



# What's In A Name? Survey Results

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PREPARED FOR AAIR  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Introduction .....	3
Collectors .....	4
Distribution .....	4
Note .....	5
<b>SUMMARY OF RESULTS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Question 1 .....	6
Question 2 .....	7
Question 3 .....	10
Suggestion 1 .....	10
Suggestion 2 .....	11
Suggestion 3 .....	11
Question 4 .....	12
Question 5 .....	12
Suggestion 1 .....	12
Suggestion 2 .....	13
Suggestion 3 .....	14
Question 6 .....	14
<b>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS</b> .....	<b>15</b>

# Background

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A survey was conducted and sent to all contacts on the AAIR Newsletter mailing list to ascertain their views on the name of the Association, is it time to make a change, as well as the Association's need for a tagline.

The following introduction was included at the beginning of the survey.

## Introduction

What's in a name? How often do we hear that phrase and think, 'how true is it'? Although it may seem a trite sort of question, I believe it's time for AAIR members to consider whether there's a need for a change to our name. During our recent Strategic Planning retreat in Sydney, the AAIR Executive Committee seriously considered this question.

Now this isn't something to be considered lightly. The name Australasian Association for Institutional Research has served the organisation well for over 25 years. The organisation is affiliated with the US-based organisation, Association for Institutional Research (AIR), the European AIR, the South African AIR, Southeast Asian AIR and most recently the Middle Eastern AIR. In Canada, our affiliated organisation is called the Canadian Institutional Researchers and Planners Association (CIRPA) whilst in the United Kingdom it's called Higher Education Institutional Research Network (HEIRNetwork). All of these organisations include the term 'Institutional Research'. But in the Australasian context, is this term widely used, and even if it is, how well is it understood?

So what names are given to those units in our institutions doing the type of work that would generally come under the umbrella of 'institutional research'? Here are a few that I've found:

- Planning and Institutional Performance
- Corporate Planning and Performance
- Business Analytics and Planning
- Corporate Intelligence
- Corporate Information
- Strategic Information and Analysis
- Strategic Intelligence and Planning
- Information and Analysis
- Planning, Policy & Information
- Quality, Information and Planning, or just
- Quality and Planning

So there's quite a variety of terms that institutions use to cover the types of things we do.

Of course if we look more closely at these units, we see that they don't all have the same responsibilities and coverage. The 'Planning' function is sometimes aligned more closely with the budgetary or financial area; 'Evaluation' can often be linked to an academic development functional area; and so forth. Some areas are solely 'strategic' whilst others are very 'operational'; others a mixture of the two.

And if we consider AAIR's mission to be '**To advance institutional effectiveness in tertiary education**', then what does that suggest we should be called? We have been using the tagline '**Making decisions make sense**' in some of our promotional material. Would it therefore be better to retain 'AAIR' as the name, but develop a tagline that better defines what we represent?

Please complete the following brief questionnaire to voice your opinion.

Thanks

David Marr  
AAIR President

## Collectors

Four collectors were established: Direct mail, LinkedIn, July Newsletter, and Twitter.

COLLECTORS: 4 of 4				
	NICKNAME	STATUS	RESPONSES	DATE MODIFIED
	<b>MailChimp</b> Created 7/21/2015	CLOSED	105	Monday, August 10, 2015 7:20 AM
	<b>LinkedIn</b> Created 7/24/2015	CLOSED	2	Friday, July 31, 2015 9:10 PM
	<b>July Newsletter Email</b> Created 7/26/2015	CLOSED	2	Monday, July 27, 2015 12:43 PM
	<b>Twitter</b> Created 7/24/2015	CLOSED	0	Friday, July 24, 2015 3:21 PM

COLLECTORS: 4 of 4

Figure 1. Responses collected via different collectors

## Distribution

The survey was opened on Friday 24 July until Sunday 9 August at 10PM GMT+10.

The survey was distributed at 03:34pm on Friday, 24 July 2015 via the AAIR mail client to 884 subscribers. As at 20 August there were 261 opens and 92 clicks inside the email.

The survey was then tweeted to 147 followers with a different distinct collector URL.

The survey was then posted on LinkedIn to 86 followers with a different distinct collector URL. As at 20 August, there were 80 impressions, with 1 click and 1 interaction.

The survey was further circulated as part of the July Newsletter sent to the same list on Monday, 27 July 2015 at 09:43 am. As at 20 August 2015 there were four clicks on the survey link in the July Newsletter email.

On Monday, 03 Aug 2015 11:56am, a second email was distributed to the segment of the original group who did not open the email the first time. This was circulated to 803 recipients. As at 20 August there were 158 opens and 28 clicks inside the email. The link to the survey was tweeted again on this day.

A final reminder was circulated to the segment of the segment who had not yet opened the last email. This was circulated on Friday, 07 Aug 2015 at 02:56 pm to 798 recipients. As at 20 August there were 150 opens and 22 clicks inside the email. The final reminder for the survey was tweeted again on this day.

### **Note**

All spelling and grammatical errors within the responses have been left; therefore, a number of errors appear in the responses.

# Summary of Results

## Question 1

Overwhelmingly the response to AAIR changing its name, was 'no'.

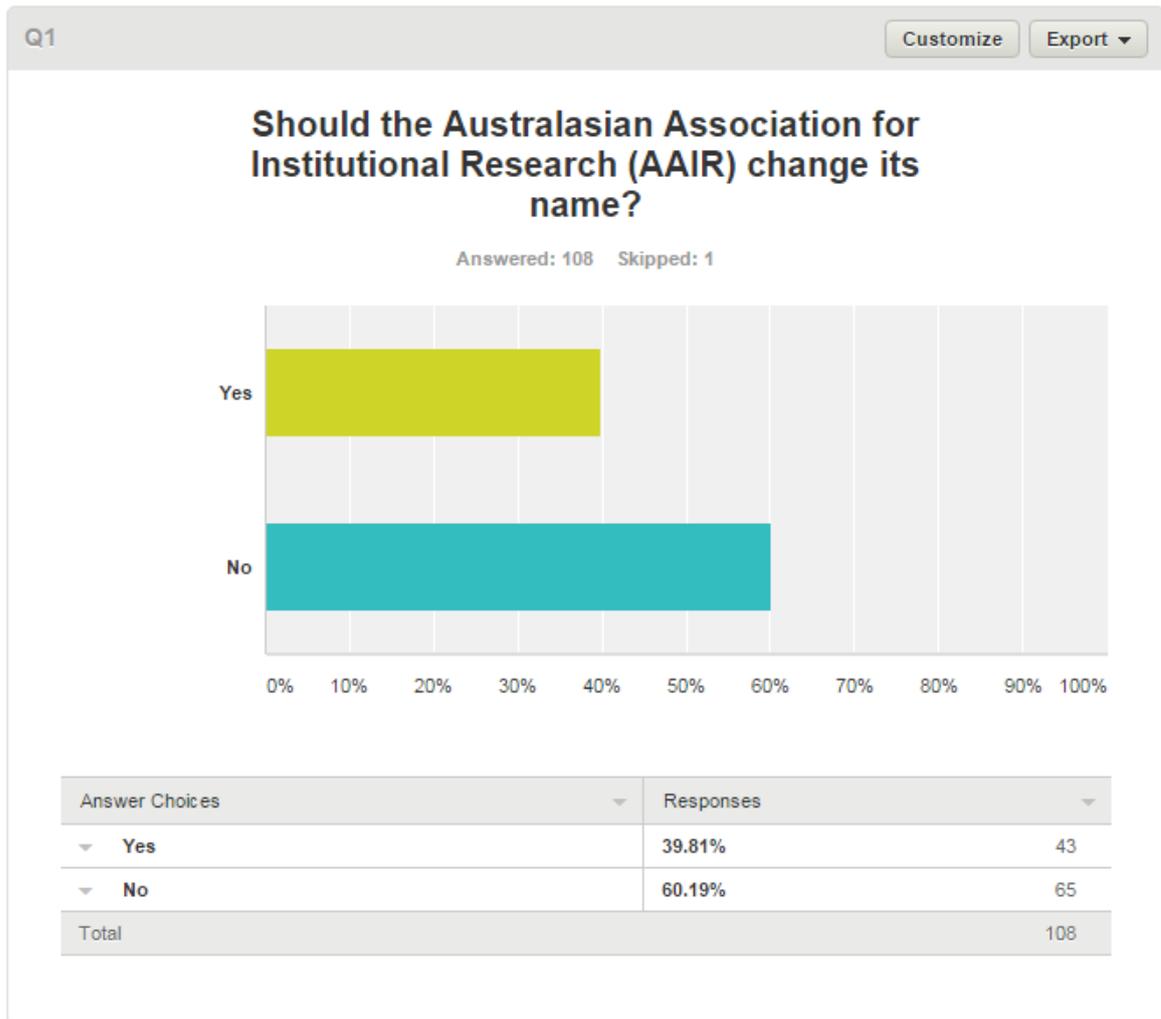


Figure 2. Question 1 results

## Question 2

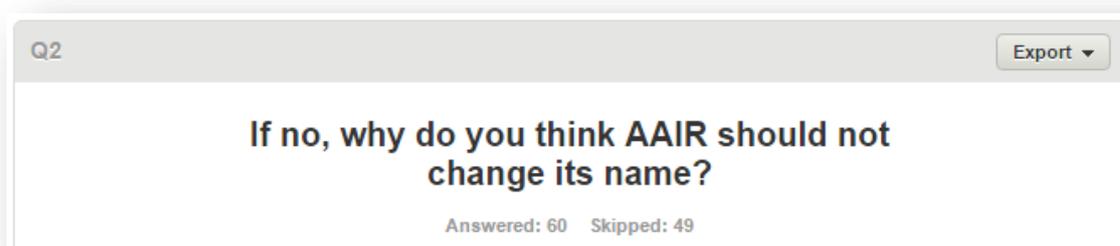


Figure 3. Question 2 results

Reasons given for AAIR not changing its name are as follows:

1. I feel the name currently covers the scope of the association
2. No matter what name change to, it would not cover all areas of functions.
3. The term Institutional Research is not generally known outside of the sector nor is it apparent that it only applies to academic institutions
4. No better name and loss of affinity to like named organisations
5. AAIR is aligned with other international associations of similar name and the name covers the specific aspects of the work we do. Other names would not be as accurate.
6. AAIR is the brand and we all do our own bit for IR, whether collating or analysing the data.
7. I believe it needs the name Education or Higher Education in the name somewhere.
8. IR is a good umbrella term, what we should do is to clarify the role of SIGs
9. Unimportant.
10. First, it's already known and you lose the historical context. Second, some of the other names exclude groups or people. As an example, "Higher Education Institutional Research..." Not everyone who benefits from IR is from Higher Education. One can glean good information even if not working in HE. Third, AAIR identifies where we are from, just like Middel East AIR or others. Don't complicate something that doesn't need it.
11. (1) the name Australasian AIR is very similar to names of other organisations doing same/similar work, (b) name change is costly as it will require rebranding and related changes
12. Its says it all....
13. well established and aligned internationally
14. History, existing linkages to other orgs, difficulty in coming up with another name that would encompass all areas..... e.g I don't think 'planning' is very insightful/descriptive for a lay person or even Higher Ed staff.
15. it doesn't speak clearly enough that it is a higher ed focussed body
16. Because of AAIRs affiliates around the world that use the same (or have the AAIR part at least) name.
17. easy to say, internationally recognisable
18. Fine as it is.
19. Keep in line with internationally similar organisations like the EAIR, although they just use the acronym and then call themselves 'The European Higher Education Society'

20. While I don't have strong feelings either way, my reasons are a name change potentially weakens our affiliations with other similarly-named international organisations and the benefits of any name change have not been adequately demonstrated in the preamble to this survey.
21. It is what it is, the issue is to get people to understand what AAIR is about and name is marginal in that endeavour
22. Keep the name and develop its brand/purpose. Need to align with international counterparts.
23. It's stood us well for over 25 years and we've built up a brand amongst HE staff. Aligns with overseas affiliates. There's no clear rationale for changing it.
24. Why does the Committee think we should is a more pertinent question. And, people who answer yes, should be required to give some rationale.
25. It still works for several closely-related countries, e.g. USA, South Africa.
26. It is in line with names of similar groups in other countries. The problem is not the name but the lack of visibility and 'champions' for AAIR
27. If AAIR has served its purpose through the years, why change.
28. Maintain alignment with international associations
29. It encompasses what it stands for both in terms of participants and content it discusses during its various meetings,
30. No need. What's the trigger? If the direction has not changed and the industry standard is to use "institutional research" then it's fine.
31. No clear rationale, cost, re-education, recent successful conference etc etc etc
32. I think the name serves the association well
33. The original mission for AAIR was about research, and we should continue to differentiate our mission from the myriad of other planning and administrative activities in HE organisations. Otherwise we may as well subsume ourselves within ATEM.
34. It is like a well known brand that we all get used to in the higher education sector. To me a name is only a name. What the AAIR does is more important and I think AAIR has been doing a really great job at connecting people to learn from one another.
35. Link with other international organisations.
36. It's a well understood name for those that need to know.
37. At first I thought it should because I had forgotten what AAIR stood for. But when I checked it out I thought it was okay if indeed this is what you do
38. International affiliations
39. Keep the alliance with other institutions across the world
40. AAIR is part of an international coterie of similar organisations. Such synergy would be lost by a name change.
41. I don't think we should underestimate the value of having a name that syncs with international bodies. There is also not an obvious alternative, so "if it ain't broke don't try to fix it"
42. Cos you'll just end up changing it back
43. It would be a pity to see the demise of the collective noun 'AAIRies'. However, institutional research is not a moniker that has ever caught on down here so something more pertinent would be of value.

44. Too many organisations change their name, lets keep it, people are familiar with it so we don't need to know another acronym
45. to keep aligned with other like organisations
46. reflects international associations
47. Consider tagging. Other associations do the same, e.g. SRHE and EAIR
48. History and affiliations to overseas IR associations
49. Existing brand, reference to US AIR. Only change I would think is appropriate is perhaps additional reference to Higher Education
50. It has currency and links to the main air body.
51. Because the current name states clearly what the organisation is about.
52. Institutional Research is recognised outside of Australasia as the activity we undertake
53. The current one is fine and sums up what the organisation is doing, aligns with international equivalents
54. Institutional Research is a term used world wide and underlies a significant body of literature; it would seem like raising the profile of this term might be a function of AAIR rather than AAIR changing its name.
55. Association with affiliated organisations will be lost
56. It is the proper term for the organisation and what it does - as per its parent and affiliated organisations. AAIR should educate its members and potential members about what this means instead of changing the name. We should become more worldly, rather than starting a silo identity.
57. It fits in with the name of other similar IR bodies
58. I think it is well known in higher education
59. It is a symbol of our affiliation with other AIR organisations.
60. Known, suitable, better to focus on underlying activities than surface

## Question 3

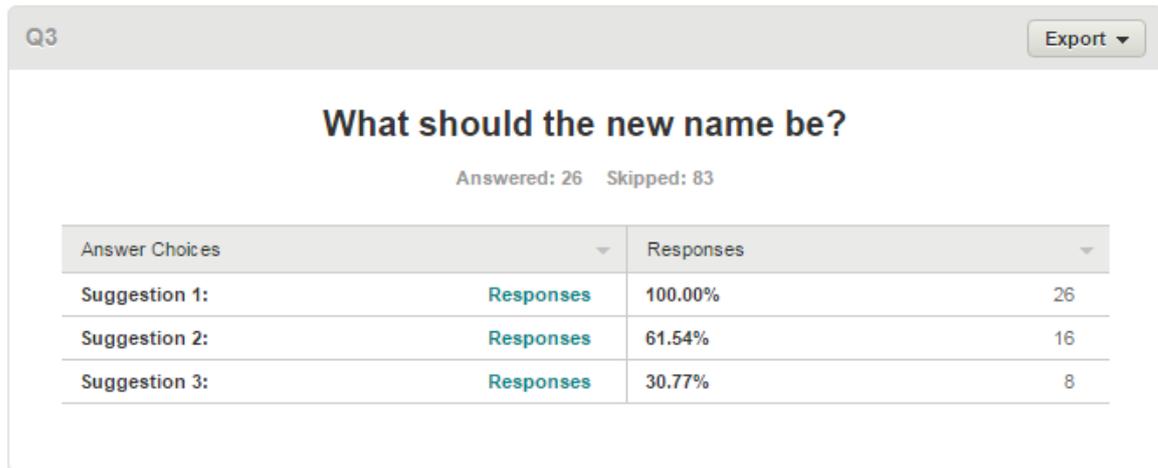


Figure 4. Question 3 results

### Suggestion 1

1. Australasian Association for Higher Education Strategy and Management
2. Australasian Higher Education Institutional Research Association
3. Australian Strategic Institutional Research Association
4. Higher Education Institutional Research Australasia (HEIRA)
5. Strategic Intelligence and Planning in Higher Education
6. Association for Higher Education
7. Australasian Association of University Planning and Performance Professionals
8. Institute for Planning and Strategic Analysis
9. Australasian Higher Education Institutional Research
10. Australasian Association for Higher Education Institutional Research
11. Australasian Association for Higher Education Research
12. Association of Business Intelligence in Tertiary Education
13. Higher Organisational Thinking (HOT): Australasian Association for Institutional Research (AAIR)
14. HESINA - Higher Education Strategic Information Network of Australasia
15. Association of Institutional Reporting Professionals Australia
16. Institutional Strategy & Planning Association – Australia
17. Australasian Higher Education Quality Association
18. Australia New Zealand Association for Institutional Research
19. Australian Association of Educational Institution research
20. Australian AIR (consistency with the other countries maintained)
21. AAIP - Australasian Association for Institutional Planning
22. Strategic Information and Performance
23. Association for Tertiary Education Planning
24. Corporate Intelligence
25. Australasian Association of Institutional Analytics – AAIA
26. Australian Association for Higher Education Research

## Suggestion 2

1. Australasian Association for Higher Education Planning and Quality
2. Strategic Institutional Research Association
3. Strategic Intelligence and Analysis in Higher Education
4. University Planning and Performance Association of Australia and New Zealand
5. Institute for Planning and Strategy
6. Australasian Higher Education Institutional Research Association
7. OpenEducation
8. Higher Education Research Association of Australasia
9. Institutional Performance and Planning Professionals Australia
10. University Strategic and Planning Group - Australia
11. Educational Institutional Research (Australia)
12. AIRPN - Australasian Institute for Research & Planning Network
13. The Evidence Mob
14. Strategic Planning and Analytics
15. Association of Institutional Analytics - Australia & New Zealand - AIA-ANZ
16. Australian Association for Tertiary Education Research

## Suggestion 3

1. Australasian Association for Higher Education Planning, Analysis and Strategy
2. Intelligence Processing and Analysis in Higher Education
3. Australasian Institute for Planning and Strategic Analysis
4. [Ambiguous Name] - Institutional Strategic & Planning Group of Australia (sub name)
5. AIIPN or (AIIPA) - Australasian Institute for Information & Planning Network or Association (AIIPA)
6. Institutional Performance Analytics
7. Australasian Institutional Analytical Decision Support Association - AIADSA
8. Australian Association for Higher Education Information and Planning

## Question 4

The overwhelming response to 'Should AAIR use a tagline that better defines what AAIR represents?' was YES.

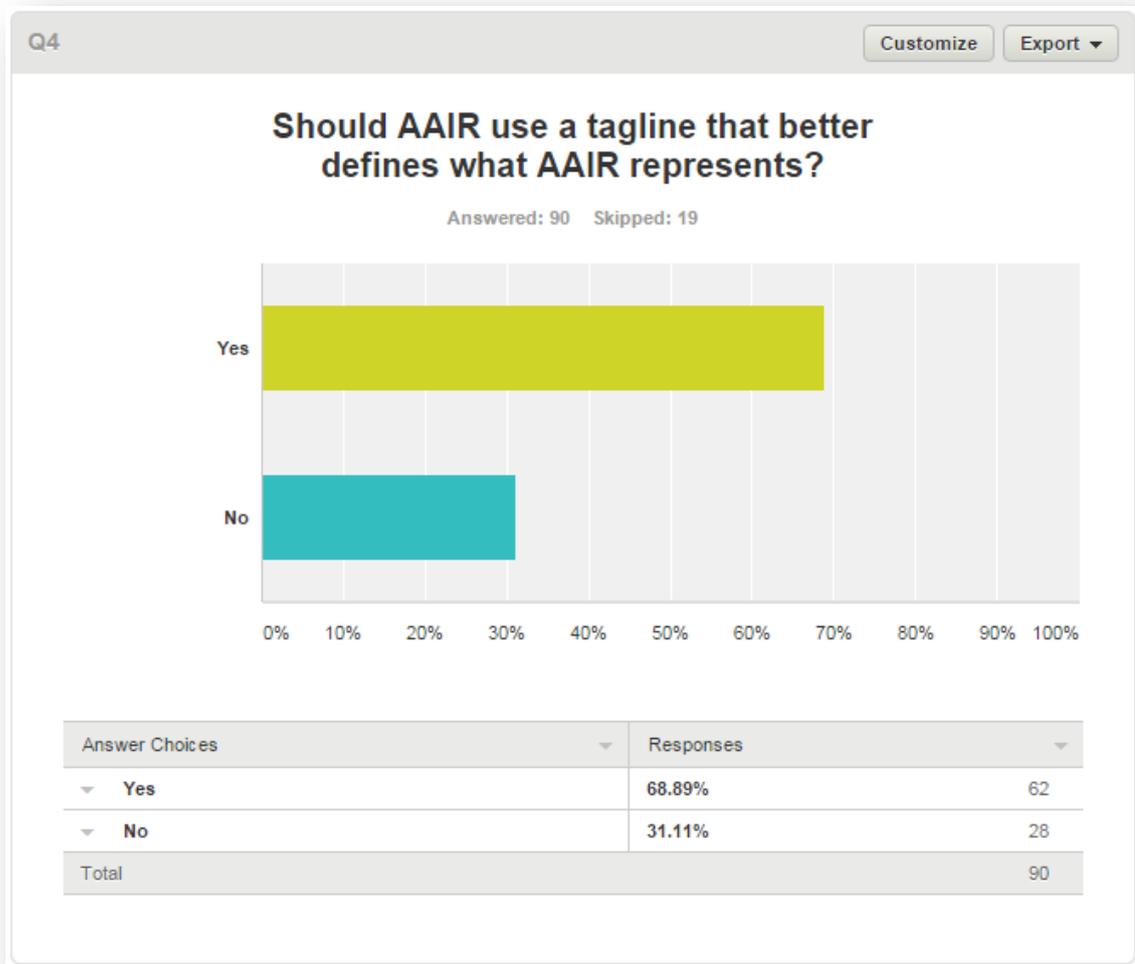


Figure 5. Question 4 responses

## Question 5

### Suggestion 1

1. < Name of Body>
2. Developing insights; supporting decisions.
3. To benefit, assist and advance research in Australasian tertiary education institutions
4. Turning data into intelligence
5. Data, Analysis, Insights, Advancement
6. Supporting the best educational decisions.
7. Helping Business Intelligence be smarter

8. Sorry, I don't know
9. Higher education research to inform better decision making
10. assume nothing
11. Breathing life into higher organisational thinking
12. Information Research Professionals in Educational Institutions
13. Aiding data-driven decision making
14. supporting decision-making in 21st century higher education
15. The cliché group that doesn't make newbies feel welcome.
16. Informing higher education
17. Improving understanding of higher education
18. improving institutional performance through intelligent thinking
19. You didn't offer a Maybe or Don't Know choice
20. Planning the future by assessing the present
21. Quality Insight Together
22. Making decisions for better outcomes
23. Ensuring informed decision making
24. Strengthening Institutions
25. Strategic, analytical, evidential
26. Researching our tomorrows for today
27. Using data to make better decisions
28. Informing institutional effectiveness
29. Evidence Based Decision Making for Dummies
30. Informing the decisions to make sense
31. Something about being the focal point for Information & Performance
32. Making Decisions Make Sense!
33. Providing information and analytics to the Tertiary sector and beyond
34. No opinion; my response to the previous question is neither Yes nor No
35. Informing decision making and practice
36. supporting effective decision-making
37. Making decisions happen
38. Planning for Quality in Higher Education Institutions
39. Enhancing institutional capacity
40. something that references Higher Education....
41. Enhancing your understanding of tertiary education
42. Advancing evidence-based planning and decision making in the higher education sector
43. Helping Higher Education make informed decisions

## Suggestion 2

1. <blank>
2. Raising Business Intelligence to another level
3. data informed decision-making
4. Working together to Inform and Grow the tertiary sector.
5. From data to analysis to understanding to a better future
6. better intelligence, better performance
7. Advancing Insight, Performance and Vision

8. Connecting minds for better futures
9. Evidence to inform and inspire
10. Planning and Analytics
11. Improving institutional decision-making
12. Data driven decisions
13. The foundation for effective Institutional decision making
14. Supporting evidence-based decision-making
15. Decision support that matters
16. Assessing Performance in Higher Education Institutions
17. An evidence-base for institutional change and directions
18. Providing insights into your tertiary institution
19. Helping Tertiary Education make informed decisions

### Suggestion 3

1. <blank>
2. Analysing business intelligently
3. big-data, here we come!
4. developing insights through intelligent institutional research
5. Evidence for decision making
6. Better decisions, better performance
7. Excelling without Excel
8. Inform and monitor effective institutional decision making
9. Bringing educational research into policy
10. Measuring the Performance of Higher Education Institutions
11. Assisting Australian Higher Education Institutions

### Question 6

By completing this survey, respondents could enter a draw to win a prize.

Fifty one respondents left their name, and 50 respondents left their email address.

# Additional comments

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Respondents were invited to submit additional comments via email if they wished. AAIR received three responses via email.

The following three texts are reported anonymously from emails sent to the AAIR Secretariat after respondents completed the survey.

<i>Email</i>	<i>Comments from contributors sent via email after completing the survey</i>
1	I think using the name Institutional Research is beneficial to ensure alignment with international organisations. I think we would be better served if units within Universities Adopted the title in their departments, and departments need to improve internal communications of what we do and the need/benefits for IR.
2	I just received an email seeking comments on advice about a possible name change. Wow. Revolutionary. I support using tags to embody what we are about. Probably we need to be more vocal about what we are for / stand / support. For your consideration, I attach draft of the first chapter of the global book on IR.
3	<p>Before getting aairies to just boldly go where they may not have comfortably gone before, maybe a bit of context about the survey beyond “What’s in a name” might help with engagement. Is it to do with the incorporation of the AHEEF group? or is it AAIR has other groups using the acronym? or just because a change is as good as a holiday? Maybe a link to the minutes of the discussion from the Strategic Planning retreat or a brief synopsis of the popular thoughts coming out of it?</p> <p>Too many “just click here” links to the dark side of research (surveys) are appearing in our oh too social media enabled world. Let us slow down a bit and smell the flowers (ie the rose by another name maybe) and let people have an empowered choice of entry, before entering the survey rather than afterwards. This may help we oldies and less socially enabled members feel we have the full drum and we may be likely to engage in a part of Social and Institutional research not everyone is comfortable with ... surveys.</p> <p>Thanks for your time, patience and (hopefully) understanding.</p>