



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting – Thursday 30th April 2020 (Meeting #3)
Commencing 11:00 AEST**

[QLD, NSW, VIC, ACT, TAS - 11:00; SA, NT – 10.30; WA – 9:00]

GoToMeeting: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/445690405>

Meeting ID: 445-690-405

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GoogleDrive Documents: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-geam3uLXXnGQ0CdYrr6Qcnvtj7re8W?usp=sharing>

Distribution list: Bek Christensen (President), Don Driscoll (Past President), Ayesha Tulloch (VP – Public Outreach & Policy), Jennifer Finn (VP – Science & Applications), Jodi Price (VP – Next Generation), Chloe Sato (Secretary), Jeremy Huntley (Treasurer), Nigel Andrew (Austral Ecology – Chair), Pep Turner (EMR – Chair), Gerry Turpin (Director – Indigenous Engagement), Leanda Mason (Director – Early Career Research), Gail Spina (Executive Officer), Jacky Tierney (Finance & Membership Officer), Toni Stevens (Online Media Manager).

1.0 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Chairperson's Welcome and Introduction

Bek welcomed all to the April Board meeting.

1.2 Present and Apologies

Present: Bek Christensen, Don Driscoll, Ayesha Tulloch, Jodi Price, Chloe Sato, Pep Turner, Nigel Andrew, Jeremy Huntley, Jennifer Finn, Gerry Turpin, Gail Spina, Jacky Tierney, Toni Stevens.

Apologies: Leanda Mason.

1.3 Minutes of Previous Board Meeting (February 2020) – for ratification*

Motion: That the minutes of the previous Board meeting be accepted as a true and correct record.

Moved: Bek Christensen

Seconded: Ayesha Tulloch

All in favour: motion carried.

2.0 ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 Matters Arising from Previous Board Meetings*

AGENDA ITEM #			ACTION ARISING	PERSON
PD	Nov (#10) 18	6.1.1	Draft report outlining what is involved in accreditation of practitioners, cost-benefit analysis to ESA of offering accreditation opportunities, and which groups can benefit from the provision of ESA-branded accreditation.	Practitioner WG
Done. Change to outlining potential initiatives for combining practitioner engagement and research. May Board meeting.				
Board	Aug (#7) 19	5.9.1	Develop draft sustainability policy	Gail
Ongoing. Conference WG to develop a conference sustainability policy (carry over to September 2020), then move onto overall policy (carry over to Planning Day 2020).				
PD	Nov (#10) 19	4.3.2	Liase with Maggie and seek quotes over next couple of months for ESA History synthesis, ready for next budget bids.	Gail

AGENDA ITEM #		ACTION ARISING		PERSON
Ongoing. Contact from Maggie and spoken to contact about quote. It would be nice to announce something as part of the 60 th anniversary conference. Carry over to September 2020, ready for budget bids.				
PD	Nov (#10) 19	5.1.1	Discussion paper on corporate membership, including costed out options and incentives for membership.	Membership WG
Need to talk to various stakeholders .Kris French has contacts in consultancy space, and will follow up to see if they can follow up process a little more. Carry over to May Board.				
PD	Nov (#10) 19	6.1.2	Develop Media Training Award discussion paper for Board, including costings associated with internal vs external resource development/delivery resources)	Toni
Done. Urgency decreased but will continue to be pursued within Media WG. Best way forward with media training. Put on hold for time being and with conference uncertainty. Some ideas floating around but nothing solidified yet. F conference did go ahead, it is possible that a workshop or symposium could be run through the WG for this year but more formal actions in future.				
PD	Nov (#10) 19	8.1.1	Education WG to update strategic alignment in the ToR to match new strategic plan, and translate final ToR to standard template	Education WG
Ongoing. No update. Carry over to May Board.				
Board	Feb (#1) 20	5.1.1	Email Board and WG Chairs with most up-to-date version of strategic plan actions; coordinate synthesis into final draft for Board sign off.	Chloe
Done. See Item 4.1.				
Board	Feb (#1) 20	2.1.1	Develop Donations and Grants Discussion paper for circulation to Board, including strategy for donations, current grant expenditure, potential external award supporters, and possible options for redistributing grants as per Planning Day discussions.	FGWG
Relate to vacant Board role. Defer action until Director in place. Update for June Board.				

AGENDA ITEM #	ACTION ARISING	PERSON	DUE BY
Board_Apr_20_2.1.1	Discussion paper outlining how ESA can facilitate links between researchers and practitioners.	Practitioner WG	May Board 20

AGENDA ITEM #	ACTION ARISING	PERSON	DUE BY
Board_Apr_20_2.1.2	WGs to consider and present well-defined project activities with 1 paragraph description for draft prospectus.	All Board/All WGs	May Board 20

3.0 TREASURER'S REPORT

3.1 Treasurer's Report – Jeremy Huntley*

Financial statements tabled. Financial statements from March also tabled for reference. Both noted by Board.

Currently not meeting revenue KPI but not a significant issue as mostly just timing of Holsworth. In terms of ESA finances this year, we need to focus on bare bones budget due to uncertainty. If things are already in train, Board will continue to discuss their progress and funding. New proposals and initiatives will not be considered unless they are critical to ESA function. ESA Board is waiting for conference go/no-go and investment returns, before making any big investments. When making budgeting choices, also need to track Perpetual investments as they have been affected by COVID (but doesn't affect day-to-day functioning of society as long-term investment).

4.0 BUSINESS for Discussion and/or Voting

4.1 Strategic Plan Action Items – Bek Christensen*

Since Planning Day Nov2019, all working groups have been updating their action items in the Strategic Plan Action Item Spreadsheet. The action list provides detail around the activities each WG will take to advance the Strategic Plan. The action list covers the 5-year Strategic Plan period, but is intended to be reviewed and updated each year. Priority actions have been identified to progress in Year 1 of the Plan. The Strategic Plan Action Items document will be locked to WGs, so any changes that WGs wish to make must be sought through the Board (unless these changes occur at annual review). WGs should provide a monthly update on actions relevant to the year in question, as well as any issues associated with actions. Chloe and Bek will develop a template for use by VPs.

AGENDA ITEM #	ACTION ARISING	PERSON	DUE BY
Board_Apr_20_4.1.1	Develop template for VPs to get updates on Strategic Plan Actions.	Bek/Chloe	May Board 20

Motion: That the Board endorses the document tabling Action Items associated with the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan.

Moved: Bek Christensen

Seconded: Nigel Andrew

All in favour: motion carried.

4.2 COVID-19 – Bek Christensen

Board discussed possible COVID-19 impacts on: (1) ESA's business, and (2) ESA members.

There has been a drop in membership renewals over last month, but unsure whether this is a long-term trend. The loss of jobs from academia may require consideration by Board in future. There are also financial implications for the society regarding the conference and investments (e.g. Perpetual). In terms of journals, the operations of Wiley need to be monitored. Finally, impacts of covid on grants and awards should be considered (e.g. extensions on Holsworth due to constraints on field work etc.).

All these issues are being monitored, and anything that needs to be changed will be brought to the Board for discussion. If anything comes to your attention that needs addressing, please include it as an agenda item.

Also, ESA should consider how to make the best of this time; e.g. Austral is looking to produce a student reviews special issue, given that students are at desk more than usual. Currently seeking high quality reviews.

Importantly, the Board needs to think carefully about how to help members. Media WG discussed whether it may be a good time to try an online training portal (haven't pursued idea due to budget bid cancellation). Getting additional information from members on their needs/wants through surveys/questionnaires could improve service delivery; Media WG interested in desired media training, Policy WG interested to know desired Hot Topics, and how they are using available Hot Topics etc. Nigel also developing an online Writing for Publication workshop over the next couple of months.

Design one survey that addresses current circumstances (impacts of covid) and seeks feedback on potential ESA offerings. Ayesha will work with Cara to design survey then seek feedback from Gail. WGs/VPs to send ideas to Ayesha via email for inclusion in survey.

AGENDA ITEM #	ACTION ARISING	PERSON	DUE BY
Board_Apr_20_4.2.1	Develop survey to best direct support/assistance for ESA members during covid.	Ayesha/All WGs	May Board 20

4.3 Director Development, Fundraising & Sponsorship – Gail Spina*

Director Fundraising and Sponsorship position has a potential candidate. Priscilla is currently at CQU, but has experience in different places in industry, peak body groups, parks and conservation and the university sector. Strong personal interest and passion for our space, as well as insight into the world in which we operate, as well as those we wish to engage with more.

The Position Description for the position, the cover letter, and the CV for the candidate were tabled and discussed by the Board. The Board agreed the appoint Priscilla in an acting capacity, offering pro rata annuity for 6 months during probationary period.

Motion: That the Board appoint Priscilla Stevens-Guiney to the role of acting Director – Development, Fundraising and Sponsorship pending formal voting at the AGM.

Moved: Gail Spina

Seconded: Nigel Andrew

All in favour: motion carried.

4.4 Academic Freedom Working Group proposed actions – Don Driscoll*

The AFWG has written a paper analysing and interpreting results from the science suppression survey of 2018-19. The paper is in review with a journal after major revisions. This analysis highlights key areas where actions can be taken, and the AFWG has identified 10 priority areas (some longer term, some shorter term). These are detailed in the accompanying document and it finishes with priority short term actions:

Immediate Priorities:

- (1) Get web site up for documenting suppression asap.
Can probably set up actions relatively easily on current or new ESA website. However, need to be very clear about expected outcomes in providing information to ESA, and the role ESA is playing this process. Also need to be conscious about how we deal with sensitive information and data (do we need additional security, given the sensitivity of the information in some cases?) Information upload should be anonymous, but also possibility waive anonymity to ESA. Also good to have ability to upload evidence to support claim? A link to other whistleblower platforms would be good.
- (2) Release paper, convo article, hot topic; get as much media as possible.
- (3) At the same time call on members to take on roles in the WG: each of our 10 points could have its own leader.
- (4) Include fund-raiser for the academic freedom projects? Need web-based capacity for this to work, and would need it by the time the paper comes out for maximum uptake.
Possible to set up a mechanism like the bushfire response, but the campaign is Academic Freedom. Board supports this idea but requires additional detail about proposal. Don to progress for approval by Board.

The AFWG seeks board support for short-term actions, and feedback on the broader plan and longer-term actions. Board supports work in this space, but highlighted ESA needs to be sentient about potential risk to ESA – so clarity around ESA’s role in initiatives is essential. Bek highlighted that this has been a significant amount of work by Don and the Academic Freedom WG, and congratulated them for completing all the foundational work as well as getting the work to manuscript phase.

AGENDA ITEM #	ACTION ARISING	PERSON	DUE BY
Board_Apr_20_4.4.1	Further develop fund-raiser for academic freedom proposal for consideration by Board.	Don	June Board 20

5.0 BUSINESS for Noting or Information Only

5.0a STANDING ITEMS: REPORTS

5a.1 Correspondence Report – Chloe Sato*

Correspondence tabled and noted by Board.

5a.2 Working Group Report – All*

Working Group Portfolio Chairs should submit a written dot point report for their Working Groups allowing for discussion of questions and issues only, rather than taking time for verbal updates. Directors with WG oversight to collate and forward dot point reports to Secretary prior to Board meetings.

Oversight	Working Group	Chair	Update as at 30 April 20
President	JOURNALS	Bek Christensen	<p>Planning on holding a Journals WG meeting in May.</p> <p>Austral Ecology: Latest publishers report attached for Austral Ecology. Main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paper downloads up by ~ 40,000: hopefully because we are promoting the journal more on social media - Total number of submissions are down from 2018 - Acceptance rate of manuscripts is up to 49.6% (from 42.5% in 2018) - Number of days in review is similar to last year (199 days from submission to acceptance) - Number of days until early view publication down to 30 days (56 days in 2018). - Australia, Brazil and Argentina still the top submitting countries - Royalties down from 2018 (but still \$184, 000) <p>Updates from Nigel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two new Social Media Editors have now been put onto the Austral Ecology Editorial Board - Mike Bull Special Issue should be out in June - I have assessed 357 rejected papers from the last few years to assess if there are any biases in why there are more rejections from Brazil. The editorial will be online early soon. Title is: <i>Design flaws, and poor language: the key reason why manuscripts get rejected from Austral Ecology across all countries for 2017 - 2020.</i> <p>EMR: Latest publishers report attached for EMR.</p>
	HOLSWORTH FUND	Bek Christensen	Holsworth Round 2, 2019 grants awarded. 47 first time recipients,

Oversight	Working Group	Chair	Update as at 30 April 20
			and 57 continuing. List of awardees available on ESA website. Will be allowing 6-month extension on use of funds due to COVID-19 related delays to research. EO preparing wording to this effect to share with grantholders.
	INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT	Gerry Turpin	No update.
	RESEARCH CHAPTERS	Eleonora Egidi	No update.
	RESEARCH AWARDS	Jennifer Firm	No update.
VP Science & Applications	PRACTITIONER ENGAGEMENT	Sacha Jellinek	The PEWG had a face-to-face meeting on the 20th February 2020. The Strategic Plan has been updated and submitted. The PEWG have submitted a symposium for the next conference (Sacha Jellinek, Sam Lloyd, Chloe Sato, Lincoln Kern). PEWG are hoping to have another full-day symposium, based on the interest we had last year. PEWG have been in contact with the Ecological Consultants association in NSW and Vic about ESA and this year's conference. PEWG have updated the award wording (Ecological Impact Award – Practitioners and Researchers Working Together) and have discussed possible funding options with Gail. Chloe, Sacha and Sam have been working on a paper from the last symposium.
	EARLY CAREER ECOLOGISTS	Stephanie Courtney Jones	No update.
VP Next Generation	STUDENT ACTIVITIES & AWARDS	Jodi Price	No update.
	ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION	Dieter Hochuli	No update.
	BULLETIN	Marie Dade	No update.
VP Public Outreach & Policy	HOT TOPICS	Dale Nimmo	Last WG meeting Thursday 2 April 2020 (1) Priorities have been bushfire-related HTs, several have been commissioned and

Oversight	Working Group	Chair	Update as at 30 April 20
			<p>one about to be published on hazard reduction burning.</p> <p>(2) Suggested changes to HTs in how they progress, anticipating policy-relevant and time-relevant topics (e.g. important events, likely upcoming issues) through collaboration with Policy WG and membership survey.</p>
	MEDIA	Euan Ritchie	<p>Last WG meeting Thursday 19 March 2020</p> <p>(1) Discussions around media for 2020 conference – difficult to find</p> <p>(2) Discussions to create science communication online course for ESA members with different modules including 1. Promoting yourself and others in the media to address ED&I; 2. Positive messaging of ecology; 3. Advocacy; 4. Writing particular types of articles.</p>
	POLICY	Ayesha Tulloch	<p>Last WG meeting Thursday 16 April 2020</p> <p>(1) Envoy Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 11 Envoys confirmed. - Online conference call held April 8 to welcome Envoys to program and discuss next steps in light of COVID. - Envoy agreement circulated and signed, first MP meeting organisation progressing. <p>(2) Submissions/Enquiries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 submissions to government enquiries submitted 17 April (EPBC Act Review & Vegetation Management/Bushfire Royal Commission). - Preparing new submission to Finance and Public Administration Committee for the inquiry “Lessons to be learned in relation to the preparation and planning for, response to and recovery efforts following the 2019-20 Australian bushfire season” ** - Want a more holistic approach to submissions that includes other WGs (e.g. Indigenous, Equity/Diversity, Education). First step is to begin submission “templates” with ESA’s stance on popular recurring topics (e.g. ecological monitoring/data, indigenous

Oversight	Working Group	Chair	Update as at 30 April 20
			engagement in ecological management). (3) Communications In development - Quarterly Policy Bulletin to be circulated to our 230 Parliament contact database. 2-pager of ESA's EPBC Act Review response to be circulated to MPs.
	ACADEMIC FREEDOM	Don Driscoll	Returned survey analysis paper to journal after major revisions. Identified 10-point plan of action. Funding request to ESA submitted (Feb) and sought ESA board support for immediate actions.
	EQUITY & DIVERSITY	Adam Frew	No update.
VP Membership Services	CONFERENCES	Jodi Price	<p>From March Board: Reduced from day face-to-face to 2 hr. Only dealt with conference 2019 report. Will meet again next week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good numbers taking up to 2-day membership especially non-members (first time offering this registration). Should be maintained. - Lot of first time delegates (~46%) and decent number of international attendees – looking into finding ways to ensure networking opportunities for delegates who might need more attention. - Discussed looking at ways to encourage non-members to buy a membership with registration like in a package deal. - Discussed the suggestion of making long talks 10 minutes to reduce the need for some many speed talks (no consensus). Main issue is students getting speed talks in consecutive years when requesting long talks. Programming in current system would be a nightmare to find a solution for this but worth considering options. - Divergent opinions on the dinner having the lower cost option and splitting the dinner up. Suggestion made options

Oversight	Working Group	Chair	Update as at 30 April 20
			<p>should be found for everyone to pay \$50. Comments that this would be extremely difficult. Last year's dinner was specific to the venue and not necessary ongoing but did manage to bring the students and young people back to the conference dinner. So worthy of ongoing discussion.</p> <p>- Food. In agreement that sustainable meat should be offered as a special dietary requirement. LOC are planning something like this for 2020. CWG will develop sustainability policy and compile supporting evidence around food sustainability before the AGM this year.</p>
	MEMBERSHIP	Vacant	No update.
	EVENTS	Vacant	Group not active.
	POST-GRAD DAY	Adrienne Nicotra/Susanna Venn	No update.
Treasurer	FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE	Jeremy Huntley	<p>Met early April As previously communicated – determined a scaled back budget focused on critical expenditure only, pending certainty of conference and journal impacts from COVID-19.</p> <p>Director Fundraising and Sponsorship position has a potential candidate. Two current action items for FGWG were determined to be delayed until the new person is in the position as they relate heavily to this portfolio.</p> <p>Discussed 2019/20 financial performance – detailed in Treasurer's report.</p>
	FUNDRAISING & SPONSORSHIP	Vacant	Group not active.

** Details at

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance_and_Public_Administration/Bushfirerecovery/Terms_of_Reference

5a.3 Online Media Report – Toni Stevens*

Online media report tabled and noted by Board. March Online Media Report also circulated for reference.

5a.4 Membership Report – Jacky Tierney*

Membership report from March tabled and noted by Board as no change from last month in membership.

5a.5 Conference Report – Gail Spina

Local Organising Committee is meeting soon to consider symposia (20 received). Abstracts for conference will open next week. Registration fees set to remain same for ESA/concession, but non-member fees will increase. Possibility of offering an online conference (complementary offering for those who no longer wish to attend in person) is being investigated. If physical meeting is cancelled, then intention is to have ESA20 fully online. Currently at \$10k sponsorship (but need \$35k). Carbon offset program has been established for conference.

5.0b SUBMISSIONS

5b.1 Bushfire royal commission – Ayesha Tulloch*

Bushfire royal commission submission tabled and noted by Board.

5b.2 EPBC Act Review – Ayesha Tulloch*

EPBC Act Review Submission tabled and noted by Board.

5.0c OTHER ITEMS (Noting and/or Information)

No other items tabled.

6.0 LATE ITEMS

6.1 SCB Oceania chapter potential for joint meeting in 2022 – Don Driscoll

The Society for Conservation Biology Oceania chapter is planning to hold its 2022 conference in Melbourne. At a meeting to discuss planning, attended by about 12 SCB members who are also ESA members, the idea of a joint conference with ESA in 2022 was strongly supported. This was because most people could not attend both conferences if they were separate, particularly government staff who are lucky to be approved to attend one conference a year. The SCB-O organising group now seeks feedback from ESA board on whether ESA would support this in principle and ideas for progressing the joint meeting if it is supported.

Issues that SCB-O emphasised as important aligned well with ESA's approach to running a conference. This included strong support of student presentations, meals on site, effort to ensure equity and representation (for SCB, particularly supporting Pacific Islanders), use of poster and speed talks to increase the number of presentations. The group discussed the potential need to hold a longer conference, and that it would be helpful to emphasise that the meeting has an international scope, not just the Australian continent.

There was also discussion of whether aligning with the student-led Victorian Biological Conservation conference was also feasible. This conference has a narrower scope and is designed to train students and give them an opportunity to speak at a local forum. Integration with the main program seems less appropriate, but that conference could take place before or after the ESA meeting.

A few hundred attend, so ESA may be taking the more senior role in organising the conference. If it's only a few hundred, could treat it as a mini-conference. It is a good plan to attract more people to conference (without having to choose between conferences), as well as promoting ESA as a place to go for conservation (and ecology).

Gail to have initial discussion with New Zealand as we have an MOU with them. If we can get their support for it, then Don can discuss with SCB and connect the SCB working group with ESA conference organisers.

AGENDA ITEM #	ACTION ARISING	PERSON	DUE BY
Board_Apr_20_6.1.1	Discuss SCB joint meeting proposal with NZ ESA.	Gail	May Board 20

7.0 NEXT MEETING

May Board – 29 May 2020.

Meeting close: 12.38pm