

Australian Council of Environmental Deans and Directors

**April 10-11, 2012: Southern Cross University
Lismore Campus, Lismore**

Minutes

	Comments	Action
Welcome & apologies	<p>President: Steve Turton JCU. Meeting Host: Jerry Vanclay, SCU</p> <p>Attendees: Peter Gell (Ballarat) Tor Hundloe (Bond) Ken McQueen (Canberra) Judith Wake (Central Queensland) Andrew Campbell (Charles Darwin) Guang Shi (Deakin) Pierre Horwitz (Edith Cowan) Tony Carroll (Griffith) Steve Turton (James Cook) Peter Nelson (Macquarie) Rick Roush (Melbourne) John Bailey (Murdoch) Karl Vernes (New England) Jamie Schulmeister (Queensland) David Gust (Queensland UT) Delene Weber (South Australia) Jerry Vanclay (Southern Cross) Joachim Ribbe (Southern Queensland)</p>	

	<p>John Bartlett (Sunshine Coast) Julia Lamborn (Swinburne UT) Randall Robinson (Victoria) Richard Horsfield (by invitation)</p> <p>Apologies: Wendy Goldstein, Macquarie ANU, Flinders, La Trobe, Monash, NSW, RMIT, Sydney, UWA, Sydney UTS, UWS</p>	
<p>Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting (ANU, Canberra: 27-28 October, 2011)</p>	<p>Coal Seam Gas media release: went out on the 8 November All action items are on the current agenda</p>	
<p>President's report on activities since the last meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter to Dr Carol Nicole (TESQA) was sent on 2 Feb 2012, explaining who ACEDD is and covered the learning standards project. It could be worthwhile getting our project officer to contact TESQA. We received a letter back explaining that this was a good project, however it would be better to work with HEQSA. A letter was sent to Prof Alan Robson. A reply was received yesterday stating that our letter will be tabled at their meeting tomorrow. • Dr John Williams would be good to lead the coal seam gas assessment project. He said that he is available and interested to undertake this work. It would be similar in format to the climate change report. This will be discussed later in the agenda <p>Got a response from Dr Lindsay Heywood, on behalf of Prof Alan Robinson (HESP) they have a meeting tomorrow of their board and our letter will be tabled.</p>	<p>Invite someone from TEQSA and/or HESP to our next meeting in Canberra</p>
<p>Treasurer's report</p>	<p>An up-to-date report could not be presented as Wendy was in Portugal. Status as at 2 Feb 2012: Doing well with \$54k in the account. There are still a few institutions that have not paid their 2011 subs. Only 1 institution has withdrawn from ACEDD – University of Wollongong, who said that their science dean can deal with environmental issues. Council decided to keep the annual fee at \$1000 for 2012.</p>	<p>Wendy Goldstein to send a current treasurer's report when she returns</p>
<p>ACEDD project 1</p>	<p>Research and analysis of Australian Environmental Programs</p> <p>Part 1 Research and field work/research stations (Horsfield/Merrick) A hardcopy report & CD were handed out. The CD contains a lot of resources including full copies of all the teaching and learning standards for the other disciplines and raw data from DEEWR.</p>	

	<p>John Merrick has done some preliminary research on research and fieldwork (part 1). Discussions covered the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What constitutes field work or field based work? • Is it possible or useful to develop an inventory of field based subjects? • Difficulty in accessing subject descriptions and subject outlines, i.e. subject outcomes • Definition of a field station • Would it be useful to have an inventory of field stations? <p>Profiling research –reported through the FOR codes and SOE codes. However, there seems to be issues with the DEEWR data for higher degree research completions. The issue is probably about how environment and sustainability are defined. A long discussion took place on the best classification system. Proposed new detailed FOE codes have been included on page 1 of the report.</p> <p>Part 2 Field stations inventory: It could foster collaboration and sharing of resources. Also some universities would find running these sites more viable by allowing other universities to share the resources. It could be good to find out what facilities and resources these sites have, what measuring equipment is there etc. It could be useful to have these listed by ecosystem etc. The data should be stored in a searchable relational database. Need to be clear on the definition of a fieldwork site and what should be included on this inventory. It may be possible to apply for an OLT grant. Would be good to start with university owned and managed sites. Discussions took place on producing a webpage on the ACEDD website Karl Vernes offered to organise this with Andrew Campbell. Will present a proposal (including a budget for a web developer, up to \$5k) at the next meeting.</p> <p>Need to update the website, send any updates to Steve.</p>	<p>Karl Vernes to present report at next meeting on field station inventory</p> <p>All members to send webpage updates to Steve</p>
<p>ACEDD project 2</p>	<p>Graduate completions from environmental programs (Horsfield)</p> <p>Graduate completions: the purpose of this project was to get an indication of how big the environmental field is. The codes for this area are spread over a wide range of fields. The charts presented are from the DEEWR data (i.e. there are problems with this data). DEEWR knows this data by cluster and band, but to get that data will take time and money. Universities offer a wide range of programs that are related to the environment but that are listed under different codes. (A good summary is on page 16 of the report).</p> <p>Discussion: If institutions aren't paying to be a member of ACEDD, then this information should not be passed</p>	

	<p>onto them. It is important that for the analysis that all Australian universities are included. It could be worthwhile to talk about how these figures have changed over time, how the environment/sustainability has been incorporated through so many other disciplines. The context is more important than the actual numbers. There needs to be clear definitions of what should be included. Members agreed that this project is good but that the current figures are nonsense.</p> <p>Rick Roush gave a report on how the Agricultural Deans have approached this, it took a lot of effort but it was extremely useful project. The result has been that the agricultural deans have now been recognised as the peak body with this information, and have more accurate figures than DEEWR.</p> <p>It clear that we are not going to get better data from DEEWR but from our own members. Richard commented that the learning and teaching project will show how wide this area is.</p> <p>There are concerns about going to subject level due to the changes that happen at that level, however looking at majors within more generic degrees could be useful. It would be useful to take this DEEWR data back to each of our universities to show them the errors. That might encourage them to provide more accurate data.</p>	<p>Members to try and get data for their own university for graduate completions</p>
<p>ACEDD project 3</p>	<p>A Learning and Teaching Academic Standard for Environmental and Sustainability Studies Working paper (Horsfield) Learning Standard Project (Preliminary Report (Horsfield))</p> <p>Report handed to members.</p> <p>The issue is what projects and environmental work needs to be included in this and in the future sustainability needs to be included. The report covered the scope of the project: the narrow and detailed fields of education that could be included. Currently there are several standards for some disciplines, Richard did desktop review on ALTC across relevant standards, summary of expectations of TEQSA regarding L&T standards, Liaison with TEQSA on how ACEDD can be recognised to undertake the learning standards work in the environment. Two categories: fields of education (ACSED) and fields of research and socio-economic outcomes.</p> <p>The issue in fields of education is there is no board environmental category; this is included under many other disciplines. ALTC has now been replaced by TEQSA for quality standards and OLT for funding for L&T.</p> <p>The ALTC undertook a teaching standards project: Teaching standards Learning environment standards</p>	

Curriculum standards

Trends that define the future of L&T: from 'teachers teaching' to 'students learning', must include collaborative, tech-powered and blended styles. Learning outcomes – built around threshold learning outcomes (minimum learning outcomes). There are no uniformly in the adopted terminology to distinguish student learning outcomes from program or units aims or objectives.

Questions were raised regarding the use of the term 'discipline'. It is not clear what the definition is being used by this term. TEQSA is not using this word but the ALTC was. These are critical questions in defining a L&T standard for the environmental field. Learning outcomes are concerned with the demonstrable achievements of the student – in terms of what they know and can do. Aims and objectives are often concerned with teaching and the teachers' intentions or sought after results. This Council will need to respond to whatever requirements TEQSA will impose. Learning outcomes are useful for both students and teachers.

It is possible to write good learning outcomes, but it's hard work. Then the alignment of curriculum will be easier. Learning outcomes need to be defined at every level in an academic program, i.e. at program level, unit level and the module level. Threshold learning outcomes have been developed by the ALTC in seven disciplines. This included the participation of professional bodies such as Engineers Australia (accreditation bodies).

Report covers all these threshold learning outcomes (TLO). Presented information includes the difference between AQF7 (bachelor) and AQF9 (masters). The institution must be able to demonstrate how students meet that institution's learning outcomes as well as the threshold learning outcomes for that discipline.

Page 11 of report show the format of all the threshold academic standards reports that have been done by the ALTC. The ones most relevant to environment are science and geography, there are some inclusions in engineering, architecture law and others that have multi-disciplinary or planning programs that include environmental issues. In the Science report, they have included agricultural and environmental sciences. Therefore this Council must consider how we want to define the areas we represent, i.e. sustainability. They then defined a set of Science TLOs that are common to all be areas they covered. In most other countries these standards are for sub-disciplines like chemistry, physics etc. rather than science as a whole. Page 13 covers the aims for science graduates.

Considerable discussion took place regarding the types of programs that we cover and that the science aims are really the aims for environmental programs.

	<p>The TLO tend to be motherhood type statements and some of these would not be that easy to demonstrate (such as explaining the role and relevance of science in society.) These talk about solving problems and defining problems. New version of Blooms taxonomy is very good as it describes process as well as knowledge. The science TLOs then have extensive notes that get around the motherhood statements of the overall TLOs.</p> <p>Went through geography standards. This was written with consultation of physical geographers as well. Their TLO is very environmentally focused. Graduates go from this area to many different jobs. (page 18). Provide detailed notes on the TLO but without prescribing.</p> <p>Summary and conclusions: 4 disciplines have narrowly defined TLO, 3 are more diverse but still quite well defined and then 3 more are very broad (health medicine and veterinary science). What constitutes a discipline – a combination of factors – historical groupings, common philosophy/methodology, need to limit the statements to a manageable number. A useful approach for ACEDD – to focus first on environmental and sustainability professional work looks like, then trace back to university program. Our issue is that we don't have a professional body to support us. Each set of discipline TLOs are apparently derived from the AQF learning outcome descriptors. A reminder that TLO are threshold standards, however TEQSA expects universities to go beyond this.</p> <p>ACEDD needs to make some decisions – other councils of deans who have been involved with these processes have appointed a discipline scholar, a project officer, a reference group and terms of reference for the work. An extensive consultative processes, desktop research and then endorsement by the council of deans. There is a second round of funding coming from OLT (August round). The funding would go to the discipline scholar and their university as ACEDD cannot apply directly for this role. Richard is happy to be the project officer, but we need a volunteer to be the discipline scholar and be the first PI, could be a mid-career researcher at one of our universities rather than someone at our level. The decision would be made by a reference group. This would need to be a joint group of universities.</p> <p>A question was raised about what we were trying to do rather than how we would do it. The TLO would be very different between the diverse programs that our group covers. If we don't do this, we will lose the opportunity to lead our own TLO. As yet we haven't seen anything that says that TEQSA will be accepting these TLOs developed under the ALTC. It is also a good idea to consult with employers of our graduates. There could be information from the engineers that could be of value to ACEDD, in particular the ALTC define your discipline project.</p>	<p>Need a member (or member of one of our Universities) to volunteer to be the discipline scholar/PI for environmental studies</p>
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	<p>For environmental management, environmental studies and sustainability there is little done so far by other groups, however for environmental engineering and environmental science there has already been significant work under engineering and science. If we don't move now, it could be too late in another 6 months. It could be worth contacting the science deans to offer to do the environmental science TLOs for them. We can set a generic set of TLOs, and then each university develops their own specific set of TLOs for their programs.</p> <p>Working group: John Bailey to chair this reference group including: Delene Weber, Julia Lamborn, Tor Hundloe, Steve Turton, Ken McQueen NT and NSW need to nominate a representation, NSW</p> <p>John will set up a skype group. Steve will put together a form for expressions of interest for the project leader and will email to members. Will be providing a list of contacts for member institutions.</p> <p>Richard summarised what he has found out about TEQSA in the report and on the CD. He also prepared a paper for the working group to start with.</p>	<p>Need NT and NSW nominations</p> <p>John Bailey to set up Skype connection for working group</p> <p>Steve to put together expression of interest document and email to members</p>
<p>ACEDD sponsored Coal Seam Gas Strategic Assessment Report</p>	<p>Update on progress (Turton) Steve Turton has spoken to John Williams and he is keen to be involved as a private consultant. He has presented a proposal. He felt the Council should add shale gas to the report as well as coal seam gas as there are differences between the two processes. The report would cover 5 areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Literature review 2. Detail governance and regulation 3. Preliminary report summarising key scientific and engineering issues by June 29 4. Engagement with ACEDD steering group to establish scope of discussion draft 5. Preparation of discussion draft with engagement of stakeholders by August 17, final report Sept 	

	<p>This report will be released, preferably with the agriculture deans' support. This needs to be done before October. A newer version will be sent to the Deans of agriculture once the proposal has been revised.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report to us to develop a brief for a press release 2. A document released to the public like the climate change report <p>The Council had a site visit to Metgasco, the local CSG Company</p>	<p>Steve Turton will send out the revised proposal</p>
<p>General Business: Items submitted by members</p>	<p>1) Environment infrastructure: ACEDD could work out the details of infrastructure needed in the medium term to be better placed for future funding streams from DIISRTE (all ACEDD)</p> <p>This came out of discussions on the roadmap item. Could be good for a presentation at the next meeting. A risk here is that if there is no funding available, then nothing is likely to happen.</p> <p>2) Consider project for funding on networks of ACEDD community - partnerships with different institutions internationally and across the Asia Pacific region (all ACEDD)</p> <p>A number of universities are developing relationships, twinning programs, student exchanges with other countries. Are there needs for funding to develop networks with other countries. We may need closer ties with other similar councils, need to get a list together (i.e. USA, Canada). The Asia Pacific region is probably of more interest to us and there are huge environmental issues in many of these countries such as China. A number of universities have campuses in Asian countries: JCU: Singapore, Curtin and Swinburne: Sarawak, Monash: Malaysia, some programs have been delivered in Indonesia. A point was raised if we should invite NZ to join this council of if there is a similar body to ACEDD in NZ. There could be good opportunities for teaching, student and research exchanges.</p> <p>Members asked if it was worth getting a database of the links members have with overseas institutions.</p> <p>QUT – not sure about formal linkages, some in China, Malaysia, not at a program level CQU – campus in Singapore – developing environmental programs Deakin – no formal partnerships, some 3 + 2 in China but have not started as yet, some research connections but by individuals Murdoch - teaching relationship in Dubai, China, research projects China, Vietnam, Solomon Islands and some others Macquarie – Fiji, New Guinea, research – lots of joint PhD programs, Europe, France, Scotland, Chinese,</p>	<p>Add to agenda for next meeting</p> <p>Steve Turton Will contact University of Auckland</p>

	<p>UQ – Mekong delta, Indonesia, Vietnam, Hong Kong, China, Bond – student exchanges, Griffith – field trips to Borneo, no formal programs, but investigating links into China, Taiwan VU – Sunway in Malaysia, China links UC – 2 MOUs in China, Sunshine Coast – no formal teaching or research relationships, lots of informal relationships, Ballarat –starting in China for teaching, research in Java, China, India Swinburne – campus in Sarawak, twinning programs in China and Iraq and significant fully funded PhD students from Iraq Melbourne – China, Field course in south east Asia, East Timor and PNG developing field research staff UniSA – formally exchange programs, for teaching Malaysia, Uni of Ortargo, Colorado state JCU - involved with coral triangle – countries to north of Australia, campus in Singapore, PNG, Indonesia, Sydney – Mekong Delta area Curtin and Monash campuses in Malaysia ECU – twinning program with Mongolia, 2 MOU with China, PhDs programs with Thailand. UNE – not many formal links, used to run a field trip to NZ, setting up 2 MOU with Bhutan, will include staff and student exchanges SCU – new PPCI who is consolidating arrangements, Colorado for student exchanges, China, Deakin :happy to look into environment and sustainability programs in China?</p> <p>Maybe set up an Australia/ China network for environmental studies, this will be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Better that this council leads this process rather than a single university. Run a workshop on this, a huge opportunity</p> <p>3) Workplace Health & Safety This is becoming a major issue, some members want the council to consider writing a letter to VCs to highlight that field work is critical in environmental programs and they should seek to reduce the weight of compliance. Health and safety laws are about risk mitigation and not a true risk assessment. This is about improving the efficiency of implementation. It’s an institutional issue but it affects all institutions. It was decided to produce a letter approval by the council that can be used by institutions that need it, could be sent to VC, C and OHS committee, or handled by each of us within our own institutions</p>	<p>All members to provide details of overseas partnerships</p> <p>Agenda item for next meeting Australia/Chian network</p> <p>Steve Turton and Jamie Schulmeister to draft a letter on OH&S issues with field work</p>
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4) Scale of ACEDD portfolio

Scale of ACEDD portfolio: is this still required? The difficulty is getting responses from people, covering the breadth of what we do.

By using graduate completions we will get this information, it was felt that an email would be better than using survey monkey. Discussions took place about how we decide what should be included, is this still going to be a value considering the other projects that we are running. The feeling of the Council was this was no longer required as an item.

5) National Curriculum for sustainability Science

Working party to explore the establishment of a national curriculum for sustainability science: this paper was put together in anticipation of accreditation of environmental degrees, EIANZ accredits environmental practitioners and graduate and experienced level. To become a certified environmental practitioner you require 5 years work experience. This organisation accredits individuals and not programs.

Tor Hundloe was asking ACEDD to consider if we should move towards an accreditation process, i.e. going beyond accrediting individuals to accrediting degrees, like in engineering. He would like the establishment of a working party to discuss this. This would cover environmental graduates who are not covered by other accreditation systems (environmental engineers). Discussion covered the current length of 3 year degrees, many topics cannot be covered in a 3 year period. A better model would be like the medical degrees – i.e. 5 years. There are many environmental programs that do not have internships or industry practice components. Need to think about this discipline as “earth doctors”.

From the discussion it was felt that this was a good idea, but not sure if we can do it. The concerns here are about future students and employers; and ensuring consistent standards of education. ACEDD could approach EIANZ to see if they were interested in accrediting programs, members didn't see that this would be that much different to accrediting individuals. Some members spoke against this, they believed that an accreditation system stops change in programs and that they are normally set in the past. If you have an accreditation that has no legislative rules behind it, then you have to ask what the point of it is.

Rick Roush spoke about the agricultural field and had objections from employers and some universities. They couldn't see the point.

The Engineering Deans have been talking to TEQSA about the disciplines that have a mature internationally benchmarked accreditation system. They have just about got agreement that in that case, they would not be separately accredited again by TEQSA, who would then look at the accrediting body (Engineers Australia) and their processes rather than at the individual university level.

	<p>Need to define the scale of the problem in what accreditation is trying to address. How happy are we in the standard of environmental work done in the country and the quality of graduates. If there is a problem – then would accreditation be the solution.</p> <p>We would need to be clear about what programs would be accredited. It would be very hard to accredit the broad field of sustainability; it's easier to accredit programs that go to particular jobs, i.e. environmental health officers.</p> <p>Working group: Judith Wake, David Gust, Tor Hundloe and John Bartlett</p> <p>6) Emeritus network of retired environmental specialists</p> <p>Members were asked to look at our own institutions and submit a list of names. It was felt that this was a good idea. It works well within the agriculture deans, all past council members are added to this list along with selected others. This would need to be voluntary.</p> <p>We only need about a dozen people on this list.</p> <p>Members to send a list of names to Steve along with contact details and a short summary of their CV. He will then contact them and the ACEDD executive will make the decision.</p>	<p>Paper from working group for next meeting</p> <p>Members to nominate names for retired specialists list to Steve Turton</p>
<p>General Business</p>	<p>ACEDD matters:</p> <p>1) Election of office members</p> <p>The Chair is going on study leave next year; therefore a new chair must be elected at the next meeting.</p> <p>At the moment the Council is running the books at Macquarie, need to elect a new treasurer</p> <p>The Council needs to consider running more formally with an executive that meets in between meetings, particularly now that money is being spent on projects.</p> <p>2) Does the constitution need review to allow for the President to speak on issues to the media and to clarify the role of the Council in advocacy? (all ACEDD)</p> <p>Review constitution to allow president or nominee to speak on behalf of the Council: (this was an issue with the coal seam gas issue). If other councils of deans are in a position to speak, then so should we. This would be speaking on behalf of ACEDD and not the university they represent.</p> <p>All members agreed.</p> <p>It needs to be remembered that the council is not an advocacy group. It not believed that we need to change the constitution. The Council agreed that the president can speak, subject to an approval process. It was felt that this was already passed previously.</p> <p>3) Proposal for our constitution to explicitly include 'sustainability' (all ACEDD)</p> <p>It would keep the same title, but we need to look at the text. The members wanted to see a</p>	<p>Elect treasurer and Chair at October meeting</p> <p>Steve Turton to draft a proposal</p>

	<p>proposal before making a decision. It was felt important that the Council show that we are interested in sustainability</p> <p>4) Next Meeting Next meeting: University Canberra, inviting :TEQSA, HEQSA Will check for suitable dates, need to check for parliament sitting, accommodation in Belconnen, All members to think about who we would like to invite to talk to us, EPBC act review ? Do we want to meet the press? Maybe the coal seam gas announcement.</p> <p>It was felt that field sessions/visits be kept for the April meetings</p> <p>The chair thanked Jerry Vanclay for hosting the meeting</p>	<p>for the next meeting</p> <p>Sort out dates for next meeting</p> <p>Members to think about who they would like to be invited to the meeting</p>
Meeting closed		

Minutes compiled by Julia Lamborn (Swinburne UT).