

**Australian Universities Quality Agency Ltd
ACN 092 938 200**

Minutes of AUQA Board Meeting 2005/3

10.00am - 7 September 2005

**AUQA Board Room
Level 10, 123 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000**

1. ATTENDANCE

Present

Professor Deryck Schreuder (Chair)
Ms Stella Axarlis
Mr Ian Hawke
Mr Clive Hildebrand
Professor James McWha
Professor Ingrid Moses
Professor Millicent Poole*
Professor Peter Sheehan*
Mr Terry Werner*
Dr David Woodhouse

* Directors Poole and Werner attended by teleconference

Apologies

Mr Bill Burmester
Rev. Mark Harding

In attendance as Observers (for all or part of the meeting)

Dr Carolyn Allport (NTEU)
Dr Antony Stella (AUQA)
Mr Colin Walters (DEST)

Secretariat

Mr Robert Carmichael

The Chair welcomed those in attendance, and in particular welcomed Director Hawke to his first meeting of the AUQA Board. The Chair also introduced and welcomed Dr Antony Stella, Audit Director, to her first meeting of the Board as an Observer.

It was noted that, as some of the papers for the meeting were marked 'confidential', it would be necessary for Observers to withdraw for some items identified by the Chair. But the spirit of the Board, operating within "Chatham House Rules", was to be as inclusive as possible.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING 2005/2

The Board **confirmed** the Minutes of meeting 2005/2 held on 22 June 2005.
(Previously circulated)

3. MATTERS ARISING NOT LISTED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

There were no substantive matters raised under this item. However, it was noted that the item 11 on the agenda had an incorrect date for AB Meeting 2005/4, and the Secretary undertook to correct this.

4. AUDIT MATTERS

4.1 Audits 2005

The Board received and **noted** Paper AB2005/3/4.1 being a report on the progress of the 2005 audit program. There was some discussion on legal advice relating to some of the current round of audits, and the implications for the operations of other auditees, both those that had already been audited, and those yet to be audited.

4.2 Audits 2006

The Board received Paper AB2005/3/4.2 being a report on the 2006 audit program and **noted** progress with the planning of next year's audits. Director Werner reported that the WA Government had taken crown law advice on a particular operational matter.

Director Axarlis encouraged Directors to take the opportunity to observe an AUQA audit so they could gain first hand insight into the nature of the audits.

4.3 Auditors

The Board received **Confidential** Paper AB2005/3/4.3 and Attachments being a report on the approval of new Auditors and the reappointment of existing Auditors already on the Auditor Register. After due consideration of the optimum number of auditors and balance between categories and genders, and the length of appointment periods, the Board **approved** the proposed additions and deletions to the Audit Register for the coming period of time.

The Executive Director reiterated the request he made at earlier meetings that Directors forward him the names of appropriate people in those categories that still needed additional auditors: especially 'Overseas' female and 'Industry' female.

Action: Executive Director / Directors

5. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair gave an oral report, covering seven points that he wished to bring to the Board's attention:

1. That the Chair met with Sir Gareth Roberts on 19 August to discuss the RQF and ensure that AUQA audits of research activities are complementary in terms of processes and outcomes.
2. That October 17 is the likely date for a debate on the National Protocols paper prepared by Professor Geoff Wilson (see also item 9.3 below).
3. That early in October the Chair will have discussions with the AVCC Board on the focus for Cycle 2 audits – in response to questions from Directors Poole and Sheehan this prompted a discussion on the possibility of raising issues relating to the SAG paper, the LTPF, and 'third stream' funding.
4. That he was in the process of trying to arrange meetings with the Federal Minister's office and MCEETYA, and that he also intended to connect with State Ministers (in company of the ED)
5. That he wished to thank all Directors for providing feedback to him on the review of the Board and its operations (see also item 8.2.1 below).
6. That the Chair continues to have follow-up interviews with Vice-Chancellors and CEOs and is receiving some interesting perspectives on the contributions made by the AUQA audit process.
7. That he will report to the Board at the next meeting on the results of the performance review of the ED to be held later in October.

6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Board received Paper AB2005/3/6 and Attachments, being a report from the Executive Director on AUQA activities since the last meeting. The Executive Director drew Directors attention to the two Attachments which required formal approval: i) Attachment A - Comments to AB on the Holland Report on items requiring action; and, ii) Attachment B - The revised AUQA Occasional Publications Editorial Policy.

In addition, the ED reported orally:

- That specific portfolios of responsibilities had been allocated to all the Audit Directors and that future ED reports would explicitly cover these;
- That AUQF2005 had been a great success thanks to the work of the JSG and AUQA staff, especially JSG Chair Martin Carroll, and Fiona Gunn;
- That he was still holding out hope of holding a simultaneous meeting with the Members with the November MCEETYA meeting in Perth;
- That Audit Cycle 2 proposals had been sent out to all AUQA constituencies for comment, and feedback was acknowledging the impact of Cycle 1 audits;
- That the Workshop on TNE Audit held in Perth on 26 August was well received;
- That Carol Nicoll had sent AUQA information about the European Universities Register;
- That INQAAHE was paying for Dorte Kristoffersen, an INQAAHE Board Member, to attend a Board meeting in London. While there she will visit the Scottish arm of QAA;
- That Roger King of the QAA is interested in doing collaborative work on 'intermediation' between agencies and institutions, and Dorte Kristoffersen will also speak to him ;
- That the last MCEETYA meeting had approved Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and had requested AUQA and VET QA agencies to take action on these.

With respect to inter-sectoral QA matters, the ED was requested to consult with DEST re Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education prior to commencing the audit process, to which the ED advised that he had already spoken with the Institute about the possibility of harmonising the AUQA audit with the VET AQTF audit.

In formally receiving the Executive Director's report the Board **approved** the two Attachments.

Action: Executive Director

7. FINANCE MATTERS

7.1 Financial Statements

The Board received Paper AB2005/3/7.1 and Statements being the Financial Statements to the end of August 2005 and Directors' Report. The Executive Director explained that the indicated deficit did not take into account all moneys and that at this year, AUQF transactions are going through the AUQA books, giving an artificial picture. The AUQF funds will be separately identified in the next Statements. The Board **agreed** to receive the Statements.

Action: Executive Director

7.2 Finance Committee matters

The Board received **Confidential** paper AB2005/3/7.2 being a report from the Finance Committee. As Chair of the Finance Committee, Director Axarlis reported that she wished to have the valuable contributions of Director Hildebrand and Siva Sivarajah acknowledged in the record of the meeting.

The Executive Director reported on some problems being experienced with out-sourced financial services, and that these were being taken up with the service provider involved. The Board **agreed** to receive the report.

8. AUQA POLICY AND BOARD ISSUES

8.1 Board Membership

The Board received an oral report from the Executive Director advising progress on the replacement of Bill Burmester.

8.2 Review of AUQA

8.2.1 Board's Self-Assessment

The Board received an oral report from the Chair, advising that the consultations with Directors had been completed and again thanked Directors for their participation. The Chair invited all Directors to partake in a Dinner opportunity prior to the final AB meeting for 2005.

Action: Chair / All Directors

8.2.2 Performance Portfolio and Self-Review &

8.2.3 External Review of AUQA

These two items were taken together. The Board received **Confidential** Paper AB2005/3/8.2.2 & 2.3 and Attachments, being a report on the self-review and external review of AUQA. The Chair invited the Executive Director to introduce the item.

The ED described the current status of AUQA's self-review and drew Director's attention to the Table of Contents of the Performance Portfolio to indicate both the structure of document, and the form and scope of the self-review process.

The Board then turned its attention to considering issues relating to the external review component. The ED advised that the long-list of reviewers had been approved by the Members.

Concerning the Request for Tender the ED reported that two tenders had been received and that though both were acceptable, one was much lower in cost than the other. Questions were raised about the suitability of the tenderers.

The Board **agreed** that subject to satisfactory checks with independent referees and clients, the lower tender be accepted.

Action: Executive Director / Dorte Kristoffersen

8.3 AUQA Object 4

The Board received paper AB2005/3/8.3 and Attachment, being a revised proposal on Addressing Object 4, following discussion at the last AB meeting. The ED pointed to the two-stage approach proposed as a result of those discussions. There was then a discussion about the acceptability of the methodology proposed for Stage 2, and the ED was requested to revise the approach, taking into account the expressed concerns of Directors, and taking into account information available in the public domain, such as OECD, AV-CC, and ACER. It was **agreed** that a revised proposal would be circulated to Directors out of session.

Action: Executive Director

9. DEST MATTERS

9.1 Strategic Assessment Group

The Board received **Confidential** Paper AB2005/3/9.1 and Attachment being the Final Report of the Strategic Assessment Group (SAG).

The Chair introduced the paper by explaining its genesis, commenting on its timeliness, and reminding Directors that the final paper would go to MCEETYA for consideration at its November meeting. It was therefore important that the Board contribute and express its views at this meeting. The Chair then invited the Executive Director to brief the Board on this latest iteration of the SAG paper.

Dr Woodhouse explained that though still in some ways a draft document, it had gone through two earlier iterations, but that because of the complex and rapidly changing external environment in which it was being written, it may be necessary to revise again in order to present AUQA's place in the Higher Education Quality Framework in the most favourable manner.

There followed a very lengthy and discursive coverage of the paper's various recommendations, with contributions by all Directors. The coverage, which started off on a recommendation-by-recommendation basis, ultimately became a higher level critique of the paper as a whole, and the likelihood of it being successful, in light of its intended purpose and audience.

The view was put that as currently conceived, a number of the paper's recommendations would be strongly contested by other constituencies and the paper risked either being dismissed as an AUQA ambit claim, or provoke a more hostile reaction. It was also observed that the logic of the paper's current structure rested on the continuing existence of the current set of National Protocols, and that this was unlikely.

Discussion then turned to how the paper could be effectively be developed with some re-casting - to build a strong case based on a set of 'un-contestable QA principles', and which would present AUQA as possessing an appropriate set of organisational capabilities. It could thus contribute significantly towards the achievement of greater national consistency, and at the same time avoid the need for a proliferation of quality agencies at the national level.

It was argued that the paper should commence by focussing on those areas in which AUQA's future role is likely to be uncontested by other constituencies from a capability standpoint, and then move progressively onto those areas where the level of contestation is likely to be higher. However, it was noted that as papers which do not contain formal recommendations are simply noted at MCEETYA, the paper should retain formal recommendations for those points the Board wanted to have formally considered, and that everything else should be written in the form of a "capability statement".

After due consideration it was **agreed** to develop the paper along the following lines:

- Emphasise AUQAs capabilities with respect to the quality auditing of SAs and State and Territory Accreditation Agencies; and
- Emphasise AUQA's capabilities with respect to the quality auditing of TNE activity;
- De-emphasise AUQA's potential involvement in matters of a regulatory or accreditation nature, such as the approval of NSAs; and
- De-emphasise AUQA's potential involvement in the QA of VET provision.

The Chair concluded the discussion by reminding the Board of the critical path and timeline involved in order to have the paper approved in time to be considered at MCEETYA in November. It was **agreed** that the revised paper would be circulated to the Board by 16 September, in order to be approved and then go to the MCEETYA Secretariat in time for inclusion in the agenda of the AESOC meeting on 3&4 November, and then onto MCEETYA.

Action: Executive Director / AUQA Staff / Directors

9.2 Non Self-Accrediting Institution audits

Because the papers for the next meeting of the NSAI Working Group had not been received by the time of the AUQA Board meeting, Directors received an oral progress report on the work of the Group from Mr Robert Carmichael, the serving AUQA representative.

Mr Carmichael reported that the Consultants' report had been received by DEST but had not as yet been released to the Working Group for comment.

9.3 National Protocols

The Board received Paper AB2005/3/9.2 being a report on the National Forum on types of institutions held 17 August in Melbourne. The Board **noted** that the discussion paper prepared by Professor Geoff Wilson for the Forum would go to AESOC, MCEETYA and JCHE with recommendations from the author.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other items of business raised by Directors. The Secretary advised on the problem of finding a common date for the AB meetings in 2006 and that this would have to be revisited before the next AB meeting, in order to be confirmed at that meeting (see item 12 below).

The Chair reminded Directors of the date of the next Board and of the plans to have a private Board dinner on the night prior to that meeting as part of self-review discussions.

The Chair finally thanked all Directors for their contributions and declared meeting AB2005/3 closed.

12. MEETING DATES 2005 AND TIME OF MEETINGS

Board Dinner **21 November** – 7.00pm (AEST/DST - final details tbc)
Meeting No 4 **22 November** – 9.00am (AEST/DST – note earlier starting time)

Suggested possible dates for 2006 Meetings: (one from each set to be confirmed)

Meeting No 1 March 7, or 8, or 9
Meeting No 2 May 30, or 31, or June 1
Meeting No 3 September 5, or 6, or 7
Meeting No 4 November 28, or 29, or 30

Signed:.....

Chair AUQA Board.....

Date:.....