

QUESTnet Management Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on 5 July 1994 at the University of Southern Queensland

Present: Alan Coulter, (UQ) (Chair)
Geoffrey Dengate (GU)
Ian Hunter (JCU)
Ian Jenkins (CQU)
John Noad (QUT)
Graham Rees (UQ)
Shelley Jones (DBIRD)
Peter Rose (UNE)
Greg Barnett (Bond)
Peter Saalmans (AARNet)
Alan McMeekin (USQ)

Apologies Alan Hayman (DBIRD)
Geoff Hill (SCU)

1 Welcome:

Action

The Chairman opened the meeting at 11.30am. He welcomed Peter Rose from the University of New England to his first meeting of the QUESTnet Management Committee.

2 Confirmation and Business arising from Previous Meeting:

Corrections were made to the spelling of CSIRO as appeared in section 5.

3 AARNet Charging:

Peter Saalmans stated that he had prepared a paper where he has defined a set of parameters to prepare alternative charging structures, and includes a price capping model. These have been presented to the AARNet Board of Management on the 22 June and will proceed to the AVCC Board of Directors Meeting on the 19 July and thence to the AVCC full meeting on the 20 September.

- (1) Peter Saalmans described some of the underlying principles:

The model should provide a lowest cost network for Universities and the CSIRO.
The model should not be a short time solution.
There should be a higher "flag fall" for Universities than was presented at previous discussions.
Costs should be brought under control.
The model must be marketed competitively.
He proposed that a common tariff would be provided in 1998 which would parallel commercial IP services.
Costs subsidisations would occur from commercial users to the University sector between 1995 and 1998. It was noted that Universities currently pay 50% of the costs of AARNet, but use 78% of the traffic.

- (2) It was anticipated that the higher flag fall would be phased down over a period of time.
- (3) There was an argument that the government should subsidise the international link. It was noted the current link is saturated between 11.00am and 11.00pm each day causing a loss of information packets.
- (4) It was anticipated that there would be differences between peak and off peak tariffs providing a 50% discount.
- (5) It was anticipated that there would be price capping mechanisms for Universities and affiliates.
- (6) A mechanism was described whereby a budget would be cast which provided for a surplus of funds based on a common tariff for all participants. The surplus would then be distributed back to the University sector. Further taxation advice is required.

Members raised a number of issues in response to these points raised by Mr Saalmans.

Alan Coulter stated that it was a mistaken view that affiliates subsidise Universities when in fact there are large hidden costs to Universities who support the AARNet infrastructure. He further questioned the ability of AARNet to cater for a large number of affiliate members without the help from the University sector; to do so would require a large number of staff. He argued further that there was no need for a high flag fall since there are substantial funds available from other sources available to upgrade the network.

Peter Rose expressed concern that the introduction of a common tariff would give affiliate members benefits from CRC and ARC grants.

Graham Rees reminded members that services are sold through the Universities and there was a need to reflect this role in the charging model. This in itself presents a tariffing problem.

Alan Coulter suggested that the models presented so far have neglected regional interests throughout Australia where state government support has been available.

Two recommendations followed:

- (1) There should be recognition of members' contributions in providing services to affiliates of AARNet.
- (2) The regional model should be proposed to the AARNet Board of Management.

4 Upgrade to Tale-links:

The majority of this session was devoted to the upgrade of metropolitan links. Graham Rees advised the meeting that at this stage the most favoured solution is for 34 megabits radio links. Discussions had been held with Telecom. Graham was in possession of the draft Telecom Proposal which is based on the Victorian Proposal by Telecom to the Victorian Institutions. Copies of this document were distributed to members. Graham elaborated on the document at length and was of the opinion that it was a conservative document, it was based on current technologies and was significantly over priced. The Telecom Proposal, in its current format is unlikely to be supported.

Peter Saalmans advised that the RFI for the National tender went public on the previous day, Monday 4 July. Members had the opportunity to comment on the draft tender and those comments have been incorporated into the final document. Peter was unclear how the evaluation process would proceed and members felt that it would be advantageous to evaluate on a regional basis given that the final solution would not necessarily be imposed upon all metropolitan regions of the country but that different solutions from different tenderers would apply to different metropolitan regions.

Peter took the suggestion of regional evaluation on board. He then went on to comment that the international link will be upgraded around September to a 3 megabit link and that it is likely to be upgraded to a 6 megabit link within 12 months time. There is an immediate demand to upgrade the inter-national link now but the funds would not be available to pay for the extra costs until September, hence the delay.

The Chairman then moved the discussion back to item number 3 AARNet Charging. Specifically members addressed the questions in the QUESTnet discussion paper that had been previously distributed.

Peter Saalmans agreed that there had emerged two "base line links". First, two megabit links to regional institutions and second 34 megabits to the metropolitan institutions. Rebates for the cost of those links will therefore be based on the base line that was applicable for that institution.

Questions 2 and 3
Were discussed but not resolved.

Question 4
Peter Saalmans indicated that it was very unlikely there would be any further such major grants.

Question 5
Peter Saalmans indicated that the current arrangement is mostly through Universities and expected this to continue.

Questions 6 and 7
It was agreed to wait for the consultant's report.

Question 8

This would depend upon costing and could not be resolved at this point of time.

Question 9

Agreed by members that this was a particularly messy matter. There is a need to satisfy customers, auditors etc that the charge on the invoice for network usage is verifiable, whilst it is not a real problem for internal University clients it is certainly a problem for external clients and affiliates. This matter certainly needs to be resolved.

Question 10

It was agreed that we do need a mandate but we should wait for a consultant's report before we decided on how to proceed.

Peter Saalmans pointed out the dollar figures presented on page two of the discussion paper should be divided by thirteen, that is they should be weekly figures not quarterly figures.

The Chairman requested that Ross Gorham be thanked for his efforts in preparing the draft paper in such a short time frame.

5 QPSF Update:

Mr Dengate reported that the first of three chassis had arrived and had been successfully installed. He pointed out that the Griffith Security Programmer had checked a number of Unix operating systems security vulnerabilities and had identified a number of weaknesses in the version of AIX that had been shipped, these weaknesses were being addressed by Greg Watson and IBM.

Chassies 2 and 3 and the RAID disc had been shipped from the US and were expected to arrive on Tuesday the 12 July. With respect to the QPSF vacancies that had been advertised, an appointment for a Senior Computer Operator had been recommended. Applicants for the Systems Programmer position (HEW 7/8 level), had been short listed and the committee was currently seeking referee's reports.

The target for general availability was still mid August. Alan Coulter was still working on the agreement and was having difficulty getting the terms and conditions of the mechanism C grant. Nevertheless the agreement was nearly complete and would shortly be going to UQ's legal officer and would be then distributed to Universities for consideration by their relevant officers.

6 QUESTnet 95:

It was decided that the next QUESTnet conference would be held on the South Coast and that Greg Barnett would chair the organising committee and work in association with the Gold Coast Campus of the Griffith University. The possibility of offering the conference over one day of a weekend was discussed.

7 Other Business:

(1) Joint publications

Members agreed that Universities would benefit by preparing a number of joint publications that could be published under the QUESTnet banner and by providing a QUESTnet home page on a World Wide Web Server. Jason Copeland from the QUT was nominated by John Noad to chair a working party and to act as the co-ordinator of publications. The host for the World Wide Web Server would be determined at a later stage.



(2) Open Learning Initiative

Peter Saalmans advised members of the progress on the OLI as he understood the situation to be. DEET has awarded a contract to an organisation called OLTC headed by Ms Julie Carr. The State Ministers of Education are represented on the Board of Management on the OLTC which would act as brokers in providing services to distance education students. It is intended to establish a prototype system on a national basis by the year end, - approximately one thousand students will participate. AARNet has been approached to install an email service and modem banks. They have indicated they are not willing to participate in this way.

(3) AARNet Information Service

A working party has been established to investigate services available on AARNet. A report has been completed 2 weeks prior which will be presented to the AARNet Board of Management with a recommendation that SCIR should receive the report. It is expected that \$300 000 will be allocated from a National Priority Reserve Fund to fund this service. The object of the service is to ensure that information regarding AARNet is readily available.



(4) AUSCERT

Graham Rees reported that there has been a delay in signing contracts, however establishment is proceeding. Advertisements have been placed to fill four position vacancies within the organisation.

14 Meeting Closed at 3.30pm