

Quality Assurance in Australian University Libraries

Issues identified through institutional quality audits

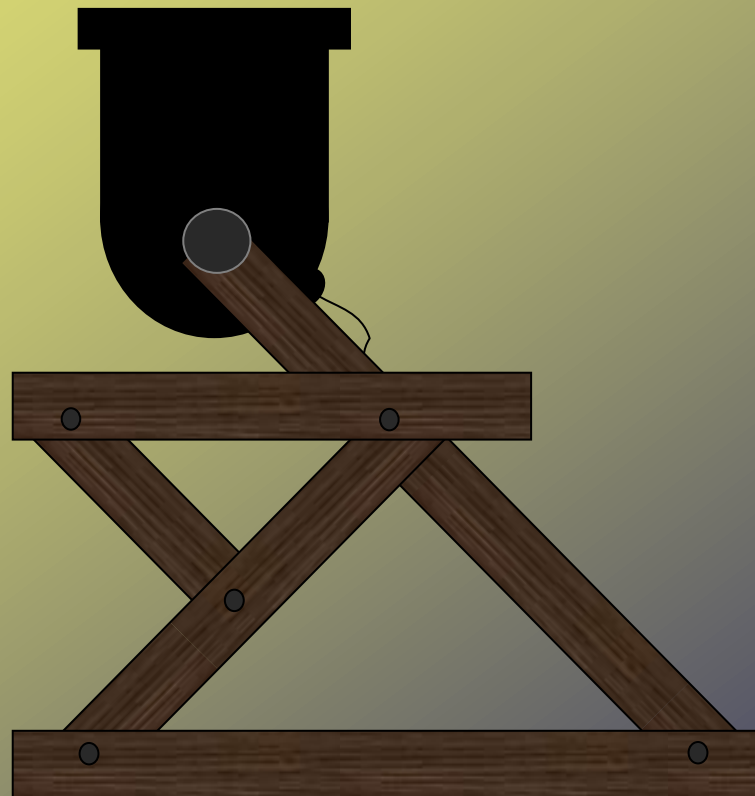
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Address for 'Getting Beyond the Starting Blocks: Quality
Assurance at Academic Libraries'

Stellenbosch, 28-29 October 2004



Australian Universities Quality Agency



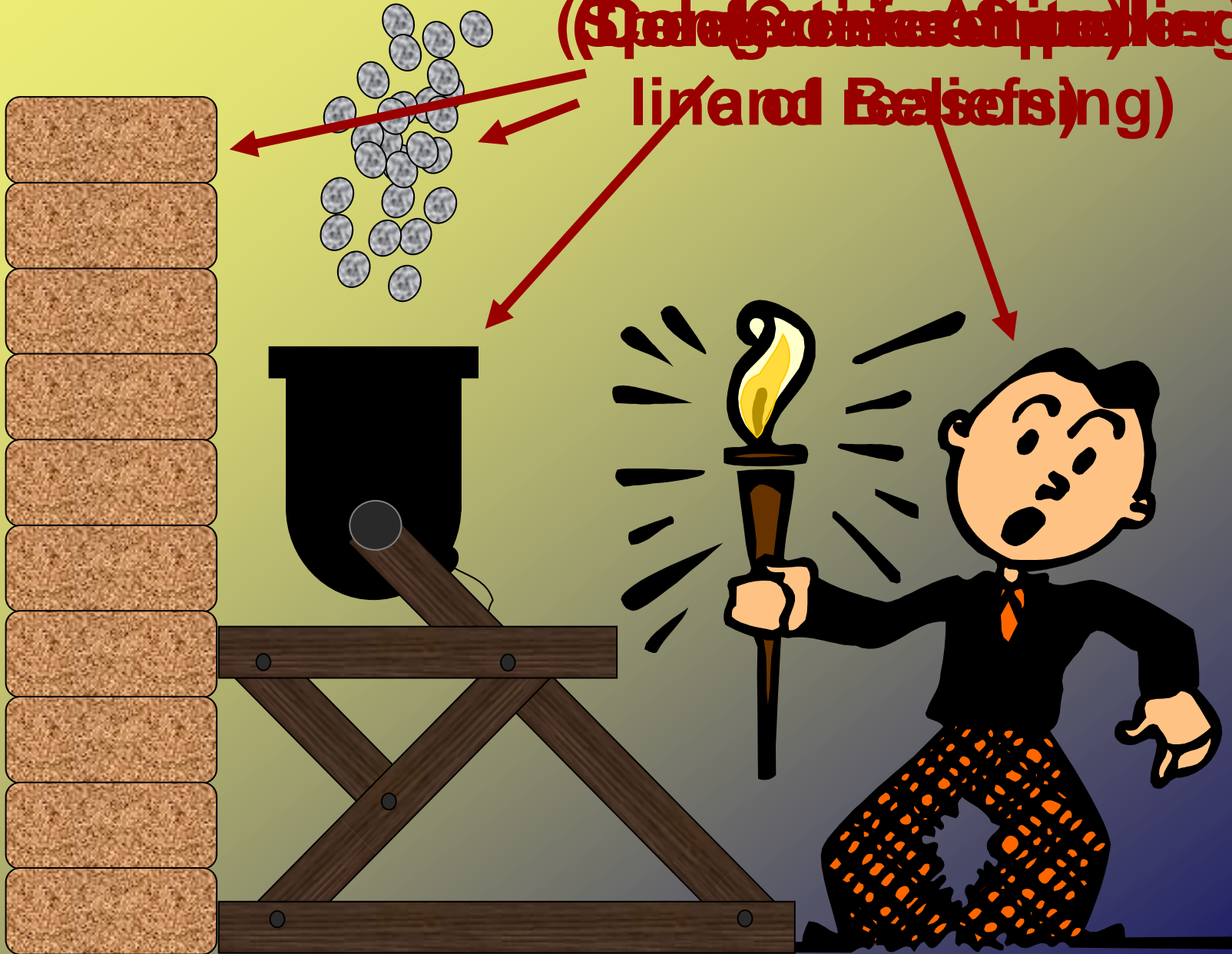


Breakthrough!



BPiEtatWalt

(Sole of Grubies Shipping) long
Infrared Beamsing)



Hoist on one's
own petard!



Disclaimer

The views expressed in this presentation, although based upon experience auditing universities on behalf of AUQA, are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views or policy of AUQA Pty. Ltd. Nor do they purport to encompass the totality of issues involved in considering the quality assurance of university libraries and other information services. They are shared only as a contribution to the discussions within the international higher education sector about quality improvement. The author accepts no liability in relation to any matters arising from the use of the contents of this presentation.



Outline

- Part A:** Context & Challenges for Australian University Libraries
- Part B:** Issues Observed in AUQA Audits
- Part C:** Difficult Audit Issues to Think About
- Part D:** Shameless Plugs!



Part A

Context & Challenges



Context & Challenges

1. Increasing emphasis on electronic resources
2. Increasing costs; decreasing purchase power
3. Learning and managing complex rules
4. Supporting multiple campuses
5. Supporting offshore T&L
6. Supporting flexible T&L
7. Shift in balance of roles of Librarians
8. Strategic repositioning



Context & Challenges

Context is one of increasing (in diversity and quantity) demands and decreasing (at least proportionately) resources, therefore the key quality issue is:

Effective design, prioritisation and provision of library resources and services in a way that best supports the university's academic mission.



Part B

Issues Observed in AUQA Audits



Issues Observed in Audits

1. Planning and Resourcing
2. Libraries and Teaching
3. Libraries and Learning
4. Libraries and Partner Providers
5. Libraries and Research
6. Libraries and External Engagement
7. Monitoring and Reviewing



1. Planning & Resourcing

- Library planning not always well integrated with overall academic planning.
- Lack of parity and planning involvement across branches and campuses.
- Libraries integrating with ITS and Learning Support Services to become information-based learning facilitators.
- Other information sources (e.g. Internet, mass media) are causing a reconsideration of the Library's traditionally hallowed place.



2. Libraries and Teaching

- Limited success with Service Level Agreements.
- User committees not obviously effective (perhaps too high-level), but Faculty/outreach librarians do seem to be.
- Collection standards are often ill-defined.
- Selection (and deselection) policies and practices vary considerably.
- Resource-sharing networks are increasingly important.



2. Libraries and Unit Approvals

- Sign-off practices for new & modified units highly variable.
- Change of mode or location often does not require a new approval process, yet has Library implications.
- ‘Not Applicable’ ought seldom be an acceptable response to questions about library resource issues in new proposals.
- Library often involved too late or as a *fait accompli*. It is NOT ENOUGH to have a Library rep on the Academic Board.



3. Libraries and Learning

- Increasing emphasis on electronic access and collections for *all* modes of study.
- Access (in terms of opening hours, number of computers, study space and response times) remains problematic.
- Libraries shifting balance of their role from information provision to information literacy training, especially considering the increasing variety in information media.



4. Libraries and Offshore Partners

- Partners' libraries sometimes have one textbook per unit. Is this quality information support? Would recommended readings be more appropriate?
- Does the reliance on DE 'readings' diminish the acquisition by students of information literacy skills?
- Are partners able to help students with information literacy training?
- Offshore language issue not yet resolved.



5. Libraries and Research

- New university 'research themes' are not obviously reflected in library planning as yet.
- Research-oriented selection policies do not necessarily obviously support teaching selection policies (and vice-versa).
- May be an untapped opportunity to promote the teaching:research nexus through integrated collection acquisition & maintenance policies.
- Libraries are increasingly focusing on advanced information literacy.



6. Libraries and Ext. Engagement

- There is increasing tension between managing tight resources and sharing libraries with wider communities.
- This issue is not always guided by clear policy.
- But it goes both ways (especially with regional campuses)
- Some evidence of excellent linkages between academic and public libraries.



7. Monitoring and Reviewing

- Most Libraries have used customer satisfaction measures for a long time.
- Uses of Rodski and CAUL statistics need to be publicly contextualised (like GCCA stats) if to be used for accountability purposes.
- There is a general lack of guidelines for interpreting KPI.
- What is the relationship between Library statistics and student learning (and research) outcomes?



Part C

Difficult Audit Issues to Think About



Fitness for Purpose

Using 'Fitness for Purpose', how does one audit:

1. Effectiveness of prioritisation methods?
2. Adequacy of disciplinary collections?
3. Fitness of access to information resources?
4. Assessment of student information literacy?

and one more point...

5. Impact of technology on learning?



The place and time is England, 1811...



Folk were happily minding their own knitting.
Literally.

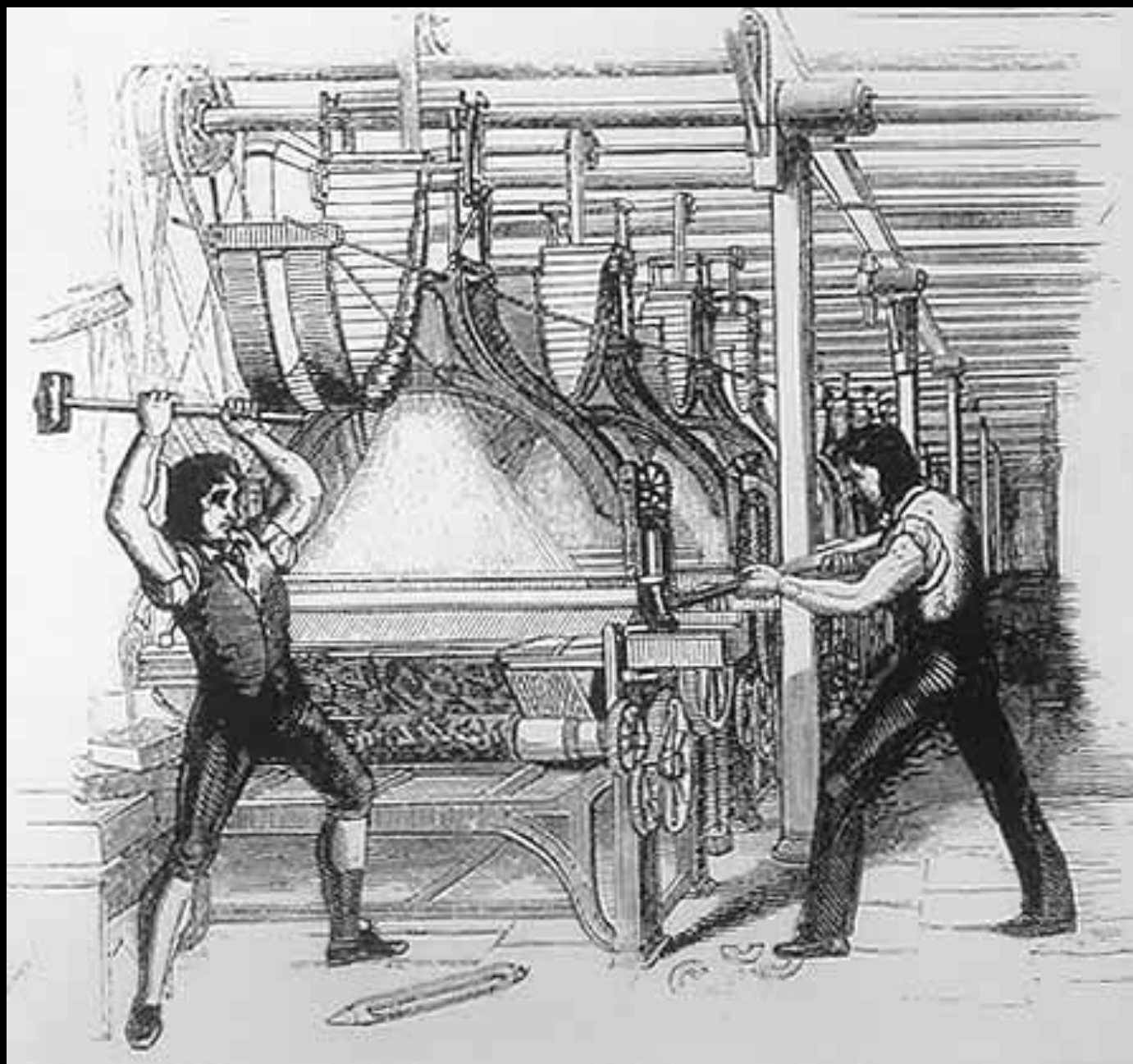
But then along came new technology.

“Mass production was being introduced by the use of wide knitting frames. These frames made the work less labor intensive, because the stockings were made of a one-cut piece of material, which was called a ‘cut-up.’ Consequently, stockings were cheaper to manufacture.”

“The knitters felt that these methods of manufacturing were displacing skilled labor and that the deterioration in quality, due to the cheaper production practices, was producing the decline in the purchase of stockings.”

“There were many manufactures who agreed with the knitters but the practice was becoming so common that the only way for them to compete was to follow their competitors’ lead.”





WHEREAS,

Several **EVIL-MINDED PERSONS** have assembled together in a
riotous Manner, and **DESTROYED** a NUMBER of

FRAMES,

In different Parts of the Country :

THIS IS

TO GIVE NOTICE,

That any Person who will give Information of any Person or Persons
thus wickedly

BREAKING THE FRAMES,

Shall, upon **CONVICTION**, receive

50 GUINEAS
REWARD.

And any Person who was actively engaged in **RIOTING**, who will
impeach his Accomplices, shall, upon **CONVICTION**, receive the
same Reward, and every Effort made to procure his Pardon.

Information to be given to Messrs. **COLDHAM** and **ENFIELD.**

Newgate, March 26, 1811.

D. Jones, Printer, Newgate

What happened to the Luddites?



12,000 troops were dispatched by George IV (then Prince Regent) to handle the 'Luddite Riots'. Eight ringleaders were executed in Lancashire. 17 were executed in York.

At least 13 diehard Luddites were exiled to
Australia ...

... where it is thought their descendents became
AUQA Auditors.

Who are concerned
that mature students
may experience the
eLibrary thus...



“Technological change is almost always
what I call a ‘Faustian bargain’ –
it giveth and it taketh away.”

(Neil Postman)

Part D

Shameless Plugs!





AUQA GOOD PRACTICE DATABASE



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Database Search

This database contains good practices in higher education that have been independently validated through national or state systems for audit or accreditation. Access these practices by entering your search criteria below and then clicking the SEARCH button.

Keyword Search:

Advanced search options:

Contributing Institution:

Category:

Subcategory:

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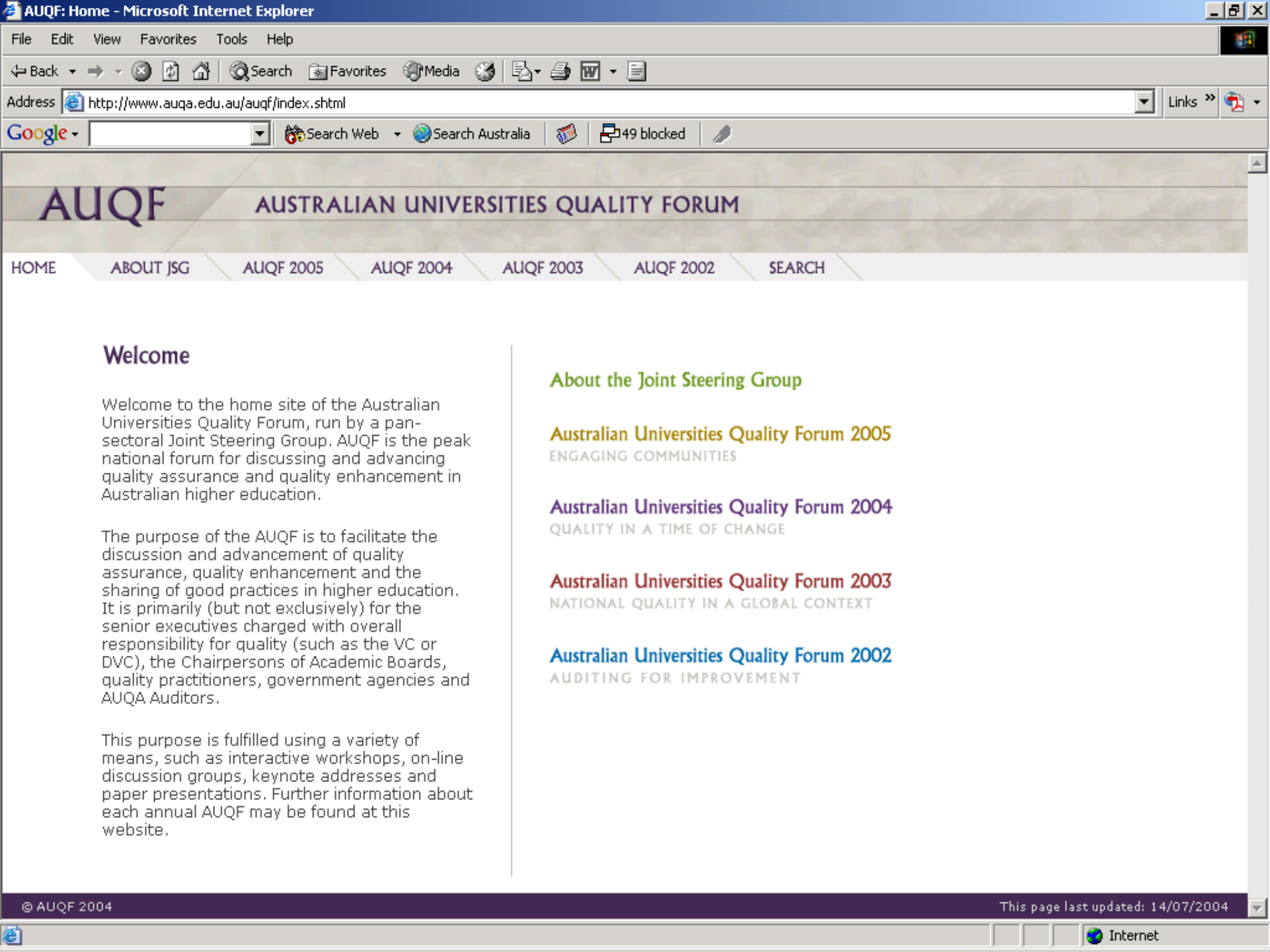
NEW ENTRIES!

Seventeen new Good Practices from four universities have been added as of August 2004!!

Search

[View all records](#)





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Welcome to the home site of the Australian Universities Quality Forum, run by a pan-sectoral Joint Steering Group. AUQF is the peak national forum for discussing and advancing quality assurance and quality enhancement in Australian higher education.

The purpose of the AUQF is to facilitate the discussion and advancement of quality assurance, quality enhancement and the sharing of good practices in higher education. It is primarily (but not exclusively) for the senior executives charged with overall responsibility for quality (such as the VC or DVC), the Chairpersons of Academic Boards, quality practitioners, government agencies and AUQA Auditors.

This purpose is fulfilled using a variety of means, such as interactive workshops, on-line discussion groups, keynote addresses and paper presentations. Further information about each annual AUQF may be found at this website.

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Australian Universities Quality Forum 2004

QUALITY IN A TIME OF CHANGE

Australian Universities Quality Forum 2003

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Australian Universities Quality Forum 2002

AUDITING FOR IMPROVEMENT





Quality Audit

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