

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

**AUQA Board Meeting 2007/2
10.00am, Tuesday 05 June 2007**

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

MINUTES

1. ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

Present

Emeritus Professor Deryck Schreuder (Chair)
Mr Patrick Coleman
Mr Ian Hawke
Mr Clive Hildebrand
Emeritus Professor Michael Koder
Professor Bill Lovegrove
Professor Ian O'Connor
Professor Alan Pettigrew
Mr Colin Walters
Mr Terry Werner
Dr David Woodhouse

Director James McWha and observer Carolyn Allport sent apologies.

Others in attendance for part of the meeting – Mr Rob Carmichael

Board Secretary – Dr Antony Stella

The Chair welcomed all, the new Directors in particular, to the second meeting of 2007. He commented on the significant issues placed before the Board that include Cycle 2 audits and developments with the NSAI audits.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING 2007/1, HELD ON 1 MARCH 2007

The Board **confirmed** the Minutes of meeting 2007/1 held on 1 March 2007.

3. MATTERS ARISING NOT LISTED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

Director Colin Walters had sent a paper to The Executive Director on 'AUQA record-keeping and privacy', for possible discussion at the Board meeting. The Board agreed that a working group will further analyse the issues raised and report back to the next Board meeting.

Because of the number of significant matters on the Agenda, those items which were deemed to require discussion had been starred, and Directors were asked to indicate if they wished to change the status to any of those items. No requests were received for further items to be starred.

On a motion from the Chair, the Board agreed that the actions recommended in the papers (and which were not starred or taken up for discussion at the meeting), were deemed to have the approval of the Board.

The starred items were taken for discussion in their order of appearance.

Action: Executive Director

4. AUDIT MATTERS

4.1 Audits 2007

The Board **received** a report on the 2007 audit program.

4.2 Audits 2008

The Board received a report on the 2008 audit program and **approved** the deferral of the Cycle 2 Audit of RMIT to 2009.

Action: Executive Director

4.3 Audits 2009

The Board **approved** the list of universities for audit in 2009 under the conditions indicated.

Action: Executive Director

4.4 NSAI Audits

The Board received a report on the recent developments in the auditing of NSAI Higher Education Providers (HEPs). Plans for staffing, resource allocation and establishment of the NSAI division within AUQA were noted. The proposed nature of the NSAI division was discussed and the Executive Director explained that this section will be a part of AUQA reporting to ED and accountable to the Board through ED. The Board **advised** that this division may be called 'identifiable' to reflect both the special function and the issue of accountability.

Action: Executive Director

4.5 Progress Reports

The Board received a report on the Progress Reports received from the auditees after the previous board meeting. The Executive Director briefed the Board on the procedures followed in monitoring the progress reports; and he brought to the attention of the Board the unsatisfactory action by one of the auditees. The Board **advised** the Executive Director to write to the CEO involved, highlighting the implications if the auditee fails to act satisfactorily on the Audit recommendations and affirmations.

The Board noted the consultation/review that has been initiated by MCEETYA on governance issues, and that AUQA has been invited to respond. The thematic analysis on governance done by AUQA might

inform AUQA's response. The Board **agreed** to examine AUQA's response out of session.

Action: Executive Director

4.6 Auditor Appointment

The Board considered the AVPC recommendations; and **approved** the appointment of those recommended by AVPC to the honorary AUQA Auditor Register.

Action: Board Secretary

5. AUQA POLICY AND BOARD ISSUES

5.1 Appointment of Directors to the AUQA Board

(i) The Board discussed the current Board composition. Directors **endorsed** the letters to the nominators with more than one nomination, requesting that they consider gender balance when they put forward their nominations.

The Board **agreed** to make a recommendation to MCEETYA regarding a proposed Board balance in membership. Directors advised that the composition of the governing bodies of the other MCEETYA companies be considered, while seeking some discretionary powers for the Board regarding its composition.

(ii) Directors of the Board were requested to make their nominations for the Deputy Chair. Director Clive Hildebrand nominated Director Ian Hawke, who was willing to stand. There being no other nominations, The Board **accepted and endorsed** the nomination and welcomed Director Ian Hawke as the Deputy Chair of the Board.

(iii) At its March 2007 meeting the Board approved revisions to the AUQA policies related to retention and destruction of materials resulting from an AUQA audit. As a result of those revisions, Directors **signed** a Declaration on conflict of interest and confidentiality.

Action: Executive Director

5.2 AUQA Policies

(a) Policy on 'Special Purpose Reviews

At its meeting on 1 March 2007 the Board asked that AUQA develop its policies and strategies to handle causes of concerns that emerge between audits. The draft document addressing this issue was considered by the Board.

After a thorough discussion on the implications of the strategies outlined in the document, the Board requested that the document be further revised to reflect the strengthened approach to the 'audit follow-up' (rather than the emphasis on 'issues of concern').

(b) The Board **endorsed** the revisions to the 'Risk Assessment Register'.

- (c) The Board **noted** the Ministers' responses to revised objectives and received a copy of the Constitution with the revised objectives.
- (d) The Board **approved** the change in leave provision for AUQA staff

Action: Executive Director

5.3 Review of AUQA

The Board received the progress report on the Action Plan. For the item under student involvement in audits, the Board **advised** that the existing mechanisms should be strengthened and auditees be advised to strengthen the participation of students in their self-review process.

Action: Executive Director

5.4 Audit Cycle 2 – Reference Group

The Board considered the report from the Reference Group including the Framework for Risk Assessment and Framework for Standards, Evidence and Outcomes.

Acknowledging the valuable contribution of the Reference Group to guide the Cycle 2 audits, the Board wished to place on record its thanks to the members of the Reference Group. The Chair of the Board will send a letter of thanks to the RG on behalf of the Board.

The Board also requested that feedback be obtained on the Framework for Standards from the 2008 auditees.

The Board **approved** the work of the Reference Group to be applied for the 2008 auditees; and noted that this remains a 'work on progress'. The next RG may be established after one year to consider the field experience and further refinements to be undertaken.

Action: Executive Director, Board Secretary

5.5 Strategic Plan 2007-2012

The Board endorsed the Strategic Plan 2007-2012.

Action: Executive Director

6. FINANCE MATTERS

6.1 Financial Statements

The Board received the financial report for the period ending April 2007.

6.2 Finance Committee Matters

The Board received the report from the Finance Committee, including the revised 2007 budget submitted to MCEETYA. Board Directors approved the appointment of Director Koder to the Finance Committee, filling the

vacancy created by Professor Millicent Poole, whose term in the Board ended on 31 March 2007.

7. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair briefed the Directors of the following:

1. The Chair attended the Federal budget meeting on invitation and commented that the new investments in higher education are welcomed.
2. The Chair and the ED have met with Opposition Spokesperson (Mr Stephen Smith) to discuss with him the Labor White Paper and noted the interest in special purpose audits by AUQA. Interaction with other MCEETYA stakeholders will continue.
3. The Chair and the ED met DEST representatives to ensure appropriate links with the developments in other aspects of institutional accountability and quality.
4. The Chair and the ED are scheduled to meet Professor Richard Johnston, Director of the Carrick Institute to discuss collaboration in areas of mutual interest, and particularly as regards data collection.
5. As a part of the quality assurance of the audit process, the Chair has been obtaining feedback from the heads of the auditees. The feedback from the auditees has in general been very positive.
6. The Chair participated in the biennial conference of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHEE) and presented a paper. He commented that the conference facilitated interaction with heads of QA agencies from various countries and was a good platform to know more about the current developments in quality assurance especially in Canada and the USA.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Board received the report from the Executive Director on AUQA activities.

The Board considered the recommendation of the JSG (AUQF 2007) for the Australian Higher Education Quality Award for 2007 and endorsed the same. The Award will be presented during AUQF2007 in Hobart.

Action: Executive Director

9. DEST / MCEETYA MATTERS

9.1 MCEETYA

There were no specific matters under this item not covered elsewhere.

9.2 Transnational Quality Strategy (TQS)

The Board received a report on the developments related to TQS

10. OTHER BUSINESS

(i) The Chair advised that as the new Board membership is now in place, the 'self-review' process involving Board Directors will be initiated in the second half of 2007

(ii) It was proposed that, Internationalisation be one of the generic themes for the 2009 audits. Directors agreed that the extent of the engagement off-shore by the Australian higher education sector is not likely to diminish; and to that extent AUQA should continue to make it a focus of audit. Other thematic options to consider included issues such as 'equity' - where it appears that the sector has not made as much progress as anticipated. A decision will be made at the next meeting.

11. BOARD MEETING DATES FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2007

A third meeting of the Board will be held as per schedule on 21 August 2007.

The Board also confirmed that its fourth and final meeting will be held on 29 November 2007.