



President's Report

13th November 2013

It was gratifying to know, when taking over the role of President, that I had an experienced and willing Committee to work with and that the former President, Dr Josephine Palermo, had left the organisation in a very sound position both financially and administratively.

This, my first year as President, has been one of consolidation of the good practices we've developed over the past few years but also one where we've explored better ways to provide services to our members. I've also been keen to develop a succession plan for the Committee's various key roles so that long-serving members get a respite from these roles and the Committee continues to be refreshed by new and enthusiastic members.

The Annual Forum and SIG Forum continue to be our flagship professional development activities. Although these continue to offer a meaningful experience for a willing audience, we cannot be complacent in assuming this will always be the case. We should always be open to exploring different ways of meeting our members PD needs.

The AAIR Newsletter and Bulletin communiques have provided regular information relevant to their readers although in some different formats and with some new initiatives in 2013. However AAIR's Journal of Institutional Research (JIR) has been struggling to find a place in the highly competitive publishing market. This is not a sustainable situation and one which will need to be seriously addressed in 2014.

AAIR as a small, narrowly focussed organisation will always struggle to sustain a viable membership and will be constantly under threat of either becoming financially uncompetitive, irrelevant or being subsumed by larger organisations. So it is paramount that we continue to seek ways to remain relevant and to provide a home for the specialised IR fields which AAIR hopes to represent if we are to survive and, dare I say, grow.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Marr', written over a horizontal line.

David Marr

AAIR President 2012-14

Achievements in 2013:

AAIR Executive Committee

The AAIR Executive Committee Was elected at the 2012 AAIR Forum in Terrigal. David de Bellis who had been co-opted onto the Committee from South Australia was formally elected to join the Committee. Andrea Jeffreys from Deakin University also joined the Committee informally representing Victoria. Other members of the Committee were re-elected with Kathie Rabel taking on the role of Vice-President formerly filled by the new President. The Committee will have met on six occasions in 2013 via teleconference and one face-to-face meeting in Perth.



Back Left to Right: Dean Ward (Honorary Secretary), Don Johnston (Committee Member), Jeff Holmes (Committee Member), Kathie Rabel (Vice-President). Front Left to Right: Dave Marr (President), Bruce Guthrie (Committee Member), David De Bellis (Honorary Treasurer), and Andrea Jeffreys (Committee Member).

During 2013 Jeff Holmes' role at QUT changed to the extent that he could no longer fully commit to performing his role as Honorary Treasurer. He has agreed though to stay on the Committee until the 2013 AGM. In his stead, David de Bellis has agreed to take

on the Honorary Treasurer's role until November 2014.

In the June/July Newsletter I wrote: "It's hard to express the appreciation I and the Committee have for the excellent work Jeff has done as Treasurer, taking us from a point where our financial processes were in disarray, despite our strong financial position, to a more stable and sound footing." Again I wish to reiterate my heartfelt 'thanks' to Jeff!

To assist this succession planning notion, Kathie Rabel, AAIR Vice-President, has developed role descriptions for each of the positions on the Committee. These will assist us to inform new Committee members of what's expected of them but also to make clear what role others on the Committee play.

Having more clearly defined role boundaries will assist the efficient running of the Committee. Thanks must go to Kathie for promoting this initiative.

During 2012 & 2013, each of the Datawarehouse/Business Intelligence (DW/BI) and Load Management (LM) Special Interest Group (SIG) mailing lists has been moved into MailChimp. Following on from the development of our News Bulletins in 2012, Liesha Northover (AAIR's administrative support) has developed a '*SIG Bulletin*' which allows us to communicate to our SIG members directly with news pertinent to them.

Craig Napier from the University of Wollongong has agreed to coordinate the DW/BI SIG for the next 12 months taking over

from Andrea Matulick. Andrea had coordinated this group since its inception and for this the Committee is extremely grateful.

AAIR Annual Forum



This year's Annual Forum finds AAIR in Perth, helping the University of Western Australia (UWA) celebrate its 100th Anniversary. The Local Organising Committee has done a fantastic job of putting together what should be a most memorable conference. With keynotes such as Emeritus Professor Alan Robson AM, Hon Dr Elizabeth Constable, David De Carvalho for the Commonwealth Department of Education, and Julie Hare from *The Australian*, the audience is sure to get some wonderful insights into the future of higher education in Australia.

I'm also pleased that Leishman Associates are our event manager for the sixth year in a row, a relationship that is hoped we'll continue to enjoy for at least another year.

From 2014 our colleagues from the Australasian Higher Education Evaluation Forum (AHEEF) will join with the AAIR Annual Forum in Melbourne (dates and venue yet to be confirmed). I look forward to this new collaboration with this group as I believe it will be more than mutually beneficial for both parties.

It is also intended to hold the 2014 Annual Forum adjoining the Higher Education

Compliance and Quality Network (HECQN) Forum to allow members to attend both in the same city on consecutive days. At this stage of discussions, no firm arrangements have been formalised.

AAIR SIG Forum – by Kathie Rabel

Hosted by the University of Western Sydney, the 2013 AAIR SIG Forum and at the Fairmont Resort in the amazing Blue Mountains town of Leura, was a great success with over 80 attendees from all over Australia and New Zealand. The theme, 'Crossing mountains, blazing new trails', seemed apt given this mountains location.

For 2013, we welcomed back Altis as the platinum sponsor, Oracle, Certus Solutions and MIP Australia as Gold sponsors and welcomed for the first time Analytics8 and IBM as silver sponsors. As always, their involvement adds important dimensions to the Forum and we are very appreciative of their involvement.

We all got to enjoy meeting new colleagues and reconnection with others while listening to music and sharing a few drinks and food at the welcome reception the night before the conference officially started.

First up on Day #1 was an official

“Crossing mountains, blazing new trails”

Fairmont Resort, Leura



welcome and keynote address from Professor Janice Reid, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Western Sydney. Over the course of the rest of the day, delegates had 12 sessions to choose from covering such issues

as retention, modelling data warehousing, business intelligence, planning and use of social media.

Thursday concluded with the Forum dinner, where Glen Bell had us all using the playing cards we'd been handed at the door to search the room looking to make the ultimate "poker hand" whilst meeting and talking to new people in the process.

Day #2 also kept us busy with the morning session including an inspiring keynote from Professor Shirley Alexander, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching at University of Technology Sydney. Sessions during the rest of the day focussed on terminology as varied as effective systems, analytics, rapid response, smarter decision-making, agile practise, visualisations, quality assurance and even conquering Mount Everest.

To wrap up the Forum, 'best presenter' prizes were awarded to Craig Napier from University of Wollongong and Jillian Langham from University of South Australia. A special 'thanks' was also given to Kerrin Paterson and Lisa Parsons from UWS for their outstanding organisation of the Forum.

In summary: a great event, well organised in a majestic setting with learned peers and colleagues. One happy vegemite (Dave added this!)

AAIR Website

The AAIR website continues to provide a fantastic resource of the Association's history as well as its current developments. If you've received one of Liesha's *Bulletins* you'll be aware of the number of job opportunities that AAIR pass on to our members. There is continued interest in the 'Opportunities' section of the website with many institutions and recruitment companies utilising this free facility.

Forum papers and presentations continue to be presented through the AAIR website. Other events that are occurring throughout the year either in Australasia or elsewhere overseas are also recorded on the website.

Membership

As of 30 June 2013 the Association has 231 financial members many of whom became members through the AAIR Forum at Terrigal.

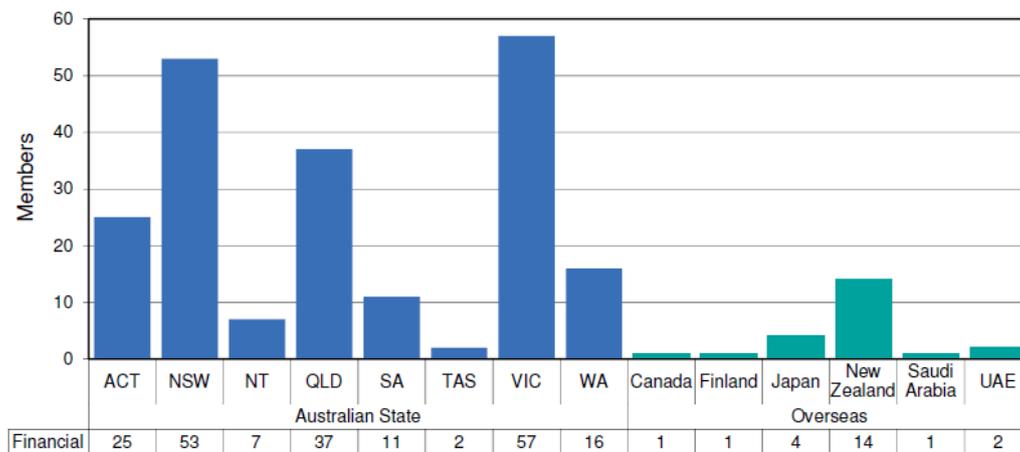


Figure 1: Members by Australian state or country

This year AAIR embarked on a new invoicing method through MYOBLive for membership renewals. 127 invoices were subsequently sent out in May of which approximately 27 people paid by the due date.

In 2014 it is anticipated that the process will be instigated much earlier so that cancellation of membership occurs well before the SIG Forum in July/August.

Special Interest Groups (SIGS) have become a very active part of the Association's activities and provides its members access to resources not available through other networks and at very little cost. So we are keen to continue to support them. As part of the registration fee for this year's SIG Forum in Leura, full registrants were offered AAIR membership for the remainder of 2013. This entitled them to receive member only bulletins, discounts to both AAIR and non-AAIR events such as those provided by Gartner as well as other member benefits.

AAIR Newsletter

The Newsletter continues to be one of the Association's premier communication channels providing AAIR members and distribution list subscribers access to current and relevant information.

During 2013 AAIR's Newsletter editor, Emma Liversidge from Griffith University, has provided a new format and style whilst still providing the information our readers had

enjoyed during Wendy Marchment's term as Editor.

A survey of all Newsletter subscribers was undertaken during September and October. It is hoped to be able to publish the results of that survey by the end of the year.

Journal of Institutional Research (JIR)

Volume 18 Number 1 was published in August 2013 with many of the papers presented at the 2012 Annual Forum at Terrigal making up a large part of that edition. It was hoped to publish two issues of the Journal per year but there just hasn't been the supply of papers to justify another edition. The ranking of this peer-reviewed publication can only increase if our members and peers take the opportunity to publish in JIR.

Sharon Kitt from the University of Ballarat took over the role of JIR Editor in 2013. Sharon's first role was to advise the AAIR Committee of what directions the Journal could go in order to make it genuinely an academic journal worth publishing in. The Committee is still considering her



recommendations.

A survey of all members with respect to the future directions of the Journal will be undertaken early in 2014 to garner members' views of what that future might look like, if any.

Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) Grant

As reported in the 2012 President's Report to the AGM, AAIR, in conjunction with Deakin University and Southern Cross University, was successful in obtaining a \$110,000 research grant from the Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) for an initial 12-month study into 'Tracking Student Cohorts: who is falling through the cracks?'

The study, now complete, had several outcomes:

- Publication of the research study's methodology in the JIR (<http://www.aair.org.au/articles/volume-17-no-1/17-1-tracking-student-success>)
- Publication of the comparative study between Deakin University and Southern Cross University in the Journal of Higher Education Studies titled: 'Improving Student Preparedness and Retention—Perceptions of Staff at Two Universities' (<http://www.aair.org.au/news/hes-article>)



Each Fellowship will have different objectives –

a. The 'Raj Sharma Fellowship' is in recognition of Raj's influence on Institutional Research in Australasia and will be focussed on academic or career advancement in the pursuit of IR knowledge;

b. The 'Zimmer Travel Fellowship' will be to assist an AAIR member to attend an international forum hosted by an AAIR affiliate by contributing toward their travel costs.

The successful applications will be determined by the AAIR Committee. Only one Fellowship can be held for the year by the same person.

Further information and application forms will be available on the AAIR website following the Annual Forum in Perth.

Co-marketing of Conference Events

In 2013, AAIR has continued to endorse conference events organised under Criterion Conferences and Gartner. AAIR provided promotional material for these conferences as well as having its logo displayed on the conference material. Discounts to some of these events were also provided to AAIR members.

In 2014 these co-marketing arrangements will be extended to EduTech Conference events thus putting AAIR's brand in front of the more senior tertiary education managers.



New AAIR Fellowships

AAIR proposes to offer two annual Fellowships to the value to \$1,000 each. Eligibility is restricted to current AAIR Members with at least two years continuous membership. Office holders and members of the AAIR Committee are ineligible to apply for either Fellowship.

David Marr
AAIR President
13 November 2013