

Annual Report

2005



QRNO
Queensland
Regional Network
Organisation

QUESTnet
Queensland
Education Science
and Technology
Network



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QUESTnet Objectives

The objective of the Committee shall be to promote and advance the development and use of Information and Communications Technologies (hereafter called "ICT") in Higher Education and Research in Queensland and adjacent areas in Australia, through a variety of relevant means, including but not limited to the following:

- Foster and facilitate coordination and cooperation in the work of members (eg. by arranging special meetings and seminars to discuss mechanisms for sharing infrastructure)
- Provide opportunities for the exchange of information among technical staff in the region (e.g. by the annual QUESTnet conference and other meetings of personnel in areas of common interest and endeavour)
- Formulate and offer approaches to common issues of members (e.g. commission projects, arrange development seminars)
- Provide strategic direction to, and coordination among, the ICT activities in the sector (e.g. via committee memberships, submissions on proposed initiatives)
- Establish and oversee sub-committees for specific roles or tasks for the benefit of members (e.g. QUESTnet conference)
- Develop and maintain a cooperative working relationship with CAUDIT
- Promote and represent our sector in the State to develop a sphere of influence, particularly with other educational areas and Government
- Deal with Vendors on a regional basis appropriate to QUESTnet members.

Office Bearers and Meetings

QRNO

Chair – Nick Tate (UQ)

Deputy Chair – Barry Mahoney

Executive Officer – John Noad, Chris Christoff

Following John Noad's retirement, Chris Christoff took over as Executive Officer 1 July 2005.

QUESTnet

Chair – Kent Adams (JCU)

Deputy Chair – Maureen Klinkert

Treasurer – Barry Mahoney

Executive Officer – John Noad, Chris Christoff

Kent Adams and Barry Mahoney were returned as Chair and Treasurer at the November meeting.

Following John Noad's retirement, Chris Christoff took over as Executive Officer 1 July 2005.

Meetings:

The Boards of Management of the two organisations met on three occasions during the year – 7th July, 28th September, and 25th November. A joint planning workshop was run 10th /11th February, with AARNet involvement on the 11th.

Retirements:

The Board thanks John Noad for 4 years of dedication and contribution to the role of Executive Officer of the QRNO and QUESTnet, and his contribution to IT in the Qld tertiary sector. The Board wishes John well in retirement.

Ian Jenkins, IT Director CQU also retired and the Board extends their thanks for Ian's long term contribution to the IT in universities and for his work with the Qld organisations.

QUESTnet Conference 2005

Australian Catholic University hosted the 2005 QUESTnet Conference from 5th to 8th July 2005 at the Hyatt Regency Coolum on the Sunshine Coast. Barbara Olde, Director Information Technology and Communication Services, chaired the organising committee, and Martin Lack and Associates were retained as conference organisers. Financially, the conference covered its costs. QUESTnet aims to present a very high quality and very affordable conference for ICT professionals while meeting the financial commitments. Without sponsorship this would not be possible and the sponsors are formally recognised for their support. Past conference proceedings are available on the QUESTnet website and the papers have been available as a resource for a number of years (<http://www.questnet.net.au/conferences/>).

The conference was very successful with record numbers of sponsors and delegates. Delegates, sponsors and organisers were unanimous in their support for the conference.

Statistics (Delegate Numbers):

	2005	2004	2003	2002
Vendor	196	115	133	89
University	151	152	204	157
Provider (Uni)	26	22	16	14
Government	12	13	9	4
Research	10	15	10	16
TAFE	1	1	0	1
School	0	0	1	1
Total	396	318	373	282

12 delegates representing 8 Federal, State and Local government entities were present. 26 delegates from university sector providers AARNet, Grangenet and VERNet participated.

Statistics (Sponsors)

	2005	2004	2003	2002
Platinum	1	3	1	1
Gold	9	6	6	11
Silver	8	6	5	3
Bronze	21	6	14	6
Supporter	0	5	5	2
Total	39	26	31	23

As can be seen from the table 2005 was supported by more sponsors than previous years. The following companies are recognised as having sponsored the conference at some level over the last 4 years: ASI, Cisco, Dell, Foundry, NEC, and Nortel.

The University of the Sunshine Coast will host the conference in 2006 at the Hyatt Regency on the Sunshine Coast, with Maureen Klinkert, Executive Director, Information Technology Services, University of the Sunshine Coast, as the conference Chair. The conference theme is "Networking for e-Research: Communication, Collaboration and Regional Engagement". The dates have been set as 11th to 14th July 2006, and plans are well underway.

QUESTnet Workshops and Presentations

QUESTnet conducted 6 workshops in the latter half of the year:

- Data Centre Design – 9 September, CQU
- CiscoWorks – 26-27 September, Griffith
- Enterprise Architecture – 26-27 September, UQ
- Thinking Skills - 21-23 November, UQ
- Benchmarking – 23-24 November, UQ
- Network Vulnerability Scanning and Windows Data Collection – 1 December, UQ

QUESTnet supported delegates to attend the MAMS Workshop – 14 March, UQ (run by MELCOE, Macquarie University)

The **Data Centre Design** workshop was conducted at CQU in Rockhampton by Merv Connell. Some delegates attended in person and others via Access Grid. The delegates toured the new purpose-built data centre bunker at CQU.

Cisco was contracted to present the **CiscoWorks** workshop, conducted by Glen Rosenberg from Cisco. The hands-on component of the workshop suffered from poor performance of the server, unable to support the 15 concurrent delegates. As Cisco was to be paid for running this workshop, the workshop was scheduled to be run again in 2006.

Ovum was contracted to run a workshop on **Enterprise Architecture**, presented by Ray O'Donnell. With 23 delegates this was well attended. The delegates thought the material relevant and that the workshop contributed to their understanding of the subject. Delegates, however, were under-prepared for the complexity of the subject and the amount of information contained therein.

QUESTnet organised a **Thinking Skills** course 21-23 November at UQ and supported member delegates with travel. This course, run annually at UQ by Dr Richard Broome from Thinking Skills Training (South Africa), was opened to QUESTnet delegates.

QUESTnet initiated a workshop, presented by John Lockwood and Richard Northam from CAUDIT, on the CAUDIT **Benchmarking** instruments. This workshop provided a forum for better understanding of the issues with the design of the instruments, and was anticipated to be the forerunner to a roadshow for the surveys instruments.

The **Network Vulnerability Scanning and Windows Data Collection**, organised and sponsored by CAUDIT, presented by AusCERT, was well received and delegates thought the material well presented and relevant to their workplace.

The **MAMS** workshop was held in March, run by MELCOE at Macquarie University. Delegates from QUESTnet member universities attended. Feedback indicated people were unhappy as the presenter had difficulty making the technology function (hands-on workshop).

Chris Christoff, Executive Officer, presented to **ATUG** 20 September on the functions of the QRNO and QUESTnet, and the status and plans for Queensland's regional education network.

QUESTnet supported member delegates with travel to attend the various Brisbane based workshops. Steven Turner from Martin Lack and Associates organised the logistics for most workshops.

QRNO Finances

In summary, as at 31 December 2005:

	2005
Total Revenue	113,106.70
Total Expenses	<u>90,711.35</u>
Operational Surplus	22,395.35
Accumulated Funds	
Opening Balance	\$178,512.11
Surplus/Deficit	<u>22,395.35</u>
Closing Balance	\$200,907.46

QUESTnet Finances

In summary, as at 31 December 2005:

Total Revenue	\$60,408.55
Total Expenses	<u>\$32,526.53</u>
Operational Surplus	\$27,882.02
Accumulated Funds	
Opening Balance	\$231,427.32
Surplus/Deficit	<u>\$27,882.02</u>
Closing Balance	\$259,309.34

Planning Workshop

A QUESTnet/QRNO planning workshop was conducted 10th February, with an AARNet planning workshop on 11th February.

The salient issues discussed were:

- Duties for new Executive Officer (in preparation for John Noad retiring)
- QUESTnet activities for 2005
- QRNO policy and charges for the location of member router equipment in PoPs
- Indemnity clauses for AARNet 3 contract
- Sunshine Network Interim Stage 2 status
- Network architecture and edge router location
- The role of the AARNet technical manager
- QRNO and AARNet support responsibilities
- Future QREN development and ARENAC funding bids
- AARNet priorities for 2005

In addition to the regular meetings the Board of Management annually seeks this feedback from the full membership to determine future planning and direction.

AARNet and the Qld Regional Network

AARNet appointed Mahmoud Abo Elwafa as the Technical Manager for Queensland.

All member universities were connected to AARNet 3 (see table):

University	Date
Griffith	09/04/2005
UQ	23/04/2005
JCU	29/04/2005
CQU	29/04/2005
QUT	11/05/2005
AIMS	13/05/2005
USQ	28/06/2005
ACU	27/07/2005

SCU and USQ will connect at 1Gbps to the AARNET optical network (over Nextgen fibre) in 2006.

Eduroam

UQ and QUT have pilots in operation. Universities have some issues with legacy Access Points. Griffith, CQU and JCU are investigating their infrastructures' capabilities for Eduroam. ACU is running a pilot in Victoria.

AARNet Sunshine Interim Phase 2

The AARNet Pty Ltd (APL)/Powerlink Queensland (PQ) 2.5Gbps fibre network, known as the AARNet Sunshine Backbone, extended the AARNet network, providing 1.25Gbps between each of JCU (Townsville) and CQU (Rockhampton), and CSIRO offices sited at these universities. This link was completed in 2004, with AIMS being connected at to JCU over fibre at 1Gbps in May 2005. Funding was sought for the capital to provide interim capacity to those sites not yet served by the AARNet Sunshine Backbone. The interim capacity would be used until Gbps fibre services could be provided to those locations.

JCU Cairns	118MB ATM	Powerlink Fibre
CQU Mackay	70MB ATM	Powerlink Fibre
CQU Gladstone	34MB ATM	Powerlink Fibre
USC Sippy Downs	50MB GWIP	Telstra
USQ Hervey Bay	50MB GWIP	Telstra

Agreements were executed between Powerlink and APL and separately between APL and JCU and CQU. USQ Hervey Bay elected to negotiate bandwidth on QRail fibre, in partnership with the Hervey Bay City Council Widelinx project.

VPN

QUT, Griffith and Qld Health have agreed on the installation and support of a VPN solution to allow joint staff appointments working in Qld Health facilities access to their home university resources from QH equipment. This opens the door for similar agreements by other universities who offer medical and associated health programs (e.g. nursing) and have staff/students in QH locations. The QRNO and Education Qld will review this mechanism for application in the education sector for in-service trainee teachers and teachers doing further study. TAFE Qld has a similar interest.

ARIIC Projects

The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), through the Australian Research Information Infrastructure Committee (ARIIC), provided Strategic Infrastructure Initiative funds for two projects under the banner of “2005 Managed Environment for Research Repository Infrastructure (MERRI) Projects”.

Funding was allocated for two projects led by The University of Queensland:

- Middleware Action Plan and Strategy Project (MAPS) – The University of Queensland, AARNet, GrangeNet, CAUDIT, ANU, Monash University, Macquarie University and CAUL
- eSecurity Framework for Research Project - The University of Queensland, AARNet, CAUDIT, Macquarie University and APAC

Member organisations also participated in other MERRI projects:

- BlueNet: The Australian Marine Science Data Network – JCU, UQ
- Dataset Acquisition, Accessibility and Annotation e-Research Technology Project (DART) – UQ, JCU

Connect Australia

QRNO drafted a consortium submission for the Connect Australia Broadband Connect-Clever Networks discussion paper. The consortium considered the issues for the provision of high bandwidth services to USC (Sippy Downs), USQ (Hervey Bay), and the Sunshine Coast and Hervey Bay City Council areas.

Consortium members
Hervey Bay City Council (Widelinx)
SunROC Suncoast Broadband Program
University of Southern Queensland
University of the Sunshine Coast
University of Queensland
Queensland Health
Queensland Rail
Pipe Networks
IP Systems
AARNet Pty Ltd
Queensland Regional Network Organisation (QRNO)

The consortium was formed for this response and may be constituted in a different form for BC-CN funding submissions. USQ and Hervey Bay City Council are establishing a contractual relationship for the provision of fibre services, over QRail infrastructure. USC and SunROC will go to market for last mile and back haul services for the Sunshine Coast area.

Technical Advisory Committee

Merv McConnell (CQU) was elected as the new TAC Chair, and Anthony Croome (UQ) the new TAC Secretary. The Board thanks David Elkin (ACU, past Chair) and Peter Kurtz (QUT, past Deputy Chair), and Thomas King (Griffith, past Secretary) for their effort and commitment.

The TAC is planning several projects for 2006, including:

- Updating the vision for the Qld regional network
- Conducting a Best Practice study tour of the member institutions
- Developing a GIS database of communication resources (fibre, microwave)

Policy Development

A policy was developed for the reimbursement of relevant expenses for the Executive, Board and member delegates attending workshops and the QUESTnet conference.

Websites

Significant changes were made to the QRNO and QUESTnet web sites to improve their use as a source of information for members. The sites will be formally redeveloped in 2006.

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Chair
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Kent Adams
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