
**CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH CENTRE:**

Research Centre for Linguistic Typology (RCLT)

PREAMBLE

The Research Centre for Linguistic Typology is committed to comprehensively analysing the grammatical structures of endangered and previously undescribed languages. This commitment is part of a worldwide enterprise to document and preserve for posterity as much of the world's linguistic diversity and heritage as possible. The RCLT operates in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Research Centre for Linguistic Typology undertakes typological investigations, following an inductive methodology, putting forward generalisations concerning the nature and mechanism of the human language ability and associated cognitive capacities, and investigates relationships between languages, both in terms of historical development and genetic links, and the influence of contact phenomena between geographically contiguous languages within a linguistic area. This enables us to lay the foundation for scientific understanding concerning the 'why' and the 'how' of language evolution.

1 INTERPRETATION

“Academic Board” means the Academic Board of the University.

“Advisory Committee” means the governing body of the Institute referred to in clause 4 of this Constitution.

“RCLT” means the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology whose constitution is in this document.

“Director” means the person appointed pursuant to clause 5 of this Constitution.

“Faculty” means the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

“Dean” means the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

“Members” means the foundation members nominated in this Constitution and any individuals subsequently admitted to membership by the Dean or Director as specified in this constitution.

“University” means La Trobe University.

“Vice-Chancellor” means the Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University.

“Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)” means the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) of La Trobe University.

2 STATEMENT OF AIMS

- (1) The RCLT is committed to analysing the linguistic structures of under-described languages in all their variety, aiming to describe phonetic and phonological as well as morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic structures. Analyses are based on primary linguistic data collected through fieldwork in speech communities across the world, and, wherever possible, archived in international digital archives. All research is cast within the larger framework of typological linguistics, thus drawing on and contributing to our theoretical understanding of human language, culture and cognition.

- (2) To provide opportunities for researchers, particularly from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, to join together in research on languages and cultures;
- (3) To promote the training of postgraduates in research in linguistics, with special reference to typological language descriptions;
- (4) To do all such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above aims.

3 STRUCTURE OF THE CENTRE

The structure of the Centre will be as set out in this Constitution.

4 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

4.1 The Advisory Committee will be strictly bound to conduct itself according to the provisions of this Constitution, always subject to the existing legislation, policies and procedures of the University.

4.2 Without limiting clause 4.1, the Advisory Committee will assist the Director and Dean by:

- (1) advising on policy and strategy to meet the aims of Section 2 above;
- (2) participating in the appointment and advising on the administration of the Director;
- (3) advising, and assisting in reporting, on the management of resources;
- (4) identifying potential new sources of funding for linguistic descriptions of minority and endangered languages; receiving and endorsing the annual report of RCLT and submitting it to the Academic Board through the Dean and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

4.3 Subject to clause 4.1 the Advisory Committee will conduct its own proceedings.

4.4 Membership of the Advisory Committee will be as follows:

- (1) There will be up to nine members, including the Director, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Dean, or their nominees, up to two other members of staff of the University including at least one from a Faculty other than that of Humanities and Social Sciences, and two people who are not members of staff of the University. The two non-members of staff will be appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the recommendation of the Director and Dean. There will be one representative elected by the staff with fixed term appointments and one representative elected by the Student Members; these members will normally be on the Executive Committee.
- (2) The Chairperson will be appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on advice from the Advisory Committee.

4.5 The Advisory Committee must submit an annual report to the Academic Board via the Dean and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the operations of RCLT for the previous calendar year, especially on the fulfilment of academic and financial plans. The annual report must be submitted each year by the date given in

the Procedure for Annual Operational Report – Research Centre and will include a financial statement of funds received and expended. The report will also include an academic and financial plan for the next year, which will be considered by the Research and Graduate Studies Committee as part of the annual planning and budget process.

4.6 Unless otherwise provided in this Constitution the term of membership for each Committee Member will be two years. A Committee Member's term may be extended.

4.7 The Advisory Committee will be accountable to and report to the Academic Board through the Dean and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

4.8 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) shall have the power to terminate the appointment of a member of the Advisory Committee where the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) considers it necessary and in the interests of the Centre

5 DIRECTOR AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

5.1 The management of the RCLT will be assisted by an Executive Committee including the Director and the Executive Officer of the Centre. The membership will be determined by the Dean on advice from the Director. The Executive will normally include at least one representative from staff with fixed term appointments and Student Members.

5.2 The Director will be the Chair of the Executive Committee and will be accountable to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), via the Dean, for the fulfilment of financial and academic plans and reporting on this to the Academic Board. The Dean will be the supervisor of the Director.

5.3 The Director will be appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on advice from the Dean and the Advisory Committee.

5.4 The Director, advised by the Executive Committee, will be responsible to the Dean for the overall financial and academic administration of the RCLT and for the day to day activities of the RCLT in accordance with the legislation, policies and procedures of the University and the academic and research objectives of the University.

5.5 Without limiting clause 5.4, the Executive Committee will assist the Director in

- (1) managing the day to day functioning and administration of RCLT;
- (2) administering the funds available to the RCLT;
- (3) preparing the annual report of the RCLT and other relevant reports.

5.7 The Director may delegate any power, function or authority pertaining to the operation of the RCLT to an appropriately qualified person or committee but may not delegate his/her power of delegation.

6 FINANCING

6.1 Finance for the RCLT will derive either from funds available to the Faculty or University or from outside sources such as private, corporate or philanthropic bodies and government bodies or agencies as well as donations.

6.2 The financial management of the RCLT will be governed and controlled by the legislation, policies and procedures of the University.

6.3 Any variation of financial procedures will be subject to and conditional upon the approval of the Vice-Chancellor.

7 MEMBERSHIP

7.1 Foundation Members

The Foundation Members of the RCLT are Professor RMW Dixon and Professor Alexandra Aikhenvald.

7.2 Ordinary Members

Members of staff of the University who are engaged in research in areas related to the aims of the RCLT may apply in writing to the Executive Committee to become members of the RCLT. The Dean will decide on the application on advice from the Executive Committee.

7.3 Student Members

Post-graduate students supervised by ordinary members of the RCLT and engaged in research in areas related to the aims of the RCLT may apply to the Director to be Student Members of the RCLT. The Director will decide on the application on advice from the Executive Committee.

7.4 Honorary Members

The Dean, on advice of the Executive Committee, may from time to time invite such persons as it considers would assist the Centre to further its objectives to be Honorary Members.

8 OBLIGATIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE RCLT

8.1 Every member (whether Ordinary, Student or Honorary) of the RCLT, upon being admitted to membership of the RCLT, agrees to use his/her best endeavours

- (1) to comply with the terms of this Constitution;
- (2) to comply with the University's legislation, policies and procedures;
- (3) to arrange, promote, co-ordinate and co-operate in programmes for research in the RCLT;
- (4) to engage in joint research programmes carried out by members of the RCLT;
- (5) to apply for or tender for funding for research in the RCLT in Australia and overseas.

8.2 A member may be expelled or suspended by the Dean, on advice of the Executive Committee, if, in its opinion the member has engaged in conduct which is prejudicial to the activities of the RCLT or in breach of this Constitution.

9 QUORUM

- 9.1 The quorum for a meeting of the Advisory Committee will be three members, at least two of whom will be Ordinary Members.
- 9.2 The quorum for a special meeting or an Annual General Meeting of the RCLT will consist of 30% of the membership, of which at least 50% must be Ordinary Members.

10 MEETINGS

- 10.1 The Advisory Committee will meet at least twice in each calendar year.
- 10.2 There will be an Annual General Meeting of all members to discuss the Annual Report prior to its submission to the Academic Board through the Dean.
- 10.3 A Special Meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held within 14 days of receipt by the Chairperson of a written request for a meeting setting out the reasons for the request and signed by at least 50% of the members.

11 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- 11.1 Any intellectual property in material developed by the RCLT will be owned by the University or as otherwise agreed to by the University in writing provided that nothing in this clause will affect the rights of staff or the University under the University's legislation, policies or procedures relating to intellectual property.
- 11.2 Any assets acquired under the auspices of the RCLT will vest in the University.

12 CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

- 12.1 The Academic Board, on advice from the Executive Committee, the Dean and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), may create different categories of membership and conditions of membership in the RCLT and by unanimous resolution appoint members to the RCLT.
- 12.2 A member may be appointed by the Executive Committee to act as a representative of the RCLT to obtain research projects or funds for the RCLT or for any other purpose specified by the Executive Committee.

13 CHANGES TO THIS CONSTITUTION

- 13.1 Any change to this Constitution must be recommended by the Executive Committee to the Dean and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) for approval before submission to the Academic Board through the Research and Graduate Studies Committee of the University.
- 13.2 A change to this Constitution will have effect only when the written approval of the Academic Board has been obtained.

14 APPOINTMENT OF STAFF, CONSULTANTS

14.1 Any person appointed to work for the RCLT will be either staff employed by the University or persons employed as consultants consistent with University policy.

14.2 Any person appointed to work for the RCLT will follow normal University procedures according to the basis of their engagement as set out in clause 14.1.

15 CONSULTING ACTIVITIES AND COURSES OR SEMINARS ATTRACTING OUTSIDE INCOME

15.1 Any consulting activities or courses or seminars conducted by members of the RCLT which attract outside income (being income not derived from any specific research funding source) require endorsement by the Executive Committee and will be subject to the normal requirements for the approval of the University.

16 CONTRACTS

16.1 Members of the RCLT have no authority to enter into contracts which purport to bind the University unless the members have complied with all relevant legislation, policies and procedures of the University.

17 ETHICS APPROVALS

17.1 A Member of the RCLT conducting research must obtain approval from the La Trobe University Human Ethics Committee and/or Animal Ethics Committee and/or Genetic Manipulation Supervisory Committee as may be required by the University's legislation, policies and procedures.