

Australasian Mammal Taxonomy Consortium (AMTC)

Governance Document

1.0 AIMS

The AMTC aims to:

1. promote stability and consensus in the use of Australasian mammal scientific names via updatable online species lists approved by AMTC members, thereby supporting more rigorous study of mammals and their biodiversity;
2. provide advice and guidance on taxonomy, and promote its cause and importance to scientists and laypersons; and
3. promote the importance of taxonomic-based research and foster and enable collaborative taxonomy-focussed research projects.

2.0 RELATIONSHIP WITH AUSTRALIAN MAMMAL SOCIETY (AMS)

The AMTC is an affiliated body of the AMS, and as such, the AMTC was proposed and endorsed (Established) at the AMS Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 18 November 2020.

3.0 STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

The structure of the AMTC shall include both a Steering Committee (the AMTCSC, see below) and a broader membership base.

Application for AMTC membership shall be open to researchers and practitioners with a variety of biological interests and expertise relating to taxonomy. AMTC members should be members of the AMS, academia, government organisations, or elsewhere, with expertise in biological diversity, conservation science, palaeontology, anatomy, morphometrics, phylogenomics, nomenclature, and other areas of biology, with a galvanising interest in understanding how these disciplines are applied to provide clearer understanding of the taxonomic relationships among our unique Australasian mammal fauna. Researchers seeking membership in the AMTC should contact the standing chair of the AMTC Steering Committee (AMTCSC), indicating briefly in an email their interest and track record in mammal taxonomy. Contact details of the AMTCSC chair will be available on the AMS website. The AMTCSC chair will table AMTC membership nominations for discussion at the subsequent AMTCSC meeting, and the applicant will be notified of the decision thereafter.

4.0 STEERING COMMITTEE (AMTCSC)

4.1 AMTCSC ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

The primary role of the AMTCSC shall be to generate, oversee and annually update the approved mammal species lists for the region, including Australia and potentially other regions of Australasia, such as New Guinea, neighbouring South Pacific Islands and New Zealand. The AMTCSC shall consult with and seek input from the AMTC, IUCN and other relevant international regional authorities on the constitution of said species lists before making a final decision. The AMTCSC shall also oversee other activities pursuant to Aims 1-3 (above) and shall seek input from the AMTC as required.

The guidelines used by the AMTCSC in generating and updating species lists are outlined in the document entitled “AMTCSC Species List Formation Guidelines.”

The AMTCSC (on behalf of the AMTC) shall liaise with the Australian Faunal Directory (AFD) governed by the Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS), as aligned with Aim 1 (above). In doing so, the AMTCSC shall ensure that any generated AMTC-approved species lists are based on both recent and reliable published research and that they inform the lists supported by the AFD (ABRS).

The AMTCSC (on behalf of the AMTC) shall also liaise with Oz Mammals Genomics (OMG) and other relevant emerging mammal genetics/genomics initiatives, to ensure integration of the latest genetic information in determination of AMTC-approved species lists.

The relationship and connection of the AMTC with both the AMS and AFD (ABRS), as well as other relevant bodies (such as OMG and other genomics initiatives), is recognised as crucial for clear communication with the broader group of mammal researchers.

The AMTCSC (on behalf of the AMTC) shall seek to promote their activities with the aforementioned bodies and groups, as aligned with Aims 2 and 3 (above).

The AMTCSC (on behalf of the AMTC) shall report at the annual AMS AGM on topics relevant to AMTC business and that of the broader community of mammalogists.

4.2 AMTCSC STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

The AMTCSC shall be composed of 6-10 people who have a focus on mammal taxonomy in their research.

The AMTCSC shall consist of a Chair (as lead) and other members. The standing AMTCSC shall strive to embrace diversity and inclusion in all its forms. Where possible, it should consist of at least 50% female membership, include eligible First Nations representatives, and be represented by a mix of both experienced and emerging taxonomic researchers. Every member of the steering committee shall have a strong and equitable say over ideas and directions of the AMTCSC.

4.3 AMTCSC ELECTION PROCESS

The AMTCSC shall be elected every three years. New and re-elected membership is possible. The existing AMTCSC Chair shall not stand as Chair for a consecutive term but may remain a general member of the AMTCSC. To safeguard institutional memory, where possible, some AMTCSC positions should be appointed of overlapping duration.

As an affiliated body of the AMS, the AMTCSC shall be elected by the AMS Committee in the following manner. The standing AMS Committee President shall invite all members of the AMTC and AMS to submit Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for election to the AMTCSC, ensuring they are aware of details outlined in the AMTC Governance Document. Once the EOIs are received, the standing AMS Committee President shall liaise with the other members of the AMS Committee and the standing Chair of the AMTCSC to determine the constitution of the subsequent AMTCSC. Successful nominees shall be notified by the AMS Committee President. Handover between standing and subsequent AMTCSCs will occur before the AMS Conference and AGM is held.