Environmental Management Working Party

Notes of a meeting held on 6 December 2002

Present: Kate Kearins, Bruce Clarkson, Ken Piddington, Brennan Allen, Helen Pridmore, and Marganne Allen

1. Apologies: John Cameron, Hamish Rennie, Richard Bedford
2. Welcome: Helen Pridmore (Assistant to VC, Policy and Processes)
3. Environmental Policy

The group discussed University of Queensland policy summary included with meeting materials. It was suggested that a similar summary with the Vice Chancellor’s signature would be a beneficial marketing tool for the policy. Research suggests that a well-marketed and visibly supported environmental policy increases employee buy-in. The disadvantages of heightening Policy awareness include greater scrutiny internally and externally and responsibility to fulfill Policy obligations.

The question was raised whether a full revision of the policy was necessary to increase knowledge and awareness as opposed to simply creating a summary from the existing policy. It was generally agreed that the current policy is too long, seems to require reading of additional reference materials and commits the University to actions that have not been internalized (the creation of Management Practice Statements, new courses or course material, etc.).

Helen recommended that the policy be drafted such that it outlines the University’s environmental commitments, but that the actual means of implementation is reserved for a separate document. The frequency of policy implementation reports and reporting to the Vice Chancellor would have to be decided upon and be incorporated into the policy.

Discussion of Talking Points (provided in meeting materials):

The Talking Points compared the current Policy against content typical of many business environmental policies. As the first 7 points were general policy comments and not likely to be contentious, we began at point 8. The intent of this discussion was to get agreement on the general content of the Policy.

An environmental policy will commit the University to….

• Continual improvement in environmental performance: Acceptable to group.
• Strive to meet or exceed environmental standards: “Exceed” could be problematic and would have to be worded such that the University did not over-commit itself.
• Adopt a “cradle-to-grave” philosophy with respect to goods, raw materials, services and disposal: The group agreed that it is desirable to have this philosophy included in the policy, but that it should be worded to provide flexibility. It
should be strongly tied to our procurement procedures. We do not, however, want to commit the University to a Life Cycle Analysis of all goods and services.

- Aim to minimize or eliminate the use of non-renewable materials, supplies…: Tie into “cradle-to-grave” statement above.
- Expect high environmental standards for businesses and organizations that UW deals with…: Tie into “cradle-to-grave” statement above.
- Accept liability for environmental damage: Change “liability” to “responsibility” and word in a way that focuses the University’s responsibility to a reasonable scope.

Other comments/suggestions:

- The policy should contain language committing the University to continual improvement on environmental issues.
- The policy should allude to the larger picture by putting it in context of other government documents.
- Policy needs to include links to other relevant policies and committees.
- Consider including the “design for the environment” philosophy in the Policy.
- Make sure a vision of the Policy’s goal or destination is included.
- Include adaptive management language.
- Ensure that the Policy includes a strong teaching and research component.
- Goal is to have the revised Policy finalized for the 2004 Calendar.

**To Do:** Set a timeline for completion of the Policy (Marganne with help from Helen).

**To Do:** Develop a list of internal and external stakeholders for Policy review (Marganne).

- Helen commented that the group title “Environmental Management Working Party” suggests a group of folks brought together for a short-term project. If the group actually functions as a committee, it should be named as such.

**To Do:** Review the Party’s Terms of Reference and determine if the group should be changed to a committee (Marganne).

4. **ICE Awards Update:** Construction at Kohanga Reo will occur over the holidays on both the ICE Award and another project. Go take a look now so you can see the big improvement after the holidays. Shops recycling bins are “in the works”, but fewer bins may be installed than originally planned. The plans needed to be upgraded to be more vandalism and weather resistant. Additionally, Marganne is planning to provide more structure for next year’s ICE Awards applicants.

5. **Environmental websites:** Both the University-wide and Waikato Print environmental websites are up and running.

6. **WEBN Fees:** Early this year, the WEBN had set out an ambitious schedule for presentations on sustainability and other matters. About this same time, they had also
proposed a change in their fee structure based on organisation size. This has lead to
the University being billed approximately $400 for it’s continued membership with
WEBN. They have failed, however, to deliver on most of their planned outputs.

To Do: Approach WEBN and inform them of general dissatisfaction with
performance. Discuss the potential for the University to either pay a lesser
membership fee, or pay the full fee with the condition that we may withdraw next
year without improved performance. The University may also consider membership
with an alternate professional organisation, such as the Auckland sustainable business
network (Marganne).

7. Urban Designers Input: Marganne is developing input to provide to the urban design
consultants on Tuesday, December 17. EMWP members at this meeting were not
planning to attend this meeting.
To Do: Provide EMWP with draft of urban design input for comment (Marganne)

8. Festival for the Environment Event: Richard Warrick has agreed to do a presentation
on global climate change. Marganne and Scott Gemmill have tentatively booked the
Performing Arts Centre. Costs for the venue, staff, setup, and lighting will cost
approximately $500. The addition of catering, cash bar, and advertising will only
increase the cost. Need to investigate a funding source, or the venue will have to be
changed to a low/no-fee option such as a lecture hall on campus.

To Do: Approach VC’s office about potential funding (Marganne).

9. Clean Burning Initiative (Ken): Ken has spoken to Bob Priest (Environment Waikato)
and Vice Chancellor Bryan Gould and both are supportive of the initiative to
encourage hybrid vehicle technology in the Waikato. Ken has drafted a letter to be
from VC Gould to Environment Waikato (EW) suggesting that EW convene a group
of local stakeholders to discuss this initiative. Ken is also drafting a position paper on
the initiative for the EMWP to review.

To Do: Complete letter and position paper for EMWP review and final distribution to
Environment Waikato (Ken).