

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

Charles Sturt University Barton Campus 8 – 9 November 2018

In attendance:

Margaret Andrews (Murdoch), Paul Dargusch (UQ), Peter Davies (Macquarie), Aidan Davison (UTas), Nathan English (CQU), Dianne Gleeson (Incoming President, Canberra), Pauline Grierson (UWA), Pierre Horwitz (ECU), David Kennedy (Melbourne), Peter Mahon (Swinburne), George Mellick (Griffith), Stuart Parsons (Incoming President Elect, QUT), Nick Reid (UNE), Michelle Spencer (RMIT), Craig Strong (ANU), Peter Teasdale (UniSA), Jerry Vanclay (Southern Cross), Karl Vernes (Treasurer, UNE), Grant Wardell-Johnson (Outgoing President, Curtin), Glenda Wardle (Sydney), Ben Wilson (CSU) Ian Clark (Executive Officer)

Guests

Chantal Huijbers (ecoEd), Rod Parnell (Council of Environmental Deans and Directors, (US)

Apologies

John Bartlett (USC), Jo-Anne Chuck (WSU), Saul Cunningham (ANU), Grant Daggard (USQ), Jenny Davis (CDU), Patrick Hesp (Flinders), Matt King (UTas), Andrew Millington (Flinders, Immediate Past President), Patrick Moss (UQ), Tony O'Donnell (UWA), Enzo Palombo (Swinburne).

Thursday 8th November

Chair: Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson

9.30: Welcome

Associate Professor Ben Wilson welcomed the Council to the Charles Sturt University Barton Campus.

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

9.45: Council Business

Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held 2nd May at the University of the Sunshine Coast were confirmed with minor amendments.

President's Report

Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson pointed out the importance of Environmental Science and Management in Australia noting:

- Quality of Research
 - 34 universities achieved a 4 or 5 in the last ERA survey
- Need for caution
 - Threats to the environment are increasing and ACEDD needs to be active in Education, Research, and Advocacy

- ACEDD has an important role in the development of Environmental Science and Management and vigorous engagement is needed especially in the universities where its importance and significant contribution is not recognised.
- Need to encourage members to ACEDD regional meetings where the host university can showcase its research
- ACEDD Strategic Plan
 - Sign of maturing of ACEDD
 - Need to focus on areas of engagement
 - Maintain a budget for strategic initiatives such as the “Future Work report” and the support for the ATN Work Integrated Learning project.
- ACEDD Scholars
 - Number of Scholars nominated has increased each year but there is still room to improve as each university can nominate a scholar each year.

Grant concluded by noting the retirement from the Council of Professor Neil Saintilan (Macquarie) and Professor Grant Daggard (USQ) and thanking them for their significant contributions to the Council.

Discussion of President’s report

Need to raise the profile of Environmental Science and Management:

- Engage more with Australian Council of Deans of Science
- Complete with the emphasis on technology pointing out how it is integrated
- Recognise the breadth of the field – contains aspects of the Social Sciences, Humanities, Science and Law.
- Advocate for environmental disciplines if the possible review by ARC of FOR codes takes place

10.45: Treasurer’s report and Finance statement

A summary of income and expenses was tabled. Major expenditure items are the Executive Officer honorarium and Council meetings. Need to develop guidelines for field trip expenditure associated with the Autumn Council meetings.

- Two Universities have not paid 2018 subscriptions
- No need to increase subscription fee for 2019
- Need to consider projects to expend the strategic project fund
- Encourage all members to nominate ACEDD Scholars
- An independent audit of finances will be presented to the Autumn Council meeting
- Need to consider whether it is necessary to have an annual audit or whether the time between audits could be extended.

11.15 Guest Speaker:

Dr Chantal Huijbers, Biodiversity and Climate Change Virtual Laboratory, Griffith University

Dr Huijbers described the purpose and resources of ecoEd, a project that aims to produce resources that allow integration of digital tools for environmental sciences in undergraduate curricula. A number of ecoEd modules have been developed for use in undergraduate classrooms.

A copy of Dr Huijber’s presentation is attached and will be made available on the ACEDD website.

1.30: Strategic Plan

A paper prepared by the Advocacy and Engagement working party was discussed and accepted as a model to further develop the Teaching and Learning and the Research and Scholarship objectives. Working parties will be established to develop recommendations and a budget for Teaching and Learning: (leader, Grant Wardell-Johnson); Research and Scholarship (leaders, Glenda Wardle & Dianne Gleeson); and Advocacy and Engagement (leader, Stuart Parsons). Plans and budgets to be approved by Executive.

2.30 Guest Speaker

Professor Rod Parnell, President American Council of Environmental Deans and Directors

Dr Parnell explained his Council's relationship with and the role of the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE):

- The Council meets twice a year. One meeting aligns with the Annual meeting of NCSE
- More than 130 member institutions including private and public
- Each institution sends two delegates, one a longer serving member and the other a newer academic to retain memory of past decisions and bring fresh ideas
- Topics come from a survey of members to determine needed information.

A copy of Dr Parnell's presentation is attached and will be made available on the ACEDD website.

Discussion

- Should ACEDD consider TAFE/VET institutions in the same way as the junior colleges are involved with the American Council? A possible action would be to invite a representative to speak to council.
- ACEDD consider preparing white papers on environmental issues to inform incoming governments – consider how we take advantage of our STA membership for this sort of activity.
- Another way would be to make submissions to Senate Enquiries.

4.00-5.00

Council Business continued

Future Employment Project report

Associate Professor David Bruce's report which was distributed with the minutes was discussed. The following points were made:

- Consider how differentiating TAFE/VET from University graduate opportunities might affect Recommendation 1
- Noted that the report does not include post graduate qualifications
- Need to clarify source of and perhaps expand data summarised in Table 5
- Clarify nature of skills desired by employers; perhaps differentiate TCCP, Discipline, Enterprise and Technical skills

It was recommended that the T&L group

- Prepare a summary for the ACEDD website
- Develop an infographic about employment opportunities for University Open Days

ACEDD should consider a follow-up investigation involving a wider survey of employers.

Strategic Plan

Discussion of possible projects for the Teaching & Learning objective

- Further develop the work of the Work integrated Learning project
- Undertake a review of the Learning and Teaching Assessment Standards (LTAS)
 - Who are the users and how are they used?
 - What does the regulator (TEQSA) want?
 - Consider Indigenous content/participation
- Continue to develop the process for sharing field trips

7.30pm ACEDD Dinner – Ottoman Restaurant

Day 2

Friday 9^h November

Chair: Associate Professor Dianne Gleeson

9.00

Council Business

Election of Officers

Professor Stuart Parsons was elected to the Vice President and President Elect position

Officers

President	Associate Professor Dianne Gleeson (term expires Nov 2020)
Immediate Past President	Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson
Vice-President and President elect	Professor Stuart Parsons
Treasurer	Associate Professor Karl Vernes (term expires Nov 2019)
Executive Officer	Associate Professor Ian Clark

Amendment to the Constitution

It was agreed that the following paragraph be inserted into the constitution between the second and third paragraphs of the section headed "Finance".

The assets and income of the organisation shall be applied solely in furtherance of its above-mentioned objects and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the organisation except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation.

Proposer	Associate Professor Grant Wardell Johnson, President
Seconder	Associate Professor Ian Clark, Executive Officer

Governance

It was agreed that the Executive Officer investigate

- an induction package for new members be prepared
- a process for a pairing arrangement whereby each institution could be represented by two councillors
- observers from the host University be encouraged to attend Council meetings
- a tab with resources for students and a link to EIANZ be added to the website
- developing a link to environment student organisation Facebook pages

Strategic Plan Working Groups

Working groups were established and action topics were developed. Each group will develop a modest budget for approval by Council Executive

Advocacy and Engagement

Stuart Parsons, George Mellick, Patrick Moss, Nathan English, Pierre Horwitz

- Further the development of the paper already prepared

Teaching and Learning

Three subgroups were proposed

WIL: Grant Wardell-Johnson, Margaret Andrews, Nick Reid, Michelle Spencer

- Consider recommendations from ATN pilot project
- Align with ACDS materials

Field Courses: Karl Vernes

- cross-institutional enrolments
- pre-requisites
- stand-alone courses
- on-line options

LTAS review: Aidan Davison

- Align with Science TLO
- Include appropriate social science content
- Consider indigenous content

Research and Scholarship

Glenda Wardle, Dianne Gleeson, Pauline Grierson, Peter Teasdale, Nick Reid

EIANZ

Concern was expressed that external accreditation limits academic freedom. Agreed that Professor Chris Frid as ACEDD representative on the subcommittee be asked to report to ACEDD as appropriate.

Indigenous Representation/Content

Consideration be given to how to approach this. It was agreed that we seek advice from an appropriate organisation and a possible presentation at the next Council meeting.

11.00 Guest speaker

Gary Brook, Director, Assessment and Investigations Group, TEQSA

The role of TEQSA and some background information was provided

- TEQSA maintains the National Register of Higher Education Providers in accordance with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011
- There are 176 registered HE institutions
- TEQSA is a quality assurance agency with regulatory powers
- Most of the major universities are self-accrediting and are therefore responsible for ensuring that compliance across all the HES Framework is sustained throughout their higher education operations, are appropriately applied and met throughout the development, approval, delivery and discontinuance of a course of study.

Some issues that have arisen during accreditation include

- Design and content is too low for the level
- Learning outcomes are not well defined

Benchmarking by external referencing is a way to ensure that courses are appropriately designed. Organisations such as ACEDD can help with this.

TEQSA is able to consider MOUs with professional bodies like ACEDD. The purpose is to maintain and improve quality in the provision of higher education in Australia. The following guidelines are from the TEQSA website (<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/engagement-professional-bodies>)

- the development of a complementary approach to course accreditation processes and requirements
- the use of professional bodies as a source of expert advice
- the sharing of information with professional bodies to inform our regulatory activity and to protect the interests of students and the higher education sector
- encouraging alignment of professional outcomes with learning outcome requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
- fostering communication between us and professional bodies regarding each other's respective roles.

Delegate's reports

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

- Several institutions are undergoing or implementing major reorganisations. Most involve a reduction in the number of faculties or equivalent administrative unit.
- Several institutions have or are expecting new VCs and/or Senior staff.
- Institution wide curriculum reviews involving adding common units thereby resulting in fewer cognate courses; introduction of WIL in a variety of forms is common
- Most institutions are stipulating a smaller number of assessment points, ostensibly to reduce academic workloads
- Commencing student numbers are holding or small decrease reported by most
- Masters programs expanding
- Plagiarism is an issue especially amongst some international cohorts. Response may be towards fewer written assignments and more supervised exams

15.00 Future meeting

The next meeting will be hosted by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in late April, early May, 2019

Meeting close.

Retiring members Professor Jerry Vanclay, Professor Neil Saintilan (Macquarie) and Professor Grant Daggard (USQ) were thanked for their significant contributions to the Council.

Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson was thanked for his leadership and achievements as President during his term of office.

Associate Professors Dianne Gleeson and Ben Wilson were thanked for hosting the very successful meeting.