ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Meeting – Friday 14th November 2014 (Meeting #4)

Teleconference: commencing 11:00 AEST

[NSW, VIC, ACT, TAS, QLD - 11:00; SA, NT – 10:30; WA – 9:00]

Phone no: 1800 333 803 (622507#)

Distribution list: Nigel Andrew (President), Liz Tasker (VP - Member Communications), Jodie Lia (Secretary), Jason Cummings (Treasurer), Kerry Bridle (Ordinary Director), Euan Ritchie (Director – Research Chapters), Gail Spina (Executive Officer), Lyn McCormick (Finance Officer).

1.0 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Chairperson's Welcome and Introduction
1.2 Present and Apologies

Present: Nigel Andrew (President), Liz Tasker (VP - Member Communications), Jason Cummings (Treasurer), Kerry Bridle (Ordinary Director), Gail Spina (Executive Officer), Lyn McCormick (Finance Officer)

Apologies: Jodie Lia (Secretary)

Absent: Euan Ritchie (Director – Research Chapters)

2.0 ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 Matters Arising from Previous Board & Executive Meetings

Action Item table attached (August 2014).

3.0 REPORTS

3.1 Treasurers Report – Jason Cummings

Jason presented a verbal Treasurers Report. It was noted that at the end of September there was a large deficit ($317,000) due to money being paid out for ESA14. According to Lyn this is standard as the income comes in later formally once conference revenue is confirmed. Currently the ESA14 budget is unfinished, but there is a strong expectation there will be a healthy profit.

3.2 Correspondence Report – Nigel Andrew & Gail Spina

A combined correspondence report was tabled. No major issues noted.

4.0 GENERAL BUSINESS (Discussion and/or Voting)

4.1 Treasurer's Signatory - Nigel Andrew

As Jason has been officially voted in as the Treasurer for ESA, the Executive needs to endorse him being a signatory for the ESA and Jill Landsberg Trust Fund accounts for the Board. It is noted that this motion is required by the bank.

MOTION: That the Executive endorse Jason Cummings becoming a signatory to the ESA and JLTF Accounts with full authority.

Moved: Jodie Lia
Seconded: Liz Tasker
All in favour: motion carried.

5.0 OTHER BUSINESS (For Noting or Information Only)

5.1 ESA15 – Gail Spina & Nigel Andrew

ESA15 is now on track with the venue now booked (Adelaide Oval, Key Dates organised and LOC now aware of their roles. Gail and Tricia (from Kaigi) will continue to give guidance until more momentum is achieved. The next LOC meeting is the first week of December.

AGENDA ITEM #	ACTION ARISING	PERSON	DUE BY
Exec_Nov_14_5.1.1	Nigel needs to talk to Mike Austin about his role on the LOC – at the minimum as part of the Scientific Committee.	Nigel	ASAP

5.2 ESA response to losing expertise in CSIRO Darwin – Nigel Andrew

Liz noted this should be an important and key role for ESA to play. Workforce cuts are always important issues especially as there is currently a broad scale diminishing respect for ecologists and scientists more broadly. ESA should be commenting in some form that is appropriate and useful.

How we do this is a difficult issue, but discussion among the Board is important and critical, as we will all bring a range of different views to the table that reflect the membership. These different views need to be expressed and an agreed position needs to be reached by the Board. It's important that we do comment and make a difference! Gail also endorsed the importance of discussion broad principles of making comments under the ESA banner, and the need to make a strong statement regarding the diminished respect for scientists at a range of levels. ESA needs to develop guidelines around our statements if we are to be credible and taken seriously.

Jason noted that we need to defend our membership base and be proactive about it! The ESA Board should write a hot topic and the diminishment of scientific expertise, and release it as a comment in the newspapers. The development of a Hot Topic on the Loss of Ecological Expertise Australia wide – more broadly than one institution, and this could be the basis of ESA's platform position. We need to argue why this is a problem and provide an objective case for our position – A Hot Topic would be ideal. The Exec thought this would be a critical exercise for the Strategic Planning Day retreat in February.

5.3 Preparation for Strategic Planning Day – Nigel Andrew

Liz noted that Phase II of the website is critical to raise – Gail noted that this will be part of our larger Communication Strategy that needs to be further developed. We have spent a lot of time, effort and funds in getting the basic society website working, and developing better strategies to communicate with members; we need to determine our outreach activities, have a Budget so that we can determine objectives, keep to costs, and report on it. Liz also noted ESA has a critical gap with schools/ children/ teachers, and the ecological information that we have.

Nigel – we also need to look at the development of new roles for the Board. The Executive were also reminded that we are thinking about a 2016-2020 strategy, not just one for 12 months. Jason also questioned whether we could consider changing the strategic plan to run with a financial year rather than a calendar year. It would make more sense, as this is how our finances are audited. Again something to consider at SPD.

5.4 DGR Status Update – Gail Spina

Gail reminded the Exec that ESA now has DGR status, we are a registered charity, and we need to incorporate this into our normal processes. We need develop our financial processes to receive and track donations separate to say membership dues. We also need to be able to give tax receipts to donors. Lyn will look into this, and FGWG will develop a structure at their meeting in December to send to Interlated to integrate our financial processes with our website. Gail noted that this will be an extra job for Interlated to develop, and we will have to commission them to develop it for the ESA website. A finalised scoping document will be done on the 16th December (FGWG meeting at Sydney airport).

AGENDA ITEM #	ACTION ARISING	PERSON	DUE BY
Exec_Nov_14_5.4.1	Develop a structure to send to Interlated to integrate our financial processes within our website.	FGWG	December 2014
Exec_Nov_14_5.4.2	Final scoping document developed for Interlated to develop website further.	FGWG	December 2014

5.5 Open Access Publishers – Gail Spina

ESA has been sent a list of conferences to promote, but a member noted that one of the conference open access organisers was a predatory group that was part of unethical practices. ESA puts out information about conferences, but should we also be putting info out to members about predatory practices. Nigel noted that a Board member should coordinate a call for members to develop guidelines and information for members. Should such information be put behind a username firewall – Brigette to talk about such pros/cons at Strategic Planning Day.

6.0 LATE AGENDA ITEMS

6.1 Audited Accounts – Nigel Andrew

Nigel mentioned that audited accounts need to be made available on the web for member to comment up on. Jason will write a one paragraph précis, send to Gail, and Gail will upload, and make a comments area available.

AGENDA ITEM #	ACTION ARISING	PERSON	DUE BY
Exec_Nov_14_6.1.1	Write a one paragraph précis to the audited accounts for the website.	Jason	December 14
Exec_Nov_14_6.1.2	Upload the précis, audited accounts and make a comments area available on the website.	Gail	February Board 15

7.0 NEXT MEETING

Next Executive Meeting – 13th March 2015
Next Board Meeting – 13th February 2015

Meeting closed: 12:00pm AEST