

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

### Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne 9-10 May 2019

#### In attendance:

Margaret Andrews (Murdoch), Jo-Anne Chuck (WSU), Peter Davies (Macquarie), Chris Frid (Griffith), Dianne Gleeson (President, Canberra), Monique Gagnon (Curtin), Pauline Grierson (UWA), Patrick Hesp (Flinders), Dieter Hochuli (Sydney), Pierre Horwitz (via Skype for part of meeting, ECU), David Kennedy (Melbourne), Matt King (UTas), Fred Leusch (Griffith), Patrick Moss (UQ), Tony O'Donnell (UWA), Enzo Palombo (Swinburne), Nick Reid (UNE), Amanda Reichelt-Brushett (Southern Cross), Robyn Schofield (Melbourne), Michelle Spencer (RMIT), Craig Strong (ANU), Rachel Whitsed (CSU), Ian Clark (Executive Officer)

#### Apologies

Jenny Davis (CDU), Linda Galligan (Southern Queensland), Stuart Parsons (QUT), Guang Shi (Wollongong), Peter Teasdale (UniSA), Karl Vernes (UNE), Grant Wardell-Johnson, Glenda Wardle (Sydney)

#### Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May

##### Phillip Island Field Trip

The group enjoyed a full day at Phillip Island. The boat trip was cancelled because of predicted adverse weather conditions but enjoyed well-presented and informative presentations from Phillip Island Nature Park science staff at the Koala Conservation Centre:

- Peter Dann (Research Director) - research and conservation on Phillip Island
- Rebecca McIntosh - seals as ecosystem indicators
- Duncan Sutherland - Rewilding Phillip Island
- Ross Holmberg - new approaches to data collection and citizen science engagement

This was followed by a visit to the Penguin Parade centre where David Kennedy (Uni Melb) gave an overview of the geomorphology and environmental management of the area and Andre Chiaradia (Phillip Island Nature Parks, research scientist) led an entertaining discussion about the penguins.

#### 7.30pm ACEDD Dinner – Oxford Scholar Restaurant, RMIT.

#### Day 2 Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May Council Meeting

**Chair: Associate Professor Dianne Gleeson**

#### 9.00: Welcome

Associate Professor Michelle Spencer welcomed the Council to RMIT and acknowledged that we were meeting on the land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations, the **traditional** owners of the land on which the University stands.

President, Associate Professor Dianne welcomed ACEDD delegates noting several members who were attending for the first time.

## 9.15am: Council Business

<p><b>Minutes of previous meeting</b></p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> &amp; 9<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at the Barton campus of Charles Sturt University were confirmed with minor amendments.</p> <p><b>Website</b></p> <p>Agreed that the website needs to be more regularly updated with relevant news and links to reports to show the activities of the council.</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Recommended that a science communication expert be used to produce a more engaging design.</p>	<p>President and EO</p>
<p><b>President's Report</b></p> <p>The report (attached) covered the following four topics summarised below which led to a broad discussion and suggested actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Quality of Research; 2018 ERA</u> <p>Of the 34 Tertiary Institutions Assessed for 05 Environmental Science two-digit code. 21 achieved a level 5; 9 achieved level 4; 4 achieved at level 3.</p> <p>The mis-match between quality of research in environmental sector has not translated into good environmental outcomes.</p> <p><b>Action</b> It was agreed that we should produce a press release</p> </li> <li><u>Science Technology Australia</u> <p>Glenda Wardle attended an STA Forum which prepared a communique (previously sent out) and promotion developed the #SolveitwithScience.</p> <p>Dianne met with STA CEO Kylie Walker to discuss the benefits of STA membership and resources available as well as their ongoing events. Noted that Professor Rachel Burton from University of Adelaide, is the cluster rep for the environmental sector on the board</p> <p><b>Action</b> SA reps Patrick Hesp and Peter Teasdale with EO could meet to discuss ACEDD</p> </li> <li><u>Future skills for Environmental Science graduates</u> <p>University Canberra External Advisory Group raised questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>What is the right skill set for a graduate to be employable now and into the future?</b></li> <li><b>What data analytical/statistical skills are desirable for employment now and into the future?</b></li> <li><b>Is there a need for a short course for current employees to upgrade or bridge their needed skills?</b></li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>President and Council</p> <p>EO</p>

<p>Discussion centred around what ACEDD can do to determine and disseminate information about what industry wants.</p> <p><b>Action.</b> Investigate what is currently available about job skills and job opportunities and prepare a graphics/video for University open days to provide information to parents and students.</p> <p>4. <u>Review of FOR Codes</u></p> <p>Council supported the need to make a submission noting that ~80% of ERA submissions are in 0501 code and some are in 04 and 06 codes. There is a need to expand the 05 code from 4 to possibly 8 to include for example environmental geoscience and human dimensions.</p> <p>Submissions close <b>7 June 2019.</b></p> <p><b>Action.</b> Make a submission based on the above requesting a consultation</p>	<p>EO</p> <p>President</p>
<p><b>Executive Officer Report</b></p> <p><b>ACEDD Scholars</b></p> <p>A list of ACEDD scholars was distributed with the agenda papers. Nominations can still be received.</p> <p><b>Science meets Parliament</b></p> <p>Only two nominations were received. Early bird registration has been completed.</p> <p><b>Finance Report</b></p> <p>A copy of the current expenditure against budget was distributed with the agenda papers. Agreed that some surplus funds should be used to benefit academic teaching staff with production of brochures and support for the establishment of a T&amp;L group. Materials should complement those produced by the ACDS.</p> <p>An audited financial statement will be presented to the November meeting</p>	<p>EO and Treasurer</p>
<p><b>EIANZ Qualifications Accreditation Scheme (QAS)</b></p> <p>Professor Chris Frid ACEDD representative on the QAS Board provided some background and reported on the activities of the board. Paper was distributed with the agenda papers. Wide-ranging discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation may benefit a program by providing internal leverage for staffing and facilities and persuading parents;</li> <li>• Cost is about \$8000 plus \$3000/year;</li> <li>• Accreditation is not content prescriptive as EIANZ recognises that Universities are capable of designing appropriate curricula;</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>The ACEDD are asked to note this report and attached paper and brief Prof Frid on any issues that they would like raised with EIANZ with respect to the accreditation of courses/programs and practitioners.</p>	

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**11.30am: Guest Presentation**

**Associate Professor Jeff Shimenta – Environmental Science WIL at RMIT**

Associate Professor Shimenta described the way in which the New Colombo Plan Mobility Program is used to support RMIT Environmental Science undergraduate students to participate in projects in Fiji. The projects are wide ranging and designed to benefit the local communities. They continue from one year to the next so long term results/data can be used. Students work in interdisciplinary groups and are encouraged to use industry standard techniques.

Other WIL project opportunities at Lakes Entrance, Lizard Island, Costa Rica and Vietnam were described in an informative presentation. It was noted that WIL should not be left until 3<sup>rd</sup> Year capstone courses but that students can become more committed when introduced earlier in their program.

**1.00pm: Guest presentation**

**Professor Vin Pettigrove – Monitoring aquatic pollution in Melbourne catchments**

Professor Pettigrove outlined aspects of the A3P research project funded by Melbourne Water that he leads at RMIT. The project is investigating how to remediate polluted and damaged waterways using a variety of strategies including stormwater sampling and involving citizen science.

**2.00pm: Council Business -**

<p><b>Action Items from the Spring meeting</b></p>	
<p><b>Strategic Plan Working Group reports</b></p> <p>Working groups established at the Spring meeting reported progress.</p> <p><b>Advocacy and Engagement</b></p> <p>Pierre Horwitz spoke to the paper distributed with the minutes. It was agreed to support a meeting of the group to produce a budget for action. Council suggested that people from outside of the committee could be involved and also that engagement with industry to determine desired job skills and skill sets for future jobs.</p>	<p><b>Stuart Parsons and Pierre Horwitz</b></p>
<p><b>Teaching and Learning</b></p> <p><b>LTAS Review</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposal distributed with the meeting papers was accepted. It was agreed to fund Stage 1 which involves collecting information on the current use and implementation of the TLOs through a survey to all ACEDD member institutions to ascertain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>which institutions/curriculum designers have used LTAS in the design of their environmental offerings, how it has been used, and how any outcomes have been evaluated</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• why institutions/curriculum designers have not used it in the design of their environmental offerings (this may include not being aware of its existence)</li> </ul> <p>The budget proposed was questioned as being inadequate in both the hourly rate for a Research Assistant and the number of hours involved both in designing the survey instrument and processing the results.</p> <p><b>Action: Budget to be reviewed and resubmitted to Executive.</b></p>	<p>EO</p>
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### Delegate’s reports

Members representing 21 institutions 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 and schools 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
- New undergraduate programs in Digital and Spatial sciences are being introduced
- Commencing undergraduate student numbers are up most institutions
- Some Masters programs are experiencing large increases while others are holding or slightly down
- Several institutions are seeking or will be seeking new appointments to replace actual or predicted retirements
- A couple of institutions are moving towards the “Melbourne” model
- Joint undergraduate programs with Indian or Chinese institutions are planned in a couple of institutions.

### 15.00 Future meeting

The next meeting will be hosted by the ANU in early November, 2019

#### Meeting close.

Associate Professor Michelle Spencer and her staff Dr James Chapman and Mardi O’Donnell were thanked for hosting and organising the very successful meeting.