Editorial

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In this issue of the *JBI*, we present an exciting and provocative symposium on Illuminating Environmental Ethics. Our Associate Editor Environmental and Non-human Animal Ethics, Rob Irvine, has brought together three internationally-renowned researchers in the field, in a dialogue we hope will inspire further debate in the journal's pages. The *JBI* encourages responsive debate and welcomes a variety of forms of reaction to symposia, which can range from a letter to the editor, to commentaries, through to full-length original research essays.

Much like the constitution of the board of this journal, there are aspects of academic endeavour that transcend national boundaries and disciplinary divides. One is the pursuit of excellence. However, what excellence consists in is not something that can be easily defined or agreed upon. International league tables tell us the "top" universities in any given year.

Indeed, a variety of tables based on a range of criteria provide quite different answers to which university produces the leading ground-breaking research, is home to the greatest expertise in a given field or is the most attractive to students. This, at least, has an egalitarian bent to it, allowing an institution that does not appear in the top 200 in one list to claim status on the basis of inclusion in another.

One of the ways of gauging those rankings is on the quantity and quality of research publications produced by the academics at a university. The *JBI* has a strong policy on peer review that is committed to and promotes research excellence. Within that policy we also recognize that the quantification of excellence in a peer-review system is, at least potentially, subjective and we follow best practice in striving for the most rigorous standards of peer-assessment (see <http://velim.med.usyd.edu.au/jbi/policies/index.php>). This becomes all the more important for us because of the interdisciplinary nature of the *JBI*. We believe we have addressed this by establishing a wide range of portfolios in our Associate Editors, each of whom is an established or rising expert in their field, and we welcome proposals for new portfolios and applications for new Associate Editorships. If you are interested in applying to be an Associate Editor, or in putting forward a proposal for a Symposium or Special Issue, please contact the Editor-in-Chief or the Managing Editor.

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