Newsletter,
Welcome 2013

March 2013

Australasian Association for Institutional Research

President's Update

by Dave Marr

Welcome to 2013! This year sees the start of several new directions for AAIR. As you've probably noticed, the AAIR Newsletter has a brand new format thanks to our new and enthusiastic Newsletter editor, Emma. And one of the new aspects I'm hoping to introduce to each Newsletter is an update on what's happening with AAIR that are keeping the Executive Committee busy.

At the AAIR Forum in Terrigal we began discussing the development of a *Survey and Evaluation Special Interest Group (SIG)* that explores issues beyond the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) which Bruce Guthrie has championed and will continue to do so in that specific space. To this end, AAIR have been having on-going discussions with the organisers of the *Australian Higher Education Evaluation Forum* (AHEEF). Both AAIR and AHEEF see advantages in combining our two annual Forums and maintaining the themes of interest to each of our members. Of course arrangements for separate Forums in 2013 are well underway. More discussions will be had before we decide which way to head from 2014 and we'd appreciate any feedback that members would care to make.

AAIR is also interested in supporting our colleagues in **quality and risk management** by establishing a SIG around their issues. A session at last year's Forum was also trialled

to seek interest in this area. More work needs to be done in this space and I'll keep you appraised of what might be developing there.

AAIR continues its support of **Gartner's Business Intelligence & Information Management Summits**. Members will receive a discounted rate to attend these two day events. These strategic relationships allow AAIR to offer its members access to a range of relevant events that we could not hope to stage by ourselves. Keep an eye on the **Current Events** page on the AAIR website for further opportunities.

Shortly we hope to be running a **survey** of our members seeking your input into how you'd like your Association to move forward over the next two to three years. We'd be very grateful for your contributions when that hits your inbox.

Liesha Northover, AAIR's administrator, and Andrea Jeffries, our newest Committee member, have co-opted Michael Rothery from UTS to assist us in **streamlining our membership database**. It will probably take 2013 to get our systems in order, but I'm confident that in 2014 we'll be in a much stronger position in understanding who our members are and more importantly, their past history with AAIR.

Who Are We?

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

The Journal of Institutional Research has been providing an outlet for our members to have their works published in a peer-reviewed journal since its inception in the early 1990s. For a number of years (up until 2003) AAIR published a May and a September/October

issue. Since then we've struggled to publish two issues per year (except for 2011) due to the lack of contributions. Elsewhere in this Newsletter I make a plea for you to take the opportunity to publish those good things that you're doing. Our Journal provides you with an exclusive Forum to present your work to your peers. Can I encourage you to make that effort as the future of JIR is not assured without your contributions. So they're just few of the things the AAIR Committee are managing on your behalf. As you can see we're trying hard to find more and better ways for you to gain the most from your membership. It's your Association, so help us help you; feel free to give us your feedback, new ideas, offers to get involved. I'd encourage you to do so.

David Marr
President

Bron Kershaw:
Business Intelligence Analyst at Griffith University – hard at work but always smiling!

Introducing…
Bronwyn Kershaw

One of my ideas in beginning this newsletter was to profile an Institutional Research professional in each edition. The profile is intended to connect faces to names, showcase strengths and development as an Institutional Researcher, and bring the community together. If you know of an admirable IR professional please contact me via the editor email (editor@aair.org.au). If you think you have an interesting and valuable journey to share please don't be shy in self-nomination either.

Name: Bronwyn (Bron) Kershaw

Current Position: *Business Intelligence Analyst* in the Business Intelligence and Corporate Budgeting team in the Office of Planning & Financial Services at Griffith University.

Education:
- B Business Marketing & Economics (she tells me these disciplines fit surprisingly well together!)
- Masters in Information Systems

Career history:
Bron's journey into Business Intelligence and Higher Education is an interesting one.

 "*I've always personally enjoyed studying and that's influenced my belief in continuous education*". Bron tells me

she loves to work in Higher Education (nerd alert!).

As an Undergraduate student, Bron was employed part-time in an online customer support role for international students, so 10 years later when she saw the advertisement at Griffith she was enthusiastic to once again work in a University environment.

By that stage Bron had embarked on careers spanning Office Management, Retail Sales, Corporate Account Management before being aligned with the Business Intelligence team at VITA Group due to her experience and skills in reporting. As a Project and Reporting Officer, Bron was introduced to Cognos 7 (and then 8, though she now works in 10), and was fortunate to receive some great mentoring.

In the three years since joining Griffith Bron has become an expert on applications and admissions data, student load, and she's further developed her skills in TM1 and Cognos Framework Manager and Report Studio.

Where does Bron go for information and help?
She's lucky to have a team around her with broad experiences and knowledge, and on a wider scale has a great network of people that she has connected with at the IBM Cognos forum and AAIR forums, as well as external contacts at Admissions Centres and systems/software experts.

What's the future for Business Intelligence?

"*Analysis and reporting is becoming vitally important; no matter the size of the organisation, open access to strategic decision supporting information is essential*", Bron believes. She has observed indispensable business knowledge becoming increasingly transparent at all levels of an organisation.

What would you do if you were VC?

"*If I were VC I'd love to continue to be part of the Griffith community, understand the University at the ground level.*"

What's the best thing about AAIR?
"They enable collegiality within a sector that requires it most."

And the forum?
 "It's great to be able to share experiences, difficulties, and most of all, successes with like-minded professionals that understand the industry and it's challenges."

Joined AAIR: 2011.

QUIRKY BRON FACTS

Bron is a do-a-holic! In her spare time, aside from working full time, she is studying three subjects in her final semester of her Masters, tutoring a first year management concepts subject, and preparing for her first half marathon!

Congratulations to Bron on her recent engagement too!

Higher Education@home

by Emma Liversidge

1. What are the potential impacts of a **demand driven system**? Many authors since the system was proposed have produced a varied and interesting list. **The Australian** recently released an article suggesting the demand driven system challenged entry standards "rendering published rankings increasingly irrelevant" as bonus point schemes and early entry offers explode.

2. Do we engage our brightest and best in to a profession in education? An article in *The Conversation*, "**Standards will slide while teacher education is used as a cash cow**", highlights sliding ATARs as a result of the discipline being used as a cash cow. Separate to the reported drop in ATARs, I wonder how Australia is inspiring high quality potential teachers in to the field? Not to mention how we reward, develop and recognise them once there. Perhaps I've missed the suave marketing and engagement campaigns, and the need for greater cultural emphasis on teaching as a profession. In a nice turn of events, the government then announced increased testing to ensure quality students within the education sector. In The Conversation an array of feedback from people in the discipline provide some good perspective on where to focus efforts and the current structural problems.

3. You had me at "**abandon endless growth and return to the teaching/research ideal**". The *University of Adelaide* claims to be embarking on that journey. If only I could inspect the inner workings of such a plan.

4. Dr Jane Lomax-Smith's Base Funding Review Report did well to effectively articulate the strengths and opportunities for improvement in funding. Constraining costs and increasing efficiencies are some of the key arguments for the government largely rejecting the **Jane Lomax-Smith Base Funding Review report**. While generally not surprised by the Government's lack of foresight, concern remains over a sustainable future for Universities. The Scan (Tertiary Sector News & Views website) has a good wrap up on sentiment over the response.

5. *Universities Australia* has recently launched a policy agenda to "provide a road map for a smarter, stronger and more prosperous Australia by building on Australia's comparative advantage in higher education". The agenda lists 4 key themes:
   a. *Increase participation*
   b. *Develop a globally engaged university sector*
   c. *Further build a powerful research and innovation system*
   d. *Improve efficiency, investment and regulatory burden.*

   TV advertisements have accompanied the launch which are designed to emphasise the importance of the sector for the country and economy. If you've noticed the Ad, you'll know the statistic: "**Australia ranks 25th out of 29 advanced economies for public investment in the university sector**". It'll be interesting to see if a public response can be generated from this initiative.

6. Want to nominate professionals leading in best practice? Consider the **ATEM/Campus Review Best Practice Awards** which are free to members and non-members.

7. *Cultural dimesions of Indigenous participation in vocational education and training: new perspectives* is a recently released study by NCVER. The report "discusses the links between cultural identity and current participation in education, and the benefits Indigenous Australians derive from education and training".

8. Mixed reactions have arrived with the announcement of an Australian version of the **EU's profiling tool U-Map**. U-Map, in a bid to reduce sector obsession with research biased rankings could be in place using publicly available data in 2013. Expect a policy briefing in April from LH Martin.

9. The **Survey of Australian Employers** is currently collecting the views of 9,000 employers from all sized organisations and sectors. The survey results will be published on NCVER's website in late 2013 in *Australian vocational education and training statistics: Employers' use and views of the VET system*.

10. International Education Advisory Council released *Australia – Educating Globally*, a report which covers seven key issues facing Australia's international education sector. The Government is now considering the report which will help inform the development of a five year strategy to ensure sustainability and quality of the international education sector in Australia. Some healthy projections from this report should be welcome news across education.

Need a MOOC fix?

by Emma Liversidge

The media must love Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), almost as much as universities, right?! If you've got a MOOC fetish, or you haven't yet investigated this worldwide phenomena below are a couple of recent articles.

"Coursera announces fee-based verified courses" by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* describes how Coursera is planning to tackle issues of student identity in course completion and certification.

And as a follow up, "Coursera to fight online cheating – but do biometrics even work?" article in *The Conversation*.

"Universities seek copyright law reform to enable MOOCs" by Australia's own *The Conversation* discusses the law reform required for Australian universities to compete, an issue seemingly noted by Opposition Leader, Tony Abbott.

Georgia State University to Grant Course Credit for MOOCs, one of the early pioneers to begin testing credit for MOOC learning options.

Are you a Google search expert? You will be after taking the Google MOOC on power searching!

For information on the way universities are adapting, or not, to the spread of MOOCs in America, Britain, Europe and Australia subscribe to the Observatory on Borderless Education. The report, and the latest development on MOOCs is outlined in University World News.

The NMC Horizon Report > 2013 Higher Education Edition, released annually, identifies emerging technologies expected to influence learning and teaching over the next five years. **MOOCs** and **Tablet computing** are the two final picks for adoption of one year or less. **Games and Gamification**, and **Learning Analytics** come in next in the two to three years, while **3D printing** and **Wearable Technology** is noted for four to five years.

When considering a MOOC – don't mistake brand for quality. While Universities around the world are hopping on the MOOC bandwagon, this article warns it is risky to assume that a university brand is a surrogate for course quality.

To MOOC or not to MOOC? Nigel Thrift, in an article in The Chronicle, suggests that

MOOCs are likely to encourage most elite universities to think even more carefully about any expansion of their online or offline undergraduate education, and that MOOCs will become a relatively small part in what he calls "Big Ed".

One of the big questions surrounding the MOOC conversation relates to money. Apparently EdX has already created such a plan for making money and sharing it with its partners, now it is time to see the money start rolling in. Looks like ANU has been persuaded as they join the MOOC rush with edX partnership. Coursera and edX now have established links across the globe including Australia, Canada, Europe, Hong Kong, Japan, Mexico, and Singapore, while signing up more American universities.

9th out of 10

Analytics Top Priority for IT This Year: "If you want a well-paid career in IT, it pays to develop your skills in analytics and big data", and "while analytics tops the list of technologies, it only comes in at number 9 in the list of business priorities for CIOs". Lifehacker article cites information sourced from *Gartner*.

$6.2 billion

The government's increased participation and attainment targets have been suggested to lead notable increases to "the amount of student debt that will never be repaid to government... as increasing numbers enter universities under the new 'demand driven' system of uncapped places." The Australian

Saving Excel Worksheets as PDFs? Use a Macro!

The Association for Institutional Research posted this useful and time saving tip on their website. See their Tech Tips site for further ideas.

Looking for some training and development?

See our Training and Development webpage focused on training for institutional researchers.

Data Scientiest = sexy!

According to an article in the Harvard Business Review, the role of Data Scientist is the *sexiest job of the 21st Century*!

Technology and Academia

Excerpt: "**Middle-aged history professor gets Twiter account; makes one tweet before losing login information.**"

Warning: this article is a humourous take on technology in academia, "Recent 'Technology in Education' Articles You May Have Missed" by Kerry Soper from Brigham Young University, USA.

Seeking another opportunity in Institutional Research? Try our Opportunities webpage for current vacancies in the profession

JIR: your journal

by Dave Marr
President

As stated in the Presidents Report, the Journal of Institutional Research has offered AAIR members a conduit through which they can publish their works in a peer-reviewed journal since 1991. From 1991 to 2003, AAIR published two issues per year; one in May and another in September/October. However since 2003 we've published only one issue per year (except for 2011) due to the lack of submissions.

During 2013 it is hoped that we can return to publishing a May and an October issue of JIR but that can only occur if we get people contributing their work. It is hoped that we'll shortly have a new JIR Editor appointed whose initial role will be to stimulate enough interest in submitting to the Journal that we'll be able to publish twice yearly. Papers from the AAIR Annual Forum are considered for submission to the Journal and for the past few years these have been the main contributions to the Journal. Of course we'd like that opportunity to remain but we'd also like to encourage everyone to consider contributing at other times of the year.

The Journal is open to receive papers on a wide range of topics of interest to our members, both those dealing with the broader aspects of IR, but also those practices and techniques that you are developing all the time that are innovative and which your peers can learn from. And of course there are opportunities to explore topics pertaining to each of the SIGs: datawarehousing and business intelligence; government reporting; load planning; surveys and evaluations; quality and risk management. The possibilities are there for you.

JIR does not currently have a high impact factor and so many academics won't choose the JIR to publish in for that reason. But generally AAIR members aren't as concerned with 'impact factors' as our academic colleagues. The Journal though does provide those new to writing papers and publishing to submit their work, to have it peer reviewed and to use it to polish their skills.

It may surprise many that Journal papers are regularly viewed on the AAIR website more so than any other item or page on that site. The topics that we write on are of interest to many and not just in Australasia. So there's a willing audience out there if we so choose to engage with them.

The AAIR Annual Forum provides you with a friendly forum in which to bounce your ideas off your peers before sitting down to write and I would like to encourage you to do so.

I'm very committed to ensuring the continuation of the Journal, publishing two issues per year (in May and October) and providing opportunities to AAIR members that other Journals may not offer. But I need a commitment from the IR practitioners in Australasia and beyond to support me in maintaining a journal that is contributed to by us and which is for us. Only in that way can we hope to keep it operating. This is my plea to you.

David Marr

President

Higher Education Abroad

by Emma Liversidge

EDUCATION STATISTICS

"E-9 countries are home to 54% of the world's population and account for 42.3% of out-of-school children, 58% of illiteracy among youth (aged 15-24) and 67% of adult illiterates (aged 15+), two-thirds of whom are women."

Some great information can be found on education systems around the world via the **GSV EDU Education Sector Factbook 2012**

1. "**Denmark's student finance is up for reform**, with completion rates and the proportion of the total spend on education devoted to student loans the key targets." University World News
2. India: "**Growing access without investing in quality won't work**" University World News describes relieving access issues pre-tertiary education and how this has led to a significant strain on quality. This concept is close to my heart as Australian universities work to achieving attainment targets in a challenging, competitive and changing environment.
3. "**The race for excellence – A marathon not a sprint**", article by Jamil Salmi and re-edited in the *University World News.* Using wine as an analogy the article discusses the mature versus developing institution topic, and those pesky rankings. The article touches on innovation and good management of young institutions.
4. For further insight in to the US Higher Education sector see the Association for Institutional Research webpage **IR In The Know**. Got any great time saving tips? Email editor@
5. "Adaptability to do more with less will be the hallmark of success in 2013", according to an article in *University World News*. "**Three higher education trends to watch for in 2013**", list funding, increasing regulation for risk management and quality assurance, and MOOCs as the biggest influencers this year.
6. In a bid to increase aboriginal participation in higher education, **Canada's universities are "launching a new, online tool to make it easier for aboriginal students to succeed in obtaining a higher education**" – *The Gazette*.
7. US is well known for the significant cost to students to attend higher education,

as well as one of the most innovative countries in the world. **Marry high student fees and innovation together** and you have Pave, an organization who have created "an innovative social-financial agreement" as an alternative to student loans. The concept is simple, a "prospect" (student) pitches their story to potential "backers" (investor/financier) who offers financial support, networking opportunity and mentorship in exchange for a percentage of the prospects income over a fixed period.

8. "**Better planning and data is needed to raise HE quality in Asia**" according to a UNESCO programme to promote policy coordination.
9. Sick of the *R* in Rankings and want a bit more of *L* and *T*? The EU is set to roll out a new ranking all of its own which is **designed to balance focus on more than just research performance**.
10. Love Higher Education and want a PhD? You may want to investigate Lancaster University's new distance learning **PhD programme in Higher Education Research, Evaluation and Enhancement**.
11. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) International Quality Group (IQG) was launched last September and has an advisory council with 22 members from Australia, Belgium, Chile, China, Egypt, France, India, Israel, Nigeria and the United States. The focus of the annual conference (held early this year) was on what the future is going to be like.
12. Heard of the **National Data Institute**? It provides an intensive introduction to NSF and NCES datasets and research methodologies using large-scale national data sources. This year it will be held July 14-20 in Washington DC. Further information can be found on the Training & Development section of the AAIR website.

13. Want a **world class university**? Jamil Salmi, the top global expert on higher education, says the following:
    a. a high concentration of *talented staff and students*
    b. *abundant resources* from public and private sources, particularly for research, and
    c. *governance* that encourages vision, initiative, flexibility, responsiveness and continuous organisational learning
14. The US **College Scorecard** was released in February which is designed to indicate a "college's affordability and value" so prospective students can make more informed decisions about the college they attend.
15. Are you an AIR member? AIR recently launched **eLibrary** a new member benefit that provides easy access to publications.
16. Heard of Facebook's **Graph Search**? The author of an article in The Chronicle suggests it is an important time to revisit privacy settings.

A Newsletter for you...

Welcome to my first (and slightly late) edition of the AAIR newsletter. I hope you like the first edition, please feel free to forward your feedback and ideas to editor@aair.org.au.

Likewise, if you attend training, professional development or networking events, like the Higher Education Conference held in late February/March for example, and think this would be of value to AAIR Newsletter readers please make contact. Contributions are always welcome!

In beginning this newsletter, I had quite a few ideas on useful information but in the end I've realised – it doesn't matter what I like, it matters what you like. As Dave mentions in his update, AAIR are looking to survey members shortly and I welcome any feedback you have about the newsletter and what ways (online, paper, etc) you prefer to digest it.

As you may have noticed, we are now listing all forthcoming events (except wrap up articles) on to our AAIR events webpage only. However I thought the **AAIR SIG for Data Warehousing and Business Intelligence, Load Management and DIISRTE** event was worth a special mention. The **annual forum** is being held in the Blue Mountains, NSW. We invite SIG members, AAIR members and institutional researchers to attend the 2013 AAIR SIG forum which this year is hosted by the University of Western Sydney. Details at this stage are that it will be on the 21st to 23rd of August at the Fairmont Resort in Leura. Other details will be sent out via the SIG Bulletins.

Enjoy the newsletter, and expect the next edition quicker than this one was delivered!

Emma
AAIR eNewsletter Editor

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Institutional Research