



THE ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA

-a professional body for environmental practitioners
NEWSLETTER NO. 1 FEBRUARY 1987

The Need for a Professional Institute

Over the past decade and a half a new type of professional has taken an increasingly important role in Australian society. Environmental practice - in areas of environmental management, science, decision-making, consultancy, administration, education - has become a key feature of modern society.

The people who are performing these professional functions have often come from diverse backgrounds, having initially trained in such fields as engineering, mining, agriculture, forestry, planning, law, administration, economics, to name a few. Others have had training specifically related to the broad range of environmental practice, such as in environmental science or natural resource management.

Whatever their backgrounds, what distinguishes this new type of professional is the very nature of their work and the professional attitude they bring to it. Many environmental practitioners have learned their environmental management /decision making skills, and the concepts on which they are based, as a consequence of years of experience in this field.

Many of the present generation of environmental practitioners are members of existing professional bodies (eg. in engineering, agriculture, planning, law, etc) or have entered environmental practice from outside these professional fields. Both groups have the need for a common professional "home". Like any other professionals, these people require:

- recognition of their professional skills;
- a means of communicating and liaising with their fellow practitioners; and, probably the strongest need, a sense of belonging to a group in which they can share their experiences, their knowledge, their problems, and know they will be understood.

As a response to these requirements, a meeting of tertiary environmental educators in Melbourne in 1985 resolved to investigate the need and feasibility of forming a professional Institute in the environmental field. The task of developing the idea went to the School of Australian Environmental studies at Griffith University.

The Initial Steps

The series of steps taken at Griffith were designed to canvass a wider opinion as to the need for a professional Institute. A study of existing professional bodies in the United States and Europe, as well as professional bodies in general in Australia was undertaken. From this some ideas on the formation of an Institute, possible objectives, code of ethics, and general constitutional matters were set down. Next, the opinion of potential members on these ideas, as well as on the question of the need for a professional institute *per se*, was canvassed by mail questionnaire. The overwhelming response to the latter question was that a need for such a professional body was perceived. Other comments led to modification of the draft constitution. At this stage it became clear that the idea needed to be taken to a wider forum. The Griffith team felt that this could best be achieved by involving representatives of the various sectors employing environmental practitioners.

Formation of an Interim Institute

On 11 and 12 April 1986, a workshop was held, at Griffith University, to discuss the formation of an Institute for practitioners in the environmental field. Speakers were invited to present papers as representatives of the various sectors of environmental practice. Speakers were:-

- Dr Roger Braddock, Dean, School of Australian Environmental Studies
- Mr John Brannock, Town Planner, Ipswich City Council
- Mr Bob Challen, Mining Consultant

Mr Ted Coaldrake, Environmental Consultant
Mr Graeme Kelleher, Chairman, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Mr Simon Molesworth, Foundation President, National Environmental Law Institute
Mr Bob Patterson, Research Officer, The Rural Development Centre, University of New England ;
Mr Colin Porter, former Director of Conservation and Environment, Western Australia
Dr Ian Sargeant, Applied Science, Rusden Campus, Victoria State College
Mr Ken Thompson, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Arts, Heritage and Environment
Mr Ron Tooth, Educator, Pullenvale Field Study Centre
Hon. Hal Wotten, Q.C., President, Australian Conservation Foundation (absent from proceedings but paper submitted)
Mr Robert Zigterman, Environmental Scientist, Cameron McNamara Pty Ltd

Also present at the meeting but not delivering papers, were Dr Tor Hundloe, Mr Ron Neumann, Mr Errol Stock, Dr Lex Brown and Dr Grant McTainsh of Griffith University

Discussion on the presented papers was held over the two day period, centering on the basic questions of need, form, and membership eligibility of an Institute. Considerable progress was made during the meeting and important resolutions were passed unanimously. These were:

That the meeting resolves that an incorporated body be formed which is to be tentatively known as the Australian Environmental Practitioners Institute or Environment Institute of Australia or by some other name with the principal objectives of :

- a. facilitating liason and communication between environmental practitioners from disparate backgrounds and professions; and,
- b. promoting environmental knowledge and awareness, and ethical and competent environmental practice.

The meeting resolves to establish an interim committee to develop the formation of such a body as resolved in the previous motion.

That the members present at the meeting (as previously listed) constitute the interim Institute for the purpose of implementing resolutions 1 and 2.

That an interim committee of five comprising Simon Molesworth, Tor Hundloe, Ted Coaldrake, Bob Challen, Ken Thompson, and up to two co-opted members be formed, with the convenor being Tor Hundloe.

An unfortunate setback to the operation of the committee was the untimely death of Mr Ted Coaldrake. His considerable experience and expertise as an environmental consultant will be lost to the committee.

Towards an Incorporated Institute

Since the Griffith meeting the interim committee has considered the difficult task of formulating a constitution and set of by-laws, and the legal questions surrounding the formal incorporation of the institute. This formal incorporation of the Institute will take place at an inaugural general meeting in mid 1987.

Before this meeting the interim committee will define the constitution and by-laws. The important questions regarding function, administration, code of ethics, membership eligibility, conferences, etc., will be part of these documents.

The constitution and by-laws will be presented and formal incorporation will take place at the inaugural general meeting. A subsequent newsletter will inform members of the interim institute of details of the launch date, venue, and agenda of the inaugural general meeting.

At all steps in the development towards a professional association, an attempt has been made to have as wide as possible representation of the potential membership. By the stage of the inaugural general meeting broad agreement will have been reached on the constitution and by-laws. However, once incorporated, the direction in which the Institute travels will be in the hands of the incorporated membership.

Membership of the Interim Institute

At present the interim committee is calling for membership of the interim institute. Any person who would like to join a professional body for environmental practitioners is encouraged to complete the membership application form on the back of this newsletter. Further information is outlined on the following page.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the interim institute are:

To incorporate the body known as the Environment Institute of Australia which has as its principal objectives:

- facilitating liaison and communication between environmental practitioners from disparate backgrounds and professions; and
- promoting environmental knowledge and awareness, and ethical and competent environmental practice.

INAUGURAL GENERAL MEETING

The interim committee has planned an inaugural general meeting for mid 1987, at which the incorporated institute will be formed. The venue and date are to be confirmed in a future newsletter.

CONSTITUTION

The interim committee is currently preparing a constitution and by-laws for presentation at the inaugural general meeting.

MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

At this time, membership of the interim institute is being sought. Any person who believes he/she has the formal qualifications or who has sufficient professional experience in the environmental field is encouraged to apply for membership. The interim membership eligibility criteria are, among others, as follows:

1. Any person who has formal qualifications in environmental and/or natural resource management; and
2. Any person who has professional expertise in environmental practice, given that he/she has had at least three years experience, and who does not necessarily hold a formal qualification as for 1, above,

is encouraged to apply for membership of the interim institute.

MEMBERSHIP FEE

Membership of the interim institute costs \$20. Upon incorporation of the institute this fee will constitute all or part of the first annual fee as decided at the inaugural meeting.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name (in full, surname last)

.....
Title (Circle) Mr. Ms. Mrs. Miss. Dr. Other.....

Present Position

.....
Employer (note if self-employed)

.....
Nature of Work (Brief description)

.....
Number of Years and Brief Description of Experience in Environmental Practice

.....
Educational Qualifications (title of degree/s, name of granting institution/s, year/s granted; title of any relevant non-degree qualifications, name of granting institution/s, year/s granted).....

.....
Relevant Awards/Acknowledgements.....

.....
Membership of other Professional Bodies.....

.....
Membership of Learned Societies.....

.....
Any Other Information You Consider Relevant.....

.....
Signature.....

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM AND MEMBERSHIP FEE TO:

The Convenor
Interim Committee
c/- Institute of Applied Environmental Research
Griffith University
Nathan, Q...4111.

Is there any other person whom you think would appreciate a copy of this newsletter

Name.....
Address.....