

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

**University of Canberra 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

### **In attendance:**

Grant Wardell-Johnson (President, Curtin), Andy Ball (RMIT), Chris Austin (Deakin), John Bartlett (Sunshine Coast), Jane Ian Clark (Executive Officer), (CQU), Grant Daggard (USQ), Paul Dargusch (UQ), Jenny Davis (CDU), Dianne Gleeson (Canberra), Peter Green (Latrobe), Pauline Grierson (UWA), Pierre Horwitz (ECU), Gunnar Keppel (UniSA), Janette Lindesay (ANU), Michael Lockwood (U Tas), Enzo Palombo (Swinburne), Stuart Parsons (QUT), Neil Saintilan (Macquarie), Scott Smithers (JCU), Karl Vernes (UNE, Treasurer),

### **Apologies**

Chambers (Murdoch), Mike Clarke (Latrobe), Dave Swain (CQU), Greg Kolt (WSU), Andrew Millington (Flinders, Immediate Past President), Bruce Milthorpe (UTS), Allen Nutman (U Wollongong), Tony O'Donnell (UWA), Nigel Tapper (Monash), Jonathan Webb, (UTS), Kathryn Williams (Melbourne), Ben Wilson (Charles Sturt)

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November Teal Room, University of Canberra**

**Chair: Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson**

### **10.00-10.15: Welcome**

Delegates were welcomed to country and to the University of Canberra by Professor Ross Thompson, Director of the Institute of Applied Ecology, University of Canberra.

Professor Thompson noted the strong interest in environmental education and support from the Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice Chancellor, both of whom are environmental scientists and the desire of the VC to teach in the environmental programs. He also pointed out the intention to appoint 4 Indigenous Professors.

President, Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson welcomed ACEDD delegates noting several members who were attending for the first time.

### **10.15-10.30**

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

The Minutes of the meeting held June 8-10, 2016 at Charles Darwin University were confirmed.

### **10.30-12.30**

#### **Strategic Plan**

The need for a strategic plan was agreed by Council at the previous meeting in Darwin. A document based on the strategic plans of other Councils of Deans was tabled for discussion. After a short discussion the council broke into small groups to consider a statement of vision and mission. Each group's statement was projected and the following vision was agreed.

**Education, research and scholarship in environment and sustainability are central to Australia's future well-being and prosperity. As the peak body, the Australian Council of Environmental Deans and Directors (ACEDD) will provide strategic leadership and advocacy in environmental science and related fields.**

A similar process was followed to develop a draft set of six goals and objectives during the remainder of the meeting.

It was agreed that these will be edited for consistency of language and format and circulated for discussion.

### **1.30-2.30**

**Presentation by Kylie Walker, CEO Science & Technology Australia**

Kylie Walker presented an overview of STA, noting that she had only recently assumed the CEO role.

- STA has 57 members
- ACEDD is an affiliate member which means it cannot sit on the board but has voting rights at the AGM;
- Science Meets Parliament is a flagship event;
- Science meets Business is a new event first held Oct 2016;
- STA presents a strong voice to promote a "good scientific ecosystem"
- Will be guided by ACEDD on how to promote Environmental Science

For more information go to the STA website <http://scienceandtechnologyaustralia.org.au/>

### **2.30-3.30**

**Presentation on *Future Earth Australia* by Dr John Finnigan (CSIRO)-Chair Expert Working Group & Dr Chris Hatherly (Director of Science Policy & Projects, Australian Academy of Science)**

Dr Finnigan described the background to and the establishment of Future Earth Australia which is about sustainability science with the following objectives:

- Provide a **single contact point** for applying research to practical issues of sustainability in business and policy development
- **Identify and support existing projects and activities** that address practical sustainability problems by facilitating the integration of the human and biophysical sciences in a systems approach
- **Provide a unified sector voice** by facilitating engagement between researchers, industry and government to communicate and advocate for change from unsustainable to sustainable in the public and private sectors.

The Australian Academy of Science provides management and secretarial support.

Funded by Australian Council of Learned Academies, CSIRO, University of Queensland and Macquarie University.

### **4.00-5.00**

**Presentation by Professor Craig Moritz (ANU), Chair of National Committee for Ecology, Evolution & Conservation.**

Professor Moritz spoke about the role of the National Committee and the decadal plans for ecosystem science and agriculture. He presented data to illustrate the projected surplus of jobs for agricultural science graduates and suggested that it might be possible to use transition Diplomas/Masters for environmental science graduates to meet the needs. This led to a broad ranging discussion about the links between agriculture and environmental programs.

### **7.30pm ACEDD Dinner – trevs@dickson**

#### **After dinner speaker Brad Moggridge**

Mr Moggridge spoke entertainingly about his background, education and working experience as the first Aboriginal man to achieve much of what he has done including leading the only dedicated Aboriginal water unit in Australia, the Aboriginal Water Initiative for NSW DPI. He encouraged the incorporation of traditional knowledge into land and water management in Australia and challenged ACEDD to have “active involvement of Aboriginal people including their knowledge and wisdom of the Australian landscape in future science curricula and research” and to be “responsible for making science of STEM a top choice course/career path for Aboriginal people”.

## **Day 2**

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November Teal Room, University of Canberra**

**Chair: Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson**

**9.00 – 12.00**

#### **Council Business**

##### **(i) President’s Report**

Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson noted:

- change to the executive positions resulting from Professor Andrew Campbell’s appointment as CEO of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)
  - Professor Andrew Millington will continue in the role of Immediate Past President
- A meeting in Perth on 10<sup>th</sup> August between himself, Pierre Horwitz and Ian Clark to begin the development of a strategic plan for ACEDD
- A meeting with Andrew Del Marco, President of the WA Chapter of EIANZ
  - discussed interaction between EIANZ and ACEDD particularly related to accreditation
  - ACEDD’s strategic plan should make interactions easier by clarifying its roles and responsibilities.

##### **(ii) Treasurer’s report and Finance statement**

A summary of income and expenses was tabled. Balance at Sept 30 is \$146 108.08.

- All Universities have paid 2016 subscriptions including outstanding fees
- No need to increase subscription fee for 2017
- Need to consider projects to reduce the strategic project fund
- Encourage all members to nominate ACEDD Scholars
  - Agreed to increase award amount to \$250.00
- Encourage members to nominate ACEDD reps for ‘Science Meets Parliament’

- An independent audit of finances will be arranged

### **(iii) Election of Officers**

The vacancy of President Elect was filled by the election of Professor Janette Lindesay.

#### **Officers**

President	Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson (term expires Nov 2018)
Immediate Past President	Professor Andrew Millington (term expires Nov 2018)
President elect	Professor Janette Lindesay
Treasurer	Associate Professor Karl Vernes (term expires Nov 2017)
Executive Officer	Associate Professor Ian Clark

### **(iv) Future Employment Working Party**

Council accepted a recommendation that the project brief from Associate Professor David Bruce be accepted and that the following suggestions be considered:

- report should not be text rich and useful for marketing environmental programs
- report format designed for regular updating
- provide information for students
  - salary range
  - career progression
  - post-graduate opportunities including entry requirements
- incorporate information gathered from individual program external advisory committees

Council also noted that historically there has been a boom-bust in employment opportunities.

It was also agreed that a separate (but complementary) report should be undertaken that investigates the changing nature of future employment and possible opportunities for environmental graduates and/or changes to environmental programs.

**Action:** Seek an appropriate consultant to undertake the task. **EO and Executive**

### **(v) Marking Honours and Masters Theses**

Discussion deferred

### **(vi) Field Intensive Courses**

Professor Jenny Davis reported results of a preliminary investigation of field-based courses that might be available for cross-institutional enrolment.

Criteria for inclusion were:

- unit is taught in the field;
- stand alone block-mode/intensive course (students only need to attend field component);
- accepts cross-institutional enrolments).

43 possible courses were identified with good representation across Australian environments.

List will be distributed for council members to comment and add/delete.

Also noted that these courses could be attractive to International study abroad students

It was also suggested that when Programs are reviewed an elective course could be designated as a cross-institutional field course.

### **(vii) Curriculum Mapping**

EO advised that an online curriculum mapping tool developed for an OLT project at the University of Tasmania could be hosted on the new ACEDD website.

**Action:** EO to investigate and report via email.

### **(viii) Future Funding Model**

Stuart Parsons reported analysis by the Deans of Agriculture showed that the block grant allocations are up 27.5% under the new model, but that HESDC funding will be based on completions not load, which is where the money is lost – so on balance, no real change.

## **12.00-3.00**

### **Delegate's reports**

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

- Several institutions are advertising or in the process of appointing Level E positions as well as B and C level appointments as the result of renewal programs, replacement of retiring staff or creation of new positions
- Some finding it hard to get replacement for retiring staff
- Commencing student numbers holding or small increase reported by most
- Masters programs expanding
- Boutique degrees being replaced by majors in a broader degree
- Several programs offer overseas fieldwork courses
- ECU raising ATAR cut-off to 70
- Macquarie study showed ATAR 85+ a good predictor of success but 60-80 no predictor.
- Several institutions reported the incorporation of UAVs ('drones') into teaching

## **15.00 Future meetings**

The next meeting will be hosted by the University of Tasmania. Proposed date 26<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> April 2017

### **Meeting closed.**

Associate Professor Dianne Gleeson was thanked for her excellent work in hosting the very successful meeting.