

August 2005

# AUQA News

A Quarterly Newsletter on the Activities of AUQA

Australian Universities Quality Agency

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## 1. Audit Activity

### 2005 Audits

2005 Audits are at various stages of progress. Portfolio Meetings have now been held for all 2005 auditees.

### Progress Reports

First audit cycle progress reports have been received from the following institutions: the University of Newcastle; the University of Queensland; RMIT University; Southern Cross University; Swinburne University of Technology; and the University of Southern Queensland.

Progress reports for these institutions (Southern Cross University to follow shortly) are located on each auditee's website and can be accessed from the following URL on the AUQA website:  
[http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityaudit/sai\\_reports/index.shtml](http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityaudit/sai_reports/index.shtml)



**Australian Universities Quality Agency**

Level 10, 123 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne 3000

Tel: +61 3 9664 1000

Fax: +61 3 9639 7377

Web: [www.auqa.edu.au](http://www.auqa.edu.au)

## 2. Staff Update

AUQA welcomes **Dr Antony Stella** as Audit Director.

Dr Stella, who joined AUQA in early August, is internationally known for her work in higher education quality assurance and knowledge of transnational education. She joins AUQA from National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), an autonomous organisation that quality assures higher education institutions of India. In recent months, Dr Stella has been seconded to UNESCO in Bangkok, where she has been a member of the UNESCO-OECD expert group for drafting guidelines for quality assurance of cross-border education. Dr Stella is a board member of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network.



Earlier this year, the Federal Government provided AUQA with additional funding to strengthen quality auditing of the offshore operations of Australian higher education providers. The appointment of Dr Stella extends AUQA's capacity to sample the transnational operations of Australian universities through its institutional audits and to undertake related activities, such as the identification of thematic issues for Australian providers and enhanced training for auditors.

## 3. Report on AUQA Auditor Meeting – 6 July 2005

The annual AUQA Auditor Meeting was held 6<sup>th</sup> July in Sydney prior to the AUQF2005. The Meeting was attended by 44 auditors and was facilitated by Professor Gus Guthrie. The meeting covered two main themes, namely Auditing State/Territory Accrediting Agencies and Options for AUQA's Cycle Two. The external review of AUQA in 2006 was also discussed.

### **Auditing State/Territory Accrediting Agencies**

Auditing of accrediting agencies was covered from a number of perspectives by different speakers. Dr Anne Martin highlighted the main differences between auditing universities and conducting agency audits, while Professor Sue Johnston outlined the implications of the Guthrie/Johnston/King report on further development of the National Protocols for agency audits. Professor Barbara van Ernst and Shirley Stokes shared their respective experiences as auditor and auditee in the 2004 audit of the NSW Department of Education and Training. The issues identified in the presentations were discussed in smaller groups which reported back in plenary.

Feedback from the Auditor Meeting showed that most participants appreciated an opportunity to engage with the topics, as not all auditors are familiar with the particular requirements and dynamics of agency audits. It was suggested by some auditors that AUQA provide special training in auditing State or Territory accrediting agencies.

### **AUQA's Cycle Two**

Options for AUQA's second audit cycle formed the second major topic of the day. A confidential paper, previously discussed by the AUQA Board, was circulated to auditors prior to the meeting. Participants were asked to discuss a number of options for the second cycle set out in the paper, and any additional proposals.

The main feedback from these discussions indicated that:

- Cycle Two should build on the results of Cycle One, i.e. the Audit Report and the Progress Report
- Cycle Two should see the introduction of minimum criteria to be covered by all auditees in their Portfolios. It was emphasised that the criteria would need to be carefully monitored to ensure they were relevant to the current context of Australian higher education
- Very few auditors supported the idea of introducing a theme-based approach to audit
- There should be an increased focus on outcomes and the impact of the financial situation of the university in regard to the achievement of its objectives
- There should be better monitoring of the documentation requested as part of an audit, to limit the amount of papers required
- Larger panels could be used and more split panels, to cover more issues and meet with more groups during the Audit Visit.

#### 4. External review of AUQA

AUQA has initiated an external review of its operations, which will take place in the first half of 2006. The purpose of the review is to investigate:

1. The extent to which AUQA is achieving its Objects
2. The extent to which AUQA is achieving its Vision
3. The extent to which AUQA complies with the INQAAHE Code of Good Practice

The external review will be undertaken by a review panel external and independent to AUQA. The profile of the review panel will be as follows:

- Two heads of external quality assurance agencies outside Australia
- An Australian Vice-Chancellor
- A head of a State/Territory Accrediting Agency
- An industry representative.

The basis for the review is a performance portfolio prepared by AUQA using the ADRI model. An external Secretariat, which will be identified through a tender process, will be charged with the practical responsibility for the external review.

Key dates for the external review are:

|                  |                                        |
|------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1 December 2005: | AUQA submits its Performance Portfolio |
| February 2006:   | Site Visit by Review Panel             |
| 14 April 2006:   | Draft report sent to AUQA              |
| 12 May 2006:     | Final report sent to the AUQA Board    |
| 31 May 2006:     | Final report published.                |

The report from the review panel will feed into the discussion about AUQA's Cycle Two audits.

#### 5. Board News

AUQA welcomes **Mr Ian Hawke** to the AUQA Board as a State and Territory Ministerial Appointment. Ian, who is the Director of the Queensland Office of Higher Education, was appointed to fill the vacancy created when Ms Leigh Tabrett took up the position of Deputy Director, Arts Queensland. Ian will attend his first meeting of the Board in September.

Another AUQA Director who will be moving on is **Mr Bill Burmester**, who was recently appointed as Deputy Secretary of the Schools Group within DEST. AUQA thanks Bill for his important contributions to the work of the Agency and congratulates him on his new appointment. At the time of writing Bill's replacement on the Board was yet to be announced.

## 6. AUQF 2005

The Australian Universities Quality Forum was held from 6-8 July at the InterContinental in Sydney. AUQF attracted over 250 delegates from throughout the higher education sector, including senior university managers and academics, government officials, students and other key stakeholders. This year was a truly international event, with seventeen countries represented.

The Hon. Jenny Macklin, Deputy Federal Labor Leader and Shadow Minister for Education, Training, Science and Research, opened the Forum. International guest Dr Barbara Holland delivered the first keynote address on *Community Engagement as a Key Element of the 21st Century University*. Barbara's presentation is available for downloading on the AUQF2005 website.

The second day of the Forum began with a plenary discussion of Voluntary Student Unionism by the Hon. Dr Dennis Jensen, Federal Member for Tangney, Professor Ingrid Moses, Vice-Chancellor & President of University of New England and Nicholas Carney, student member of the UNSW Council. The day's final plenary session was given over to a formal debate on the complex issue of plagiarism detection software, with a proposition that it is an important new addition to the quality assurance of higher education. Dr John Barrie, CEO and Architect of Turnitin, took part in this debate. Both of these events were also covered by Radio Australia's 'Life Matters' program.

On the final day of the Forum, Dr Sue Gordon AM, Magistrate with the Perth Children's Court and Chairwoman of the National Indigenous Council delivered a keynote presentation on *Engaging Aboriginal Communities – Doing Things Differently*. This presentation highlighted many issues associated with Indigenous peoples for higher education providers to consider. *Contemporary Practices in Community Engagement* were discussed in the final plenary session by a panel of Pro Vice-Chancellors from universities throughout Australia. Internationally-renowned educationalist, Professor Judith Ramaley spoke in the Forum's closing session on *Successful Strategies for Embedding Community Engagement within Teaching and Research*.

Parallel paper and workshop sessions ran throughout the 2.5 day Forum, covering topics such as quality enhancement in community engagement and transnational education, and universities as healthy communities. These sessions were well attended and, in many cases, included lively discussion. The Forum concluded with announcements of the Best Paper, Presentation and Poster Awards. The recipients were:

### Best Paper

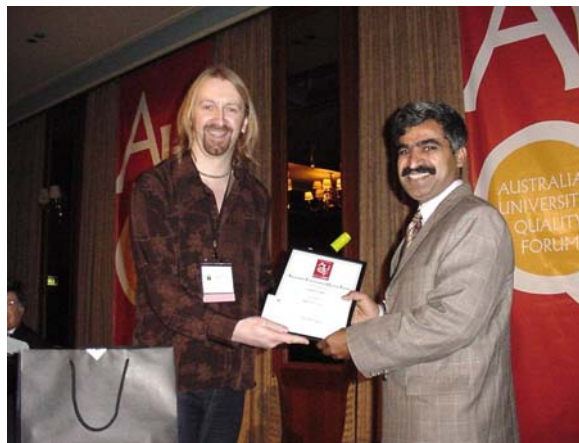
*Embedding Community Engagement: Northern Adelaide and The University of South Australia*  
Mike Elliott, Peter Sandeman and Hilary Winchester

### Best Presentation

*Engaging Communities in Participation: Participation for What? For Whom? By Whom? And How?*  
Iain Butterworth and Josephine Palermo

### Best Poster

*Lessons from Audits – Experience of NAAC*  
Ganesh Hegde



*Above left – Martin Carroll awarding Best Presentation to Josephine Palermo and Iain Butterworth.*

*Left - AUQF2005 Chair, Martin Carroll, presenting the AUQF2005 Best Paper Award to Hilary Winchester and Mike Elliott.*

*Above - Martin Carroll presenting the Best Poster Award to Ganesh Hegde of India's NAAC.*

Based on the quantity and quality of discussion amongst delegates and positive feedback from the evaluation survey, AUQF 2005 was once again a very successful event. Thank you to the Joint Steering Group, the Sydney Reference Group and all who participated. Special thanks also to our sponsors Canon, Turnitin, NTEU, Campus Review and particularly our Gold Sponsor AEI.

The Proceedings from AUQF2005 are expected to be launched online in September on the AUQF website: <http://www.auqa.edu.au/auqf>

## 7. AUQF 2006

In the final session of AUQF2005, AUQA Audit Director and AUQF Chair for 2006 Dorte Kristoffersen announced that the 2006 Australian Universities Quality Forum will be held in **Perth** from **5-7 July 2006**.

The theme of AUQF2006 will be 'Quality Outcomes and Diversity' and may include the following issues:

- Achieving quality outcomes
- Follow-up to QA processes
- Communication of outcomes
- Auditing diversity.

## 8. News of AUQA Auditors

**Professor Sue Johnston**, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) at the University of Tasmania, will join the education consultancy PhillipsKPA in September 2005.

Congratulations to **Professor Elizabeth More AM**, on becoming a member of the Order of Australia for services to education, particularly in the fields of communication, management and organisational change.

**Professor Colin Power AM** has been elected as President of the World Education Fellowship (Australia). He is also the founding Chair of the Board of Eidos, a consortium of universities, government and non-government agencies committed to improving education and social research, policy and practice. Eidos acts as a think-tank and facilitator, inspiring, supporting and enabling the blending of research, policy and practice around major educational and social issues.

**Professor Hilary Winchester**, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Organisational Strategy and Change at the University of South Australia, has recently published a report for the National Colloquium of Senior Women Executives in Higher Education - *The Great Barrier Myth: an investigation of barriers to promotion for academic women staff in Australian universities*.

## 9. Asia-Pacific Quality Network Update

### Events

APQN events have drawn attendance from 20 countries within the region and APQN has sponsored attendance at the following events in 2005:

- APQN Meeting (18 sponsored places), **Hong Kong**
- INQAAHE Conference (22 sponsored places), **Wellington**
- AUQF Conference (8 sponsored places), **Sydney**
- Workshop: How to Conduct Institutional Accreditation, (8 sponsored places), **Manila**
- Workshop: Quality Management of Quality Assurance Agencies, (5 sponsored places), **Ulaanbaatar**
- Workshop: Training of External Reviewers (sponsored places: TBA), **Phnom Penh**.

APQN events are open to all member agencies throughout the region (a current definition of the region is available at [http://www.apqn.org/development\\_gf/eligibility/](http://www.apqn.org/development_gf/eligibility/)). Interested members may register and apply online; if the application is accepted by APQN, the applicant is issued a formal invitation of attendance.

### Consultancy

APQN's first consultancy is planned for September and involves the Philippines and Cambodia. Through spreading knowledge and sharing experiences, APQN continues to enhance standards and increase cooperation across the region. APQN is currently establishing a database of consultants and reviewers who may be approached for targeted appointments with agencies in need across the region.

### Project Groups

The APQN Board has approved the establishment of a new project group called Student Participation in Quality Assurance, an initiative from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in India. Details are available on the APQN website at [http://www.apqn.org/project\\_groups/current/](http://www.apqn.org/project_groups/current/)

### **APQN/UNESCO Toolkit**

UNESCO and APQN have embarked on a joint project to develop a toolkit for governments on approaches to regulating transnational education. The toolkit will be written by two authors from Hong Kong and New Zealand and reviewed by AUQA's Antony Stella. UNESCO plans to run a series of regional workshops on the toolkit next year.

## **10. Visitors to AUQA**

Since June, AUQA has hosted a range of distinguished international visitors, including a Chinese University Presidential Delegation, delegations from Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and the Ministry of Education in Vietnam and a Samoan Qualifications Authority Study Tour. Other visitors to AUQA include: Bev Clarke, Chief Executive of Professions Australia; Martin Snell, International Education Network; Professor Leo West; Dr Akbar Rahmatullah, Pakistan Higher Education Council; and Professor T M Abu-Sharar, Director General, The Accreditation Council of Jordan.

## **11. AUQA Good Practice Database – From Strength to Strength**

New good practices from Charles Sturt University and the University of South Australia were launched at AUQF2005. These good practices cover diverse areas such as the student experience, identifying and connecting with 'at risk' students, quality assurance in transnational education, and community engagement. They can be accessed at <http://www.auqa.edu.au/gp>.

The AUQA Good Practice Database now contains 81 entries. Since November 2003, individual good practices have been accessed over 17,350 times. Good practices from Edith Cowan University, the University of Sydney, Bond University, La Trobe University, James Cook University and the University of Auckland will be added in 2005.

## **12. AUQA Publications**

The formal revision of the AUQA **Audit Manual** will commence in September, with Version 3 to be available by the end of 2005. Comments and suggestions for improvements are sought by **mid October 2005**.

Proposals are also sought for future publications in the **AUQA Occasional Publications** Series. Please forward comments on the Audit Manual or suggestions for publications to Dr Jeanette Baird at [j.baird@auqa.edu.au](mailto:j.baird@auqa.edu.au).