



**INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION  
(IGU / UGI)**

**COMMISSION ON LAND DEGRADATION AND DESERTIFICATION  
(COMLAND)**



**REPORT OF ACTIVITIES: 2018**

Andrea Vacca (Chair) and Owen Graham (Secretary)

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[www.comland.org](http://www.comland.org)

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The Commission on Land Degradation and Desertification (COMLAND) is a Commission of the International Geographical Union (IGU). See <http://igu-online.org/> for further information on the IGU.

## 0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF COMLAND

Most environments are affected by common factors that favour and increase land degradation processes. Two main topics are widely responsible: a) climatic conditions and changes, and b) anthropic impacts through land use. There is an urgent need to achieve a better practical and theoretical understanding of land degradation processes which affect the world's landscapes. In order to achieve these objectives, the working plan of the Commission is as follows:

- to promote and coordinate interdisciplinary research on land degradation and desertification in our changing global environment;
- to study the effects of environmental change, both natural and human induced, and their implications for land degradation and desertification;
- to conduct regional case studies under different climatic regimes and environmental risks (forest fires, floods, river channel changes, soil-erosion, water depletion, water quality), study the planning and design of conservation measures and the potential conflict between ecological sustainability and economic viability;
- to alert authorities as to the importance of adequate surveillance of land degradation processes;
- to develop and communicate the best techniques for monitoring changes and collecting data, and
- to sponsor and support activities leading to exchange of information regarding land degradation and desertification.

## I STEERING COMMITTEE

### **Chair:**

Associate Prof. Andrea Vacca, Italy  
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### **Members:**

#### *Secretary:*

Mr. Owen Graham, Australia  
Formerly Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority (retired)  
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Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts  
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### Completed tenure on Steering Committee:

- (several people are at or near their 8 year Steering Committee membership)

### New Steering Committee Members:

- (to be advised)

## II COMLAND MEMBERSHIP

### COMLAND MEMBERSHIP BY COUNTRY (as at November 2018)

(country unknown)	30
Australia	27
USA	22
Poland	18
China	17
United Kingdom	15
Israel	13
Germany	11
Iceland	11
Brazil	8
Italy	8
Netherlands	6
Portugal	6
South Africa	6
Austria	5
France	5
Spain	5
India	5
Hungary	4
Japan	4
Armenia	3
Chile	3
Finland	3
Korea, Rep.	3
New Zealand	3
Slovenia	3
Canada	2
China, Rep. (Taiwan)	2
Thailand	2
Albania	1
Argentina	1
Belgium	1
China (Hong Kong)	1
Greece	1
Iran	1

Ireland	1
Mexico	1
Mongolia	1
Nigeria	1
Singapore	1
Sweden	1
UAE	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>263</b>

The COMLAND Membership list is regularly updated with new members and deletions of others where emails are consistently rejected (bounced) for approximately 2 years.

People are welcome to join COMLAND by sending their name, affiliation, country and email via the “Contact” page on the [www.comland.org](http://www.comland.org) website. Members will be sent emails on an irregular basis advising of meetings and other relevant matters including messages from the IGU.

### III ACTIVITIES

COMLAND continues to be an active IGU Commission, and since the 2008 IGU Congress in Tunis has been productive from the standpoint of the organization of meetings, publications, awards, and in the addition of new Members and Steering Committee Members.

#### **Proposed Iceland Meeting:**

A planned workshop, meeting and field trip in Iceland had been scheduled in mid 2017. This activity was cancelled in early 2017 for institutional reasons. Subsequently, the COMLAND Secretary visited professional colleagues in Reykjavik with the view to scoping a revised activity in SW Iceland in 2019 or 2020. This was privately funded. If this proposed activity receives local approval and support, it is likely that the model for a workshop, meeting and field trip that was successful in recent meetings in may be adopted.

#### **IGU Commission on Agriculture and Land Engineering (AGLE) – Conference 2018:**

COMLAND and the AGLE worked to develop a conference and field trip for a joint Commission meeting in 2018 in Australia. COMLAND undertook preliminary planning for a 4 day field trip in southern Australia that covered land degradation issues and agricultural engineering issues. AGLE’s contribution was to scope institutional arrangements for the conference and meeting facilities. Unfortunately, this activity was cancelled due to institutional problems and AGLE holding their October 2018 meeting in another country.

COMLAND continued scoping and planning for a dedicated COMLAND meeting and field trip in late 2018 using the proposed itinerary from the cancelled joint COMLAND and AGLE activity. This proposed activity was also cancelled because of scheduling difficulties and integration with various academic calendars.

#### **IGU Regional Conference – Quebec Canada (August 2018):**

COMLAND co-hosted a Session with the Commission on Hazard and Risk (CH&R) at the IGU Regional Conference in Quebec, Canada in August 2018. This Session was Chaired by the CH&R.

#### **IGU Thematic Conference – Koper Slovenia (September 2019):**

The COMLAND Steering Committee has agreed to offer sponsorship to support this Conference. This should help young geography researchers attend and contribute to the meeting.

**Other events:**

Proposals for COMLAND meetings and field trips in coming years will be publicized by email and on the ( comland.org ) website when further developed and agreed to by the Steering Committee.

## **IV COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:**

**International Association of Geomorphologists & Indian Institute of Geomorphologists:**

Active collaboration and support of ICG Conference (Delhi 2017) – Chairing of Session S39, participation in field trips and financial sponsorship of ICG for Young Geomorphologists program.

**Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ):**

Following the successful Tasmanian Meeting and field trip (October 2014), COMLAND has maintained liaison with the EIANZ with the view to investigating the potential for future collaborative events.

**Other IGU Commissions:**

COMLAND has a working relationship with the Commission on Hazard and Risk and is developing such relationship with the Commission on Agriculture and Land Engineering.

- COMLAND and the Commission on Hazard and Risk held a successful joint Papers Session at the IAG Delhi Conference in November 2017.
- COMLAND and the Commission on Hazard and Risk held a joint Papers Session at the IGU Quebec Conference in August 2018.
- COMLAND and the Commission on Agriculture and Land Engineering undertook preliminary discussions on holding a joint conference and field trip in late 2018.

## **V PUBLICATIONS**

COMLAND continues to publish papers from its sponsored sessions and conferences, with most appearing in international peer reviewed journals.

A selection of papers from the COMLAND Meeting in Slovenia (June 2016) are being edited and compiled for a special edition of the Journal *Land Degradation & Development*. The edition title will be: “The Role of Historic Impacts on Modern Environmental Processes and Management”.

Publication is expected by 2019. The guest editors are Drs Paul Hudson and Matija Zorn.

## **VI AWARDS:**

Several important contributors to land degradation research have been awarded by COMLAND. The COMLAND Award is intended to express appreciation to individuals or groups for their special contributions to COMLAND and land degradation science. COMLAND’s Premier Award is for Distinguished Research on Land Degradation and is open to both individuals and institutions.

Awards may be granted by the Steering Committee or considered upon submission receipt. Submissions are generally only considered if applicants can demonstrate a track record of supporting COMLAND and its Objectives. Such support may be variable but can include contributions to meetings and related activities.

Membership of COMLAND, like other IGU Commissions, is open to anyone upon request. Such membership is not a specific academic or professional qualification. COMLAND does not have a “Fellow” category of membership.

### **Recent COMLAND Awardees**

- Owen Graham, Australia, 2015
- Matija Zorn, Slovenia, 2016

## **VII WEB SITE**

COMLAND has recently completely updated and revised its own website, which contains information on its structure, activities, past and future meetings. The website was revamped in 2013 and is now maintained on a commercial platform by Owen Graham (Secretary of COMLAND). The address is: [www.comland.org](http://www.comland.org)

The COMLAND website contains information that includes upcoming and past meetings, the Steering Committee, awards, reports and publications.