MYEFO Research funding cuts … opposition party promises ahead of the 2019 election

Photo by NordWood Themes on Unsplash

FROM THE ACTING PRESIDENT

Happy New Year

…and here's to a great start to 2019!

Many of you may still be on holiday, but I hope you can spare some kind thoughts for those of us who have started back at work already this year. And why is it that the weather always gets better when you are back at work? Rhetorical question that is not based on any data – just a gut feeling! Sometimes you just have to go with that gut feeling though.

We have a busy year ahead of us on the AAIR Executive with four new Committee members and a couple of vacancies. I hope that some of you will seriously consider becoming more involved with AAIR and join those of us who are giving back to the association.

Now, a little bit about those who have chosen to give some of their time to AAIR. I gave each of the new Committee members an option of writing something themselves or answering four questions that I put to them. This month we introduce two of our new Committee members to you **Leone Nurbasari** and **Andrew Bradshaw.**

Leone Nurbasari

First up is Leone Nurbasari, Associate Director, Reporting and Analytics at The Australian National University.

What do you enjoy about your job?

I love exploring problems and generating new knowledge and understanding. Last year I particularly enjoyed building models from a variety of data sources to inform a new undergraduate admissions model at ANU.

Tell us something about yourself outside your working life.

I have always been pretty average at sports, and quite hopeless at running. Having recently completed the couch to 5kms, I am now a regular runner and have plans to increase my distance and complete a 10km run this year.

What got you involved in AAIR?

I have worked in the planning division at The Australian National University (ANU) since 2000. When I started at ANU all those years ago, I learned about AAIR from my division colleagues who had a great network of peers and always brought back valuable ideas from the Annual Forums. I have since been to many different AAIR and SIG fora across the country, and now I look forward to serving on the committee for the next two years.

If you could trade places with someone for a week who might that be and why?

The activity I have enjoyed the most in my life is snorkelling on the Great Barrier Reef. So, I would trade places with a marine biologist (having magically obtained all their knowledge as part of trading places) and run snorkelling tours on the outer reef to share that joy with other people.

Andrew Bradshaw

Next up we have Andrew Bradshaw, Manager Statutory Reporting at Macquarie University.

What do you enjoy about your job?

2019 is my thirtieth year at Macquarie University in an office responsible for the reporting of our government student and staff data. I have enjoyed the job over this period, as I find the government reporting requirements are continually changing depending upon the political party in office at the time (e.g. I saw the introduction of HECS in 1989 and am now working on the implementation of TCSI for 2020). I also thoroughly enjoyed working with colleagues from other universities, and with Department of Education and Training officials in Canberra.

Tell us something about yourself outside your working life.

I am currently involved in the Sports and Recreation Committee on Blacktown City

Council, where I contribute to improving the sporting facilities within the Council to increase the number of participants in sport and recreation within the area. I have managed to build a good relationship with the Mayor and some council members that currently sit on this particular committee.

What got you involved in AAIR?

As a pre-2000 AAIR member, I can't recall exactly how I first got involved with AAIR. I believe I attended my first annual forum in Terrigal on the NSW Central Coast in 2012 and met many AAIR colleagues at the time with whom I am still friends today. I also recall presenting at one of the early AAIR forums in Adelaide in 1997, where the forum theme was, 'Equity and tertiary education: The role of institutional research'. I have attended many more AAIR forums since then, and through AAIR have managed to build friendships both professionally within and outside of the university environment. I find attending AAIR SIG forums and annual forums highlights the progress many providers have undertaken and provides a motivation to take back some of these learnings to our own institutions.

If you could trade places with someone for a week who might that be and why?

When I was 18 years old, I recall playing indoor cricket with Mark and Steve Waugh, where both represented their country and Steve even managed to be captain of the side for many

years. Little did I wonder at the time, playing with such talented cricketers, that I would look back on and wonder what it would be like to be Steve Waugh. I am sure there would be times, when facing world class West Indies quick bowlers I would want to trade places and just be that spectator watching from the crowd. But Steve was able to lead Australian cricket through difficult times to be World Cup champions and the best test playing nation of the time.

It's a wrap

Next month we hope to formally introduce you to **Lisa Bolton** and **David Carroll**, but for this month, I think that's a wrap!

Kathie Rabel
Acting AAIR President

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first AAIR newsletter for 2019.

Well, 2018 ended as it began, with the annual Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) announcement, this time revealing the government will strip $328m in research funding to increase support for regional universities. This sits alongside the continued freeze on government funding for undergraduate places. On the back of this announcement are promises aplenty from political parties ahead of this year's Australian Federal election. How this will impact on the strategic plans of our institutions will become obvious in the coming months, and no doubt busy work in this area has started already.

It is my great pleasure to introduce to you, via this month's *Institutional Researcher's Corner* interview (p. 9), your new newsletter editor, Dr Lizzie Li. Lizzie is part of the Strategic Planning team within the Planning and Information Office at The University of Auckland, New Zealand. I've been fortunate to meet Lizzie at two previous AAIR Forums, in Melbourne and Alice Springs, and believe she will bring to the newsletter her enthusiasm for institutional research. Best wishes Lizzie!

Happy reading

Tracy Creagh

SECTOR NEWS AND VIEWS

And we're off …

Just prior to Christmas, the Australian Government released the Mid-Year Economic Forecast and Outlook (MYEFO) revealing the government will strip $328m in research funding to increase support for regional universities. There are warnings that the MYEFO could force universities to put on hold recruiting research students. MYEFO states savings from the Research Block Grants scheme will total $328m in the four years from 2018-19. The money will come from the RBG scheme's Research Training Program and Research Support Program.

From Monash, Margaret Gardner noted the effect will be felt immediately by the nation's researchers and their research projects in positions lost and projects slowed, limited or not started. "But the damage done will be felt for much longer – in inventions, ideas and opportunities missed" she added.

Universities Australia responded swiftly: "With cuts looming and our overall R&D spend falling for the first time on record, the portents for Australia's future as a world leader in life-changing research are worrying". The IRU described the cut as "another budget horror".

The University of Queensland will commence negotiations this year for the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation to fund an undergraduate degree. Vice Chancellor Peter Hoj made the much-anticipated announcement just prior to Christmas. As well, the agreement between the University of Wollongong and Ramsay was announced at the same time. A Ramsay degree will be taught at UoW from 2020 in a deal worth $50m plus over eight years.

Free university and TAFE under 'transformational' Greens education plan. The suite of policies unveiled ahead of the 2019 election also includes major funding increases for tertiary institutions, greater job security for university staff, a higher income threshold for student debt repayments, and boosts to student welfare payments.

Academic gender gap narrowing in Australian universities. Frank Larkins has looked at the gender gap among university staff in the last decade. The academic gender gap has now narrowed to less than five percent in favour of males because the recruitment ratio has been 1.4 new females for every new male employed. More females are now being appointed at the senior lecturer and above levels than at any previous time.

The Review of the Higher Education Provider Category Standards: Discussion Paper (Emeritus Professor Peter Coaldrake) has been released. The final PCS review report is expected to be submitted to the Australian Government in the second half of 2019.

Government faces mounting unpaid student debt burden. More than 2.8 million Australians now owe the government AU$55 billion (US$40 billion) after graduating with a degree or a vocational education qualification. But at least a quarter of them will never earn enough to repay their debt.

An excellent summary of Australian HE in 2018 from Tim Pitman, Curtin University in Higher education policy in 2018: Culture wars reignite, but in the end it's all about the money (*The Conversation,* December 28, 2018)

Andrew Norton discussed Labour's early 2019 announcement that it would require universities to increase admission requirements for teaching students in his blog (January 9) noting that "…targeting low ATAR students and capping are not mutually exclusive options. However, overall I think capping is the more likely of the two".

The release of both QILT's 2018 employment satisfaction survey results and graduate outcomes (see *Rankings and Ratings*), were viewed positively, Andrew Norton notes that "Four years on from the worst new graduate employment outcomes ever, the 2018 statistics released today show cause for optimism. Although full-time employment rates remain well down on a decade ago, they are improving".

Other news

On January 1, Andrew Norton posted his analysis of the new year's National Archives Cabinet papers release which includes material related to the 1996 Budget changes to HECS. The most important of these were replacing flat HECS rates with 'differential HECS', so that rates were based on subject disciplines, and lowering the HECS repayment thresholds, so that debtors began repaying earlier and repaid more at each income level (historical thresholds are at page 47 of this document).

The University of Auckland has won top prize at ranking agency QS's reimagine education awards. The university won for its Peerwise, "free online learning tool." Peerwise also won the ICT learning and teaching category. In category awards, the University of Queensland won the gold award for university-employer partnership. QUT won silver and Deakin University bronze in the nurturing employability category. The University of Melbourne picked up a bronze for its self-guided VR bone surgery platform.

Down Under, Worries Over International Students Are Academic. Worries grow in Australia that the large numbers of overseas students may affect academic quality and leave institutions economically vulnerable.

The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA)'s Free Speech on Campus Audit 2018 is the third systematic analysis of over 190 policies and actions at Australia's 42 universities. The Audit rates each university's support for free speech by analysing policies and actions that limit the diversity of ideas on campus. Thirty-five of Australia's 42 universities (83 per cent) are Red rated for policies and actions that are hostile to free speech on campus, an increase from 33 in 2016 and 34 in 2017.

For those of us who occasionally work from home: It's not just the isolation. Working from home has surprising downsides. Libby Sander, Assistant Professor of Organisational Behaviour, Bond University outlines some findings disputing the benefits of working from home (*The Conversation*, January 15)

Campus News

UTS to open First Nations residential college. Architects will consult Indigenous designers before beginning the construction of a $100 million building at a site near the Ultimo university, which is expected to open its doors within four years.

UTAS invites foreign students to 'jump the accommodation queue', existing students told to search Gumtree. The University of Tasmania has begun offering foreign students the chance to "jump to the head of the accommodation queue" if they pay upfront, while existing students are being told to look on Gumtree as the university cannot guarantee them a place to live.

Monash University and Gandel Philanthropy have partnered to support the next generation of Indigenous change agents, as part of the largest philanthropic fundraising campaigns in the history of the university.

South Australia beats strong competition to be home to Australia's new space agency. The agency will be based at Lot Fourteen, the former Royal Adelaide Hospital site, which is being transformed into an innovation precinct.

Victoria University of Wellington has failed to change its name to the University of Wellington. Just before Christmas the NZ minister of education said "Given the level of opposition to the university's recommendation, including by its own staff, students and alumni, I am not persuaded that the recommendation is consistent with the demands of accountability and the national interest."

Staff and Student Wellbeing

How lonely are today's students? Student mental health has been high on the agenda over the past couple of years. There has been a lot of activity on treating the problem – counselling services, pet therapy, stress awareness weeks – but not so much aimed at preventing problems in the first place.

Sleep Pod Companies Want to Disrupt Naps on Campus. As wellness and anti-stress campaigns become more popular on U.S. college campuses, some institutions are responding by giving students a more comfortable place to catch some z's: in space age-looking sleep pods. Already a handful of colleges and universities—and even high schools— have made room for the devices, which can go for anywhere from $8,000 to $13,000. The University of Miami, Wesleyan University, Stanford University, Washington State University and more have all debuted sleep pods in libraries, health centres and other spots on campus.

Rankings and ratings

Employer satisfaction with university graduates has hit its highest level ever, while graduates enjoy their best job prospects in four years. The 2018 Employer Satisfaction Survey shows 85 per cent of employers are satisfied with the skills graduates bring to their roles, including teamwork and communication.

Also released alongside the Employer Satisfaction Survey, the 2018 Graduate Outcomes Survey shows more than seven in 10 university graduates are in full-time work four months out of university. This increases to nine in 10 three years out from graduation. The same survey shows median salaries are also on the rise – at $61,000 for workers with an undergraduate degree and $83,000 for those with postgraduate coursework qualifications.

Six Senators Question 'U.S. News' Rankings. A *U.S. News & World Report* unveiled changes in its methodology that it said placed much more emphasis than in the past on social mobility. Many critics were unimpressed, noting that the same elite institutions (which largely educate students who are upper and middle class) remained on the top of the rankings. Now six U.S. senators have joined the discussion, sending an unusual joint letter to *U.S. News* urging it to change its methodology.

Wonkhe again offers a welcome counterweight to the harsh realities of the real rankings with an entirely made up league table featuring fictional universities from movies, books and TV (or some other entertaining purpose).

Meanwhile in New Zealand

Politician says fees-free tertiary policy has failed. Paula Bennett says the Government's fees-free tertiary policy has been a "complete failure". The flagship policy came into effect on January 1 2018, giving first-time students the ability to apply for one year of free university study or two years of free industry training. Education Minister Chris Hipkins says the initiative is tracking well after its first year, with more than 40,000 people receiving fees-free study or training.

The gap between the rich and poor at university in New Zealand. Data shows just 6 per cent of those accepted into the elite university courses of law, medicine and engineering come from our most disadvantaged homes. Meanwhile, more than half the entrants are from families on the top three tiers of the income ladder. In simple terms, poor are outnumbered by the rich 10 to one.

International News

Excellent overview of the UK HE landscape from *Wonkhe* (January 9): Let's go fly a kite: The higher education landscape. Marian Hilditch, Head of Data Quality at Teesside University, Ian Robinson – Director, Public Sector & Education, HSBC, Zac Ashkanasy – Principal, Nous Group, Andy Westwood, Vice Dean for Social Responsibility University of Manchester and others discuss the views of the state of HE.

Federal Shutdown Includes Agencies Supporting Research. Numerous federal agencies that are important to higher education were shut down when a standoff over President Trump's proposed border wall was not resolved. Trump has vowed not to sign a measure to keep the government fully functioning unless more than $5 billion is included for the wall. Democrats have refused to provide the votes to do so.

Trump administration to unravel HE quality safeguards. United States Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has ambitious plans for higher education in 2019 and detailed many of them in recommendations that for the first time articulate the Trump administration's views on how to

steward billions of taxpayer dollars in federal student aid.

YouTube deletes cheating videos after BBC investigation. YouTube has deleted thousands of videos promoting academic cheating in the last week after a BBC Trending investigation. The videos all advertised essay-writing services, which can lead to serious penalties for students.

Yale and Harvard join coding boot camp trend. Two Ivy League universities, Harvard and Yale, have each announced plans to offer coding boot camps in 2019 aimed at students in tech and the liberal arts as well as adult learners.

Education experts call for a 'take your son into university day'. Experts seeking to address male academic underachievement among boys and young men are calling for the introduction of a "take your son into university day" in an effort to increase male participation in higher education. The proposal is based on "take your daughter to work day", which began in 1993 as a way of exposing girls to as wide a range of careers as possible, and aims to address the growing gender gap at British universities where female students outnumber male.

China reaps rewards of heavy investment in science. The number of Chinese world-class scientists in 2018 was 7.9% of the total number of 6,078, up from 5.9% share in 2014. The United States is still dominating the number of top-cited world scientists with 2,639 in total. But its relative proportion decreased from 55% in 2014 to 43% in 2018.

The In-and-Out List. A look at what happened in 2018 and what's to come in 2019 with *Inside Higher Ed*'s seventh annual in-and-out list.

BIG DATA, ONLINE LEARNING, ANALYTICS & TECHNOLOGY

Perspective from Andy Youell, strategic data advisor and previously with HESA: Jisc and HESA: an integration for the future of data. The proposed coming together of Jisc and

HESA is the latest chapter in the reconfiguration and rationalisation of the sector's agencies which kicked off with the launch of the Bell review in March 2016.

Will 2019 Be the Year of Privacy? Five Things to Look for in Education. This article is part of a collection of op-eds from thought leaders, educators and entrepreneurs who reflect on the state of education technology in 2018 and share where it's headed in 2019.

Sorry, your data can still be identified even if it's anonymized. Urban planners and researchers at MIT found that it's shockingly easy to "reidentify" the anonymous data that people generate all day, every day in cities.

Purpose-driven business needs the right data. On LinkedIn (December 22) Robert Hillard, Chief Strategy & Innovation Officer at Deloitte Australia discussed the value of linking organisational purpose, particularly higher purpose, with a sustainable business model.

Are you a Data Addict? Rob Wither writes in LinkedIn (January 9) and asks: When faced with an important decision or meeting, do you find yourself always referencing reports, creating more and more complex Excel spreadsheets all in search of "the definitive" piece of information that will make your choices a near certainly?

Purdue's Online Strategy, Beyond 'Global'. The Indiana university will expand online with support from the entity formerly known as for-profit Kaplan. Plans reflect debate over how two unlike institutions can (and should) combine strengths.

Nesta's Ten predictions for 2019. From Robo Lawyers to the end of the week as we know it, Nesta reveal their ten trends, tech breakthroughs and social movements for 2019.

Living in a connected world means we work virtually 24/7 – or so it seems. Message sent, received but no instant reply: how does that make you feel? David Cowan writes in *The Conversation* (January 4) "In our world of instant communications, it seems we have come to expect that the general immediacy and access to information afforded to us by our

technology, should be reflected in our online social communication, just as it would be when face-to-face. But norms that exist in the real world don't necessarily transfer easily to the digital realm. Is it time we developed a new social contract for online communications?"

Interesting interactive analytics and visual data representation from the ABC Story Lab: How life has changed for people your age. What's different about your life, compared to someone who was your age in the 1980s?

And a question I ask myself regularly: Should we speak nicely to our devices? (LinkedIn January 9)

LEARNING & TEACHING

Three things high school graduates should keep in mind when they have their ATARs. From the Grattan Institute Ittima Cherastidtham and Will Mackey explore three things prospective university students should keep in mind when finalising their preferences.

The Future of MOOCs Must Be Decolonized. *This article is part of the guide New Year, New Learning: Reflections on Education in 2018 and Beyond.* The heyday for massive open online courses was studded with hype. So much so, the New York Times even dubbed 2012 the "Year of the MOOC." Advocates for the courses would point a finger at the unaffordability of traditional education, promising that MOOCs could offer cheaper, more innovative alternatives.

GRADUATE OUTCOMES AND EMPLOYABILITY

How everyone benefits from badging: a guide to mainstreaming digital credentials. Digital badges add great value for employers, students and institutions alike but it's critical for colleges and universities to more quickly recognise and adopt the delivery of these microcredentials to keep pace with labour market needs.

Reflections on credentialing: past, present and future. As the conversation around—and demand for—alternative credentials continues to heat up, there are a few big bets happening across the postsecondary ecosystem that could completely transform the way we think about (and recognise) higher learning.

RESEARCH

Springer Nature and Publons Enter Wide-Ranging Partnership to Bring Greater Efficiency and Recognition to Peer Review. The burden on the peer review community is increasing as the volume of published research articles grows. Research output is rising exponentially and this is putting pressure on the system, with many academics inundated with requests to peer review. The recent Global State of Peer Review report highlights a growing "reviewer fatigue". To help address this, Springer Nature and Publons, part of Clarivate Analytics, have announced a partnership to improve the peer review process and enable peer reviewers to receive recognition for their contribution.

In the past year, Altmetric has tracked over 25 million mentions of 2.8 million research outputs. This page highlights the top 100 most-mentioned scholarly articles published in the past year – those which have truly captured the public imagination.

Editorial Mutiny at Elsevier Journal. Following in the footsteps of linguistics journal *Lingua*, the editorial board of the Elsevier-owned *Journal of Informetrics* has resigned and launched a rival journal that will be free for all to read.

Welcome to The Great Acceleration. From *The Scholarly Kitchen* (January 2) David Crotty explores the increasing pace of new initiatives related to academic publishing, and specifically open access publishing.

Let them eat cake! Communicating research creatively. With cake. Contributing Editor Paul Greatrix, *Wonkhe* (January 11), has previously noted interesting ways doctoral students present their PhDs and research over the years and now apparently there are examples of 'Bake your Thesis' competitions.

ON THE MOVE

Sarah O'Shea (**Uni Wollongong**) has a 12-month fellowship at the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) to research post-graduation employment outcomes for first in family university completers.

International education analyst, **Darragh Murray** has left QUT for Navitas, to become manager of strategy and engagement.

Simon Bronitt will become dean of law at the University of Sydney in July. He will join from the University of Queensland, where he is deputy dean of law.

John Dornbusch has a new five-year term as chancellor of the University of Southern Queensland, through to 2024. He became chancellor in 2014.

Karen Nelson will commence as DVC (Academic) at USQ February 11. Professor Nelson moves from USC where she has been the inaugural DVC (Students).

Susan Dodds becomes DVC Research and Industry Engagement at La Trobe University. She joins from UNSW where she is dean of arts.

Catherine Marks joins Bond University as VP Engagement. Ms Marks moves from the University of Swansea in the UK.

Tony Wills will become executive general manager of the Australian Research Council next month. Dr Wills joins from the National Health and Medical Research Council, replacing Leanne Harvey, who is moving to QUT as VP administration and registrar.

Elizabeth Labone is the new executive dean education and the arts at Australian Catholic University. She joined ACU in 2000.

Desiree Cai is the new president of the National Union of Students. She finished her term as president of the University of Melbourne student union in November.

La Trobe University is losing **Catherine Itsiopolous**, head of the school of allied health. She is moving to Murdoch University to become PVC of the college covering science, health, engineering and education.

Ruth Shean is the new chair of the estimable National Centre for Vocational Education Research, replacing Peter Shergold. Dr Shean is a public servant, most recently DG of the WA Department of Training and Workforce Development.

The University of Melbourne has appointed **Lucy Powell** as media manager.

Murdoch University VC **Eeva Leinonen** is new chair of the Innovative Research Universities lobby, replacing Flinders' Colin Stirling. The chair rotates among IRU members.

Clare McLaughlin is the new **general manager** of the **National Health and Medical Research Council**. She moves from the **Department of Industry, Innovation and Science** where she was GM, science agencies governance. Ms McLaughlin replaces **Tony Willis** who moved to the **Australian Research Council** to be GM.

ANU's **Lyndall Strazdins** is the new director of the university's Research School of Population Health.

Michael Adams has started as dean of law at the University of New England.

HE policy veteran **Andrew Dempster** has joined KPMG in Canberra. Mr Dempster was a staffer with former Labor education minister Chris Evans and an advisor to Swinburne VC Linda Kristjanson. He moves from his own practise, Proofpoint Advisory.

REPORTS AND RESOURCES

AI Now Report 2018

The AI Now Institute at New York University is an interdisciplinary research institute dedicated to understanding the social implications of AI technologies. It is the first university research center focused specifically on AI's social significance

NEW PODCAST!

Crowdoscope have now uploaded their **five podcasts** on collective intelligence to Soundcloud. They include interviews with leading thinkers on AI+CI such as Tomas Malone from MIT's Center for Collective Intelligence, Christopher Tucci, Louis Rosenberg, Daniele Morandi and Nesta's Geoff Mulgan

BOOK REVIEWS

Smart, Succinct and Agile: Strategic Planning in an Age of Uncertainty

Sneak peek from Inside HigherEd:
Challenges to higher education mount ever higher. The global financial crisis, which left institutions trapped in a vise between rising costs, shrunken endowments and curtailed public funding, has given way to a new period of rapidly changing student demographics, intense public scrutiny and disconcerting political unpredictability.

This in-depth report details the latest trends in strategic planning and best practices leaders can choose from to

build a meaningful process able to motivate key constituencies.
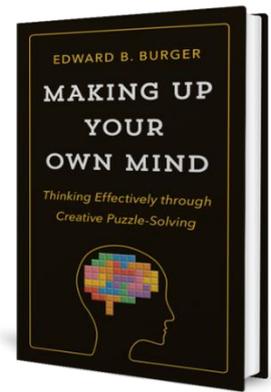
Making Up Your Own Mind Thinking Effectively through Creative Puzzle-Solving

Edward B. Burger

In this enlightening, entertaining, and inspiring book, Edward Burger shows how we can become far better at solving real-world problems by learning creative puzzle-solving skills using simple, effective thinking techniques.

Making Up Your Own Mind teaches these techniques—including how to ask good questions, fail and try again, and change your mind—and then helps you practice them with fun verbal and visual puzzles. The goal is not to quickly solve each challenge but to come up with as many different ways of thinking about it as possible. As you see the puzzles in ever-greater depth, your mind will change, helping you become a more imaginative and creative thinker in daily life. And learning how to be a better thinker pays off in incalculable ways for anyone—including students, businesspeople, professionals, athletes, artists, leaders, and lifelong learners.

[Citizen Science: Innovation in Open Science, Society and Policy](#)

Edited by Susanne Hecker, Muki Haklay, Anne Bowser, Zen Makuch, Johannes Vogel and Aletta Bonn

This **free** ebook identifies and explains the role of citizen science within innovation in science and society, and as a vibrant and productive science-policy interface. The scope of this volume is global, geared towards identifying solutions and lessons to be applied across science, practice and policy. The chapters consider the role of citizen science in the context of the wider agenda of open science and open innovation, and discusses progress towards responsible research and innovation, two of the most critical aspects of science today.

POSITIONS VACANT

LOOKING FOR SOME TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT?

See our [Training and Development](#) webpage focused on training for institutional researchers.

Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS).

Visit the HEIMSHELP [Training page](#) with details of the training resources that are available to help you meet reporting and verification deadlines

LOOKING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCES AND EVENTS?

Here is a selection of upcoming events that may be of interest. See our [Events/Fora](#) webpage for more national and international events.

[Europe's new Digital Market and Data Rules - why should Australia care?](#)

Data Science Melbourne, RMIT, Melbourne

11 February 2019

This talk and panel discussions evaluates the global impact of the Digital Single Market. It aims to clarify what the new Digital Single Market means for Australia. Is it just a new set of rules to follow or perhaps even a business and innovation opportunity?

[Universities Australia Higher Education Conference](#)

27 February – 1 March 2019

National Convention Centre, Canberra

The 2019 conference theme *Degrees of Change* will explore the role that universities play in securing Australia's prosperity, and will provide opportunity to consider the social and economic contribution that universities make to society at a local, national and global level. The conference plenary sessions will include strong representation from universities, government, business and industry both locally and internationally.

[Learning Analytics & Knowledge Conference (LAK)](#)

Tempe, Arizona

4-8 March 2019

Organised by the Society for Learning Analytics Research (SoLAR) is an interdisciplinary network of leading international researchers who are exploring the role and impact of analytics on teaching, learning, training and development.

[Data4Good Conference 28 March 2019](#)

Sydney, Australia

This inspirational day will offer tangible insights and creative approaches from speakers who are using data for positive change across industries including the environment, health, communities and much more.

This one-day program features a series of case studies from leading organisations that are leveraging data for good.

2019 AIR FORUM • MAY 28 – 31, 2019 Denver, CO, U.S

Proposals open Sept. 12 - Oct. 14, 2018.

The AIR Forum, the Association's annual conference, is the world's largest gathering of higher education professionals working in institutional research, assessment, planning, and related postsecondary education fields.

28th National VET Research Conference 'No Frills'

10–12 July 2019, Adelaide, South Australia

Convenor: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

'No Frills' is a well-known annual national conference where researchers and practitioners in the vocational education and training (VET) sector come together to present, discuss and share information about key issues confronting the sector.

The 2019 conference will be held in Adelaide, South Australia. Further details will be released at a later date.

41st Annual EAIR Forum

25 to 28 August 2019

The Netherlands

The 41st Annual EAIR Forum 2019 will be hosted by the Leiden University, the Netherlands.

The theme of the 2019 EAIR Leiden Forum is "RESPONSIBILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS: WHAT? WHY? HOW?"

Call for paper submissions is now open!

HERDSA Conference 2019

2-5 July 2019

Auckland, New Zealand

The theme for the conference is *Next Generation, Higher Education: Challenges, Changes and Opportunities*

STARS Conference

**Melbourne, Australia
July 7-10, 2019**

The STARS conference provides the opportunity to disseminate and discuss current research, good practice, emerging initiatives and leading-edge ideas that are aimed at enhancing students' tertiary learning experiences.

EPHEA/NAEEA Biennial Conference

University of Wollongong, Australia

24-27 November 2019

Equity Practitioners in Higher Education in Australasia (EPHEA) and National Association of Enabling Educators in Australia (NAEEA) is pleased to host the 2019 themed "Enabling Excellence through Equity" from Sunday 24 to Wednesday 27 November 2019 at the University of Wollongong Innovation Campus. This educational conference aims to promote the aims of both the organisations and bring practitioners from equity and enabling together.
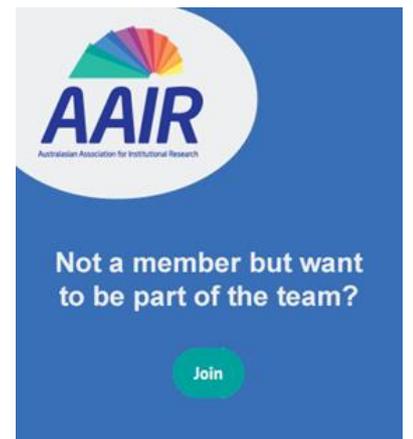
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER'S CORNER

Five quick questions with Dr Zhi (Lizzie) Li, The University of Auckland

What is your job title?

Evaluation Coordinator & Analyst.

Briefly, how would you describe your role in terms of your place in your institution?

As a part of Strategic Planning team within Planning and Information Office, my role is embedded in Academic Quality Office reporting to Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic).

From your perspective, what are the emerging areas of interest in institutional research?

Over the last couple of years, we have started to see data scientists working in the Planning and Business Intelligence units. Data scientists use data mining techniques to access data—structured and unstructured—in a range of open sources, extract knowledge, and integrate insights into business decisions. I think data science will challenge the landscape of institutional research. I was at Microsoft's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Global Boot Camp last December. It was amazing to see how cognitive service tools processed natural language into scripts, and how they connect translation and text analysis

with simple apps that you can create for yourself! My view is that AI and machine learning will be discussed more frequently and possibly merged into institutional research.

What do you believe will be the future priorities for institutional research?

Despite technological advancement and the upsurge of high-tech tools, I believe that the priority for institutional researchers is to develop 'soft' skills. This would enable us to provide *meaningful* information rather than data just in numerical formats. In a way, I think how we translate data into insights helps others understand that the information is as important as, if not more important, than what tools to adopt and how to visualise the data.

IR has developed into a specialised area with multidisciplinary knowledge and backgrounds. For that, as institutional researchers we need to continue our professional development, acquire knowledge and upskill ourselves to better support decision-making processes. This professional development should also reflect the issues we face and contextual intelligence at both organisational (university) and the institutional (higher education sector) levels.

As incoming AAIR Newsletter editor, what will be your focus for future newsletters?

To be honest, my focus for the next 6–12 months will primarily be on learning, and on finding a co-editor to work together with me. I would like to learn how the newsletter is prepared and where to search and find the most relevant content for AAIR members so that I can bring you the latest and greatest information. Based on these outcomes, I would like to introduce theme-based special issues to allow our members to become more involved and participate more actively in their professional association. I will start to contact our members for ideas and their advice and contributions for the coming issues.

My goal is to make the AAIR newsletter a collaboration platform to promote our Association, our members, and what we are going to

achieve! I anticipate that there will be challenges ahead for me, but I'd like to walk this journey with hope and joy!

If you're interested in working with me on the newsletter, I'd love to hear from you at editor@aair.org.au

Connect with Lizzie on LinkedIn

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Issue 2, February 2019

A great way to get involved with the AAIR community is to share your thoughts and ideas.

Do you have something you would like to share with your IR colleagues?

The next newsletter will be published in late February Please send your contributions to the editor@aair.org.au by February 11, 2019.

A reminder about the organisations' social media links to keep you up-to-date and in touch with all the latest news and events.

AAIR on Twitter @AAIRaustralasia

**Tracy Creagh
Editor, *The Institutional Researcher***