



ACEAS

Australian Centre for Excellence in Antarctic Science

A Special Research Initiative of the Australian Research Council

ACEAS Ombudspeople¹

ACEAS has appointed two Ombudspeople to provide members of ACEAS confidential, informal, and independent, neutral dispute resolution, advice and reporting relating to inter-person grievance. ACEAS will work to ensure that we avoid such issues through proactive training and protective measures, but these will not completely prevent issues from arising.

Given concerns and varying standards of training and reporting across our various host and partner organisations, independent Ombudspeople can provide assurance that concerns or reports will not be overlooked.

It is intended that ACEAS Ombudspeople may help with grievances, conflicts or disputes that arise in ACEAS activities across different nodes or partner organisations. They are also available to record reports of bullying, harassment, or assault independently and informally as a secondary mechanism to formal reporting avenues.

What does an Ombudsperson do?

The primary duties of an organisational ombudsperson are

- (1) to work with individuals and groups in an organisation to explore and assist them in determining options, including to help resolve conflicts, problematic issues, or concerns, and
- (2) to bring systemic concerns to the attention of the organisation for resolution.

An organisational ombudsperson operates in a manner to preserve the confidentiality of those seeking services, maintains a neutral/impartial position with respect to the concerns raised, works at an informal level of the organisational system, and is independent of formal organisational structures.

What an ombudsperson does not do

Because of the informal, neutral, confidential, and independent positioning of an ombudsperson in an organisation, they typically do not undertake the following roles or activities:

- Participate in formal investigations or play any role in a formal issue resolution process
- Serve in any other organisational role that would compromise the neutrality of the ombudsperson role
- Receive notice for the organisation
- Make binding decisions or mandate policies
- Create or maintain formal records or reports for the organisation

Reporting

¹ This document was informed by the SAEF Ombudspeople document, and reuses material from the International Ombudspeople Association at <https://www.ombudsassociation.org/what-is-an-ombuds->

You can contact an ombudsperson to talk through issues of concern. Due to its informal, confidential, and independent role outside the organisational structure of ACEAS, notice to the Ombudspeople about a problem will not result in the generation of a formal record, nor does it constitute legal notice about the existence of a problem.

For those interested in making official complaints about a problem, the Ombudspeople may assist by making appropriate referrals. The Human Resources department (or equivalent) of the ACEAS member whose behaviour is being reported will follow their protocols to investigate the grievance.

The Ombudspeople will report to the ACEAS Management Committee on the number and types of cases they have handled, as well as relevant issues and concerns however they will not share any private or confidential information. ACEAS will also make the Ombudspeople visible to members and monitor comfort of members in approaching them.

ACEAS Ombudspeople

ACEAS has appointed the following ombudspersons. Contact by the means listed during business hours and clearly state that you are contacting them in their capacity as ACEAS Ombudsperson:

Professor Mark Tjoelker 0414 357 424 or m.tjoelker@westernsydney.edu.au

Professor Fran Sheldon 0408 850 369 or f.sheldon@griffith.edu.au