

## **MINUTES, MEETING OF THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEANS AND DIRECTORS**

### **FEMALE ORPHAN SCHOOL, PARAMATTA SOUTH CAMPUS, UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY, PARRAMATTA, 9-10<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

#### **In attendance:**

John Bartlett (USC), Andrew Campbell (CDU, President Elect), Delma Clifton (CQU), Peter Green (La Trobe), Tor Hundloe (Bond, Treasurer), Janette Lindsay (ANU), Graciela Metternicht (UNSW), Andrew Millington (Flinders, President), Charles Morris (UWS), Stuart Parsons (QUT), Neil Santilan (MacQuarie), Scott Smithers (JCU), Paul Sutton (UniSA), Nigel Tapper (Monash), Grant Wardell-Johnson (Curtin), Kathryn Williams (Melbourne), Karl Vernes (UNE).

#### **Apologies:**

Jonathan Aitchison (Queensland), Andy Ball (RMIT), Okke Batelaan (Flinders), Grant Daggard (USQ), Steve Dovers (ANU), Bill Gladstone (UTS), Chris Frid (Griffith), Nicola Porter (RMIT), Julia Lamborn (Swinburne), Tony O'Donnell (UWA), Guang Shi (Deakin), Steve Turton (JCU, Immediate Past President), Ben Wilson (Charles Sturt),

#### **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April**

##### **10.00-10.10: Welcome**

Delegates were welcomed to the University of Western Sydney by Dr. Trevor Bailey, Deputy Dean, School of Science and Health, who noted that ACEDD was meeting in the oldest multistorey building in Australia.

Dr. Charles Morris welcomed fellow ACEDD delegates and outlined the program and protocols.

ACEDD welcomed new delegates Delma Clifton (CQU), Peter Green (La Trobe), Stuart Parsons (QUT), Neil Santilan (MacQuarie), Paul Sutton (UniSA), Nigel Tapper (Monash) and Kathryn Williams (Melbourne); and welcomed the return of Karl Vernes (UNE)

##### **10.15-10.45**

##### **Minutes of previous meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held 16-17 October 2014 at the University of Canberra were confirmed.

##### **Matters arising/President's report**

##### **(i) Government fee proposals**

Delegate packages (pre circulated) contained responses from federal, federal shadow and state ministers with responsibilities for higher education and environment, and

cross-bench senators, in response to the letter concerning fee levels for environment courses (also included the package).

Council agreed that it would need to monitor any new proposals from government in this area.

Discussion ensued around stances that ACEDD might take on ethical investment portfolios of member universities. While there was vocal groundswell expressing concern about the portfolios of institutions, it was pointed out that these are personal views and it is unlikely that any delegate has a mandate to vote on such an issue at an ACEDD council meeting.

The discussion moved on the wider ethical considerations which ACEDD might lobby around in the future, particularly in the environmental area, the following are items that arose in the discussion that either need to be considered in future meetings or actions that can be taken:

1. Should ACEDD have a statement on ethical investments on its web site? (a discussion at a future meeting of council)
2. Remind Vice Chancellors of the Talloires Declaration, asking universities who have not member to join. **Action: President**  
*Update: non signatories are: Adelaide, Flinders, UniSA, Curtin, Murdoch, Edith Cowan, Federation, Sydney, Southern Queensland, QUT, Griffith, Charles Darwin*
3. Invite a speaker in ethical investments to the next (Canberra) meeting, possibly Tony Cole. **Action: EO (Executive Officer)**

## **(ii) Executive Officer**

Andrew Millington reported that three candidates for the ACEDD Executive Officer position would be interviewed in Brisbane on May 7<sup>th</sup>. The interview panel would comprise the current, immediate past and incoming presidents – Andrew Millington, Andrew Campbell and Steve Turton – and Judith Wake (ex-CQU representative).

*Update: Emeritus Professor Ian Clark (UniSA) has been appointed Executive Officer and will attend the next council meeting.*

## **(iii) LTAS Project**

The sign-off meeting for the LTAS project was held in Sydney on February. Andrew Millington, Jeanette Lindsay, John Bartlett, Ian Clark (UniSA), Fran Sheldon (Griffith) attended on behalf of ACEDD.

The project has now been approved by LTAS, and the most recent steer for LTAS is that this should be seen as a *point of reference* in curriculum development and that it should be used in conjunction with overlapping threshold statements where appropriate, e.g., Environmental Science degrees would be a mix of Environment and Sustainability and Science TLOs.

The LTAS web site is to be linked to the ACEDD website, in part because ACEDD is obliged to maintain the site and link for five years. The LTAS project will transfer funds to ACEDD to maintain this link.

Andrew Millington proposed an official vote of thanks to all the people involved with the LTAS project, particularly the team leaders at the University of Newcastle – Liam Phelan and Bonnie MacLean.

#### **(iv) ACEDD Scholars Scheme**

Only 8 nominees had been put forward by the time of the meeting. Council approved these.

It was decided to keep the nomination process open until later in the year, and to alert universities early in the second semester in future so that all eligible graduates could be identified.

Council discussed how we could keep in touch with scholars in the future. The EO is asked to look into this. One suggestion is to invite local ACEDD Scholars to ACEDD Council Dinners in the future.

#### **(v) Science meet Parliament Scheme**

Discussion on this deferred to October (Canberra) meeting. **Action: EO**

#### **10.45-11.00 Disestablishment of IES-UNSW**

Graciela Metternicht outlined the situation at UNSW where the Institute of Environment Studies (IES) was to be disestablished.

Council expressed concern about this development, noting there is a worrying trend in Australian HE concerning a lack of appreciation for holistic and interdisciplinary environmental education and the trend to specialists.

The President will write to Vice Chancellors expressing the Council's concerns while simultaneously informing them about the publication of TLOs in Environment and Sustainability.

#### **11.00-12.00: Environmental research and education at UWS**

Helen Angelkakis, outlined the work of the regional centre of excellence built around sustainability education for local communities, which is endorsed by the United Nations University.

Rosemary Nicholson and final year capstone project student Candice Skelton, talked about the B.Sc. Natural Sciences capstone field project, which is framed by the concept of transferring from undergraduate students to graduate practitioner. Candice presented on her capstone project on Tasmanian Devils.

The final presentation was by National Teaching Fellow, Professor Pauline Ross, who spoke on reconceptualising the academic role in the sciences that generated much discussion.

Delegates appreciated these insights into environmental education at UWS and Council encourages other hosts to follow this lead.

Copies of these presentations will be linked to the ACEDD website. **Action: EO**

#### **12.00-18.00: Field trip**

Delegates departed for an afternoon field trip to the Blue Mountains led by Charles Morris. A way stop at the UWS Hawkesbury Campus allowed delegates to sate their

appetites with a sandwich lunch, followed by a lecture on carbon enrichment and sequestration experiments at the EUCFACE facility from research staff at the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment. Delegates continued to the Blue Mountains for some light bushwalking to the Grose Valley walls.

### **20:00-22.00 Council Dinner: Rydges Parramatta**

Highly convivial, as usual,

## **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April**

### **9.30-Council business II**

#### **Treasurer's report**

Tor Hundloe presented a report of the council's finances as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. The closing balance was \$106,926, though delegates noted a number of payments were outstanding.

Andrew Millington made the point that although ACEDD appears to have a high surplus, this would soon be within the normal range of council surpluses when the Executive Officer was appointed and honorarium paid, and the ACEDD Scholars and Science Meets Parliament Schemes are fully functioning. However, there should be no need to increase subscription levels (which we note are still less than many discipline councils) when the Executive Committee reviews prior to the Spring 2015 meeting in Canberra,

Andrew Campbell observed that because the council now had more transactions and a greater surplus, it would be wise for the Council's accounts to be audited annually in the future.

### **11.00-11.30 Coffee**

### **11.30-14.15 Jon Womersley, EIANZ President**

Jon Womersley gave a presentation on EIANZ, the majority of which focussed on EIANZ's plan for accreditation. Council was uncomfortably surprised to find that these were quite advanced considering the fact that ACEDD schools and departments will be expected to deliver this accredited curricula and that they had not been consulted.

The plans for accredited courses seemed unrealistic to most delegates. In part this is because they are framed in an all-encompassing manner, which will lead to many aspects of environmental science and management being treated superficially if they are all contained in a single undergraduate curriculum.

Robust questioning followed after the lunch break.

**Action: President to get an update from EIANZ before the next council meeting**

### **12.30-13.00 Lunch**

Delegates took the opportunity to visit the Whitlam Gallery in the Female Orphan School, after an introduction by the director, Eric Sidoti.

### **14.15-14.30 Future meetings**

The Fenner School (ANU) between 29-30th October 2015 will host the annual (Spring) meeting.

Andrew Campbell mooted the idea of a late May meeting at CDU in Darwin in 2016. Delegates approved this suggestion and asked Andrew to explore this option further.

The Council expressed thanks to UWS, in particular Charles Morris, Lindy Pearson and Julie Langford for organising and hosting the meeting.

**14.30: Meeting closed.**

Draft