

The Royal Society of Queensland

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6 August 2023

Members' Newsletter 2023 No. 6

Editors: **Geoff Edwards/Pam Lauder**

This Newsletter announces a new event, on 7 October; announces a new writing prize; and acknowledges the passing of Walter Fisher, in whose name Round 5 of the Research Fund was conducted.

The Society's Council is keen to organise networking events for members. **But if the Society is to organise events, it needs organisers.** Would any member like to volunteer to join an organising committee for the event forthcoming on 7 October?

David Marlow Writing Prize:

"Given climate change, how can Queensland's planning system be rendered fit for purpose?"

One of our members, **David Marlow**, has donated a purse of \$1000 for the most meritorious original paper on the subject: "Given climate change, how can Queensland's planning system be rendered fit for purpose?"

Submissions will be assessed by a panel of experts. The author of the article that the Society's Council on advice from the panel deems to be the most meritorious will receive \$1000. All articles that are deemed by the panel to meet the conventional standards of peer review will, with the consent of the authors, be submitted for publication in volume 133 of the *Proceedings of The Royal Society of Queensland*, a proposed Special Issue on "Planning for climate change".

The Prize will be awarded for the most meritorious paper submitted by **31 December 2023**.

The Prize complements a seminar proposed to be held on Saturday **7 October 2023** at Griffith University, Southbank. However, dates are not aligned; papers submitted for the Prize are not intended to be presented in person at the seminar and authors may consider the findings of the seminar when drafting their submissions.

Guidelines for the Prize will be finalised shortly and posted on the website.

Half-day Seminar 7 October 2023: "Given climate change, how can Queensland's planning system be rendered fit for purpose?"

The Society proposes to convene a face-to-face (plus online) seminar on **Saturday 7 October** on the theme:

"Is Queensland's urban and regional (statutory) planning regime fit for purpose, given climate change, given the vulnerability of many residential developments to natural disasters, and given relentless environmental deterioration?"

We aim to produce a short manifesto explaining: **"Given climate change, how can Queensland's statutory planning regime be rendered fit for purpose?"**

This will be a half-day workshop from 9:00 AM-12:30 PM in collaboration with SEQ Community Alliance and Griffith University Environmental Planning (tbc). The SEQ Community Alliance will host an afternoon seminar on a related theme. Our new Council member **Dr Philippa England** is co-organising the afternoon event. The event will be held in the theatre, Griffith University, Southbank (just inland of and above the Ship Inn).

Papers are now invited on the following themes:

- how urban and regional planning came to be a tool to facilitate economic growth rather than to guide property development in the public interest.
- a set of principles that might be embedded in planning legislation and policy to advance sustainability.
- performance-based versus prescriptive planning and whether the current regime has tended too much towards flexibility.
- the trend towards project-by-project assessment with neglect of strategic planning.
- whether planning is now a conflicted discipline, within the profession and within local governments.
- whether the biophysical and socio-economic datasets within State and local government circles are adequate to support local governments' planning.
- trends in natural disasters and extremes.
- shifts in biodiversity and health parameters under climate change.
- a template or action plan for reform.

The workshop will aim to produce a "7 October Declaration" which will be a manifesto or log of claims for a transition from our present regime to a climate-friendly one. This will arise from an extended discussion in the second half of the morning, meaning that not all submitted papers will be presented face-to-face.

All submitted papers will be offered peer review and (with the author's consent) can be incorporated into an online Special Issue of the Society's *Proceedings*.

The event can foreshadow a subsequent event or series of events to deal in more detail with some of the issues raised, **if organisers can be identified.**

Call for papers foreshadowed

Would any member like to foreshadow contributing a paper on this or a related theme? A call for papers will issue shortly when a *Guide to Authors* has been finalised but, in the meantime, it would be good to know whether there is any interest from members who have a foot in the fields of philosophy, town planning, environmental protection, surveying, economics, commerce or any field related to this broad theme.

Please express interest to the Policy Coordinator, Geoff Edwards policy@royalsocietyqld.org.au pending appointment of an editor and event co-organiser.

Walter Fisher Saw Grants Finalised

It is with great sadness that the Society heard that Walter Fisher – in whose name the Walter Fisher Round 5 of the Research Fund awarded four prizes for research in mycology – passed away peacefully on 13 July at the age of 98.

Family member **Dr Geoff Edwards** writes:

*I had the privilege of placing a memo summarising the four successful applications in front of Wal Fisher in Melbourne early in June, shortly after they had been announced. He was absolutely delighted that he had been the enabler of these worthy projects. The Society owes a debt of gratitude to the assessors, the Queensland Mycological Society, Coordinator **Col Lynam** and the other office-bearers who completed the assessment process just in time, as it turned out, for him to enjoy the results before his passing.*

The Research Fund may be used by any person to perpetuate the name of themselves, a friend or family member via a philanthropic donation. Donations are tax-deductible within ATO rules. Send to the Bank Australia account in the name of The Royal Society of Queensland Research Fund, BSB 313-140, A/c 12393328 and request a receipt from **Pam Lauder** on admin@royalsocietyqld.org.au. Donors of a substantial amount may express a preference for a science-related subject field.

New Editors required

Our Honorary Editor **Assoc. Prof. Julien Louys** and **Associate Editor Justyna Miskiewicz** have both indicated that they wish to retire after completion of volume 132, the 2023 annual volume of the *Proceedings of The Royal Society of Queensland*.

Shortly a call for papers will be issued for volume 134, the 2024 annual volume. The Society is seeking a new Editor for volume 134. This is an excellent opportunity to build skills in scientific publishing. The Editor enjoys academic independence, but is not isolated and can draw on the experienced members of Council and others in the Society for support as required. Please contact the President if you would like to avail yourself of this opportunity.

The Editor of volume 134 is in a position to influence the scope of the journal as expressed in the *Guide to Authors* which has not yet been reviewed by Council.

Volume 133 will be reserved for a Special Issue on the adequacy of planning in an era of climate change. An Editor or Co-Editor for volume 133 is also required, although this need is not so urgent and can be shared with others. The Editor of volume 133 should have some knowledge of climate science, environmental management or urban and regional planning. Please contact the President.

Professor Myles Allen, Oxford University

Member **Alan Lauder** and our Admin Coordinator **Pam Lauder** travelled to Canberra recently to meet **Professor Myles Allen**, Oxford University, who came to Australia to present at Macquarie University, University of Canberra and to Cattle Australia. Professor Allen has been dubbed 'the physicist behind Net Zero' and devised the metric GWP* (as opposed to the metric GWP 100) a better way of measuring short term gasses like methane and how it affects global temperatures. Alan had met Myles when they were both invited on a worldwide webinar by the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef. Professor Allen is quoted by the IPCC, as is Alan's work. Myles was keen to meet Alan again. Alan was lead author in a benchmark peer-reviewed journal article on offsetting methane emissions: *Offsetting methane emissions — An alternative to emission equivalence metrics*.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1750583612003064>

Make a Habit – ENGAGE with our Network

Queensland Science Network <http://scienceqld.org>

Social Media- LinkedIn - <http://www.linkedin.com/company/queensland-science-network/>

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/QLDSscienceNetwork>

Royal Society of Queensland <http://www.royalsocietyqld.org/>

Social media LinkedIn <http://www.linkedin.com/company/royalsocietyqld/>

Facebook- <http://www.facebook.com/royalsocietyqld>

Web Content Uploaders Required

STATUS OF CURRENT WEBSITES

The Society operates three websites:

- its home site <https://www.royalsocietyqld.org/>;
- the Queensland Science Network site <https://scienceqld.org/> ; and
- the Rangelands Dialogue site <http://rangelandsqld.org.au/> .

A fourth is under negotiation. The sites support about 30 email addresses.

All three sites are built in WordPress and all three are hosted by the commercial company HostPapa www.hostpapa.com. The home site has two main sophisticated features: an automated membership roll; and an archive of *Proceedings* dating to 1884 with full text search capability. The Rangelands site is operated with the WordPress "block editor" while the other two sites can be operated with either classic editor or block editor.

In addition, the Society maintains some silent domains:

www.royalsocietyqld.org.au , forwarded to the *.org equivalent;

www.scienceqld.org.au forwarded to the *.org equivalent;

www.policyqld.org.au forwarded to the main website pending a volunteer to activate it.

The Queensland Science Network site has connections to 26 member bodies.

To maintain this complex, three roles can be identified:

Web Administrator

Maintains a list of passwords, renews hosting and domain packages as they fall due, requests the Webmaster to conduct technical operations as required. The list of accounts and passwords with instructions occupies seven A4 pages. Since the first website was established in 2013 (built by member, former computer programmer **David Marlow**), the role of Web Administrator has been fulfilled by Geoff Edwards. Geoff wishes to phase himself out to allow him to focus on his own writing. He is negotiating with Council over a replacement. No further action required of the membership at present.

Webmaster

Fulfils IT technical operations such as:

- fix glitches
- update the base software every year or so
- update add-ons and plug-ins as required or as their licences expire
- improve security as problems arise
- advise the Web Administrator.

John Tennock served as Webmaster for the Royal Society and QSN sites until recently when he retired from the role. He built the QSN site. Former Rangelands Coordinator **John Brisbin** john@ethicalfeast.net built the Rangelands site and maintains it pending reactivation of the Rangelands initiative. Since John T's retirement, Council has engaged **Alex** at an hourly rate as required to perform

the role of Webmaster for the Society and QSN sites. Their role requires programming skills. No further action is required of the membership at present.

Web Content Uploaders

People who generate content and/or upload it to one or more of the sites.

Content material comes from all directions, including from the activities of members and email traffic from member groups of QSN. Usually, however, some editing or reformatting is required. Mostly, Geoff Edwards has fulfilled this role in collaboration with John Tennock and John Brisbin. However, Geoff wishes to phase himself out of this role and a volunteer or volunteers from the membership are required to keep these sites fresh and make them desirable destinations for web browsers.

STATUS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The Society operates four social media accounts:

Queensland Science Network

<http://scienceqld.org>

Social Media- LinkedIn <http://www.linkedin.com/company/queensland-science-network/>

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/QLDSocietyNetwork>

Royal Society of Queensland

<http://www.royalsocietyqld.org/>

Social media LinkedIn <http://www.linkedin.com/company/royalsocietyqld/>

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/royalsocietyqld>

Col Lynam operates the LinkedIn accounts; **Gary Hopewell** operates the Society Facebook account and **Andy Grodecki** operates the QSN Facebook account.

The potential for social media to improve the profile of the Society is immense. Col Lynam has generated a network of more than 700 participants in the LinkedIn account in less than two years. However, all three coordinators require content to take advantage of this outreach.

Volunteers sought

The roles of generating and uploading content are good skills to place on a CV and the Society's platforms offer an excellent opportunity to build skills that will be increasingly important in an IT-rich future. Are any members associated with graphic designers or computer organisations whose staff might want work experience?

Volunteers are required as a matter of priority for all three websites and the four social media accounts. The roles can be partitioned to minimise the burden on any one person. Please contact Web Administrator Geoff Edwards on policy@royalsocietyqld.org to express interest and discuss training.

Save the Date for the Next ([#CitSciOz23](https://twitter.com/CitSciOz23)) Australian Citizen Science Association Conference



Location: University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia

- **Monday 20th November (side event):** Workshops & excursions
- **Tuesday 21st November:** Conference Day 1 (Opening, Keynotes, breakout rooms, short talks, long talks, posters, & official welcome evening event)
- **Wednesday 22nd November:** Conference Day 2 (Keynotes, short talks, long talks, posters, dinner TBA)
- **Thursday 23rd November:** Conference Day 3 (Keynotes, short talks, long talks, posters, conference official close, dinner TBA)
- **Friday 24th November (side event):** Bonus Bioblitz Day! Join us as we kick off the Great Southern Bioblitz 2023. Learn how to use iNaturalist from experts, get to know the local wildlife, meet the locals and discover species new to science in the Sunshine Coast area.

Cost: TBA (will include bus rides to and from the venue for Conference Day 1 – 3 if staying at preferred accommodations).

Abstract submissions are now open. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. If you would like to find out more please email conference@citizenscience.org.au



Citizen engagement in urban planning in West End – balancing flood and heat hazard against high density housing

KURILPA RESIDENTS REJECT NINETY STOREY PRECINCT

On Sunday 18 June, residents gathered in West End's community hall to debate the merits of the proposed **Temporary Local Planning Instrument (TLPI) Plan for the Kurilpa Precinct** and strongly rejected the plan and its process. If accepted by the State Government, the TLPI will allow new residential buildings to be built up in areas with no limits to height (up to ninety storey towers) and will allow for a population density that would be eight times that of Manhattan.

Brisbane City Council (BCC) and the State Government have so far not provided any opportunity for residents to comment nor provided any public consultation process for this

substantial growth plan. The Forum sought to inform the local community about the details of the TLPI Plan, and to provide time for small group workshops to allow people to share their concerns and issues.

The subject is relevant to the proposed workshop on 7 October on whether the statutory planning regime is fit for purpose. For this reason, we have extracted an article by **John Mongard** on 22 Jun 2023 published in the *Westender* and reproduced with permission of the Editor. It appears on our website <https://www.royalsocietyqld.org/2023/08/west-end-planning/>.

Listening to Cassandra: Bridging the Gap Between Science and Policy

A [thoughtful opinion on this subject](#) has appeared in the August edition of *Science Victoria*, online newsletter of The Royal Society of Victoria. Thoughtful, but not without its own blind spots.

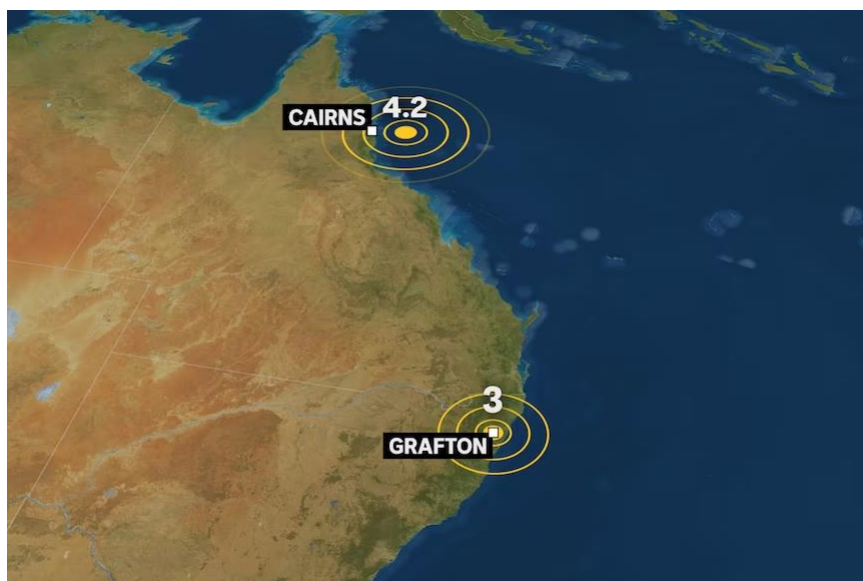
“The transformative power of science suggests it should play a fundamental role in developing public policy. This would ensure science informs debates about issues such as sustainable energy production, ecosystem protection, and genetic modification of food.

“However, both the literature and everyday experience indicate that using scientific knowledge to inform policy debates is not straightforward. This article examines how to better integrate science and policy development.”

The article presents two case studies, one being “Science Overshadowed: Toowoomba Recycled Water Project”. The article is commended to members.



Earthquakes do happen in Queensland, regularly



The earthquakes were felt in Cairns and Grafton this week. (ABC News)

With two quakes rattling the east coast within hours this week, Aussies are noticing seismic activity more. Here's why.

By [Julia André](#) Posted Sat 10 Jun 2023

The Australian tectonic plate has small cracks and fault lines right across the country and in surrounding ocean beds. The earthquakes are the result of a release of stress when local fault lines are activated by the movement of the plate.

"The big faults are where the plate boundary is, where the Australian plate is colliding with the Pacific plate through Papua New Guinea and New Zealand," Geoscience Australia's senior seismologist Jonathan Bathgate said. That's why those regions have heightened seismic activity compared to Australia. "We record more than 100 magnitude-3 earthquakes every year," Mr Bathgate said.

"The Australian tectonic plate is moving constantly at about 7 centimetres a year to the north-east and those stressors just activate these local fault lines that we have in our landscapes."

Is Australia seeing an increase in seismic activity?

No. Despite Melbourne experiencing a magnitude-4 earthquake late last month, Mr Bathgate believes that Australians are noticing more seismic activity due to increasing accessibility to earthquake data on websites like Geoscience Australia. "Australia gets more earthquakes than people appreciate," Mr Bathgate said.

He said that Australia records many events that generally go unnoticed by the public. "The earthquakes we've seen in Melbourne aren't that unusual, we get a number in that region and further to the east in the Gippsland area," Mr Bathgate said.

There is also a history of seismic events occurring offshore near Cairns, with a magnitude-4 quake rocking the region about every 10 years. Although Australia tends to experience earthquakes in "random locations", the Grafton quake was not typical. "It is quite unusual, we haven't got many earthquakes on record from the Grafton region," the seismologist said.

How are earthquakes measured?

Earthquake recording instruments are called seismometers. They were first placed in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth in the early 1900s and at the time, could measure only large earthquakes.

There are now more than 100 seismometer stations across Australia. "We can now capture and record smaller earthquakes than ever before," Mr Bathgate said. Seismometers are buried several metres into the ground. They're extremely sensitive to seismic waves, which occur in earthquakes when rocks slip past each other and create vibrations. The vibrations then travel through the rocks and pass through the instrument. It's then recorded and sent back to the National Earthquake Alert System in Canberra.

The largest earthquake in Australia's history

The most destructive earthquake in the country's history was a magnitude-5.4 in Newcastle on December 28, 1989. Thirteen people died, 160 people were hospitalised and multiple buildings collapsed.

Australia's largest earthquake was recorded at magnitude-6.6 when it rocked Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory in 1988. "It certainly did some damage to gas pipelines and infrastructure," Mr Bathgate said.

International Network of Women Engineers and Scientists – NZ – 3-6 September

ICWES is the flagship triennial conference of the International Network of Women Engineers and Scientists (INWES). ICWES19 is being hosted by the New Zealand Association for Women in the Sciences (AWIS) and Engineering New Zealand.

There are multiple ways to engage with ICWES19, however busy your schedule and wherever you are in the world.

The conference runs for 3 days at Auckland's Aotea Centre, starting with a welcome reception on the evening of Sunday 3 September, and finishing at 5pm on Wednesday 6 September. Over the course of the programme, attendees will be able to choose from 28 concurrent themed speaker and workshop sessions, in addition to five keynote sessions, plus attend the celebration dinner and have ample opportunity to network with other attendees. Attendees can also sign up to one of the optional two-day STEM field trips to the Auckland/Waikato region or Christchurch post-conference.

The STEM Diversity session, on Monday afternoon, will be of particular interest to senior leaders looking at ways to advance the diversity agenda of their STEM organisations and to those advocating for equity in STEM. This session includes talks from leaders in different aspects of diversity, and a panel discussion to discuss the ways organisations and individuals can improve diversity and equity in STEM (as well as the activities that might not work so well), providing new insights that can be applied in STEM organisations.

For those who can't make it to Auckland in person, ICWES19 offers an online programme, with access to the five keynote sessions and a selection of the concurrent themed sessions. Education providers and non-profit organisations can also access sessions for group watch events.

For more information on the conference, including registration, go to www.icwes19.com.

Ways to engage with ICWES19

- In person
- The full three-day programme - or just one day if time is an issue
- The STEM diversity afternoon – perfect for senior STEM leaders and advocates
- The Shaping Space breakfast – ideal for senior secondary STEM students
- Add on a post-conference STEM field trip
- Online
- Individual access to three days of keynotes and concurrent speaker sessions
- Group watch access for education providers or non-profit organisations.

Coal seam gas paper draws reaction

A paper published in 2022 in our Proceedings, authored by members **Peter Dart, Col Lynam, Revel Pointon** and **Geoff Edwards** has attracted attention from the Queensland Government and the gas industry. Two articles in the *In Queensland* online newspaper are appended.

Mt Isa and its mining history.... South East QLD Regional Plan – Shaping SEQ

The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland is holding two interesting events during August. See the Events calendar on our QSN site for details: <https://scienceqld.org/calendar/>.



Proceedings CALL for PAPERS 2023 and CALL for DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Give your research international exposure.

The next edition of our peer-reviewed *Proceedings of The Royal Society of Queensland* (PRSQ) will be print published at about the end of 2023, or when sufficient articles have been processed, but with continuous digital publication.

<https://www.royalsocietyqld.org/2022/01/call-for-papers-for-2022-annual-edition-of-the-proceedings/>

Scope

PRSQ publishes scholarly papers in a range of disciplines. Papers on topics in the natural sciences that are significant for Queensland and Queenslanders are particularly welcome. Papers on related topics including the social sciences, managing the natural environment, education, culture, history, philosophy, heritage and policy will be considered. PRSQ regularly publishes research articles, reviews, short communications and outlook papers.

Contact

Please contact the Honorary Editor, **Assoc. Prof. Julien Louys**, (editor@royalsocietyqld.org.au) to ascertain whether a paper is within the journal's scope or to submit a paper.

All members: please advise your colleagues and family, especially postgraduates who have completed or are about to complete their dissertation, of this opportunity.

President's Closing Remarks

A big thank you to members who are sending in their thoughts about the possible Constitution changes. We need anyone with any thoughts about it to let us know, as any new rules may be there for years to come.

Acting on a prompt by member **David McKellar**, I have made a submission about a proposed restructure of the medical and health faculties of the University of Queensland. A copy of the submission is appended. While some of the issues are primarily matters of corporate management for the University to reconcile, the modern university is a major public institution and it is appropriate for a knowledge-focused stakeholder like our Society to have input.

Dr Nelson Quinn

President
0428 231 591



CSG companies may have to pay to fix farmland subsidence

STATEWIDE

The State Government agency has found that CSG-related subsidence on highly prized farmland could be as much as 175mm in some places and that it presented real and consequential costs to farmers.



Farmers have been fighting over subsidence claims from CSG (photo supplied)

It adds another level of complexity for the industry which has a vocal opposition in some farming areas.

A report from the Gasfield Commission has found that if drainage is affected on farmland there was a potentially high level of productivity losses.

The Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment investigated the issue in 2021 and found subsidence of 100mm near wellfields. Its 2022 annual report noted that it had increased to 120mm, but it was now predicting that it could increase to around 175mm in more heavily developed fields.

“It is expected that rectification work may be required on some farmland because of CSG-induced subsidence,” the report said.

The report said CSG extraction will cause the land surface to subside in and adjacent to CSG well fields and becomes a permanent feature.

But under State Government regulations, the burden of proof was on the landholder “and the commission is of the view that procedural systems are generally unsuitable for managing the issue”.

GasFields Commission chief executive Warwick Squire said coal seam gas-induced subsidence had emerged as a significant concern of landholders in priority agricultural areas, particularly on Queensland’s Condamine Flood Plain.

“Key to these concerns is the potential economic impact on specialised and slope-dependent farming systems, and the subsequent legal protections available to these landholders should a material impact occur,” he said.

“The report outlines that due to the unique nature of farming in these areas and the low slope of the land, there may be instances where CSG-induced subsidence has a consequential impact on farming operations.

“The report also acknowledges that the science base for CSG-induced subsidence is continuing to evolve and further testing of the findings of this report need to be undertaken when more detailed farm-scale monitoring and modelling is available.

“It recommends farm field scale satellite data be made available publicly and that further research is undertaken how landscape scale changes could impact overland flow.”

On shaky ground: 10 years on, fight over CSG, water and farmland ramping up

[In Queensland, Tuesday 1 August 2023](#)

More than a decade after the coal seam gas industry got the green light for massive expansion, farmers and communities are still fighting what has claimed to be neglect, long-term disruption and inequity and the potential for irrevocable land damage.



[John McCarthy](#)



Zena and Gary Ronnfeldt have been fighting CSG companies Photo: ABC

The claims follow a report from the Gasfield Commission last week which highlighted the major problems of land subsidence faced by farmers on the high-quality farming district known as the Condamine Alluvium, which supports high-density cropping.

The industry has always battled opposition because it extracts highly prized groundwater as part of its operations and because it often accesses farmland for exploration and development, but since the industry expanded into exporting through the LNG projects near Gladstone that fight has intensified.

A report by the School of Agriculture and Food Sustainability at the University of Queensland has highlighted a continued war between farmers and industry over water and an uphill battle for justice.

That report has been rejected by the industry which claimed it was a one-sided view based largely on anecdotes and unproven allegations.

One of the industry's harshest critics is Zena Ronnfeldt whose property has been impacted by subsidence and who claimed that farmers were being treated like modern slaves.

"We have enough to deal with in trying to manage at our own cost the subsidence damage to our farms while still having no clear pathway to compensation," she said.

The UQ report said the major community concern was the disparity of water extraction rights between the landholders who are constrained by statute and the CSG companies who enjoy practically unlimited rights to extract," the report said.

"The prevailing self-regulation, lack of baseline assessment and inadequate monitoring of the mining processes are abrogations of government responsibility and the precautionary principle."

The report said there was little time to protect land and the natural systems that underpin agriculture from "potentially irrevocable damage".

"At the heart of this paper is a twin concern: first, that there is a glaring disconnect between what is happening on the ground and the aspirations of a statutory framework that assumes any adverse effects are being satisfactorily managed by conditions and, second, that there is no adequately funded body sufficiently empowered and independent of commercial or political influence to confirm the validity of the opposition to this industry expressed by numerous landholders.

"The power imbalance between industry and landholders and weak regulation of industry hinders efforts by the industry to obtain social licence.

"Governments have, to a large extent, neglected the region-wide and long-term effects of the mining.

"As the industry is still ramping up there is precious little time to protect agricultural land and the natural systems that underpin agriculture from potentially irrevocable damage.

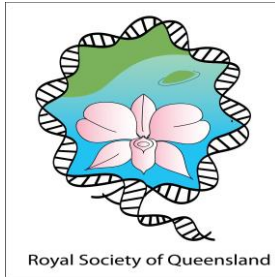
"The industry has not been able to negotiate an inclusive social licence to operate among the farming community, although sentiments have moved marginally towards acceptance among the townspeople.

"Major disquiet about procedural justice, the imbalance of power between communities affected by the industry, inequitable distribution of risks, limited assessment and oversight of the industry's activities by governments, the short term nature of the mining set against the long term disruption to communities and farming and neglect of regional implications and intergenerational equity."

Gas industry representative group APPEA said the sector was one of the most regulated in the country and had a long history of co-existence and consultation.

Queensland director Keld Knudsen said gas companies operate in a tightly regulated framework and the Government recently announced further reforms to strengthen these relationships between energy projects and agriculture operators.

“The paper presents a one-sided view of the industry based largely on anecdotes and unproven allegations. There is no assessment of the benefits of hosting industry, including the \$500 million-plus of land access payments, water for irrigation and infrastructure improvements,” he said.



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Incorporated by Letters Patent issued under the

Religious, Educational and Charitable Institutions Act 1861

26 July 2023

Professor Aidan Byrne
Chair
The Health Faculties Consultation Committee
Office of the Provost
The University of Queensland
Brisbane QLD 4072

Dear Prof Byrne

I write in the capacity of “external stakeholder” to lodge a submission regarding the contemplated restructure of the Faculties of Medicine and Health and Behavioural Sciences.

The Royal Society of Queensland, founded in 1884, is the senior learned society in the State. The Society seeks to advance knowledge by encouraging original research and the publication of results. As a non-aligned, generalist organisation, the Society aspires to counter the ill-effects of increasing specialisation by sharing knowledge across jurisdictional silos.

A specific example of this mission in action is our current nascent initiative to identify the preconditions of human well-being, including good health. We advocate for holistic policy solutions that advance and foster those preconditions. Our website refers:

<https://www.royalsocietyqld.org/initiatives/community-health/>. This topic has been recognised in the recently issued *Measuring What Matters: Australia’s First Wellbeing Framework*, which recognises that determinants of health include the social, environmental, structural, economic, cultural, biomedical, commercial and digital environments in which we live.

We submit some primary themes for your consideration which we believe should influence your processes and decisions.

Minimise reductionism

Reductionism, the confinement of intellectual activity with overly specialised disciplinary boundaries, is an ever-present threat to scholarship. It has two primary dimensions: narrowness in scholarship within academe; and isolation of the fruits of scholarly endeavour from recipients who could benefit from it, such as practitioners and those in government steering budgets and policy.

It is fairly clear from the published documents that the University acknowledges the benefit of reducing institutional barriers between two existing faculties, but it is less obvious that building bridges between scholarship and potential beneficiaries of research knowledge such as health practitioners,

teachers of health practitioners and policy officers is on the agenda. I will return to this point.

Composition of advisory committee

The Health Faculties Consultation Committee, which seems to be the primary entity charged with aggregating feedback from stakeholders, would seem constituted entirely by people with roles in the University, with perhaps one exception. While recognising that many of the issues at stake will be corporate ones for primarily internal debate, ultimately the objective of the health faculties is to serve the public interest and the Committee would seem to be too narrowly constituted to represent the range of legitimate stakeholders.

Reconceptualising the role of the University

From time to time universities and funding agencies come under pressure from political and business sources to downplay 'pure', 'basic' or curiosity-led research in favour of applied research deemed by business or some other client to be immediately commercially or practically useful. We believe advocates of such tilting of the priorities have mischaracterised the weaknesses in tertiary research and research institutions. Applied research depends upon pure research. Nor are the weaknesses in tertiary research to be overcome simply by allocating more funding to present activities and popular demands.

Faculty (faculties) functions

We suggest that the following core functions that would fall within the scope of a medical faculty (faculties).

Training healthcare professionals and practitioners

We agree with the discussion paper that 'a particular focus of concern for the health system is the provision of the right number of appropriately trained health professionals prepared to work in all healthcare locations, particularly regional, rural and remote settings. Some part of the system needs to give priority to the training task, with that work informed by insights about the destiny of trained practitioners. This requires expert training - we want our health professionals to be indoctrinated in their crafts, rather than just self-actualising as their fancies take them. Ideally each specialisation (dentistry, medicine etc) should be associated with the others to foster interaction among them.

Associated research

We agree with the discussion paper that 'the focus of health research needs to be more substantially aligned to problems defined by the healthcare system. This is not to diminish the importance of basic-or curiosity-based health research.' However, as indicated above, we believe that we need more acceptance of and investment in curiosity led research.

Fiddling with the organisational arrangements won't overcome any current alleged difficulties with research activities, as research funding is dependent on irrational or uncontrollable variables, such as inadequate public investment, the personal fancies of donors and the charisma, interests and availability of staff and other resources. Presumably research outcomes from non-

medical/health disciplines will often be useful, suggesting that there should be mechanisms to link with them (if this is not already the case).

We suggest that in any event the faculty (faculties) can also contribute inputs into wider health care issues.

Protection against health threats, that is, a disease control-centre function

The Commonwealth government has announced the establishment of an Australian Centre for Disease Control to improve our response and preparedness for public health emergencies with the following functions:

- ensure ongoing pandemic preparedness
- lead the national response to future health emergencies
- work to prevent and control non-communicable (chronic) and communicable (infectious) diseases.

The faculty (faculties) should include a capacity to ensure University of Queensland inputs into the Centre's processes, noting particularly Queensland's needs stemming from its situation in the tropics.

Designing and implementing health care systems including policy capability

This requires structured institutional arrangements to build and share expertise across a wide range of other disciplines such as natural sciences, economics, foreign affairs, public administration and commerce.

Forums to support this policy making and program design purpose should be embedded in the anticipated restructure and not left to opportunism after the new faculty (faculties) has been established.

Developing solutions to non-medical causes of health problems – the preconditions of well-being, with responses to climate change being front of mind

Health professionals can contribute to problem-solving forums, and not simply be the end product of an established process. This will require maximising diversity in the undergraduate disciplines within the education of healthcare professionals to help position the University to contribute to these processes, which invariably involve many actors, not always with health as their priority.

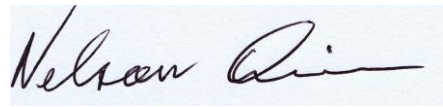
Some conclusions

We suggest that the three functions of the faculty (faculties) are primarily training health professional and associated health research, as well as outreach to the rest of the University, the health and welfare systems, business and governments.

Our suggestion is to merge the two existing schools, retain the centres & institutes and the other policy oriented centres, with an added function of trawling the rest of the university for relevant contributions, eg law, planning, and biology (if this is not done now) combined with an outreach function. Then you could have two organisations (schools and the rest). The alternative of merging them all in one may entail the risk of a too large, unwieldy and difficult to manage organisation. In either case, the top managers of the system will

need to understand and contribute to policy analysis and political decision making skills and knowledge.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue rectangular background. The signature reads "Nelson Quinn" in a cursive script.

Dr Nelson Quinn

President

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