

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

FRANK FENNER BUILDING, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY 29-30TH OCTOBER 2015

In attendance:

John Bartlett (USC), Andrew Campbell (CDU, President Elect), Ian Clark (Executive Officer), Delma Clifton (CQU), Steve Dovers (ANU), Dianne Gleeson (Canberra), Pierre Horwitz (ECU), Janette Lindesay (ANU), Jen McIlwain (Curtin), Andrew Millington (Flinders, President), Charles Morris (UWS), Enzo Palombo (Swinburne), Stuart Parsons (QUT), Kylie Pitt (Griffith), Joachim Ribbe (USQ), Neil Saintilan (Macquarie), Scott Smithers (JCU), Paul Sutton (UniSA), Steve Turton (JCU, Immediate Past President), Kathryn Williams (Melbourne), Karl Vernes (UNE), Ben Wilson (Charles Sturt)

Apologies:

Jonathon Aitchison (UQ), Rebekah Brown (Monash), Mike Clarke (Latrobe), Grant Daggard (USQ), Chris Frid (Griffith), Guang Shi (Deakin), Zenobia Jacobs (Wollongong), Michael Lockwood (U Tas), Graciela Metternicht (UNSW), Tor Hundloe (Bond, Treasurer), Tony O'Donnell (UWA), Jerry Vanclay (SCU), Grant Wardell-Johnson (Curtin),

Thursday 29th October

Chair: Professor Andrew Millington

10.00-10.10: Welcome

Delegates were welcomed to the ANU by Professor Steve Dovers, Director, Fenner School of Environment and Society, College of Medicine, Biology & Environment, Australian National University.

President, Professor Andrew Millington welcomed ACEDD delegates and outlined the program and protocols.

ACEDD welcomed new delegates Dianne Gleeson, Enzo Palombo and proxy delegates Jen McIlwain, Kylie Pitt and Joachim Ribbe and Executive Officer Ian Clark

10.15-11.00

Professor Millington congratulated the University of Newcastle LTAS - TLO project team for winning the Learning, Teaching & Skills section of the 2015 Green Gowns Awards Australasia

Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held 9-10 April 2015 at the Western Sydney University were confirmed.

Matters arising/President's report

(ii) Executive Officer

Associate Professor Ian Clark from the University of South Australia has accepted the position of Executive Officer. It is noted that in addition to the duties noted in the role statement he will also manage the financial dealings of the Council and for convenience be sole signatory for the cheque account.

ACEDD Scholars Scheme

12 Nominees were received for 2014. Certificates have been prepared and the nominees will be contacted in November. **Action: EO (Executive Officer)**

It was agreed that the criteria for selection should be left to individual Universities. Honours students can be considered but no student can be nominated more than once.

Deans will be reminded to send nominations for approval at the April/May meeting. Deadline for nominations will be 28th February.

(iii) Letter to Vice Chancellors

Letters were sent out in September. One response from Flinders.

(iv) LTAS Project and TLO

Discussion about how TLOs are being used and the need to consider the Science TLOs as well for some programs. Agreed that a session should be included at the 2016 Canberra meeting at which several program representatives report.

A curriculum mapping tool as used at University of Tasmania for the Agriculture TLOs could be adapted for the purpose. **Action: EO**

Finance Report

A summary of income and expenses was presented. Balance at October 30 is \$84 649. Noted that some Universities have not paid 2014 affiliation fees. Agreed that 2015 invoices should include a reminder of outstanding fees and that a copy of the invoice notice should go to each Councillor. **Action: EO**

It was agreed that the Treasurer should arrange for the finances to be audited and report to the Canberra Meeting.

Motion

Agreed that Ian Clark (Executive Officer) be added and Tor Hundloe and Peter Nelson be removed as signatories to the bank account. Moved Andrew Campbell, seconded Andrew Millington.

Forward Budget was tabled and approved with minor amendment to Science meets Parliament allocation increased to allow for two participants.

Agreed that the Honorarium for the Executive Officer be increased to \$20 000 to take into account the added role of managing the finances under the direction of the Treasurer.

11.00-12.30 Presentation by Mr Philip Vernon, General Manager, Australian Ethical Investment

Mr Vernon outlined how the company uses a series of positive and negative factors to make investment decisions. It balances investment returns against social and environmental outcomes.

Climate change and divestment to decarbonise portfolios are a current issue. He gave the City of Melbourne as an example which has divested \$30 million of investments and plans to decarbonise its portfolio completely by 2050, but is aware that fossil fuels are currently needed to ensure energy supplies until cleaner energy becomes widely available.

A discussion of the topic followed in the Council Session after the lunch break.

13.30-15.00: Council Session 2nd Session

(i) Election of Officers

Two positions were filled

President Elect Grant Wardell-Johnson

Treasurer Karl Vernes

Outgoing members, Steve Turton and Tor Hundloe were thanked for their significant contributions as members of the executive.

(ii) Ethical Investments Discussion

There was considerable discussion about whether ACEDD should have a position on ethical investments and whether it is the correct body to give advice particularly because ethics involves not only environmental issues.

It was agreed that ACEDD should sponsor a project to investigate

- what is happening and what is best teaching and learning practice in the sector including in Business and Finance schools;
- the benefits/disbenefits of environmental/ethical investments

Executive will seek advice about how to proceed from experts in the field and report back to Council.

(iii) Science meets Parliament

Agreed to continue to sponsor participation of two nominees from ACEDD and that the selection pool should be wider.

- Call for nominations from all members (one per University), including a half-page statement and a 2 page CV
- Nominees should be within 5 years of first academic appointment
- Nominators responsible for briefing participants
- Briefing notes about ACEDD should be provided
- Gender balance desirable

15.30-17.00: Presentation by Dr Gordon de Brouwer, Secretary, Dept of Environment.

Dr de Brouwer described the role of the Department, pointing out that critical thinking is the basis of good public policy. The change in Cabinet has brought Innovation and Cities and the Built Environment into the purview of the department.

The department is a mix of both specialists and inter-disciplinary types. He is impressed by the quality of graduates and wants systems thinkers who can develop and make explicit a conceptual framework to guide their policy development and advice. He thinks that there is a gap in undergraduate programs in the area of public policy.

He would welcome input from Universities into policy discussions but is looking for evidence-based information rather than complaints.

19:00-22.00 Council Dinner: Teatro Vivaldi with guest speaker Distinguished Professor Brian Schmidt

Highly convivial, as usual. Dr Schmidt foreshadowed his plans for the ANU, stressing the importance that all researchers should teach ('unless they have a better research track record than mine'), and emphasising the importance of investing in youth (providing greater job security for promising post-docs). He lamented the current funding model that does not fully fund research, and the fact that the structure of the Australian economy (where a significant proportion of the Australian stock exchange is tied up in the resources and finance sectors) is such that there are very few large Australian companies with a significant research expenditure. Much of the debate about the need for universities to lift their game to improve business investment in R&D is misplaced, because a mining and banking economy does not need much R&D compared with economies that are more heavily based on, say, defence industries, advanced manufacturing, pharmaceuticals or ICT.

Friday 30th October

Chair: Professor Andrew Campbell

9.00-10.30 Presentation from **Professor Clive Baldock, Exec Director, Australian Research Council**

Professor Baldock's presentation was supported by a powerpoint presentation which will be available from the ARC website. Noted that discussions with groups like ACEDD is important and suggestions are considered by ARC.

Some points raised were

- ARC D-P success rates for all sciences is between 20% and 30%
- Number of grant applications is increasing
- Continuous application rounds being discussed for some schemes
- Questioned whether DECRA and Future Fellows should be funded earlier in their careers
- Panel membership is being reviewed to ensure review quality

- Recognition that unsuccessful applications waste time but it is the responsibility of Institutions to ensure quality
- Interdisciplinary research is being considered as a field but assessment will be challenging
- Supports open access policy as it leads to higher citations which in turn raises University ranking

11.00-12.30 Council Session 3

(i) Variation to Professional Employees Award.

Richard Sharp from EIANZ provided information to support a recommendation that ACEDD should encourage EIANZ to apply to the Fair Work Commission to vary the Professional Employee Award 2010 to add environmental science to the academic schedule. This would *“enhance the profile of environmental science degrees...and highlight to students that they will be professionals when they graduate.”*

There was general acceptance of the benefit of varying the award but it was felt that ACEDD could make the application without going through EIANZ and there was a need to gather data on employment rates and future opportunities.

(ii) Future Employment Opportunities for environmental graduates

Following discussion of projected employment figures for environmental graduates it was agreed that ACEDD should commission a study to gather evidence of the future size and impact of the ‘green economy’. A working group of Andrew Campbell, Pierre Horwitz, Ben Wilson, and Steve Dovers was established to organise a workshop of key players to develop outcomes of the study.

13.00 – 14.30 Delegates reports

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

- Most programs were undergoing restructure as a result of wider University restructure, new VC, reduction in number of degrees, small boutique degrees being closed;
- No pattern in undergraduate student recruitment, some are up and some are down;
- Encouragement for work integrated learning;
- Masters programs are popular, especially with International students but supervision load of Masters research projects is an issue;
- Reflecting interest from prospective students, the number of new programs with “animal” in the title is increasing while those with “plant” in the title seems to be decreasing;
- Cost of field trips is becoming an issue

An inventory of field sites will be compiled. **Action: EO**

14.30-15.00 Future meetings

The next meeting will be hosted by Charles Darwin University in early May 2016

The University of Canberra will host the October 2016 annual (Spring) meeting, potentially with assistance from Charles Sturt University's Canberra campus.

Andrew Campbell mooted the idea of a late May meeting at CDU in Darwin in 2016. Delegates approved this suggestion and asked Andrew to explore this option further.

The Council expressed thanks to ANU in particular Steve Dovers, Sam Fischetti and Fenner School staff for organising and hosting the meeting so capably.

15.00 Meeting closed.

Retiring member Charles Morris was thanked for his long service as a member of Council and host of the Parramatta meeting.