



COUNCIL MINUTES

Meeting – Sunday 1st December 2013 (Meeting #6) Held in conjunction with ESA Planning Day commencing 09:00 AEDT

Lakeside Room, Sebel Albert Park, Melbourne

Distribution list: Kris French (President), Carla Catterall (Past-President), Nigel Andrew (Treasurer), Liz Tasker (VP-Public Liaison), Glenda Wardle (VP-Research), Ian Williamson (VP-Student Affairs), Michael Bull (Austral Ecology – Chair, Editorial Board), Gary Luck (EMR – Chair, Editorial Board), Megan Evans (Bulletin Editor), Don Driscoll (ACT Councillor), Ben Gooden (NSW Councillor), Christine Schlesinger (NT Councillor), Andrew Hayes (QLD Councillor), Nerissa Haby (SA Councillor), Kerry Bridle (TAS Councillor), Peter Vesk (VIC Councillor), Eddie van Etten (WA Councillor), Lyn McCormick (Finance Officer), Gail Spina (Executive Officer),

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Chairperson's Welcome and Introduction
- 1.2 Present and Apologies

Present: Kris French (President), Nigel Andrew (Treasurer), Carla Catterall (Past-President), Ian Williamson (VP-Student Affairs), Kerry Bridle (TAS Councillor), Nerissa Haby (SA Councillor), Christine Schlesinger (NT Councillor), Peter Vesk (VIC Councillor), Glenda Wardle (VP-Research), Don Driscoll (ACT Councillor), Liz Tasker (VP-Public Liaison), Eddie van Etten (WA Councillor), Gary Luck (Ecological Management and Restoration, Chair-Editorial Board), Ben Gooden (NSW Councillor), Luke Collins (NSW Councillor-elect), Anita Wild (Tas Councillor-elect), Brad Murray (Treasurer-elect), Perpetua Turner (Book Review Editor), Lyn McCormick (Finance Officer), Bev Watkins (Membership Officer), Gail Spina (Executive Officer).

Apologies: Michael Bull (Austral Ecology – Managing Editor), Blair Parsons (WA Councillor – elect), Megan Evans (Bulletin Editor), Andrew Hayes (QLD Councillor)

- 1.3 Minutes of Previous Council Meeting (August 2012) – For ratification

MOTION: That the minutes of the previous Council meeting subject to the identified corrections be accepted as a true and correct record.

Moved: Nigel Andrew
Seconded: Christine Schlesinger
All in favour: Motion carried.

- 1.4 Minutes of Previous Executive Meeting (September 2012) – For noting

Item noted

2.0 Treasurer's/Finance Report - Nigel Andrew/Lyn McCormick

The balance sheet, cash movement and income statement were presented to Council. No exceptions in cash movement this month with the exception of student travel grants. Term deposits were re-invested. Nigel advised a budget v actual statement was currently being developed so that exceptions were easier to identify and interpret. The audit indicated that the overall fiscal position had improved since 2010/11 but funds were still feeling the effects of poor share performance during the GFC but were recovering. Nigel reviewed financial governance activity during 2012 including discussions with

Perpetual and the development of the Business Plan and Financial Governance Policy for the benefit of incoming officer and Lyn outlined revenue sources. Nigel also outlined the purpose of the fund reinvestment strategy and proposed constitutional change.

Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_2.1.1	Budget v Actual presentation of accounts for Council meetings	Nigel/Lyn	April Council
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3.0 Webpage Review

3.1 Draft Webpage Review

A review of the draft webpage was undertaken to identify content still required, review functionality, and identify any gaps or problems. Council members were allocated sections of the draft webpage relating to their portfolios or area of interest and broke into small groups to review and provide feedback on changes, problems or additional requirements. These changes to be provided to Gail and Liz for action with Interlated. Feedback is attached as an addendum to these minutes.

Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_3.1.1	Collate web feedback and action with Interlated	Gail/Liz	Feb Council
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3.2 Web Management Officer PD & timing of appointment

A draft Position description for the planned part-time Web Management Officer was tabled for discussion. Agreed:

- Liz to review duties and responsibilities to include priorities and opportunities.
- Skills desired to include “knowledge and interest in ecology and conservation an advantage”.
- Considered position may be filled through contract individual appointment or by web management company taking ESA as a client so amend Terms to “This is either a permanent part-time position contract for 1-3 years or services provide under commercial contractual arrangement.”
- Increase probation period to 6 months.
- Need to build in time flexibility to cover peaks and troughs – maybe consider hours per month rather than hours per week or alternative model.
- Also need to indicate in position summary that this is a new position managing a new website and both will evolve over time.

Council members to advise Gail of any recommended service providers – either individuals or companies – for targeted recruitment.

Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_3.2.1	Revise position description and develop recruitment timeline	Liz/Gail	March Executive
Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_3.2.2	Provide recommendations for potential web management providers for recruitment mailing list	Council	Feb Council

4.0 Breakout Discussions

4.1 Student Grants & Review of Travel Grants (Group: IW, AM,KF,BM,BG,GL,LC,AW,LMc)

This group considered a review of student travel grants including the process, cost/budget allocation and eligibility. Ian Williamson tabled a discussion paper.

- Student Travel grants – agreed grant to be adjusted by year of academic progress, add an additional step to online application and not just tick a box on registration, only one grant per student (no repeats), publish amounts available at time of advertisement, monitor take-up rates and trends over time to manage budget allocation and program success.

- Student Grants – Agreed to offer only one award under each of the premier programs (JLTF, TNC, FEA) and applicants can only eligible to win one. Agreed to reduce research grants from two rounds to one round per year (closing at the end of the year) and double the amount of the awards accordingly.

Motion: That research grants be offered once a year only at the end of each year and the amount be accordingly doubled.

Moved: Ian Williamson
Seconded: Nigel Andrew
All in favour: Motion carried.

Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_4.1.1	Angela forward updated Student Travel Grant Policy and Student Prize Policy to Council for ratification	Angela	February Council
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4.2 LOC Guidelines review (Group: EvE,KW,PV,CS,PT,JL,LT,DD,GW,NH,GS)

A skeleton draft of the proposed LOC guidelines was tabled for discussion by Eddie. Discussion centred around the need to update and confirm the policies and philosophies underpinning the conference and procedural issues flowing from there to be embedded in the new PCO contract. Specific issues identified were:

- sponsorship - ethics, accountability and ESA expectations – and the development of a simple workflow indicating respective responsibilities of PCO & LOC.
- Financial decisions – template for a high level planning document to allow options to be explored and assumptions and implications of decisions to be understood. Guidelines need to provide improved decision making support at the initial stage.
- Post conference evaluation – recommended structure, process for effective analysis & communication of results and monitoring across conferences
- Existing Profit – loss policy needs to be expanded to more explicitly indicate expectations.
- Flexibility in scientific program design to allow for innovation

Gail clarified PCO contract and review process for the benefit of new members.

Agreed it would be useful for working group of past LOC members (Pete, Glenda, Kerry) to review final draft of Guidelines to identify gaps.

Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_4.2.1	Council members to provide any additional feedback or comments to Eddie	Council	February Council
Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_4.2.2	Final draft of LOC guidelines to Council for ratification	Eddie	April Council
Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_4.2.3	Incorporate relevant components of the final guidelines in the updated PCO contract	Gail	April Council

5.0 Regional Councillor scenarios

Kris tabled a paper for review of the role of Regional Councillors and other potential representative options. Agreed that any model needed to ensure broad representation of Society members around the Council table and avoid capture by geographic, sector, research or other interests. Agreed geographic boundaries not appropriate for an ecological society. Suggested model:

- 8 'Councillors' with portfolios aligned with strategic plan initiatives rather than geographic representation
- Open term, broadly defined roles allowing recruitment around strategic needs and expertise required
- Aim to have Council members driving portfolio initiatives with a background working group from broader membership – aim is to increase capacity of Council.

- Role not specified in constitution, broad definition in by-laws only
- Ensure geographic spread without rigidity of state boundaries
- Potentially some geographic chapters eg Tas, NQ
- Ensure equity across career stage, location, gender, research interests.
- Student representation important as high proportion of membership
- Funds for activities to be applied for from dedicated annual fund removing automatic \$1000 annual allocation

Prepare draft working model including process and implications for constitution and by-laws. May be wise to have consultation period seeking member feedback on proposal via web, facebook & e-news

Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_5.1.1	Prepare draft model of revised Councillor role including process and implications for constitution and by-laws.	Kris/Gail	April Council
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6.0 ESA Revenue brainstorm

A round table discussion was held to consider opportunities and methods to raise funds and increase revenue and sponsorship opportunities. Suggestions included:

- Consider partnering with an influential or wealthy Patron
- Look for opportunities from within financial sector eg Superfunds, Banks, NGO's eg Telstra
- Philanthropic sector tied to specified outcomes eg fund 4 early career postdocs
- Online shopping partners– middle man for relevant suppliers eg equipment suppliers, book sellers (eg Andrew Isles) – member discount and purchase kickback
- ESA Online shop – ESA merchandise, clothing, bags/satchels, calendars
- Publishing - explore opportunities for collaborating with publishers to produce publications under ESA brand
- Web content – paid job advertisements, general advertisements, content of interest

Most of the above would require the development of detailed guidelines and costing structures. While this is not an immediate priority it could be further explored for next Planning Day

Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_6.1.1	Explore options for publishing collaborations with Wiley Blackwell	Gary	Feb Council
Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_6.1.2	Explore options listed above in more details for further consideration	Nigel/Gail	Planning Day 2013

7.0 Strategic Plan review

Kris tabled a document reviewing progress to date under the Strategic Plan. Suggestions arising through the review:

- Web function - Include a web dropbox function as part of the new site to facilitate sharing of large files and images between members – consistent with networking hub focus
- Communication - Need to expand social networking capability specifically twitter – could be a shared function between EO & new web officer
- Conference items – “Table Talks” – alternative model for talks – consider for future conferences
- Students – look to develop an active student network
- Research – link hot topics and research chapters direct to twitter
- Research Chapters – need own internal contact function, members only section, blogs

Gail to investigate above suggestions and Kris to review working groups required in 2013 and bring terms of reference to Council.

Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_7.2.3	Review 2013 Working Groups activities and terms of reference	Kris/Gail	Feb Council
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8.0 Other Business

8.1 Conference update/review

ESA12 currently has 676 registered delegates including 42 day registrations and some complimentary. Workshops and field trips not well patronised. LOC have implemented a staggered poster session which increases value of poster session but increases costs. As previously discussed, sponsorship was difficult. Still hoping to breakeven or come close.

ESA13 will be a joint NZES/ESA conference in Auckland. Kris, Kerry & Gail to meet with NZES rep Bruce Burns during the conference to start more detailed discussions.

ESA14 will be held in Alice Springs. Need to reserve accommodation as a priority as rooms are limited. Christine, Alan, Gail & Conlog to have preliminary discussions while everyone is here at the conference.

8.2 Treasurer honorarium

The need for an honorarium to support the increased time required from the Society's Treasurer given the increasing complexity of financial planning and systems was discussed. Nigel considered it was premature as current level of commitment may settle after this year's activities. Agreed to hold over to Planning Day 2013.

Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_8.2.1	Review Treasurer Honorarium	Council/Nigel	Planning Day
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8.3 Indigenous symposium

Christine reported on this year's Indigenous Symposium. \$24500 had been received in funding with ongoing support from Myer Foundation and The Nature Conservancy. 16 speakers were funded. Still ironing out some process problems but overall very successful initiative.

8.4 SA Regional event

Nerissa requested approval to run a 2013 SA regional publishing event. Agreed in principle with Nerissa to provide more details and costs to a future Council meeting

Coun_Dec_12/Plan Day_8.4.1	Additional SA regional event details and costings to Council	Nerissa	April Council
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8.5 AGM 2013

Proposed to hold ESA AGM during EcoTas13 in New Zealand pending discussions with NZES LOC.

8.6 SERA

Inaugural meeting held in Perth. ESA officially invited to attend NGO networking meeting with a variety of organisations. Two working groups established to improve standards for restoration practice and environmental practitioners sector lobbying. Carla agreed to continue her involvement on working group and Gary will take over as liaison point for Council. ESA not represented on standards group – perhaps investigate Restoration Ecology Chapter to facilitate network.

9.0 Next Meeting

Next Council Meeting - 8th February 2013

Next Executive Meeting – 8th March 2013

Meeting closed 4.15pm