Call for applications – Australian-based astronomer to serve on the Giant Magellan Telescope (GMT) Science Advisory Council (SAC)

Applications for all positions close on Thursday 5th November, 9:00 AM AEDT.

If openings remain after all applications received by the deadline have been considered, late applications will be accepted.

Astronomy Australia Limited (AAL) is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee whose members are all Australian universities and research organisations with a significant astronomy research capability. Its core business is to manage programmes which provide astronomers with access to national astronomy infrastructure, including data and computing infrastructure.

AAL finances a portfolio of infrastructure projects and facilities from Australian Government funding. AAL oversees the progress of these projects and reports regularly on them to the Government.

GMT SAC

The GMT is a next-generation optical/infra-red facility, currently under construction at the Las Campanas Observatory site in Chile with first light expected in the mid-2030s. At 24.5 metres in diameter, the telescope will have six times the collecting area of the largest telescopes currently in existence. The GMT is being developed by the GMTO Corporation, a non-profit international research consortium. The GMTO was founded to own and administer the planning, design, construction and operation of the telescope. The GMTO operates on behalf of an international consortium of 16 universities and organisations, including AAL and the Australian National University (ANU).

As part of the GMTO, AAL and ANU are each entitled to nominate one astronomer to serve on the GMT SAC. The AAL and ANU nominees must then be ratified by the GMTO Board to ensure the SAC maintains the balance of skills and breadth of research expertise required to best serve the organisation.

AAL is seeking written applications from astronomers who are interested to serve on this SAC. The successful applicant must be an Australian-based astronomer with an active and successful research career directly relevant to the GMT. Significant experience serving on science advisory committees or involvement with similar groups will be highly valued, as will involvement with international projects and a demonstrated ability to engage with Australian astronomers. Previous experience working within international/national observatories and/or telescope construction projects will be highly valued.

As a member of the GMT SAC, you will be expected to attend one meeting a year usually held in the United States, either in person or by video conference. GMT SAC members are also expected to attend hour-long sessions via video conferencing, generally held once a month. In addition, Australian GMT SAC members are ex-officio members of the Australian GMT Committee, for which GMTO Board, Founders, and SAC reps from AAL and ANU meet three times a year via video conference. While travel expenses and logistical support associated with attending any in-person meetings will be provided by AAL where possible, this position is not remunerated.

The AAL GMT SAC representative will be appointed for a 2-year term, commencing in January 2027.

Applications

If you consider yourself well placed to serve as AAL representative on the GMT SAC, please email Stuart.Ryder@astronomyaustralia.org.au (cc: info@astronomyaustralia.org.au) with a maximum three-page application including:

- A covering letter describing your expertise relevant to the GMT SAC.
- A brief CV.
- Any relevant conflicts of interest.

Please do not hesitate to contact Stuart Ryder, AAL Senior Program Manager, with any questions regarding the position.

AAL encourages applications from all interested candidates with the appropriate skills and expertise. AAL specifically considers gender balance across committee appointments and seeks to maximise the number of AAL member institutions involved with AAL committees.