Deputy Chair will be nominated and elected by the same process as the Chair and will serve under the same term lengths and limits.

4. Composition of the Scientific Advisory Committee

The membership of the SAC will comprise 9-10 national or international experts in a relevant field of climate or weather research, Earth system simulation, relevant software engineering or high performance computing and data expertise. Members of the ACCESS-NRI Board are not eligible to be members of the SAC.

Members will be determined by a subcommittee of the ACCESS-NRI Board following an open nomination process convened by ACCESS-NRI. The selection criteria will be based on scientific expertise in one or more of the domains supported by ACCESS-NRI, demonstrated willingness to contribute to community-building and technical experience related to ACCESS (e.g., model development, model evaluation, data analysis, or high-performance computing and data).



The selection process will ensure the diversity of research fields, applications, gender, career stage and culture of the committee, and will ensure that each Community Working Group is represented on the committee.

Membership terms will be for 2 years, renewable to a maximum of three consecutive terms.

Members are expected to declare potential conflicts of interest to the Secretariat upon joining the SAC; to declare to the Chair at the start of each meeting any conflict of interest related to agenda items for that meeting, and to abide by the ACCESS-NRI Code of Conduct.

The Director and Associate Directors of ACCESS-NRI will be invited as *ex-officio* members of the SAC.

A person ceases to be a member of the SAC if:

- The person resigns by notice in writing to the Chair; or
- The person is determined by the ACCESS-NRI Board to have contravened the ACCESS-NRI Code of Conduct.

5. Quorum



The quorum for SAC meetings is a simple majority of members. Proxies will be permitted for members representing a Community Working Group.

6. Voting



The SAC aims to reach decisions by consensus. When a unanimous agreement cannot be reached voting will occur by a simple majority of members.

7. Frequency



The SAC will meet 4 times per year, with the meeting format and timing determined by the Chair and Deputy Chair. It is anticipated that the SAC will meet in person once per year.

8. Diversity



Diversity, and fostering a culture of inclusiveness, will be key contributors to the excellence of ACCESSNRI.

The ACCESS-NRI Board will endeavour to ensure that there is an acceptable level of gender and cultural diversity on the SAC, and that the Committee is inclusive.

9. Review



The SAC will perform an annual review through a survey of members to gauge its effectiveness and to improve processes.

10. Support



Secretariat support will be provided by the ACCESS-NRI team.