

[CCE2007_008.7]

Date sent: **Sun, 15 Jul 2007 07:14:18 +0000**
Forwarded by: **PETER@kingsu.ca**
From: **Colin Scholes <colinscholes@chemistswithoutborders.org>**
Subject: **Re: Chemists without Borders**
To: **peter.mahaffy@kingsu.ca**

Dear Peter,

I have attached a short outline about how Chemists Without Borders Australia came about and the current programs we run. In addition, there is an outline about our young scientist exchange with the Pacific region that we would like IUPAC to become involved with. We are still a young organisation, with an active member base that are interested in taking on new projects. So if there are any ideas or programs currently run by IUPAC CCE that you think we could be involved with, please let me know.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Regards

Colin.

Chemists without Borders Australia, is a group of young scientists that aim to use their scientific knowledge and skills to assist communities with their self identified problems to achieve a more sustainable future.

We officially started in February 2006; however a group of us had been discussing the idea for the previous 2 years. We came about because many of us felt frustrated that there wasn't any organization where we could use our knowledge in a manner that assists people directly. The only opportunity at that time was going through one of the various scientific institutes, such as Royal Australian Chemical Institute or the Australian Academy of Science. However, being young scientists we have little control on what those organizations do, and therefore what they would allow us to do. Coupled with this, we saw what the engineers were achieving with Engineers without Borders Australia, and also how the Institute of Engineers Australia was engaging its young members through its Young Engineers organization. So we decided to start something new, and Chemists without Borders Australia was born.

We currently have five projects, they are

- Teaching secondary students about land and water management, especially in regards to the impact of industrial development. Part of the program is teaching them about testing and monitoring of their local waterways, coupled with possible rehabilitation methods. We are assisted in this project by two local water conservations groups that teach the students about the local flora and fauna, and how this changes and adapts with land development.
- Textbook drives for the Pacific region, we have been collecting scientific textbooks (mainly tertiary level) to be sent to tertiary institutions currently in Papua New Guinea and Fiji. We have also had involvement (very limited) with Engineers without Borders Australia 'Guns to Pens' program, in relation to shipping textbooks to Afghanistan
- Science tutoring of secondary students from disadvantaged backgrounds, mainly refugees, who due to disruption to their education require extra tuition. The numbers in this program vary each semester, dependent on the number of tutors available and access to facilities in which to run the tutorials.
- Professional Development Seminar series. One of our goals is to improve our members and the science profession, as part of this we run a seminar series aimed at teaching students about aspects of science they aren't taught in detail at university. Issues such as intellectual property, legal and ethical aspects of being a scientist, industrial relation, etc.
- We are currently developing a young scientist exchange with countries in the Pacific, to assist in the development of their scientific communities. We hope by giving their scientists exposure to research in Australia, as well Australian scientists spending time in pacific countries, we can increase the quality of science in the region. We plan to have this program up and running by early next year.

The project that generates the most interest is our young scientist exchange that we are developing. This is also the most complicated, because we have to ensure that the program is adequately supported in both countries. To this aim we have been working with the University of Melbourne to obtain their assistance in supporting (non financial) the Australian side of the program, which at the moment is most likely by hosting the visiting scientists. Obviously, the science faculties in the institutions we are in consultation with in the Pacific region, which is the University of South Pacific, University of Papua New Guinea and Papua New Guinea Institute of Technology, view this as an opportunity to increase their international standing and so are quite amiable to assisting with the program. A major problem is funding (as always), now we have partial backing of the program from corporate sponsors and we are seeking funding from the Australian Governments Foreign Aid programs.

We are hoping IUPAC would become a partner in this program. Firstly, because of the experience your members have in running similar exchange programs in developing countries and we hope to access some of that knowledge to ensure our runs as smoothly as possible. Furthermore, we are in need of education and scientific resources for scientists visiting developing countries, as well as senior scientists to act in a limited mentor role, quite simply, someone to contact when those on exchange need advice. We can only provide the last two items in a very limited fashion, and therefore are in need of increasing our network of contacts who we can ask for assistance. We actually believe there is a good possibility to expand this program away from just an Australian – Pacific exchange to a worldwide program. Discussions with colleagues in Europe and North America, and to a limited degree Asia, have indicated that this is something many young scientists would like to be involved with, and are staying updated with our progress.