

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

**AUQA Board Meeting 2006/2**

**05 June 2006  
(1000 – 1300 hrs)**

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

**MINUTES**

**1. ATTENDANCE**

**Present**

Emeritus Professor Deryck Schreuder (Chair)  
Mr Patrick Coleman  
Mr Ian Hawke  
Mr Clive Hildebrand  
Rev. Dr Mark Harding \*  
Professor James McWha\*  
Professor Ingrid Moses\*  
Professor Millicent Poole  
Professor Ian O'Connor  
Mr Colin Walters  
Mr Terry Werner  
Dr David Woodhouse

**Apology**

None

\* Rev. Dr Mark Harding, Professor James McWha and Professor Ingrid Moses could not attend a part of the meeting due to delay in flight arrivals.

**In attendance as Observer** (for all or part of the meeting)

Dr Carolyn Allport (NTEU)

**Secretariat**

Dr Antony Stella

The Chair welcomed those in attendance, and in particular welcomed the new Directors Patrick Coleman and Ian O'Connor, and the re-appointed Directors Ian Hawke and Colin Walters of the AUQA Board.

THE Chair also acknowledged the importance of the papers placed before the Board in the context of discussing the review report of AUQA, options for the next cycle of audits and the future strategies for AUQA.

Finally, he thanked the AUQA staff for the coordinated work they had put in for the Board papers.

## **2. MINUTES OF MEETING 2006/1**

The Board **confirmed** the Minutes of meeting 2006/1 held on 07 March 2006 (AB2006/2/2.1 Attachment 1).

## **3. MATTERS ARISING NOT LISTED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

Nil

## **4. AUDIT MATTERS**

### **4.1 Audits 2005**

The Board **noted** the progress of the 2005 audits and **ratified** the audit report of the Department of Education Services, Western Australia.

Summary Feedback Report (AB2006/2/4.1 Attachment 2) of the Melbourne College of Divinity (MCD) was **considered** by the Board. The board noted the positive feedback from MCD.

### **4.2 Audits 2006**

The Board **noted** the progress of the 2006 audits.

The Executive Director briefed the Board on the publication timelines for the audit reports and the efforts taken by AUQA staff to get the Definitive Draft out to the auditee by two months. The Board noted that after sending out the Definitive Draft, the timelines would depend on the time taken by the auditee to respond to the report and the nature of the response.

Considering the nature of AUQA audit reports, their coverage of issues, complexities involved in the case of some auditees, and the various quality controls AUQA has in place for audit reports, the Board agreed that aiming to get the Definitive Draft out to the auditee in two months is an appropriate timeline.

**Action:** ED, ADs

### 4.3 Auditors

The Board considered three nominations for appointment to AUQA's Register of Honorary Auditors.

After careful examination of the profiles of the proposed nominees, including the names of their referees, the Directors **approved** the appointment of the proposed nominees to the AUQA's Register of Auditors.

The ED reported that several other nominations are to hand in response to a general approach to stakeholders following the previous Board meeting.

Given the fact that AUQA will have to expand the Register of Auditors and ensure appropriate skill mix to deal with emerging areas in cycle 2 and also considering the NSAI audits, the Board suggested that advertising the profile of honorary auditors may be useful. AUQA website will be a good platform to do this.

The Board also indicated that a more formal approach may be followed when the Register of Auditors is expanded to address the above issues.

**Action:** Executive Director, Board Secretary

## 5. AUQA POLICY AND BOARD ISSUES

### 5.1 AGM

The Board **noted** the minutes of the AGM 2006 (AB2006/2 /5.1 Attachment 1) held on 19 April 2006 at AUQA.

### 5.2 Board Membership 2006

The Board **noted** the changes to the membership of the Board for 2006 and **welcomed** the two new Directors and the four re-appointed Directors. The Conflict of Register of the Board was updated.

**Action:** Board Secretary

### 5.3 Review of Policies

The Board considered the small amendments proposed to six policies (AB2006/2 /5.3 Attachments 1-6):

- a. Policy 001: Administrative Arrangements for Honorary Directors (A further revised version of Policy 001 was tabled.)
- b. Policy 002: Auditing Overseas Activities
- c. Policy 004: Car Rates
- d. Policy 016: Observers on Audit Panels
- e. Policy 020: Privacy of Information Policy
- f. Policy 026: Progress Reports

An amendment to Policy 004 – changing the 'tolls for CityLink within Melbourne' to 'road tolls' - was suggested. With this change, amendments to the policies were **approved** as they were presented.

The Board had queried the 'Work Cover' of the Honorary Auditors, and the Executive Director (ED) agreed to research the issue, and bring it to the notice of the Board in the next meeting.

The Privacy of Information Policy requires that, once the Audit Report has been published, panel members and AUQA have responsibilities for destroying, in a secure fashion, information related to the audit.

One of the Directors brought to the attention of the Board that public servants are not supposed to destroy the record of their work.

Considering this matter, the Board suggested that the ED may add a clause that the policy does not over ride any public law. He was asked to seek legal opinion, if necessary.

The timeline for the Progress Reports - 18-24 months from the date of publication of the audit report - was considered by the Board. It was agreed that this timeline may be revisited during the cycle 2 discussions.

**Action:** Executive Director, Board Secretary

#### **5.4 Review of AUQA**

The Board **considered** the external review report of AUQA (AB2006/2/5.4 Attachment 1) and discussed it in detail in the Board retreat. The Board agreed to the broad thrusts of the recommendations and suggested action on some of the recommendations. However, the Board also made it clear that this does not mean that every recommendation is accepted. The Board will review the specific implications for each recommendation and develop an Action Plan.

**Action:** Board and ED

#### **5.5 Cycle 2 Options**

The revised Cycle 2 paper (AB2006/2/5.5 Attachment 1) was considered by the Board during the Retreat. The paper was found to be helpful and the Board suggested that the paper be sharpened into the form of a precise specification that AUQA can put out publicly as the cycle 2 operational details and gave suggestions regarding the aspects to be detailed further.

The Board also indicated that the recommendations of the audit reports and the information that has come through the progress reports of the institutions be analysed to identify areas that have been found to be in need of attention and how well institutions have acted on those recommendations. (This would be made available to the Board in the next meeting in September).

**Action:** ED

## 5.6 Collaboration with the VTE Sector

The Board **considered** the revised report on auditing dual sector HEIs (AB2006/2/5.6 Attachment 1). The Executive Director briefed the Board about the efforts being taken to discuss the collaboration with NQC. The next meeting with NQC will take place in the next 4-6 weeks. The Board noted the differences in the frameworks of AUQA and the VTE sector and the consequent challenges in auditing the dual sector institutions collaboratively. It was brought to the attention of the Board that the secondment of one of the Audit Directors to VQA one day a week has been found to be helpful in strengthening the VTE sector collaboration.

**Action:** ED

## 6. FINANCE MATTERS

### 6.1 Report on finance matters

The Board received a report on the finance matters for 2006 after the last Board meeting held in March 2006.

### 6.2 Report and recommendations from the Finance Committee

The Board received the report and recommendations from the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee recommendations on revised audit fees and the revised budget were considered. Following a discussion on the appropriate level of financial reserves, the Board **approved** the revised budget (AB2006/2/6.2 Attachments 5 and 6). The Board also **approved** the revised audit fees (AB2006/2/6.2 Attachments 3 and 4)

The Board noted that the transition to in-house accounting is proceeding smoothly. The Corporate Accountant will in future attend the Board meeting for agenda items on financial matters.

## 7. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Board received an oral report from the Chair on the following:

1. There will be a media release on the external review of AUQA on 8 June at Sydney. The Board Chair and ED will meet with selected media and embargoed copies of review report have been sent to the journalists who have shown an interest in attending the meeting.
2. The Chair of the Board and ED will have meet with the Federal Minister for Education on 14 June at Parliament House, Canberra. (The Chair already had a met with the Senior Adviser to the Minister on AUQA related matters for the briefing).

3. The review report of AUQA will be taken up by MCEETYA on 6 July in its annual meeting; and, if invited, the Chair of the Board and the ED of AUQA are ready to make themselves available for the meeting.
4. The Chair and the ED will meet the Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University (ANU) in a couple of weeks to discuss the nature of the audit that will be appropriate to ANU.

**Action:** Chair, ED

## 8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Board **noted** the report from the Executive Director on AUQA activities.

The confidential item on the inaugural Australian Higher Education Quality Award (AB2006/2/8 Attachment 1), to be awarded during the AUQF 2006, was discussed by the Board. Considering the nominations received, criteria used by the Joint Steering Group (JSG) of AUQF 2006 that acted as the screening committee, and the contributions made by the nominee in the field of quality assurance, the Board **agreed** to award the inaugural Australian Higher Education Quality Award to the person recommended by the JSG.

For the next year award, the Board wishes to examine more closely details such as increasing the number of nominations, and reviewing the screening process.

**Action:** ED

## 9. DEST / MCEETYA MATTERS

### 9.1 NSAI audits

The Board **considered** the report on the most recent developments in the auditing of NSAI Higher Education Providers for HESA purposes. The Board noted that AUQA is working with one STAA (Queensland) to develop joint guidelines for the jurisdiction, that AUQA is working with DEST on guidelines for observers of pilot audits and that planning for the pilot audit of the Australian College of Theology in November 2006 proceeds with a few others in the pipeline.

### 9.2 MCEETYA

The Board received a report on the MCEETYA review of its companies including AUQA.

The Board noted that AUQA's report for the year 2005-2006 (AB2006/2/9.2 Attachment 1) has been submitted to MCEETYA. The Board was informed that as discussed in the previous Board meeting, the report on Objective 4 of AUQA has been submitted to MCEETYA and that the need to revisit the objective was highlighted in the cover note (AB2006/2/9.2 Attachment 2).

AUQA's Response to JCHE on the Revised National Protocols (AB2006/2/9.2 Attachment 3) had been sent to Directors, who noted that the ED was invited to the JCHE meeting for the discussion of this item.

The proposals for a national accreditation agency, that are going to be discussed at the MCEETYA meeting, were brought to the attention of the Board. The Board was informed that one reason for this agency is related to ensuring national consistency in the implementation of the National Protocols. Without such an agency, it would be the responsibility of the JCHE to ensure national consistency and JCHE needs a mechanism to shoulder this responsibility.

The Board concluded that the national accrediting agency might not have any immediate impact on the role of AUQA in quality assurance, although the situation is very fluid.

### 9.3 Transnational Quality Strategy (TQS)

The Board **received** a report on the progress with the Transnational Quality Strategy (TQS). The TQS Expert Group for the Trial Quality Assessments, after two meetings, has agreed that trials will not be conducted in the higher education sector at this stage. The matter for exploration for AUQA is the dual sector auditing.

The Board **noted** that as the discussion with NQC develops, AUQA will be able to explore the possibilities of a trial assessment of dual sector in collaboration with relevant agencies.

**Action:** ED, BS

## 10. OTHER BUSINESS

None

## 11. NEXT BOARD MEETING DATES AND TIMES

Meeting AB2006/3	5 September
Meeting AB2006/4	28 November

Signed:.....

Chair AUQA Board.....

Date:.....