



## Monthly e-Newsletter – October, 2010

### What's in this edition?

AAIR Forum .....	1 & 3
Editorial of sorts.....	1
Places to Go, Things to Do .....	2
It Isn't Over Yet.....	4
Newsletter Notes.....	4-7
It is Written .....	5
Opening for AAIR Newsletter Editor .....	6
Notice of AAIR 2010 Annual General Meeting.....	7
For the Poddies, Voddies and Bloggies .....	7
AAIR Committee listing .....	7

### EDITORIAL OF SORTS

I look forward to bumping into many of you at the 2010 AAIR Forum in Geelong, running 10-12 November. Information about the Forum is to your right and on page 3.

I'm afraid the Newsletter this month is a short rations version. Due to a number of other commitments, I haven't had enough room in the space-time continuum to give the Newsletter its usual modicum of TLC. Perhaps less is more!

I am relinquishing my role as Newsletter editor after the November edition. So AAIR is keen to hear from anyone who would like to take up the role. Like me, you could fashion the Newsletter according to your own notions of what a good thing might be, so do give it some thought. A more formal invitation to consider the gig appears on page 6.

Subject to space and relevance to members, the Newsletter runs job vacancies and items on upcoming events. Send anything at all to me at: [rob@sharpwords.com.au](mailto:rob@sharpwords.com.au)

### AAIR Annual Forum

10-12 November 2010

Four Points by Sheraton Hotel,  
Geelong, Victoria

**Our theme for 2010 is:**

**Has institutional research come of age in Australasia?**

The theme invites us to focus on strategic priorities in the tertiary sector. Sub-streams will focus on:

- the equity agenda, 2010 and beyond
- supporting models for academic standards
- improving participation and retention
- improving VET pathways and partnerships.

### The Forum Program

The Forum program is taking shape. You can view it here:

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/aaair2010/downloads/AAIR2010CONFERENCEPROGRAM25AugustFINALFORWEB.pdf>

### Pre Forum Workshops

**On 9 November, three workshops will be held. The workshops are:**

- Survey design, administration and analysis
- Creatively presenting information
- New AAIRies workshop

Information about the Workshops is available at:

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/aaair2010/program.php>

### Special Interest Groups

Four Special Interest Group sessions are scheduled to run during the Forum:

- The AUSSE
- Load Planning
- DEEWR Reporting
- Data Warehousing

**The home page for the 2010 Forum is here:**

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/aaair2010/>

## PLACES TO GO – THINGS TO DO

### **TAE10 Summit**

**8-9 November, 2010**

**Brisbane Mercure**

The good folk from the Voc Ed Learning Group are putting this together for you. The first day is chocabloc with presentations covering everything from assessment practices to online training resources for the recently endorsed TAE10. Day 2 sports a bundle of half day master classes with limited numbers in each. You can attend one of these master classes in the morning, and a second in the afternoon:

- Guidance for trainers & assessors when developing assessment instruments/tools
- Why an assessment mapping matrix is essential
- Developing quality strategies for training and assessing
- The elements of TAE10 that produce a better trainer
- Creating an RPL assessment.

The first day includes a couple of sessions on what's in prospect for the Diploma of Training and Assessment. Summit details are here:

<http://www.velg.com.au/default.asp?PageID=200>

### **AAIR 20th Annual Forum**

**10-12 November, 2010**

**Four Points by Sheraton, Geelong**

The 2010 AAIR Forum is all set to go, and I hope you are set to be there. The Forum will focus on a range of topics, including:

- the equity agenda
- supporting models for academic standards;
- improving participation and retention
- improving VET pathways and partnerships.

The program is nicely settled, and remarkably diverse as always. Pre-forum workshops, papers and Special Interest Group sessions are all listed here:

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/aaair2010/downloads/AAIR2010CONFERENCEPROGRAM25AugustFINALFORWEB.pdf>

The Forum website is here:

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/aaair2010/>

**Register online here:**

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/aaair2010/registration.php>

### **LH Martin Institute 2010 Conference –**

**Building Australia's tertiary education sector:  
Alternative models & their leadership challenges**

**11-12 November 2010**

**Quay West Suites, Melbourne**

The Martin Institute, as belies its mission, is zeroing in on leadership challenges in the emerging tertiary sector. The conference will look at regulation, quality, institutional models, leadership development, teacher development, and more.

Importantly, the conference is also the platform for launching the recently completed report, *VET Leadership for the Future: Contexts, Characteristics and Capabilities*. You can download the report from the conference website:

[http://www.mihelm.unimelb.edu.au/conference\\_events/2010/2010conference.html](http://www.mihelm.unimelb.edu.au/conference_events/2010/2010conference.html)

### **RMIT Accounting Educators' Conference**

**15 November, 2010**

**Emily McPherson Building, RMIT University**

The call for papers closes on 11 October 2010, but it looks like you can expect a varied feast, with suggested topics like these:

- First year transition for accounting students
- Minimum learning outcomes for accounting
- Work integrated learning in accounting
- Educational pathways in accounting.

Conference details are here.

<http://www.rmit.edu.au/accounting/edconference>

### **Middle Years Symposium – Betwixt and Between** **25 November 2010**

**Johnson Auditorium, Pilgrim House, Canberra**

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth is organising this one. The middle years covers the 9-14 age group, and education is one ingredient of many that need thoughtful integration if kids are to get their growing done confidently.

Symposium details are here:

<http://www.aracy.org.au/index.cfm?pageName=Symposium>

### **World Universities Forum**

**14-16 January, 2011**

**Hong Kong Institute of Education**

And in case you aren't sure what to do with your summer holidays, the World Universities Forum might fill in the gap for you. Details here:

<http://ontheuniversity.com/conference-2011/>

# AAIR Annual Forum

## 10-12 November 2010

### Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, Geelong, Victoria

#### THE FORUM THEME

Has institutional research come of age in Australasia?

#### THE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- **Hon John Dawkins AO**, Chair, Australian Qualifications Framework Council, and Chair of the National Quality Council
- **Dr Carol Nicoll**, CEO, Australian Teaching and Learning Council
- **Dr Rod Carr**, Vice-Chancellor, University of Canterbury

---

#### THE PROGRAM

Papers to be presented include:

- Measuring low socio-economic status - Phillip Aungles, DEEWR
- Beyond Bradley: equity for postgraduates - Margaret Heagney, Group of Eight
- Data & Information Management - Student Insight & Analytics - making data driven decisions - Bhavesh Chavda, Deloitte
- Student feedback surveys - an holistic approach to maximising their value to staff and students - Anne Young, University of Newcastle
- Institutional Research in Australasia: coming of age or coming unstuck? - Martin Hanlon, UTS
- The Local & the Global – Responsive Pathways for Youth into Box Hill TAFE - Chelsea Rodd, Box Hill Institute
- The Development of the Australian Graduate Survey Historical Data File - Bruce Guthrie, Graduate Careers Australia
- Marked for Success - Secondary school performance & university achievement - Erik Brogt, University of Canterbury

**Read the full Forum Program here:**

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/air2010/downloads/AAIR2010CONFERENCEPROGRAM25AugustFINALFORWEB.pdf>

---

#### THE BELLS AND WHISTLES

**Three Pre-Forum Workshops, to be held on 9 November:**

◇◇◇ Survey design, administration and analysis ◇◇◇ Creatively presenting information ◇◇◇  
◇◇◇ New AAIRies workshop ◇◇◇

**Special Interest Group sessions scheduled during the conference:**

- The AUSSE
- Load Planning
- DEEWR Reporting
- Data Warehousing

---

#### THE REGISTRATION DETAILS:

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/air2010/registration.php>

---

#### THE SPONSORS

**We are grateful to the 2010 AAIR Forum Sponsors:**

| Australian Corporate Software | ANU | Callista Software Services | University of Newcastle  
| Deakin University | eXplrance | Graduate Careers Australia | University of South Australia

## IT ISN'T OVER YET

Funny how some debates just keep on keeping on.

'In the realm of education reform there were similar rumblings in the late 1960s about the need to start moving the study of Asia closer to the centre of Australian school curricula. As Minister for Education and Science in the late 1960s, Malcolm Fraser encouraged the teaching of Asian history and languages, which he felt would "lead to a wider understanding of Asian people, and of our own future". As Phillip Ayres [biographer of Malcolm Fraser] has noted, those last five words were "crucial" and pointed to the sustained effort in Canberra at this time to "adapt Australia to an Asian future". Others were more definitive – indeed more blunt – in proposing similar shifts. The Minister for the Interior, Peter Nixon, caused a minor furore in 1969 when he said that European languages and history should be dumped in favour of Asian. "Now is the time", he intoned, "for us to place the War of the Roses and similar ancient European events among the curios of bygone days". Australians should "throw overboard" the teaching of Latin, Greek, French and German and teach Japanese, Chinese and Malay.'

*The unknown nation: Australia after Empire*, James Curran and Stuart Ward, 2010, Melbourne University Press.

## NEWSLETTER NOTES

### 1. Global celebration of statistical prowess

Tanya Tietze from USC's Strategic Information and Analysis Unit thought AAIRies would like to know that 20 October has been declared, by the UN General Assembly, as World Statistics Day. The UN Secretary-General had this to say about you:

- [Statistical experts] carry out an essential public service – one that promotes peace and democracy by giving citizens reliable & impartial public information about their communities. Their core values – service, integrity and professionalism – deserve full support in all nations.

The official World Statistics Day website is here:  
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/wsd/Default.aspx>

The ABS is celebrating:  
[http://unstats.un.org/unsd/wsd/docs/australia\\_wsd\\_event.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/wsd/docs/australia_wsd_event.pdf)

Statistics New Zealand is celebrating:  
[http://unstats.un.org/unsd/wsd/docs/NewZealand\\_wsd\\_event.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/wsd/docs/NewZealand_wsd_event.pdf)

## 2. How are we going?

In September, the ABS released the 2010 iteration of Measures of Australia's Progress (MAP) a set of indicators on social, environmental and economic matters. You'll have fun here. I did. Percentage of the population with tertiary qualifications, for example. OECD average – 27.5%. Here's how we stack up against a few others:

- Italy – 13.6%
- Germany – 24.3%
- UK – 31.8%
- Australia – 33.7%
- US – 40.3%
- New Zealand – 41.0%
- Canada (top of the table) – 48.3%

This is the way to MAP:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/1370.0>

## 3. Accounting for the future

*Accounting Education at a Crossroad in 2010* is jointly published by The Institute of Chartered Accountants, and UniSA's Centre for Accounting, Governance and Sustainability. There are ten chapters by accounting academics from around the wide brown land. It picks up all manner of lively issues – mass higher education, commercialisation in universities, academic standards, generic skills development, professional accreditation. All with an accounting twist, but much is relevant across disciplinary boundaries. Find it here:

[http://www.charteredaccountants.com.au/files/documents/Accounting%20Education%20at%20a%20crossroad%20in%202010%20Publication\\_Web.pdf](http://www.charteredaccountants.com.au/files/documents/Accounting%20Education%20at%20a%20crossroad%20in%202010%20Publication_Web.pdf)

## 4. If you ask me

Lively debate around the traps about the advent of the My Lecturer website. The rationale offered by the initiators is pretty uncomplicated:

- Some of us have paid for our own courses. Some of us will pay for our education through the HECS scheme. Others have been helped by parents. ... Current and flexible teaching techniques, practical and up-to-date content, cutting edge theory and the use of modern technology is important to our tertiary experience. We communicated via facebook and decided that there should be a forum for Australian students to rate lecturers and subjects so that new students can make better choices.

MyLecturer is here:  
<http://mylecturer.net.au/>

## 6. Size matters

The Cornell Higher Education Institute, alias CHERI, has released a paper titled 'The impact of class size and number of students on outcomes in higher education'. You probably ought to have a good look at it – when you take into account the double-spacing and the end matter, you are really only looking at about 8 pages of your time.

Here's a bit of the conclusion to snare your attention:

- ... the analysis above reveals that class size and student load primarily influence student outcomes by altering certain aspects of courses that students find beneficial and helpful in learning. For example, large class sizes and higher student loads are correlated with less critical and analytical thinking, less clarity in class presentations, and lower ratings on the instructor's ability to stimulate student interest. In turn, these course and instructor attributes are positively related to students' course assessments.

The paper is here:

[http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/cheri/upload/cheri\\_wp136.pdf](http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/cheri/upload/cheri_wp136.pdf)

### IT IS WRITTEN

Agaat is a cracker of a novel. In fact, it's a row of penny bungers strung together by a fuse. The novel explodes every now and then, and in between times there's a slow, fizzing silence. It tells the story of how a nation is negotiated, person to person.

'Come and stand here in front of me, you're big enough to learn to handle sharp objects.

'I take her hands in mine, the small hand in my right hand. I press the whetting rod against her body, the strong hand holds the knife, I show her the stroke, it must sing, I say, come let's make the knives sing!

'Why, she asks, do my hands feel as if they're asleep for hours after I've been sharpening?

'That shows you're doing it right, it means the knowledge is going into you, into your flesh and into your bones so that you won't forget the lesson: You shall know a good kitchen by the edges of its knives, a farm by the sharpness of its shares and scythes.'

- Agaat, Marlene van Niekerk, Tin House Books, 2010.

## 7. The book is moving on

College of Engineering at The University of Texas at San Antonio has announced the first bookless library on a US university campus. The media release says:

- Instead of storing printed volumes, the library offers students a rapidly growing collection of electronic resources including 425,000 e-books and 18,000 e-journal subscriptions. Skilled science and engineering librarians are available during library hours to help students who need research assistance.

And lots of interesting learning spaces, too, by the sounds of it. Here's the media statement:

<http://utsaengineering.tumblr.com/post/1093104146/utsa-opens-nations-first-bookless-library-on-a>

## 8. The book is moving online

I mentioned in a recent newsletter that Monash Uni had set up a new publishing house – Monash University Publishing. The new enterprise will publish books online and in print. And here is one of its first offerings – *Closing the Gap in Education?: Improving Outcomes in Southern World Societies*, edited by Ilana Snyder and John Nieuwenhuysen. You can buy a hard copy for \$34.95, or download it for nix here:

<http://books.publishing.monash.edu/apps/bookworm/view/Closing+the+Gap+in+Education%3F57/57/xhtml/frontmatter02.html#frontmatter02>

## 9. A higher education almanac

Universities UK has released the tenth edition of *Patterns of higher education institutions in the UK*. I think we could do with something like this in Oz. Essentially it's an almanac that charts the tides in UK higher ed. Given the state of play in the UK at the moment, next year's edition of *Patterns* should make for interesting reading. But for now, I'm pleased to tell you that:

- Enrolments in philosophy have more than doubled over the last ten years.
- For the fourth time since these figures were first published, mathematics itself again shows an increase in enrolments significantly above the average (90 per cent). Statistics also shows a modest absolute increase.

There is any amount of data in tables and charts to keep AAIRies entertained:

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Documents/PatternsOfHigherEducationInstitutionsInTheUK.pdf>

## 10. Fair to middling

Andrew Norton continues to offer me plenty to think about. His blog post for 15 September reprises his earlier expressed concern that focussing equity programs on those from the lowest SES quartile was mistaken. There's not much difference in terms of educational attainment between the lowest and the second lowest quartile and we should target that 50%. Norton refers to a fascinating paper by Mick Coelli from Melbourne Uni, titled 'The forgotten second quartile: parental income and youth post-secondary education enrolment in Australia'.

Coelli notes that: 'The second lowest quartile has participation rates equally as low as the lowest quartile, in 2001 and 2006 in particular. A focus purely on the lowest quartile may be at the expense of second quartile youth, who may be equally in need of assistance. There is suggestive evidence that parental education may be driving these results, with equally low parental education levels in the lowest two parental income quartiles.'

Norton's post is here, with a link to Coelli's paper: <http://andrewnorton.info/2010/09/15/uni-equity-policy-misses-the-target/#more-4587>

## 11. Fair enough

In August, the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) released its Equity Blueprint, *Creating Futures: Achieving Potential through VET*. Submissions were called for by 10 September, so if this is the first you've heard it then I'm afraid you've missed that deadline. More to come, obviously, but the Blueprint has marked out six areas for reform:

- Adopting a sustainable investment approach to funding VET
- Measuring and reporting performance in terms of how the system deals with those who experience disadvantage
- Building the capability of the VET workforce
- Embedding support for foundation skills development
- Embedding pathway planning and partnerships as part of the VET system
- Listening to the voice of the learner when designing our system and continuously improving its services.

The Blueprint is here:

[http://www.nveac.tvetaustralia.com.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/54025/EQUITY\\_BLUEPRINT\\_20\\_August.pdf](http://www.nveac.tvetaustralia.com.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/54025/EQUITY_BLUEPRINT_20_August.pdf)

## Opening for AAIR Newsletter Editor

### Australasian Association for Institutional Research

AAIR is seeking an Editor for the Association's monthly Newsletter. The current Editor, Rob Sheehan, finishes in the role in November this year and it is hoped that a new Editor could commence early in 2011.

The incoming Editor would be encouraged to take the Newsletter in new directions – to put a personal stamp on the Newsletter. The key for AAIR is that the content keeps our members informed and is of interest to our broad readership which now numbers around 540.

We are open to your ideas and happy to discuss how AAIR can best support the incoming Editor in the role.

If you are interested in the Editor's role, please contact by email or phone either:

- Josie Palermo – AAIR President  
[josephine.palermo@deakin.edu.au](mailto:josephine.palermo@deakin.edu.au)  
Tel: 03-5227 7840

or

- Dean Ward – AAIR Secretary  
[d.ward@ecu.edu.au](mailto:d.ward@ecu.edu.au)  
Tel: 08-6304 2902

## 11. Little Red Book

For the first time, Treasury's briefing to the incoming Commonwealth government has been released. It's well worth reading – and you can spend some idle time wondering what's underneath the blacked out bits of text! There's a section on labour force participation skills that may be worth your attention. Universities get a passing mention, and schools a little more than that. VET gets a bold heading, part of which reads as follows:

- The VET sector (with the exception of Victoria), suffers from tight supply-side constraints that prevent providers from responding effectively to shifts in industry and student demand. This is exacerbated by rigidities in the market and limited contestability of funding.

You can access the Red Book in bits here – the section referred to above is in Part 2, pp 33-34:

[http://www.treasury.gov.au/documents/1875/PDF/Red\\_Book\\_Part\\_2\\_Redacted.pdf](http://www.treasury.gov.au/documents/1875/PDF/Red_Book_Part_2_Redacted.pdf)

## 12. Which skills? Where? When?

Forecasting skill needs is a torridly difficult task. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training has established a network of folk who are grappling with it. Skillsnet, as the website will tell you, welcomes researchers and experts active in early identification of skill needs and forecasting or in the transfer of research results on future skill requirements into policy and practice.

There are links here to Skillsnet projects and papers:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/networks/skillsnet/index.aspx>

## 13. Pick a learning management system

You never know what the folk at the Australian Flexible Learning Framework will do next. Last month, they released a product profile called 'Choosing a LMS that's right for you'. It's a quick run down on the virtues of Janison, Moodle and Blackboard. Here you go:

<http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/content/product-profile-choosing-lms-that%E2%80%99s-right-you>

## Notice of Annual General Meeting Australasian Association for Institutional Research

2010 Annual General Meeting  
10.00am-10.45am  
Friday 12th November, 2010

Four Points by Sheraton  
10-14 Eastern Beach Road  
Geelong Victoria Australia

### Agenda

1. Attendance, Apologies and Proxies
2. Confirmation of Minutes of 2009 AGM
3. President's Report
4. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement
5. Election of President & Committee (two year term)
6. Planning for 2011 AAIR Forum
7. General Business
8. Next Meeting
9. Closure

Dean Ward  
Hon Secretary

If you are unable to attend, you can submit a Proxy Form, which is downloadable from:

[http://aaair.org.au/Assets/2010\\_08\\_30%20Notice%20of%20AGM%20and%20Proxy%202010.pdf](http://aaair.org.au/Assets/2010_08_30%20Notice%20of%20AGM%20and%20Proxy%202010.pdf)

## 14. Research influencing teaching practice

Via Australian Policy Online, I came across a beautiful paper by Maryann Brown of Ballarat Uni, titled 'Look both ways: Working to develop a professional learning culture', presented to the 2009 Australian Curriculum Studies Association Biennial Conference. An education academic who headed back to a school teaching role, she ponders on the challenges of linking research outcomes to day-to-day teaching practice. Bridging the theory-practice divide, or gap as I prefer to call it.

It's an even-handed, exploratory, generous paper, and her observations are as relevant to tertiary education teachers as they are to school teachers. A recommended read:

<http://www.acsa.edu.au/pages/images/Maryann%20Brown-%20ACSA%20Paper%202009-%20final.pdf>

I'm guessing you know of Australian Policy Online. If not, go here and sign up to the regular updates:

<http://www.apo.org.au/>

## FOR THE PODDIES, VODDIES AND BLOGGIES

On ABC Radio National's Ockham's Razor, Jennifer Riggs considers the importance of giving young learners the opportunity to be hands on learners. She notes ruefully that the lecture has 5% efficacy in effective retention of information. And notes mischievously that slapstick rates at 80%.

Here you go:

[http://mpegmedia.abc.net.au/rn/podcast/2010/06/orr\\_20100613.mp3](http://mpegmedia.abc.net.au/rn/podcast/2010/06/orr_20100613.mp3)

## AAIR Committee – 2010

### President:

Josie Palermo, Lecturer, School of Psychology, Deakin University

### Vice President:

Dave Marr, Special Projects Officer, Statistical Services, ANU

### Treasurer:

Jeff Holmes, Manager, Load Forecasting, QUT

### Secretary:

Dean Ward, Manager, Strategic Information Services, ECU

### General Committee members:

Bruce Guthrie – Research Manager, Graduate Careers Australia

Don Johnston – Institutional Research Officer, Southern Cross University

Andrea Matulick – Project Manager, Cognos Migration, UniSA

Kathie Rabel, Manager, Institutional Analysis, Victoria University of Wellington

Rob Sheehan – Consultant, editor, writer