



# Diversity and inclusion policy

## Document control

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Responsible position: GeneMappers Committee

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## Background

GeneMappers is a meeting held by Australia and New Zealand based researchers, interested in statistical genetics and gene mapping, with a strong focus on human disease. These meetings have been held in Australia every 1.5 years for more than 15 years, with the first meeting held in 1999. The meetings move around Australia and New Zealand. The 15<sup>th</sup> GeneMappers meeting will be an online conference held in June 2021, with in person activities held at local hubs in each state.

GeneMappers focuses on approaches for the genetic dissection of common human diseases, including investigating mechanisms of gene action, and translation of genetic research into medical practice.

As the themes of future GeneMappers conferences must adapt to new and emerging research fields, so too must our approach to diversity and inclusion.

The 2021 GeneMappers organising committee commits to supporting inclusiveness and diversity, by ensuring that students, early career researchers and (senior) academics from all backgrounds are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the conference regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, disability, religion, cultural identity, or age. This

pledge aims to promote emerging research leaders from underrepresented groups, and lead to an increased diversity of role models in the Australian scientific research community.

## **Objectives**

This policy seeks:

1. To achieve diverse and equitable representation of gender identities, cultural backgrounds, and career stages at the committee level and among convenors of current and future committees.
2. To achieve diverse and equitable representation of gender identities, cultural backgrounds, and career stages across speakers and session chairs at all GeneMappers' conferences.
3. To achieve inclusion by promoting participation regardless of gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, disability, religion, cultural identity or age.

## **Procedure**

### **1. Initial information for organizing committee**

When planning begins for a new conference, the new chair(s) of the committee shall be made aware of this policy, prior to setting up a committee, which is to be published on the conference webpage.

When recruiting members to the organizing committee, the chair/s are strongly encouraged to seek not only diverse representation in terms of gender, ethnic background and cultural identity, but also from diverse academic levels including students, early career researchers as well as senior academics.

### **2. Collection of diversity information at registration**

At registration, we shall collect information regarding gender, ethnicity and cultural background, state, and career stage. Provision of this information will be voluntary, and for the purposes of a) ensuring representation across the conference program; b) evaluating the extent to which inclusion and diversity was achieved; c) enabling the GeneMappers Committee to remain accountable for implementation of this policy.

### **3. Commitment to encouraging diverse participation**

The organizing committee aims to encourage a culture of inclusion and diversity across the conference program. This will be achieved by ensuring representation of all genders, cultural backgrounds, and career stages in all aspects of the conference. That includes conference participation, invited speakers, speakers selected from abstracts, session chairs, and nomination for awards and prizes.

In addition, all efforts will be made to promote the presence of students, early career researchers, and individuals from under-represented backgrounds in networking opportunities and social events targeted towards ensuring parity of access to networking opportunities. Additional consideration will be made to the online format of the 2021 conference, ensuring participation and opportunities for both hub-based and online-only delegates.

#### **4. Achieving diversity in the conference program**

Review of abstracts will be conducted, with the reviewers blinded to abstract authors. Following blind assessment of abstracts, final rankings will be reviewed to determine if representation has been achieved.

Final lists of speakers and chairs should be circulated to all members of the committee to be endorsed during a committee meeting, with final approval made by the committee chair/s. Where balance in terms of diversity has not been achieved, the organizing committee should briefly document the steps that have been taken and note barriers encountered and suggest possible solutions for the next organising committee.

#### **5. Actions at the meeting to encourage diversity and equity**

For the 2021 meeting, and future meetings, we recommend implementing a range of policies to encourage diverse participations. Policies will be dependent on conference format, and are to be regularly reviewed, but may include:

- Providing opportunity for delegates to specify their pronouns, to be included on name badges, and in the program.
- Making recordings of presentations available online, for participants unable to watch sessions live, or attend in person.
- For in-person meetings, childcare facilities will be made available onsite at no extra cost to participants.

#### **6. Event evaluation**

Formal evaluation of the conference should be undertaken to allow delegates to provide feedback on their experiences. This evaluation should include questions regarding this policy, such as:

*“GeneMappers 2021 is committed to ensuring diversity, of gender equity, cultural background, and career stage, among speakers and chairs.*

*Was this commitment adequately demonstrated at this event?*

*Did it have an impact on you as a participant?*

*Do you feel there were any barriers to achieving diversity?”*

Following the conference, committees are encouraged to write a brief report about the meeting including specific reference to performance in terms equity and inclusion. This will be informed by

responses to the event evaluations, and with respect to the demographic/identity data, collected at registration. This report will be published on the conference website, and is to be forwarded, along with the diversity and inclusion policy to the succeeding GeneMappers organizing committee.

## **7. Monitoring**

This diversity and Inclusion document is to be made available as a downloadable file on all GeneMappers conference webpages. The GeneMappers Committee will monitor the outcomes achieved and report to the succeeding GeneMappers Committee, with successive committees striving to achieve equity targets if not met.