



President's Report

11 November 2015

In 2015, the Committee continued its path of strategic planning, meeting in Sydney on the weekend of 23 and 24 May, to finalise work commenced in 2014. In some ways we've approached this rather too slowly, but given people's time constraints, especially in their voluntary capacity, we've taken as much time as was needed and as was available to us.

That said, we have been able to, with the assistance of Dr Daniel Moody, develop a Strategic Plan that we'll be able to work with over the coming decade.

The key elements of the plan are:

Mission: *To advance institutional effectiveness in tertiary education*

Vision: *Be the professional association that has the greatest influence on tertiary education planning and evidence-based decision making in Australasia.*

Values: *AAIR has a commitment to:*

- *contribute and share;*
- *innovation;*
- *inclusiveness and diversity;*
- *professionalism; and*
- *enjoyment and friendliness.*

Balanced Scorecard: measures were developed around the following:

1. Members e.g. satisfaction, engagement, diversity.
2. Financial e.g. annual revenue, costs, cash reserves.
3. Internal business processes (efficiency and quality) e.g. event attendances, website traffic, communications (bulletins, newsletters).
4. Learning and growth e.g. innovation, adapting to changes in the external higher education environment.

In tandem with these overarching statements, the Committee has committed to 3-month rolling projects that hope to add value to our members' experience and ensure that the organisation continues to be relevant and innovative.

One aspect that was discussed at the Planning Meeting in May was whether the organisation's name was still relevant in the tertiary education sector. To test this notion, a survey of members and affiliates was conducted throughout July, from which we received 109 responses.

So what did the results show? In summary:

- 60% of respondents were against changing the name. However that does mean that 40% of respondents considered a name change a reasonable idea;
- The reasons for not changing included: 'it's a well-known brand in Australia'; 'it's affiliation with other international bodies is invaluable'; 'it's costly to rebadge'; 'no real grounds for change offered by the Committee'; 'if it ain't broke, then don't fix it'; and my personal favourite, 'cos you'll just end up changing it back';
- Approximately 50 alternative organisational names were suggested;
- Almost 70% of respondents felt that adding a tagline would be a good idea; and
- Approximately 70 suggestions of an appropriate tagline were proffered.

Despite there being a majority of respondents opting to keep the current name, there was a proportion of respondents who would consider a name change a good idea. It was therefore a useful exercise even if only to reaffirm our membership's view whilst gauging some discontent. We should be doing this every few years, is the lesson I learned from this.

Since the survey was conducted, the Committee has reviewed the results and agreed that there was no need to change the name. It has served us well, but it perhaps needs to be better promoted. One idea was to coin a tagline, and we received a large number of suggestions in that regard from the survey. The Committee deliberated on these

and put their most popular five out to the wider AAIR community in late October.

We have also commenced a project looking at redeveloping the AAIR website to make it more contemporary and to better meet the needs of the membership. This is in tandem with a project to better manage our membership, and another project looking at offering regional professional development events outside of the two annual forums.

By approaching the three projects simultaneously, we can ensure that we end up with an integrated approach that will be both effective and also economical.

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 with new and enthusiastic members. In 2015, we were fortunate to be able to second Milly Taylor from the University of New England onto the Committee.

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 professional development needs. One way that we have been exploring other possibilities is through collaborations with other event providers such as Criterion, Edutech, NCVET, Gartner, Liquid Learning, Tableau and Analytics 8. Through these collaborations AAIR has been able to offer discounts to these events while being able to provide greater exposure to those who may not be aware of AAIR.

One other area where AAIR is looking to refresh itself is in the area of a professional forum organiser. As many would know, Leishman Associates has assisted AAIR with its November Annual Forum since 2008 on a year-by-year basis.

The Committee now feels it is timely to follow due diligence through a tender process. This will give the successful tenderer more continuity and clarity around the future arrangements, something that's been missing in the past. It also means we can do much better forward planning as to where we'll hold the forums over the period of the contract, letting our members know well in advance where and when they'll be.

To this end we've sent out an invitation to tender to a number of event managers who have credentials in running education-based events. Applications closed on 30 October and a select group of members are currently reviewing these applications and will make a recommendation to the Committee. This new contract for providing professional forum management will include event management support for both the Annual Forum and the SIG Forum. The contract will run from the commencement of 2016 through to the close of the 2019 Annual Forum.

The move to also support the SIG Forum has arisen from feedback from the Local Organising Committees (LOC) who, despite having done fantastic jobs in putting together the SIG forums over the past few years, have felt that some assistance from an event manager would have made their job that much easier. Of course we'll try to keep registration costs much the same as in previous years by a gain in efficiencies and by limiting the scope to essential services the contracted party will need to provide.

While we're discussing SIGs, a request to change the name of the DW/BI Special Interest Group was recently approved. The SIG is now known as the DW, BI and Analytics SIG. It was agreed that the addition of 'analytics' more fully describes these complementary areas of special interest.

The AAIR Newsletter and Bulletin communiques continue to provide regular information relevant to our members. Louise Hargreaves from Bond University is AAIR's Newsletter Editor, and she has done a fantastic job in 2015, producing a Newsletter every month. Feedback in 2013 to our Newsletter Survey, suggested a preference for a monthly newsletter, so I'm pleased that Louise has been able to meet that need. And what a juicy read they've become! We hope in 2016 to keep developing our communications channels, so keep an eye out for those.

As I pointed out last year, AAIR's Journal of Institutional Research (JIR) has been struggling to find a place in the highly competitive publishing market. AAIR did not produce an issue of the JIR in 2015, and is unlikely to in the foreseeable future. Despite not wanting to close down this avenue for publication for our members, the reality is that it no longer serves our needs and will no longer be published. Other opportunities for publishing are currently being explored.

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 unviable, irrelevant or of being subsumed by a larger organisation. 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.

Achievements in 2015:

AAIR Executive Committee

The Committee met on six occasions during 2015 via teleconference to discuss the regular business of the organisation, including our strategic projects.

As mentioned earlier, the Committee met at the Holiday Inn, Mascot (Sydney) on 23 and 24 May to finalise our strategic planning process. Dr Daniel Moody from OZemantics again facilitated the 1½ days.

Liesha Northover, AAIR's administrative secretary, continues to provide regular communications through her member's only bulletins, and her more focussed '*SIG Bulletins*', which allows us to communicate to our SIG members directly with news pertinent to them.

Liesha also provides regular bulletins on job opportunities available in the sector, as well as maintaining the AAIR website and members database. And all this in only one day per week!

In 2015, the Executive Committee comprised: myself, Dave Marr (President), Kathie Rabel (Vice-President), Bruce Guthrie (Honorary Secretary), David De Bellis (Honorary Treasurer), with Committee Members being Jeff Holmes, Andrea Jeffreys, Don Johnston, Michael Cudmore and Kerry Martin, with Milly Taylor seconded to the Committee. Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, Michael has had to stand down from the Committee as well as from the Chair of the Load Management SIG. Despite Michael's short time on the Committee, his input was always highly valued. I'm sure Michael will continue to be involved in AAIR events and we hope to see him at those in the future.

AAIR Annual Forum

This year's Annual Forum finds AAIR in Wellington, New Zealand. It's the first time since 1999 that AAIR has strayed across the Tasman to our easterly neighbour, so we're well and truly overdue for a visit. The Local Organising Committee, under Kathie Rabel as Forum Chair, has done a fantastic job of putting together what should be a most memorable conference. With keynotes such as Stephen Few, a leading expert in data visualisation for sense-making and communication, and Professor Steve Maharey, Vice-Chancellor of Massey University (and a former member of the New Zealand Parliament as the Member for Palmerston North and a Senior Cabinet Minister), the Forum is shaping up to be one of the best.

I'm also pleased that Leishman Associates are our event manager for the eighth year in a row and continue to provide great assistance to the LOC.

AAIR SIG Forum

Hosted by the University of Southern Queensland, the 2015 AAIR SIG Forum was another great success with around 80 attendees from all over Australia and New Zealand. Held at the Kingfisher Bay Resort on beautiful Fraser Island, Queensland, the program included keynotes from Cr Gerard O'Connell, Mayor Fraser Coast. The program also included sessions led by: Adrian Karanfilovski, a Business Intelligence Analyst; Alice Evans and Amy (Wai Yee) Wong, Data Analysts in the Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation at UQ; Dr Andy Pleffer, a research data specialist grounded in the tertiary education sector, and many more.

For 2015, we welcomed Altis as the platinum sponsor, with Analytics 8, Cortell Australia and MIP Australia as Gold sponsors. As always, their involvement adds an important dimension to the Forum and we are very grateful for their involvement. By all reports a great event! Thanks to Togamau Te'o and his team from USQ. Great job!

Membership

As of 30 June 2015 the Association had 191 financial members, many of whom became members through the AAIR Forum in Melbourne and the SIG Forum in Brisbane.

Again this year AAIR sent out membership renewals via AAIR's MYOBLive account. In all, 111 invoices were sent out in April, of which 26 were paid. However the other memberships were not cancelled prior to 30 June.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) have become a very active part of the Association's activities and provide 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 last year's SIG Forum

in Brisbane, full registrants were offered AAIR membership for a full year. 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.

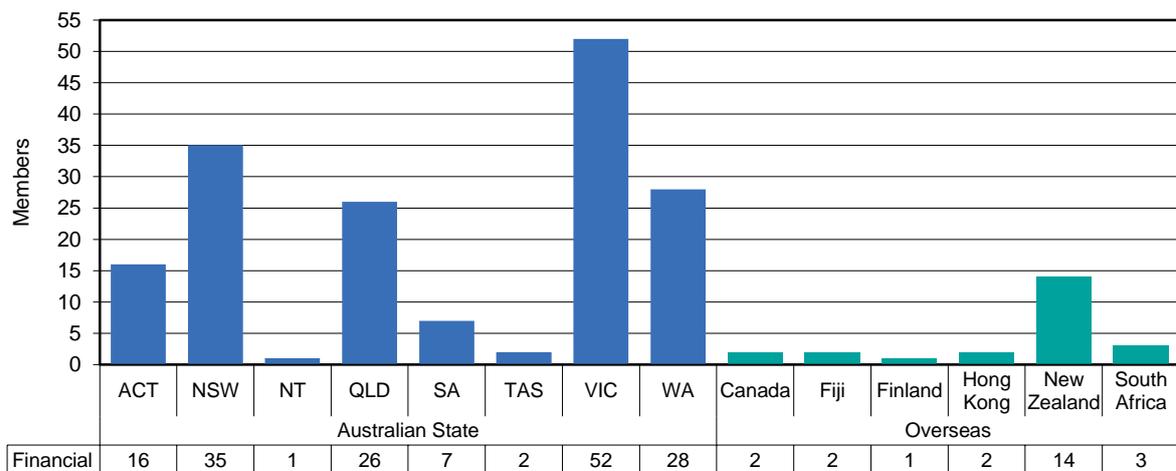
As at 30 June, there were: 160 subscribers to the DW/BI SIGmail group; 96 subscribers to the Load Management SIGmail group; 86 subscribers to the Government Reporting SIGmail group; and 84 subscribers to the Surveys and Evaluation SIGmail group.

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 'Higher Education Jobs' section of the website, with many institutions and recruitment companies utilising this currently free facility.

Forum papers and presentations continue to be published on the AAIR website. Other events that are occurring throughout

Financial Members as at 30 June 2015



the year either in Australasia or elsewhere overseas are also posted on the website.

AAIR Fellowships

AAIR again offered 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.

Each fellowship has a different objective:

- a. The 'Raj Sharma Fellowship' is in recognition of Raj's influence on Institutional Research in Australasia, and is focussed on academic or career advancement in the pursuit of IR knowledge;
- b. The 'Zimmer Travel Fellowship' is to assist an AAIR member to attend an international forum hosted by an AAIR affiliate by contributing toward their travel costs.

David Carroll, from Graduate Careers Australia, was the recipient of the Zimmer Travel Fellowship in 2015. As well as the \$1,000 contributed by AAIR, a further \$1,000, provided by the AIR Travel Grant, was included in the fellowship.

In 2015, there were no applications received for the Raj Sharma Fellowship.

Co-marketing of Conference Events

In 2015, AAIR has continued to endorse conference events organised in collaboration with a number of its partners, including Criterion, Analytics 8, NCVER 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 2015 these co-marketing arrangements included endorsement of EduTECH Conference events, thus putting AAIR's brand in front of the more senior tertiary education managers.



David Marr
AAIR President