

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

**AUQA Board Meeting 2009/3
10.00am Tuesday 25 August 2009**

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

MINUTES

1. ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

Present

Emeritus Professor Deryck Schreuder (Chair of the Board)
Mr Ian Hawke (Deputy Chair of the Board)
Ms Fiona Buffinton
Dr Gael Fraser
Professor Jeanette Hackett
Emeritus Professor Michael Koder
Professor Bill Lovegrove
Professor Ian O'Connor
Professor Alan Pettigrew
Mr Terry Werner
Dr David Woodhouse (Executive Director)

Observers: Mark Hay, Rudi Lidl

Apologies: Director Mary Foley, Observer Carolyn Allport, Observer Nigel Palmer

Board Secretary: Dr Antony Stella

The meeting started at 10.00 hrs with a welcome by the Chair to all Directors and especially new Directors.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING 2009/2 HELD ON 21 MAY 2009

The Board **confirmed** the Minutes of meeting AB2009/2 held on 21 May 2009 as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. THE AGENDA

3.1 Approval of the Agenda and items to be starred; approval of all un-starred items

Items that were deemed to require discussion had been starred on the Agenda. Directors were invited to indicate if they wished to change the status of any items. The Board identified item 5.4 as requiring discussion and agreed to consider item 8 at the end as confidential item.

On a motion from the Chair, the Board **agreed** to the actions recommended in the papers (and which were not starred or taken up for discussion at the meeting), and they were deemed to have the approval of the Board.

3.2 Matters arising not listed elsewhere on the agenda

The Chair welcomed two new Directors (and the new observer who was expected to join the meeting later) to the work of the Board at this challenging transitional phase for AUQA.

4 AUDIT MATTERS

4.1 Audits 2008

The Board **received** a report on the 2008 audit program including the feedback reports on the audits of Avondale College, the College of Law, Raffles College (Tabled) and the Universities of Adelaide and Canberra, Curtin University of Technology and Notre Dame University.

The Executive Director briefed the new directors on how the feedback summary is considered by the AUQA staff and Board for quality improvement of the audit process.

4.2 Audits 2009

The Board **received** a report on the 2009 audit program including the first dual sector audit of RMIT done jointly with VRQA.

The Executive Director advised the directors that AUQA will convene a discussion between AUQA, VRQA and the panel, to reflect on what might be done better in other dual-sector audits, both in the short term (to 2012) and in the longer term if VET joins HE in TEQSA. A further discussion with RMIT will also be arranged.

The Board **noted** that the audit reports for Macquarie and RMIT Universities, the Universities of Queensland and Western Australia, Gordon and Northern Melbourne Institutes of TAFE, and Tabor College New South Wales have been released since the last Board meeting. They were approved by the Board in correspondence.

Feedback reports on the audit of Gordon Institute of TAFE and Tabor College NSW were **considered** by the Board.

Directors **noted** that AUQA has added the three NSAI audits to its 2009 audit schedule at short notice, on the request of VRQA. These audits will be carried out by joint AUQA/VRQA panels, chaired by experienced AUQA auditors, in conjunction with the institutions' re-registration.

The Directors **commented** on a proposal for strengthening the involvement of the distance education learners while auditing institutions that have significant numbers of students studying by various distance education modes, and encouraged staff to investigate how to implement the idea.

Action: ED

4.3 Audits 2010

The Board **received** a report on the national audit schedule for 2010. The increased NSAI audit workload due to the DEEWR decision not to approve the GAAs

in Queensland, South Australia and Victoria as HEP audit bodies was noted. The Executive Director reported that he had advertised for another audit director to meet this increased workload, and that AUQA has the necessary financial resources to make the appointment.

In view of the current expectation that AUQA will morph into TEQSA at the end of 2010, the position has been advertised only to that date. The extra workload will also need some augmentation of support staff. The Board **approved** the decision to appoint another audit director, and strengthen the support.

The paper describing the audit methodology for the GAAs (tabled) was discussed. The revised methodology described in the paper was **endorsed** by the Board. (Director Ian Hawke did not participate in the discussion since he is responsible for one of the GAAs).

Action: ED

4.4 Audits 2011

The Board **received** a report on the national audit schedule for 2011. This will include (for the first time) a second audit of an NSAI, namely the Australian College of Theology.

4.5 Progress Reports

The Board **received** a report on the progress reports received from the auditees.

4.6 Auditors

The Board **appointed** Director Jeanette Hackett to the Auditor Vetting and Planning Committee (AVPC).

The Board considered the recommendations of the AVPC and **approved** the people recommended by the Committee to be appointed to the Auditor Register, subject to attendance at auditor training.

Action: ED

5. AUQA POLICY AND BOARD ISSUES

5.1 Progress Report Policy

The Board noted the revisions to Policy 26 on Progress Reports and **approved** the changes.

5.2 Standards in Australian Higher Education

The Board **received** a report on the meetings of the Advisory Group (AG) and the outcome of the national consultation. The Executive Director briefed the Board on the key messages that emerged from the submissions. The Advisory Group will not re-issue the paper for further comment. Several lines of new development have already been established.

The Board noted that the environmental scan suggested by Director Jeanette Hackett in the previous meeting is now available on the AUQA website, along with the public submissions of the 55 received.

The Board expressed its appreciation for the significant contribution made by the Advisory Group and **endorsed** the possible future projects that have been identified by the AG through the national consultation.

Action: ED

5.3 Board Review

As a major feature of its 'annual review process', the Board reflected broadly on what has worked well in relation to the operation and effectiveness of the Board over the period of AUQA's existence.

Key points included:

- The involvement of interested parties, from varied backgrounds, who have generally brought those backgrounds to bear for the benefit of AUQA;
- Meetings in which there is ample opportunity to discuss matters of substance;
- Harmonious relations between the Board and the Executive Director;
- Good management, which has allowed the Board to concentrate on its governance issues;
- The external review of AUQA as a cyclic event;
- Successful adaptation to challenges posed in the evolution of AUQA's operation.

Looking forward (towards TEQSA), directors commended:

- Maintenance of public reports, but with the addition of some confidential advice (if this is possible);
- Maintenance of whole-of-institution audit, but with the addition of special-purpose review;
- Continued use of INQAAHE's Guidelines of Good Practice

As a concluding comment, the Chair noted the value of the current constitution of the Board with an appropriate balance in stakeholder membership. This had been the source of excellent deliberative discussions and outcomes which added value to the operation of AUQA.

The Chair finally thanked Directors for the excellent review discussion.

5.4 Board Director Conflicts of Interest

The Directors checked the Conflict of Interest Register maintained by AUQA, **declared** the potential conflicts of interest with the auditees and signed the declaration forms. It was brought to the notice of the Directors that they are required to inform the Board Secretary whenever the conflict information in the record changes.

Action: All Directors, Board Secretary

6. HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

Directors **discussed** the evolving role of TEQSA, including its advisory role to the Minister, and the VET-HE integration. The developments related to the Focus groups and Expert Advisory Group established by DEEWR were noted.

Several AUQA Board directors' terms of office come to an end on 31 March 2010. In anticipation of TEQSA becoming operative by the end of 2010, the Board **approved the proposal** that AUQA's owners (the Ministers) be invited to extend those directors' terms of office until the end of 2010. The Executive Director will write to the Ministerial

Members so that the matter can be discussed in the ministerial meetings on 28 September and 8 November 2009.

The Board also **requested** the Executive Director to write to the Members about the emerging developments with TEQSA and seek advice on actions to be taken for the company's business in future after 2010.

The plan to mark the '10th birthday' of AUQA on 31 March 2010 was brought to the attention of the Directors. Further details will be discussed in the next meeting of the Board.

Action: ED

7. FINANCE MATTERS

Directors received the Financial Report for the three months to 30 June 2009.

8. CHAIR'S REPORT

Following a recent meeting of a Board Sub-Committee, the Chair made a full report (with recommendations) in relation to the annual performance review and salary adjustment of the Executive Director.

This was taken as a **Confidential Item**.

9. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Board received a full report from the Executive Director on AUQA activities.

10. MCTEE / DEEWR MATTERS

Relevant matters were covered under item 6

11. OTHER BUSINESS

(a) The following dates were approved for the 2010 Board meetings:

Meeting 1	16 February
Meeting 2	18 May
Meeting 3	10 August
Meeting 4	16 November

(b) Any other items of business raised by Directors

There were no other items of business raised by Directors

12. 2009 BOARD MEETING DATES

The next meeting of the Board will be on 24 November 2009

The Chair declared the Meeting closed at 3.15 pm.