

**ECOLOGICAL
SOCIETY OF
AUSTRALIA**

STRATEGIC PLAN

2015/16 → 2019/20

Version 3.0

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FOREWORD

The Ecological Society of Australia is continually looking for ways to maximise benefits for our members. The annual conference, two journals (*Austral Ecology* and *Ecological Management and Restoration*), and *Bulletin* are the key core aspects of the Society that have been integral to our success over the last 55 years. Today they are still fundamental to the success of the society, but we also have seen the need to dramatically diversify the way we enable members to communicate with each other. Previous Strategic Plans built a platform for renewing our website, modernising our Bulletin with electronic copies, and improving communication between members via e-news and a few active Research Chapters. The Society has also gone through a substantial structural change to keep abreast of changes in administration and governance, enabling the Society to receive tax-deductible donations and apply for grants in the not-for-profit sector.

This Strategic Plan (the Society's third) intends to consolidate and develop many of the major strategies of the past Strategic Plan 2011-2015. All projects undertaken over the next five years will be fully aligned with the Business Plan to enable full costings of any new initiatives. This is also why we have aligned this plan with the Financial Year calendar to allow better financial projections and costing of projects and initiatives.

Within this strategic plan we have identified five broad aims (facilitating research; improving membership services; enabling effective internal communications; promoting external communications and outreach initiatives; and corporate governance) and a series of strategies and activities that will be implemented to achieve them. The Plan is designed to continue to develop a strong and vital society over the coming five years and was developed during a Board Planning Retreat held at The Hideaway Retreat, Wentworth Falls in February 2015.

As a member driven Society, we are encouraging member participation and engagement in implementing the Strategic Plan and your feedback on its progress. This can be done by getting involved when calls for assistance in Working Groups are announced, getting in touch with any of the ESA Board members with ideas, or leaving feedback on the ESA website: www.ecolsoc.org.au.



Nigel Andrew
President 2015

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SOCIETY

The broad mission set for the Ecological Society of Australia is:

to promote the ecological discipline in all its forms, to support the application of the principles in ecology to protect and conserve ecological systems, and to promote the exchange of ecological knowledge for educational purposes and cultural development.

The key objectives and activities of the ESA described below are those in the current Constitution (Amended November 2012):

- I. promoting the scientific study of all organisms in relation to their environment;
- II. promoting the application of ecological principles to the development, utilisation and conservation of natural resources;
- III. advising governmental and other agencies in matters where the application of ecological principles may be relevant to their planning and decision making processes;
- IV. fostering, conservation and ecological management of native biota, their diversity, ecological function, and interaction with the environment;
- V. encouraging high professional and ethical standards among the Company's Members and other ecologists;
- VI. facilitating and undertaking scientific research in ecology;
- VII. facilitating the dissemination and exchange of ideas and information about ecology and the information among the Company's Members, ecologists, other professional disciplines and the general public; and
- VIII. educating the Company's Members, ecologists, other professional disciplines and the general public about the environment;

HOW WE WILL IMPLEMENT AND REVIEW THIS PLAN

The ESA Board uses this plan as a guiding document for setting priorities for the year/s ahead. The plan is also used as a tool to check progress against the previous year's activities. The ESA Board members will review this plan at least once per year at the annual planning meeting. The plan does not include normal on-going activities but deals with new initiatives or new directions needed to support and further develop our current range of programs. Each component activity will be championed by a Board member. Their role will be to activate the strategy and to bring together a working group when (and if) appropriate. Throughout the Strategic Plan period, many of the working groups will be active for a short period of time to deliver actions and activities required of that group.

At the Planning Retreat 2015, a range of working groups were identified that would be initiated through until 2020. Although some groups may not be activated until further into the life of the Plan, a document outlining their Terms of Reference will be prepared by June 2015, so the main aims of each group are not lost. The list of Working Groups and their current membership is listed in Appendix 3

OVERALL AIMS AND STRATEGIES

AIM 1: Facilitate high quality and relevant research in ecology
<i>a) Review functioning of research chapters</i>
<i>b) Continue to provide high quality journals for communicating ecological research and promote them through electronic outreach</i>
<i>c) Continue to provide a high quality annual conference</i>
<i>d) Develop regular (tri-annual) smaller themed based conferences to improve opportunities for collaborations</i>
<i>e) Provide and promote incentives for long term research</i>
<i>f) Extension role for practitioners</i>
AIM 2: Improve membership services and support
<i>a) Identify major groups; survey their needs; then develop targeted plans</i>
<i>b) Provide assistance, training and encouragement for research students</i>
<i>c) Provide assistance, training and encouragement for early career researchers</i>
<i>d) Provide assistance, training and encouragement for practitioners</i>
<i>e) Provide assistance, training and encouragement for established members</i>
<i>f) Develop training opportunities</i>
AIM 3: Communicate effectively with and among members
<i>a) Continue to develop the webpage and content management system</i>
<i>b) Make effective use of membership database</i>
<i>c) Identify areas of growth and attrition</i>
<i>d) Develop and maintain new mechanisms for communications with members using social media</i>
<i>e) Capturing the history of ESA: its members and activities</i>
<i>f) Develop a mechanism to reward ecologists who contribute to the society</i>

g) Improve media communication capacity for members

AIM 4 : Improve and promote external communication and outreach initiatives

a) Build skills and resources for public liaison and communication with the media

b) Develop mechanisms to effectively engage with non-member practitioners

c) Develop mechanisms to effectively engage with policy makers

d) Develop mechanisms to effectively engage with public to build ecological awareness

e) Provide opportunities for supporting and increasing participation of Indigenous people in the society

f) Engage with other related societies

c) Encourage participation of undergraduate, school students, and teachers of ecology with ESA

CORPORATE AIM : Continue to develop and maintain good governance of the Society

a) Maintain and increase membership numbers

b) Keep membership fees indexed annually

c) Maintain and improve our financial management for future sustainability

d) Assess new funding opportunities

e) Accumulate corporate experience on ESA Board through in-house skills development or targeted skills-based recruitment

f) Develop an external Advisory Group providing relevant skills and advice to Board

g) Enhance succession planning for the Board

h) Enhance ESA capacity by identifying opportunities to recruit additional support staff

i) Develop protocols for managing Public Fund, donations and bequests and other fundraising initiatives

j) Develop an efficient online meeting process

DETAILED STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES, TIMELINES SHADING INDICATES TIMELINE; ASTERISK INDICATES IMPORTANCE – LOW (NONE) TO HIGH (FOUR).

AIM 1: Facilitate high quality and relevant research in ecology								
Strategy	Component activities	Leaders	Notes	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<i>a) Review functioning of research chapters</i>	Establish Research Chapter (RC) working group	Research Chapter WG Leader	developing framework for current and new RC's	****				
	Develop a vehicle to support effective RC's	Research Chapter WG Leader	supporting/ reviewing those that are not effective; fix broken ones	*	**			
<i>b) Continue to provide high quality journals for communicating ecological research and promote them through electronic outreach</i>		AE/ EMR editors	research highlights: members alerted when e-alerts come out	**				
<i>c) Continue to provide a high quality annual conference</i>		Board/particularly Board member on each LOC/PCO		**				
<i>d) Develop regular (e.g. tri-annual) smaller themed based conferences to improve opportunities for collaborations</i>	Gordon Conference style	VP Research	call out to members in regional areas	*				
<i>e) Provide and promote incentives for long term research</i>	Explore collaboration with TERN or other supporting mechanisms	VP Research	advocacy/ small grants - Perpetual/ database of long term research/ developing	**				

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			relationship with Long Term Ecosystem Science Plan					
f) Extension role for practitioners	establish a working group	Practitioner WG Leader			*	*	*	

AIM 2: Improve membership services and support

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Component activities</u>	<u>Leaders</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>2016/17</u>	<u>2017/18</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>
a) Identify major groups; survey their needs; then develop targeted plans	Use the membership survey and database to a fuller capacity	Membership WG	do something with the data + outcomes/ plan and bring back to the Board - ongoing membership working group/ annual renewal process	***				
b) Provide assistance, training and encouragement for research students	Continue to provide competitive student grants	VP Student Affairs Student Board member		****	****	****	****	****
	Ensure all student grants are funded at an appropriate level and indexed annually	VP Student Affairs Student Board member		*	*	*	*	*
	Continue to provide support for postgraduate days	VP Student Affairs Student Board member		*	*	*	*	*

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	Ensure that promotion of grants and awards is appropriate for current technology and clearly identifies projects that are targeted	VP Student Affairs Student Board member		*	*	*	*	*
	Facilitate/encourage an effective student network	VP Student Affairs & Student Board member	social/twitter network - is it already happening well enough/ annual job. Student regional events funding	*	*	*	*	*
<i>c) Provide assistance, training and encouragement for early career researchers (ECR)</i>	Develop strategies to engage and improve services for early career researchers	ECR WG	Professional development	**	**	*	*	*
	Develop and maintain regular dedicated ECR workshops	ECR WG	Continuing Next Generation Award and international linkages (e.g. INNGE)	**	**	*	*	*
<i>d) Provide assistance, training and encouragement for practitioners</i>	grey literature database for members	Practitioner WG/ EMR editor	survey outcomes/ collaborate with Ecosystem Science Council/ review accreditation/ explore corporate linkages and sponsorship/ code of conduct and disclaimers/ ESA email badge			**	*	*

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<i>e) Provide assistance, training and encouragement for established members</i>		Ecological Training WG				**	*	*
<i>f) Develop training opportunities</i>	Conference Working Group	Ecological Training WG	for all - workshops		**	**	*	*

AIM 3: Communicate effectively with and among members

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Component activities</u>	<u>Leaders</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>2016/17</u>	<u>2017/18</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>
<i>a) Continue to develop the webpage and content management system</i>	Populate member contacts	Membership Officer		**				
	Webpage edits/ proofread			*	*	*	*	*
	ESA abstracts/ handbook online - funding opportunity to digitise	EO					*	*
	Add highlights/ research chapter/state pages.	VP Comms/ Research Chapter WG	Increasing web activity	***	**	*	*	*
	Map	Membership Officer / Interlated /Web Officer/ VP Comms		*	*			
	Research news/podcasts/ popular: progress podcasts and videos/ cartoons - ebrochures/ ecards easily downloadable	Membership/ Bulletin/ Web Officer	Dedicated space on homepage/ separate webpage	**	**			
	Journal feeds	AE + EMR Editors/Interlated/ Web Officer		**	*	*	*	*
<i>b) Make effective use of membership database</i>	Searchable by member and also find an expert	Membership and Web Officers		*				

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<i>c) Identify areas of growth and attrition</i>		Raghu / Romina / Gail- Membership Working Group			***	**	*	*
<i>d) Develop and maintain new mechanisms for communications with members using social media</i>		Social Media WG	Wikipedia pages for ecologists	*	*	**	**	***
<i>e) Capturing the ESA history: its members and activities</i>	Member uploaded photos/ site information/ interactive map/ tagged with people names	Carla Catterall/ Membership Officer/ Ben G./ Web Officer	Meaning of the logo/ package cameos/ history of Australian ecology - undergrad ecology class project; membership; history of the ESA vs history of ecology in Australia	*			*	*
<i>f) Develop a mechanism to reward ecologists who contribute to the society</i>	Nominate for Order of Australia (OA) and other awards	OA Nominations Committee	Set up nominations committee	*	*	*	*	*
<i>g) Media communication for members</i>		Social Media WG		*	*	*	*	*

AIM 4 : Improve and promote external communication and outreach initiatives

Strategy	Component activities	Leaders	Notes	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<i>a) Build skills and resources for public liaison and communication with the media</i>	Engage outreach company (Meltwater)	Board	Review costs/ benefits of engaging Meltwater in extending outreach	***	**			

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			capabilities					
	Consider incorporating a new VP into Board to provide both public liaison and outreach? roles	Board	Oversee outreach initiatives being implemented		**	**		
	Ecosystem Science Council engagement	AE Editor/ President/ Glenda Wardle		***				
	Developing proposal and scope for potential science and ecological advocacy role for ESA	Communications WG		*		**	**	**
<i>b) Develop mechanisms to effectively engage with non-member practitioners</i>	Build the EMR web presence as a gateway to engage practitioners	EMR Editor/ Web Officer		*	*	**	**	***
<i>c) Develop mechanisms to effectively engage with <u>policy makers</u>,</i>	Invite ministers to conferences/ Start long-term interactions with policy advisors of major political parties	President/VP's/LOC	Hot Topics and twitter usage	*	*	*	*	*
<i>d) Develop mechanisms to effectively engage with <u>public</u> to build ecological awareness</i>	Adapt Hot Topics to make better use of engaging the public	Hot Topics Editor/ EO/ Communications WG	Website/ short videos/ nature for the public/ media releases via Meltwater/ facebook campaign	***	**	*	*	*
<i>e) Provide opportunities for supporting and increasing participation of <u>Indigenous people</u> in the society</i>	Develop a support network and opportunities for engagement	Indigenous Engagement WG		*	*	*	*	*
	Continue opportunities for engagement at the annual conference	Indigenous Engagement WG	ATSIC	*	*	*	*	*

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<i>f) Engage with other related societies</i>	Role of Ecosystem Science Council	President/ Mike Bull/ Glenda Wardle						
	Explore links with Australian/Asian/NZ Professional Societies / Scientists	President	Potential outreach to South Pacific groups we can play a role in supporting			*	*	
	Consider the possibilities for school membership to ESA, and develop if recommended	School Engagement WG	Teachers at conference (relevant symposium). Awareness of Scientists in Schools program (SIS) - more engagement with SIS; Scholarships for fieldwork - philanthropic funding; Knowledge of curriculum		*	*		
<i>c) Encourage participation of undergraduate , school students ,teachers in ecology and in ecological society</i>	prize for outreach	VP Student Affairs		*	*			
	development of curriculum materials/ teacher training workshops	School Engagement WG			*	*		

CORPORATE AIM : Continue to develop and maintain good governance of the Society								
Strategy	Component activities	Leaders	Notes	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<i>a) Maintain and increase membership numbers</i>	Develop recruitment and retention strategies	Membership Working Group	Ecologists who are not members	***	*	*	*	*

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<i>b) Keep membership fees indexed annually</i>	Maintaining membership fees in line with CPI growth and review annually	Treasurer	Membership fee structure and rates; corporate membership/ sponsorship	*	*	*	*	*
<i>c) Maintain and improve our financial management for future sustainability</i>	annual budgeting and reporting against budget/ implement project level accounting	Financial Governance Working Group (FGWG)		*	*	*	*	*
<i>d) Assess new funding opportunities</i>	sponsorship, grants, bequests, advertising	FGWG/Board		**	**	**	**	**
<i>e) Accumulate corporate experience on the ESA Board through in-house skills development or targeted skills-based recruitment</i>	Capacity-building sessions for Board members / Working Groups at annual conferences or other events	Board	Enhanced corporate governance skills to build internal expertise	****	***	**	**	**
<i>f) Develop an external Advisory Group providing relevant skills and advice to the Board</i>	Develop and maintain a database of key contacts	Board	e.g. media relations/ public liaison/ law/ risk/ business/ marketing/ communications	*	*	*	*	*
<i>g) Enhance succession planning for the Board</i>	induction pack/ recruitment updates; position descriptions/ online expression of interest/ performance review and reporting	Secretary/ EO/ Web Officer	Relevant society documents on web & searchable. Central point for the documents easily available; student representation on Board; Delegation of tasks - understudy roles; redundancy of roles - info	***	**	**	**	**

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			sharing; expand election procedures and information; VP-elect role					
<i>h) Enhance ESA capacity by identifying opportunities to recruit additional support staff</i>		FGWG/ Board	Funding/ Perpetual grants	*	*	*	*	*
<i>i) Develop protocols for managing Public Fund, donations and bequests and other fundraising initiatives</i>		FGWG		****	***	**	**	**
<i>j) Develop an efficient online meeting process</i>		Secretary/ EO/ Web Officer/ VP Members Comms		**	*			

APPENDIX 1. ACTIONS ACHIEVED – STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2015

Aims & Strategies	Success as at April 2015
AIM 1: Continue to develop and maintain good governance of the Society	
Keep membership fees indexed annually	Ongoing and successful
Maintain and improve our financial management for future sustainability	Ongoing and successful
AIM 2 : Develop the capacity for members to contact each other effectively and communicate with the wider community	
Develop the webpage and content management system	Ongoing and successful
Develop an efficient and informative membership database	Still to be fully implemented
Identify areas of growth and attrition of membership	Little achieved
Improve council's communication to members about the direction and finances of the society	Ongoing and successful
Develop a new mechanism for regular communication with members	Ongoing and successful
Capture the history of the society through recording governance, highlights and personal contributions from the members	Little achieved
Develop a mechanism to reward ecologists who contribute to society	Starting to be implemented – Next Generation Award
Engage members who are practitioners	Still to be fully implemented
AIM 3: Facilitate high quality and relevant research in ecology	
Continue to support and promote research chapters	Some functioning, but not highly used by members
Promote ecological science	Ongoing and successful

Continue to provide high quality journals for communicating ecological research	Ongoing and successful
Continue to improve the annual conference	Ongoing and successful
Engage esteemed ecologists in the society to enhance ecological research	Still to be fully implemented
AIM 4: Mentor and encourage early career ecologists	
Facilitate early career researchers	Ongoing and successful
Provide assistance, training and encouragement for research students	Ongoing and successful
Encourage participation of undergraduate and school students in the society	Still to be implemented
AIM 5 : Develop and improve external communication and outreach initiatives	
Build skills and resources for public liaison	Hot Topics; Started service with Meltwater to develop and assess impacts of media releases
Engage with <u>practitioners</u> to enhance incorporation of ecological principles	Ongoing, moderately successful
Engage with <u>policy makers</u>	Hot Topics
Engage with <u>the public</u> to build ecological awareness	Hot Topics; Started service with Meltwater to develop and assess impacts of media releases
Provide opportunities for supporting and increasing participation of <u>Indigenous people</u> in the society	Ongoing and successful
Engage with other related societies	Part of the Global Ecological Societies Forum

APPENDIX 2. OTHER ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

ESA Incorporated at National Level

ESA achieved deductible gift recipient (DGR) status & Registered Charity with ACNC

New Website and part-time Web Officer appointed

New Conference Organiser - Kaigi

Next Generation Award initiated 2014

Comprehensive Chart of Accounts and Project based financial reporting

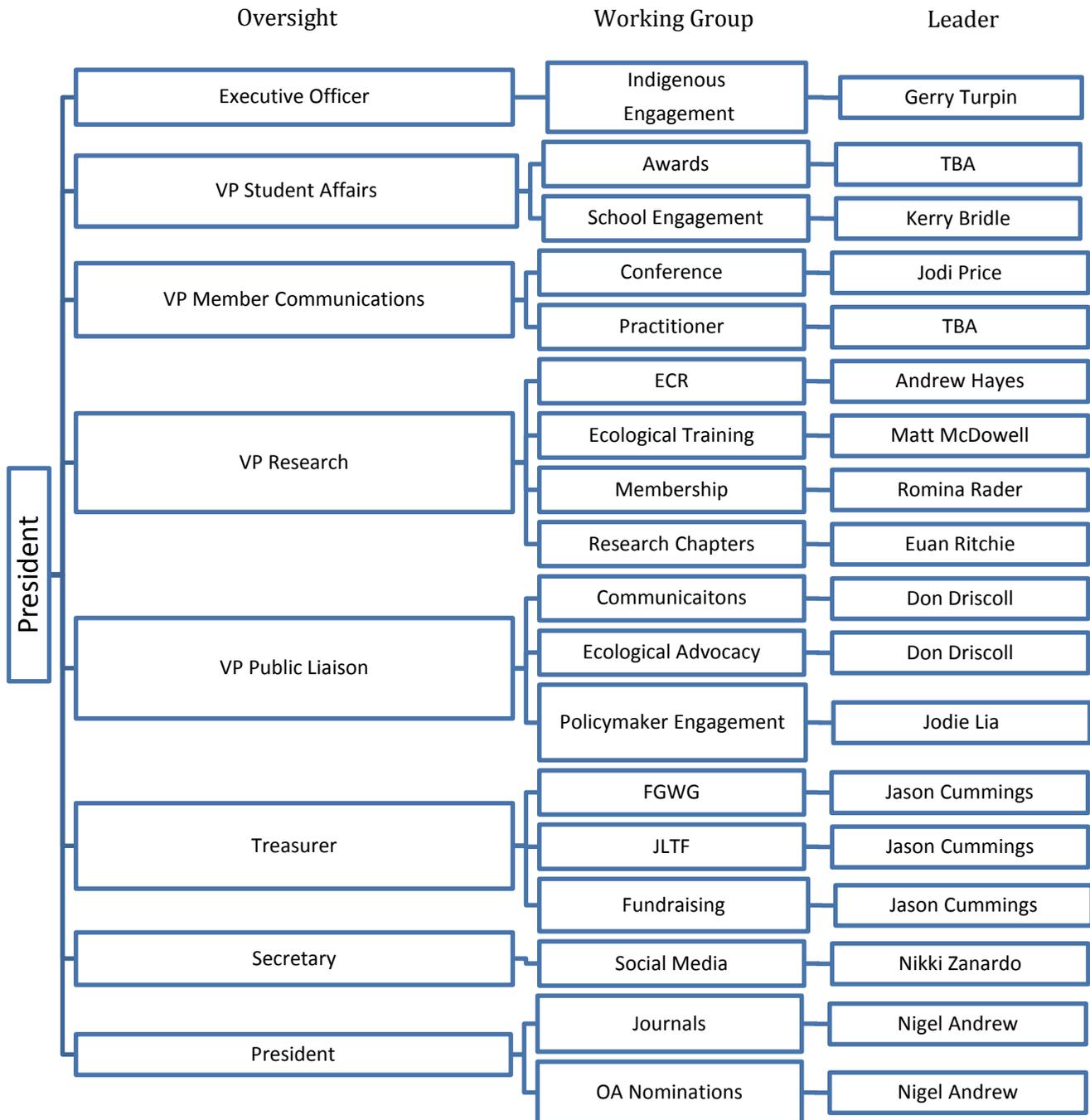
Regional Events and Activity Grants

Hot Topics

Online delivery of quarterly Bulletin

Online delivery of weekly e-news

APPENDIX 4. WORKING GROUP STRUCTURE



APPENDIX 3. WORKING GROUPS 2015 (DRAFT)

Working Group	Leader	VP Oversight	Members
Awards	VP Student Affairs	Student Affairs	EO Nikki Zanardo Member
Communications	Don Driscoll	Public Liaison	Raghu Kerry Bridle Ben Gooden EO Member
Conferences	Jodi Price	Member Comms	EO Kaigi Local Organizing Committee (LOC) rep Member
Early Career Researcher (ECR)	Andrew Hayes	Research	Ben Member Member
Ecological Advocacy	Don Driscoll	Public Liaison	Raghu Liz Kerry Member
Ecological Training	Matt McDowell	Research	Kerry Member Member
Financial Governance (FGWG)	Treasurer		President Executive Officer (EO) Finance Officer Board Member
Grants/Fundraising	VP Student Affairs	Treasurer	EO Nikki Zanardo Member
Indigenous Engagement	Gerry Turpin		EO Oliver Costello Member Member
Jill Landsberg Trust Fund	Treasurer		President EO Ross Landsberg
Journals	President		Treasurer Mike Gary EO

Working Group	Leader	VP Oversight	Members
Membership	Romina Rader	Research	EO Jodie Kerry Bev
OA Nominations Committee	President		EO Mike B Angela Moles Member
Policymaker Engagement	Jodie Lia	Public Liaison	EO Board Member Member Member
Practitioner	TBA	Member Comm	EO Anita Wild Member
Research Chapters	Euan Ritchie	Research	Matt Member Member
School Engagement	Kerry Bridle	Public Liaison	Romina Kirsti Abbott Education Assoc Member Member
Social Media	Nikki Zanardo	Public Liaison	Jodie Lia Web Officer David Watson EO