QUESTNET

Minutes of Management Committee Meeting

Friday 4 September 1992

Held at The University of Queensland

PRESENT

Greg Barnett (Bond)
Brian Cordiner (DBIRD)
Alan Coulter (UQ) Chair
Geoffrey Dengate (GU) Secretary
Ian Hunter (JCU)
Ian Jenkins (UCQ)
Alan McMeekin (USQ)
John Noad (QUT)
Graham Rees (UQ)

1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all the members to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance at such short notice. He indicated that he had neglected to formally invite the AARNet representative (Mr Geoff Huston) and undertook to formally apologise to Mr Huston for this oversight. Mr Noad advised that Mr Huston was aware of the meeting but was unable to attend in any event.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

3. BUSINESS ARISING

3.1 TAFE

It was resolved that a sub-committee should be formed to investigate the issues associated with TAFE joining AARNet and to report back to the next meeting.

Action: Alan Coulter, Brian Cordiner, Ian Hunter, and Alan McMeekin to convene and report back to the next meeting.

3.2 AARNet Directory Services Project

There was some discussion about the desirability of consistency in implementing common Directory Services systems at all institutions. It was agreed that QUESTNET should prepare and submit a resolution to be conveyed to the AARNet Board for a national standard for Directory Services to be adopted by individual institutions. It was also agreed that a similar resolution should be discussed at the forthcoming AUCDC meeting.

Action: Alan Coulter to prepare a draft resolution to be circulated to members for comment.

3.3 Qld Government Departments

The committee was advised that Qld Government Departments usage of AARNet was minimal.

Action: Brian Cordiner to investigate and report on interest of Government Departments joining AARNet.

3.4 Supercomputing

It was noted that a Regional Supercomputer Mechanism C proposal involving all the public institutions (with varying degrees of involvement) had been submitted in the latest rounds. The location of such a system was not specified in the proposal and was still to be determined.

It was also noted that the Information Policy Board (IPB) was currently in the process of developing a strategy for the provision of enhanced regional supercomputing facilities for the benefit of Government, the Universities, and industry.

3.5 QUESTNET Phase 3

It was agreed that the committee should start to consider and prepare a proposal for submission to the Qld Government for Phase 3 of QUESTNET development.

Action: Brian Cordiner and Graham Rees to develop a draft proposal for consideration by the committee.

3.6 Government Briefing

It was agreed that Qld Cabinet Ministers, Advisers, and Key Senior Public Servants should be given a seminar/demonstration to show the benefits and uses of QUESTNET/AARNet. It was agreed that the most appropriate time would be during the Networkshop'92 event in December.

Action: Alan Coulter to coordinate.

3.7 1993 Winter Workshop

It was resolved that the 1993 Winter Workshop would be held at UCQ during the break between 1st and 2nd semester. Ian Jenkins will coordinate the planning for this event. It was agreed that the theme of the workshop should have a technical slant (security was mentioned as one area of special interest).

Action: Ian Jenkins to coordinate.

3.8 QUESTNET Link Rationalisation

A working party has previously been formed to investigate the rationalisation of the various network links within and between the institutions in south east Qld (UQ, QUT, GU, USQ). An interim report of the working party was tabled at the meeting but was not discussed in detail.

Action: Directors of the participating institutions to consider the report and provide comments to the convenor.

3.9 Policy Relating to the Purchase, Use, and Maintenance of PCs

The meeting discussed the increasing importance of this issue. Ian Hunter indicated that JCU had recently developed, and had approved by the Vice-Chancellor, a purchasing policy. It was felt that all institutions would probably
require such policies and that consistency across the state would be desirable. Ian Hunter agreed to circulate copies of the JCU policy.

Action: Ian Hunter to circulate the JCU purchasing policy to members.

4.0 AARNSERT - MECHANISM C SECURITY PROPOSAL

Mr Coulter tabled the Executive Summary of the AARNSERT (AARNet Security Emergency Response Team) Mechanism C proposal that was jointly submitted by UQ, GU, and QUT and that , if successful, would be based at UQ. A copy of the full proposal is available from Mr Coulter.

5.0 EXTERNAL ACCESS TO AARNET

Members discussed the issue of allowing access to AARNet by independent entities (organisations or individuals) where the identity of users was not strictly controlled and where the relevance of such access to institutional goals and objectives was marginal. Members expressed some concern with the liberal interpretation of existing AARNet policy regarding external access.

It was resolved that a QUESTNET policy should be developed with guidelines for external access to AARNet.

It was further resolved that this policy should be conveyed to the AVCC Board of Directors (through The University of Queensland Vice-Chancellor) together with a statement of our concerns with the existing policy.

Action: Mr Coulter to prepare a draft QUESTNET Policy for comment by members.

6.0 AARNET FUTURES

John Noad introduced the AARNet Business Plan by outlining the history of its development to the document presented, and his understanding of later developments which have led to the removal of any suggestion of privatisation/commercialisation.

John also pointed out that the recent budget announcement made the Business Plan now largely irrelevant.

However he felt that there were three issues which should be discussed:

1. The principal of payment for access bandwidth rather than traffic volume.

2. The nature of the organisation with which we, as Directors or as a Queensland group, would wish to deal (eg., the AVCC, a committee of the AVCC, a CRC, or a commercial organisation).

3. The matter of regionalisation vs AARNet dealing with individual institutions.

After considerable discussion, the meeting felt that item 3 was by far the most important, and the outcome of that would, in effect, determine items 1 & 2. It was agreed that the Chairman prepare a document arguing the case for regionalisation in any future structure of AARNet, with AARNet providing the backbone links and focusing on information services provision, and circulate this to other Directors prior to the NZ AUCDC meeting.

Action: Mr. Coulter to prepare a draft document along the lines discussed and noted above and circulate to other Directors prior to the AUCDC meeting.

7.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

7.1 Common Voice Services Provider

Mr Barnett advised members of the significant savings that Bond University was experiencing by using AAP Reuters as their Voice Service provider instead of Telecom. Mr Barnett indicated that such savings were likely for all institutions and, further, that savings increase as volume increases. He advised that AAP would provide increased discounts if more Universities

switched to their services. It was agreed that this issue should be investigated further.

Action: Mr Barnett to investigate the possibilities further and prepare a brief paper on the options and benefits of switching from Telecom to AAP.

7.2 QUESTNET Meetings

The frequency of meetings was discussed and it was felt that more regular meetings of Queensland Computing Directors should be held.

It was resolved that four (4) meetings should be held each year.

It was resolved that at least one meeting each year should be held at one of the regional universities (ie., USQ, UCQ, JCU).

Because of the current importance of network development and network-related issues, it was resolved that Graham Rees be invited to attend these meetings. It was further resolved that, at the regional meetings, the host University's Network Manager would be also be invited to the meeting.

It was resolved that the next meeting should be held to coincide with Networkshop'92 and, because of organisational distractions during that week, the committee should meet on the Sunday preceding the Networkshop - ie., Sunday 29 November 1992. It was agreed that a BBQ should be arranged to which the families of committee members would be invited as well as the many individuals assisting with the organisation of the Networkshop.

It was agreed that the first meeting for 1993 would be held at UCQ on Friday 19 February. This would allow members the opportunity to inspect the facilities that would be used for the 1993 Winter Workshop.

7.3 Award Restructuring

Members agreed that, generally, the dissemination of information regarding award restructuring was unsatisfactory. Additionally, members agreed that it was desirable for common levels (and salaries) to apply to individuals with equivalent duties and responsibilities across the Qld institutions. There was some concern that this was actually the case. Therefore, it was agreed that members would disseminate relevant information, particularly information regarding the translation of existing classifications to the new levels.

Action: All members to send relevant information to John Noad who would arrange to have it consolidated and distributed to each institution.

7.4 Identification Cards

It was agreed that there was a need to provide leadership in the use of newer technologies with respect to (staff and student) cards that could be used for a variety of purposes including identification, access, resource usage, etc. It was resolved that a small group should be formed to investigate developments and advise the committee on the possible development of a cooperative Qld policy/approach.

Action: John Noad to coordinate the development of a working group to investigate the options for a coordinated approach regarding he usage of Cards at member institutions.

7.5 Purchasing Policy

There was some discussion regarding a coordinated approach to personal computer acquisition agreements with suppliers but, because of the current different arrangements regarding the devolution of acquisition responsibility across the institutions, no agreement could be reached. The

committee was advised that UQ was in the process of tendering for Laptop systems and institutions were invited to participate in the tender. Members indicated that they would like to participate but could not guarantee exclusive supply to the successful tenderer.

Action: Alan Coulter to coordinate the development of a Qld Universities tender for Laptop systems.

7.6 Charging and Clawback

Alan McMeekin advised that he has been requested to develop a document investigating the options and costs/benefits of introducing a charging/clawback system for the provision of computing and communications facilities. He agreed to share his work with the members.

Action: Alan McMeekin to prepare and circulate draft policies for funding computing and network facilities.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Queensland Directors will be held on Sunday, 29th November at UQ. The Directors will host senior networking staff of the Universities to a BBQ lunch on that day. (Prentice to organise)

The meeting closed at 4.30 pm.