

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

Australian National University 6th-7th November 2017

In attendance:

Grant Wardell-Johnson (President, Curtin), Paul Beggs (Macquarie), Nathan Brooks-English (CQU), Jane Chambers (Murdoch), Jo Ann Chuck (WSU), Ian Clark (Executive Officer), Saul Cunningham (ANU), Grant Daggard (USQ), Jenny Davis (CDU), Chris Frid (Griffith), Dianne Gleeson (Canberra), Pauline Grierson (UWA), Pierre Horwitz (ECU), Matthew King (U Tas), Janette Lindesay (ANU), Peter Mahon (Swinburne), Stuart Parsons (QUT), Robyn Schofield (Melbourne), Peter Teasdale (UniSA), Jerry Vanclay (Southern Cross), Glenda Wardle (Sydney), Jonathan Webb, (UTS)

Apologies

Andy Ball (RMIT), John Bartlett (Sunshine Coast), Paul Dargusch (UQ), Paul Hesp (Flinders), David Kennedy (Melbourne), Andrew Millington (Flinders, Immediate Past President), Tony O'Donnell (UWA), Enzo Palombo (Swinburne) Neil Saintilan (Macquarie), Karl Vernes (UNE, Treasurer) Ben Wilson (Charles Sturt)

Monday 6th November Fenner Seminar Room, ANU

Chair: Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson

9.30-10.00: Welcome

Delegates were welcomed to ANU by Professor Kieran Kirk, Dean College of Science, ANU. Professor Kirk discussed the opportunities and challenges for Environment Schools in universities. Environment is not a single discipline like chemistry or physics. Rather it is interdisciplinary and the environmental impact of research can be claimed by other disciplines. Environment Schools must take ownership and exploit the interdisciplinary nature of Environmental Science by engaging across the other disciplines.

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 26th April, 2017 at University of Tasmania were confirmed with minor corrections.

Matters Arising

Field Course Register

Jenny Davis reported that there are places available on all of the courses on the list. Discussion about how best to inform students was inconclusive.

Presidents Report

Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson noted major achievements:

- Developed a strategic plan
- Updated and modernised the website
- Developed a register of Field-based courses available for cross-institutional enrolments.
- Excellent Autumn meeting hosted by the University of Tasmania

- Commissioned a report on Future Employment Opportunities – still to be completed
- Sent two delegates to the 'Science Meets Parliament' forum in Canberra
- Sent a delegate to 'Science Meets Business' in Sydney
- Recognised 14 ACEDD Scholars
- Andrew Millington chaired EIANZ Accreditation panel that reviewed Griffith University programs
- Supported an application to ATN Teaching Learning Grant scheme for a project to support field work as an important component of WIL

10.45-11.45

Presentation and discussion with EIANZ President Dr Bryan Jenkins and Past President Mr Jon Womersley

The presentation described the rationale and nature of the EIANZ QAS and covered what undergraduates in Environmental Science and Environmental Management should be taught, where they work, what they do, and what kinds of knowledge is required. The accreditation process is modelled on the Planning Institute of Australia process and is being proposed to ensure that the education of graduates entering the profession is sound and creditable. The QAS is managed by a working group comprising Jon Womersley, Bryan Jenkins, Tor Hundloe, Professor Ronnie Harding and Professor Helen Ross.

The development of the standards has used the AQF and the NZQF as well as the LTAS statement.

It was suggested that ACEDD could:

- Provide a roster of senior academic staff to Chair visiting accreditation panels;
- Nominate a representative to be a member of the QAS working group;
- Cooperate in the development of Graduate Certificate and Masters courses to upgrade relevant skills not included in undergraduate programs.

Following the successful trial at Griffith University EIANZ invited all institutions to undertake the QAS. There are already four institutions who have nominated.

11.45-12.30

ACEDD Strategic Plan

Discussion centred on how to proceed. It was generally accepted that there is a need to achieve tangible outcomes. The core business of the Council is education and research (Goals 1 & 2) and undertake activities that raise the profile of environment (Goal 3).

1.30-2.30

Presentation by Professor Kate Auty, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability & Environment

Professor Auty spoke about her background and described the role of the Commissioner and the diversity of activities involved:

- Preparation of the State of the Environment report;
 - Incorporated economics;
 - Included people as part of the environment rather than just biodiversity;
- Preparation of other reports that lead to actions;
- Complaints resolution
 - Achieved outcomes by collaboration between interested publics and authorities;
- Arranged public presentations by experts.

Noted that ACEDD can be a valuable resource for her office.

2.30-3.30

Presentation on *Future Earth Australia* by Professor Stephen Dovers and Imran Ahmed

Presented and discussed the recently completed Future Earth Australia Business Plan, and Prospectus. FEA is seeking support from all universities and is interested to learn “what is the key initiative that universities would want?”.

Outlined some of the current initiatives and benefits:

- Providing international connections for early career researchers/academics
- Develop a mechanism for Australia scientists to lead international for a through access to the Belmont Forum¹ (<http://www.belmontforum.org/>)
- Support for early career researchers via placements in a variety of overseas organisations;
- Provide a conduit to Australian science organisation members for foreign embassies.

Professor Dovers also noted the high proportion of universities that have received a 4 or a 5 in the ERA outcomes for Environmental Science and Management (0502), showing the high level of importance of this discipline in Australia.

4.00-5.00

Council Business Session 2

EIANZ Qualifications Accreditation Scheme (QAS) - Discussion of Presentation and Griffith trial.

Professor Chris Frid tabled a paper summarising the Griffith University experience of the trial accreditation process. (Paper is attached).

It was agreed that:

- ACEDD should encourage continued dialogue with EIANZ including nominating a representative to the QAS board and providing a list of Chairs for accreditation panels.
- Review support for the accreditation process as more programs are reviewed.
- Write to EIANZ to document our relationship

7.30pm ACEDD Dinner

The Council dinner was held at the Asian Café, Canberra City

¹ The Belmont Forum is an international partnership that mobilizes funding of environmental change research and accelerates its delivery to remove critical barriers to sustainability.

Day 2

Tuesday 7th November

Chair: Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson

9.00 – 10.30

Council Business

Treasurer's report and Finance statement

A summary of income and expenses was tabled. Balance at Sept 30 is \$158542.98.

- All but two Universities have paid 2016 subscriptions
- No need to increase subscription fee for 2017
- Noted that two payments to STA because 2016 payment was after Sept 30, 2016
- Need to again encourage all members to nominate ACEDD Scholars
- An independent audit of finances will be arranged

Discussion about approval process for extraordinary expenditure. It was agreed that Executive could approve such expenditures for extra meetings, Executive Officer travel etc.

Agreed that Executive Officer should arrange for an ACEDD credit card to be used to pay for council dinners and other ACEDD associated expenses.

ACEDD support for ATN universities Teaching and Learning grant application

A grant application has been submitted by three member institutions (Curtin - lead, UniSA and QUT). Associate Professor Wardell-Johnson outlined the aims and proposed outcomes of the application which focussed on the way in which extended fieldwork courses are a form of WIL.

A copy of the full application will be circulated with the minutes.

Council Executive supported ACEDD participation in the application including financial contribution of \$20,000. This was endorsed by Council.

Strategic Plan actions

Discussion continued from Day 1. The following actions by small groups were agreed to progress the strategic plan.

Action	Responsible
Teaching and Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop strategies	Jo-Anne Chuck, Dianne Gleeson, Robyn Schofield, Jane Chambers, Grant Wardell-Johnson
Research and Scholarship <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop strategies	Peter Mahon, Saul Cunningham, Pierre Horwitz, Jonathan Webb, Jerry Vanclay
Advocacy and Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A working party will look at ways to achieve progress in engagement and advocating for the environment• Investigate ways to participate in Environment week	Queensland councillors Glenda Wardle and Jane Chambers

Develop a briefing sheet about environmental science	Saul Cunningham, Pauline Grierson, Nathan English, Peter Teasdale
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11.00-12.30

Presentation from Professor Susan Thomas, CEO Australian Research Council

Professor Thomas noted that she only recently took up the position after a long involvement in university research and teaching. She presented information about overall research funding by the Federal Government (total \$10.1 billion, 7% to ARC of which approximately 80% goes to STEM and 20% to HASS)

ARC will continue to fund both fundamental and applied research.

Important to demonstrate the great things that come out of research and researchers need to improve communication providing clear, understandable examples of outcomes.

Professor Thomas answered a range of questions and agreed to follow-up in some areas.

She suggested that meetings with groups like ACEDD are valuable and suggested that we invite other officers from her group to future meetings.

It was agreed that ACEDD would provide a summary of the discussion in a letter of thanks to Professor Thomas (attached).

1.30-3.00

Delegate's reports

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

- Several universities undergoing restructure, commonly reducing the number of faculties
- More than one dept/school claiming environment
- Commencing student numbers holding or small increase reported by most
- Masters programs expanding
- Online delivery increasing – requires staff to have better IT skills
- Boutique degrees being replaced by majors in a broader degree

15.00 Future meetings

The next meeting will be hosted by the University of the Sunshine Coast. Proposed date late April 2017

Meeting closed.

Professor Janette Lindesay was thanked for her excellent work in hosting the very successful meeting.