

(ACEDD April 2017 Hobart Minutes)

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

University of Tasmania 28th April 2017

In attendance:

Grant Wardell-Johnson (President, Curtin), Andy Ball (RMIT), Chris Austin (Deakin), John Bartlett (Sunshine Coast), Ian Clark (Executive Officer), (CQU), Grant Daggard (USQ), Jenny Davis (CDU), Les Dawes (QUT), Chris Frid (QUT), Dianne Gleeson (Canberra), David Kennedy (Melbourne), Janette Lindesay (ANU), Michael Lockwood (U Tas), Andrew Millington (Flinders, Immediate Past President), Enzo Palombo (Swinburne), Neil Saintilan (Macquarie), Robyn Schofield (Melbourne), Peter Teasdale (UniSA), Jerry Vanclay (SCU), Karl Vernes (UNE, Treasurer), Glenda Wardle (Sydney), Ben Wilson (Charles Sturt)

Guest

Imran Ahmed (Future Earth Australia, AAS)

Apologies

Jane Chambers (Murdoch), Saul Cunningham (ANU), Paul Dargusch (UQ), Peter Green (Latrobe), Pauline Grierson (UWA), Pierre Horwitz (ECU), Bruce Milthorpe (UTS), Allen Nutman (U Wollongong), Tony O'Donnell (UWA), Stuart Parsons (QUT), Scott Smithers (JCU), Dave Swain (CQU),

Wednesday 26th April Field Trip to Tasman Peninsula

Group was collected from Hobart Airport and travelled to Port Arthur. Michael Lockwood, our host, introduced the planned activities and presented data about tourism and in particular environmental tourism and the efforts being made by the Tasmanian Government to encourage more by providing good facilities. The first stop was Fortescue Bay and the beginning of the 3 Capes Track, a \$30million government investment. After walking along the first section the group continued to accommodation at Stewarts Bay Lodge and dinner at the Fox and Hounds hotel in Port Arthur. Professor Matt King, ARC Future Fellow and Professor of Polar Geodesy gave a presentation on *Spatial analysis in environmental research*

Thursday 27th April Field Trip to Tasman Peninsula (cont.)

The environmental tourism theme continued with a boat trip along the east coast of Tasman Peninsula to viewing wildlife conservation issues and geology/landforms.

Matt Taylor a PhD student and conservation scientist from Tasmanian Land Conservancy described his PhD studies in wildlife conservation and the involvement of landholders helping with data collection.

Council Dinner at the Astor Grill in Hobart concluded two packed and informative days. UTas 2017 ACEDD Scholar, Ms Violet Harrison-Day joined the group for dinner.

Chair: Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson

<p>8.30-9.00: Welcome</p> <p>Delegates were welcomed to country and the University of Tasmania and IMAS by Associate Professor Michael Lockwood who apologised for Dean Science, Engineering & Technology Professor Brian Yates who had been called away at the last minute.</p> <p>President, Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson welcomed ACEDD delegates noting several members who were attending for the first time.</p> <p>9.00-10.15</p> <p>Minutes of previous meeting</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held November 3-4 at the University of Canberra were confirmed.</p> <p>Business Arising</p> <p>ACEDD Scholars Scheme</p> <p>The list of 2017 Scholars was circulated. The absence of nominations from some Universities was noted and it was agreed to prepare a nomination form with the hope that it will facilitate more nominations and to set a deadline of March 31 to enable Council approval at the Autumn meeting.</p> <p>It was also agreed that further nominations for 2017 would be accepted up to the end of May.</p> <p>Science Meets Parliament</p> <p>ACEDD delegates were Dr Graziela Miot da Silva, Lecturer at the School of the Environment, Flinders University and Dr Elin Charles-Edwards, School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Queensland. Each will present a short report due end of May. Dr Miot da Silva has offered to make a Skype presentation during the November Council meeting.</p> <p>Professor Jenny Davis strongly supported the opportunity that SMP offers.</p> <p>Professor Enzo Palombo added that he represented ACEDD at the equivalent event Science meets Business in October 2017.</p> <p>Cross institutional Field based courses</p> <p>Professor Jenny Davis reported that courses from CDU and UTas have been collated and added to the ACEDD website. She requested other Universities to nominate courses to add to the list.</p> <p>It was agreed that a working group give consideration to developing a jointly taught unit covering niche skills.</p>	<p>Action: EO</p> <p>Action: EO</p> <p>Action: Jenny Davis, Karl Vernes</p>
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<p>Inventory of field sites It was agreed that an inventory of field sites available for research and teaching be prepared and incorporated into or linked to the ACEDD website . Available to ACEDD members and non-members. Also suggested that a Winter School series be considered offering students opportunity to travel to other countries.</p> <p>Future Earth Australia Dr. Imran Ahmad Director Future Earth Australia presented a brief update of developments since the presentation to council in November and distributed a paper which summarised the Future Earth Australia activities.</p> <p>President’s Report Reported activities since the last Council meeting and recommended focus on three areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of the Strategic Plan; 2. Relationship with EIANZ; Noted that EIANZ are trialling the accreditation process with Griffith University 3. Future Initiatives. Need to agree on format for the Autumn regional meetings suggesting a focus on field trips and research initiatives of the host University </p> <p>Treasurer’s Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabled expenditure report shows that spending is within budget. • Expressed concern that the number of ACEDD Scholars nominated is lower that hoped for. • Most member institutions have paid the annual subscription. Discussion about possibility that some may not renew as was indicated by Monash. • It was recommended that approaches be made to Institutions that are not currently members through the VC or Department Head. 	<p>Action: Karl Vernes</p> <p>Action: Executive</p> <p>Action: President and Executive</p>
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10.15-10.45

Morning Tea

10.45-11.45

<p>Strategic Plan Agreed that the six goals of the Strategic plan as circulated be posted on the “About” menu of ACEDD website with link to the strategies Questioned whether sustainability is adequately represented in the Plan.</p>	<p>Action: EO</p>
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<p>Discussion centred on achieving some outcomes. Ideas proposed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop timelines for achievement of strategies using an open forum for Council input • Goal 1 Quality Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preparation of discussion papers on topics such as field teaching (essential component; finding cheaper alternatives) student expectations; teaching in engaging ways (PBL, small groups, Blending learning/flipped classroom, WIL); innovative assessment; online delivery. ○ Investigate opportunities to support/host an environment and sustainability education session at T&L or related discipline conferences. • Goal 5 Networking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Investigate using social media to better communicate with students. ○ Gather data on website hits. • Goal 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepare a record of the aims and key issues pursued on council field trips ○ Develop framework and budget for Council meetings 	<p>Action: Ben Wilson</p> <p>Action: Working group Janette Lindesay (Convenor), Chris Austin, Grant Daggard, Les Dawes, Chris Frid, Neil Saintilan, Robyn Schofield.</p> <p>Action: Dianne Gleeson, Andrew Millington, Jenny Davis, Karl Vernes</p> <p>Action: Grant Wardell-Johnson, Andrew Millington, Michael Lockwood.</p>
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11.45 – 12.30

Presentation by Alistair Gracie, Deputy Head of School of Land and Food, Uni Tasmania

Dr Gracie is a member of the Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture and spoke about some of their activities that may be of interest to ACEDD.

- History
 - Council established in 2007 focussed on declining student numbers
 - 16 Australian and two NZ institutions
 - Much of the success attributed to Prof Jim Pratley who has been tracking student numbers over the years
- Nature of activities
 - Data tracking
 - Advertising as a group
 - seeking investment in R&D
 - linking researchers
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- Interventions
 - Website Career Harvest for students has job opportunities and course information
- International Links
 - NZ institutions are associate members
 - increase breadth of discussion, research profile

- Student exchanges

12.30 Lunch

1.00 – 2.00

Institution reports

Each member briefly described the current activities related to environmental programs in their institution.

- Commencing student numbers holding or small increase reported by most
- Masters programs expanding
- Boutique degrees being replaced by majors in a broader degree
- EIANZ Accreditation being trialled in one member university in June 2016. A member of ACEDD Council has been asked to Chair the accreditation panel by EIANZ, and they envisage that an ACEDD council delegate will always be on an accreditation panel.
- Institutional reorganisation combining small faculties/departments
- Innovative ideas
 - Fellowships for women in STEM
 - Using detection dogs to find and identify scats
 - Internships for students
 - Introduction of trimester structure (unpopular with students and staff)
- Concerns
 - Impact of changed 457 visa conditions
 - Difficulty in finding/affording external examiners for Masters research projects
 - Non-replacement of staff taking voluntary early retirement
 - EIANZ accreditation cost

2.00 Project Report

Progress report on Future Employment Project by Associate Professor David Bruce

The aim of the project is establish a baseline for tertiary environmental graduate employment in Australia; asking questions such as:

- What is the supply?
- Where is the supply?
- What is the demand?
- Where (geographically) is the demand?
- In what sections of “environment” are graduates employed?
- What skills / skill levels are required of graduates?

Associate Professor described some of the difficulties in getting current information about student numbers. Government data is out of date and the classifications for ‘environment’ are too broad. Demand data is also poor with widely varying estimates.

Some preliminary results were presented:

- Job market is seasonal (but not sufficient data yet);
- Market turns over approximately every six weeks;
- Approximately 20% of advertised jobs are for vegetation remediation work requiring VET Cert 3 / 4 quals in land conservation, drivers license, chainsaw cert, WHS, etc.;

- Large number of environmental volunteer opportunities;
- Professional jobs are usually local – require knowledge of flora (some fauna) and environmental systems in a specific region;
- Most jobs require (beyond specific environmental expertise), field skills, excellence in communication (verbal and written), project management skills and knowledge of local policies and regulations;
- Some jobs require GIS/mapping skills
- Approximately 10% require Indigenous knowledge and some require evidence of Aboriginality.

The expected completion date is 30th August 2017.

Following the presentation there was further discussion of EIANZ accreditation of awards and it was agreed that the decision should be at individual institution level.

15.00 Future meetings

The next meeting will be hosted by ANU. Proposed date 30th October or 6th November 2017

Meeting closed.

Associate Professor Michael Lockwood was thanked for his excellent work in hosting the meeting and organising relevant and interesting field visits.

Saturday 29th April – Field Trip to SW Wilderness region.

Distinguished Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick, a geographer and conservation ecologist led a small group to Mt Field National Park and the SW wilderness region. Several sites illustrating different vegetation-climate-topography relationships were visited.