

DRAFT
**Constitution of the
Australian Time Assignment Committee**

1. Functions

Constituted within the Department of Education, Science and Training shall be a committee known as the Australian Time Assignment Committee (ATAC) whose functions shall be:

- (i) to allocate Australia's share of observing time on the Anglo-Australian Telescope and United Kingdom Schmidt Telescope in accordance with guidelines issued by the Anglo-Australian Telescope Board and in liaison with the corresponding time assignment body in Britain and the Director of the Anglo-Australian Observatory;
- (ii) to allocate Australia's share of observing time on the Gemini telescopes in accordance with the Australian Research Council's objectives and in liaison with Gemini's International Time Assignment Committee and the Australian Gemini Steering Committee;
- (iii) to allocate Australia's share of observing time on other facilities, from time to time, as required.

2. Membership and appointments

The membership of ATAC shall be as follows:

- (i) ATAC shall consist of seven members appointed by an Appointments Committee consisting of three ex-officio members: the President of the Astronomical Society of Australia (ASA), the senior Australian astronomer on the Anglo-Australian Telescope Board (AATB) and the Chair of the Australian Gemini Steering Committee (AGSC).
- (ii) Nominations for membership of ATAC may be made by the Australian astronomical community at large, or by interested candidates themselves.
- (iii) In appointing new members of ATAC, the Appointments Committee will seek diversity in institutions (no more than two members from the same institution) and gender, as well as broad representation across research disciplines. The Appointments Committee shall also appoint a Chair and Deputy Chair.
- (iv) ATAC members may nominate alternate members who can temporarily replace a member, with full membership rights.

3. Terms of appointment

The terms of appointment of members of the Committee shall be determined as follows:

- (i) The normal term of appointment for each member shall be three calendar years. The membership changeover shall be staggered so that there are only two or three new members each year. In special circumstances the periods of membership may be adjusted to assist the orderly rotation of members.

- (ii) The normal term of appointment for the Chair and Deputy Chair shall be one calendar year, with the expectation that the Deputy Chair will normally assume the position of Chair following the expiration of the Chair's term. Any variations to this scheme will need to be approved by the Appointments Committee.
- (iii) Members are eligible for re-appointment to the Committee after they have been off the Committee for a period equal to the length of time that they can serve. This does not apply to alternate members who may be appointed immediately after serving; nor does appointment as an alternate affect eligibility for appointment as a member.

4. Meetings of ATAC

ATAC meetings shall be called by, or at the direction of, the Chair. At ATAC meetings:

- (i) The Chair shall preside, or, in the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair.
- (ii) Five members shall constitute a quorum (fewer than five voting members will be allowed for individual proposals under consideration at a meeting, at the discretion of the Chair or acting Chair).
- (iii) Decisions regarding process and time assignment recommendations shall be made by a majority of the votes of the members present, and in the event of an equality of votes the Chair or acting Chair shall have a casting as well as a deliberative vote.
- (iv) The Anglo-Australian Observatory shall provide a Secretary and Technical Secretary to ATAC, who shall keep a proper record of its proceedings pertaining to the allocation of AAT and UKST time, and on other facilities as required.
- (v) The Australian Gemini Office shall provide a Technical Secretary to ATAC, who shall keep a proper record of proceedings pertaining to the allocation of time on the Gemini telescopes, and on other facilities as required.

5. Time Allocation Guidelines

ATAC shall be guided in its allocation of time as follows:

- (i) On the AAT and UKST, by the policies laid out in section 2.5.2 of the AATB Handbook of Policies and Administrative Guidelines, and as otherwise specified from time to time by the AAT Board.
- (ii) On Gemini, by the objectives of the Australian Research Council (ARC), which is the Australian Partner Agency to the International Gemini Agreement. These objectives include supporting the highest quality research and research training.

Detailed policies and procedures are contained in the document 'ATAC Policies and Procedures' available on the AAO website (<http://www.aa.gov.au>).

Original version 4 April 1977; updated July 1998; this version October 2004.