



Australasian Association for Institutional Research

*AAIR – Australasian Association for Institutional Research  
Annual Forum 2010...*

## Institutional Research: Coming of Age Stories

*...21 years of the AAIR:  
Has Institutional Research Come of Age in  
Australasia?*



# AAIR

Australasian Association for Institutional Research



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Geelong, Victoria  
Four Points by Sheraton Geelong  
[www.aair.org.au](http://www.aair.org.au)

# Australasian Association for Institutional Research Annual Forum 2010

Given the theme of this year's forum, it was proposed that questions relating to 'who we are', and 'how did we come to be here' may be best answered through the lived experience of some of our AAIR members and friends over the last twenty-one years of the association's existence.

This report will chronicle some of these 'coming of age stories' that have been collected via invitations to individual members. The methodology employed was phenomenological comprising a mixture of storytelling approach and semi structured interviewing to collect the data.

As well as providing an opportunity to document the association's history in a very human way, the coming of age stories together will explore how AAIR intersects with the experiences of academics, teachers, professional staff and students alike. We hope that insights from these stories assist our current members to envisage the future of the association and in particular their role within it.





## *Dr Josephine Palermo*

*President*

*Australasian Association for Institutional Research*

### *My IR Coming of Age Story...*

If you will bear with me, I will share an historical account of my association with AAIR. I hope through my own coming of age story you will see how AAIR intersects with the experiences of academics, teachers, professional staff and students.

I became involved in AAIR about 18 years ago. I was finishing my Graduate Diploma in Applied Psychology and working full time for the Swinburne Student Union (SSU). The federal government was embarking on a quality agenda (Dawkins reforms were imminent) and universities were scrambling to formalise evaluation systems which until then had been fairly ad hoc. SSU was one of the most innovative student unions with an incorporated structure and a focus on educational outcomes. For example, SSU instituted a policy of '50% Educational Content', which meant students had to design all events with an educational focus. They couldn't just throw a BBQ with light entertainment; they had to also include promotion of educational services, or an informed speaker about educational issues of the day. It is not surprising then that at that time SSU was the only organisation on campus conducting formal summative student evaluations. It was my job as Education Research Officer to coordinate the program. Once the Quality Rounds got under way, I was quickly seconded to the Vice Chancellor's Office to lead a team which introduced new, University-wide student evaluation systems.

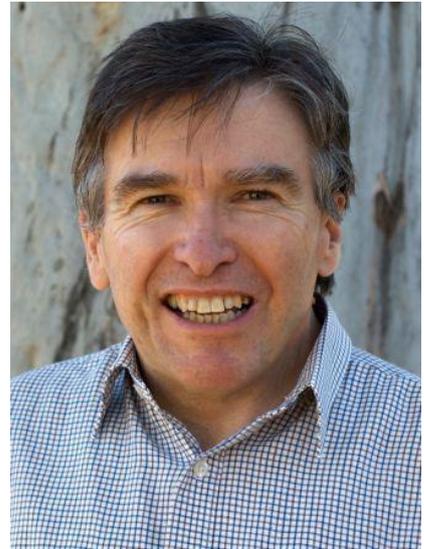
We developed principles for conduct and use of student feedback, and the introduction of new technologies. This involved not only the logistics and pedagogic issues associated with developing and implementing the surveys, but also facilitating the required shift in learning and teaching cultures towards more student-centred approaches. This early start as a 'boundary spanner' within a large and complex dual sector university led to my involvement in other change programs in the areas of quality enhancement as the AUQA audits began to take shape in the early 2000s. I was lucky enough to work alongside very bright academics with a passion for improving the student experience as well as insightful university managers who knew it was important to lead from behind and take academics with them on the change journey. I was also encouraged to take a scholarly approach to my practice and published in peer review journals on topics of quality enhancement, action learning, strategic planning, student equity and transnationalisation of education. This scholarly approach was in part encouraged by colleagues in AAIR who mentored my presentations at annual fora and proof read drafts that were submitted to the Journal of Institutional Research (of which I am now Editor).

In 2004 I left a senior administrative position in the Planning Unit at RMIT to take on Research Fellow and Lecturer roles at Deakin University where I learnt to be an academic (and am still learning!). I continued applied research in educational institutions, mostly in the Sultanate of Oman, where I collaborated with Ministerial departments on change projects levelled at developing quality assurance systems in-country that were empowering for staff, inclusive of more student-centred approaches to teaching, and involved participatory rather directive decision making processes. This more recent work has been the highlight of my association with institutional research. Presentations of outcomes won a 'best presentation' award at a recent AAIR Forum.

*Dave Marr*

*Vice-President*

*Australasian Association for Institutional Research*



## *My IR Coming of Age Story...*

When my children were quite young, they were playing a game of “what do you want to be when you grow up?” using a toy microphone; not an uncommon game for young children. When asked by my younger daughter, my older daughter said she wanted to own a flower shop or help people who were sick; my younger daughter thought she’d like to work in a candy or ice-cream store. I was quite happy to be a quiet observer as they experimented with different career options. Suddenly the older girl turned to me and said, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Here the microphone was pinned under my nose and I had to answer. So what did I say – “I don’t really know!” “But you’re the adult – you’re supposed to know!”, they chimed in harmony.

Becoming an institutional researcher was therefore more by accident than that I was achieving those career goals that I’d set for myself as a youngster. And I dare say that my story isn’t much different to a large number of my colleagues.

It all actually started at the University of New South Wales in 1972 when, as a recent school leaver, I was offered and subsequently took up a role as a Statistics Clerk in the Statistics Section of the Registrar’s Division. I’d been good at mathematics at school and this seemed a natural role for me. This wasn’t knowledge management or even information management; it was arithmetic 101. We prepared tables of frequency counts; we even produced nice charts (by hand on graph paper of course; it was before personal computers believe it or not!). We became very proficient at using electric (not electronic you should note) calculators that took fifteen minutes to perform a long division but very good at adding lists of numbers up. And there were lots of those.

I then had quite a break from the world of numbers until I’d served a period at the University of Newcastle and the Statistics Officer’s role came up. As I’d had some experience at UNSW, it was not a surprise that I was appointed to such a position. And my, how things had changed! We had electronic typewriters to allow tabbing across columns so that numbers could be aligned. We even had rudimentary word processors that unfortunately left most typists with some form of repetitive strain injuries (RSI) at some time or another. We only had one census date and the university didn’t have key performance indicators or even strategic plans. We look back now and wonder how universities ever managed without these.

Dawkins reforms came and we ‘amalgamated’; the university unit consisting of myself and a typist merging with the Management Information Unit of the College of Advanced Education. Well, that was the most likely outcome. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration) from the ‘university’ didn’t agree and I moved into a Student Statistics role in Student Administration so as to keep the DV-C ‘informed’. The role morphed into Student Data Manager and then into Student Systems User Analyst as the needs ebbed and changed.

My first encounter with the term 'institutional research' occurred in the mid-1990s when the former University Secretary, Gem Cheong, restructured both MIU and my role to create the 'Institutional Research Unit'. Neither of us was sure what this meant, but we were soon being asked to provide much more than tables of numbers by Gem.

It was in 1999, as the newly appointed Director of Institutional Research, that I was asked to attend the Australasian Association for Institutional Research (AAIR) Forum in Auckland, New Zealand. My initial thought was, "There are other people who know what this means. How? Why?" I was a newbie and I felt way out of my depth. I met some fantastic characters and learnt that some institutions even had 'quality units'. This was all foreign to me coming from a small, regional university like Newcastle.

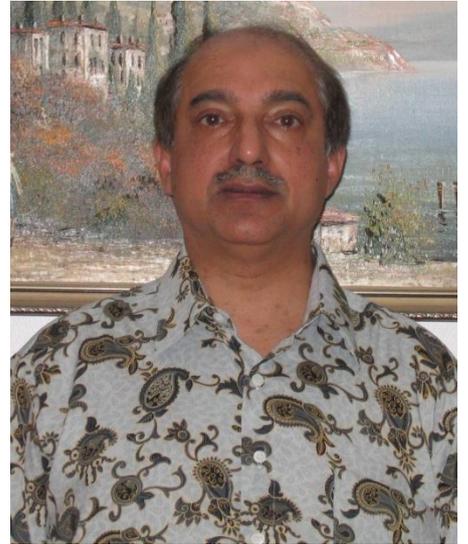
Even though I've travelled a path through data analysis back in my UNSW days, through information analysis and management in my University of Newcastle roles, I still don't believe I've really 'come of age' as an institutional researcher. Australasian universities mostly do not see institutional research as a profession in the same way that they see accountants, HR practitioners, IT specialists, even counsellors. Many of my colleagues have degrees ranging from psychology, geography, to economics and even astrophysics. I myself have a science degree majoring in earth sciences. Do these seemingly unrelated qualifications help make a good institutional researcher? In many cases it does, not because the qualification itself is relevant; it's the resolve and the confidence of the individual who has come to grips with their role. And at any number of institutions, this role may be defined quite differently.

I don't believe I will ever come of age until such time as institutional research is seen as a profession. AAIR can play a role in developing appropriate accreditation practices by providing access to suitable qualifications. That is the goal for AAIR into the future. And possibly then and only then will I feel that IR and I have 'come of age'.

So now if my daughters ask me, 'what do you want to be when you grow up?', I can say with some confidence that I want to be an institutional researcher. They may not know what that means now, but hopefully they'll have a much better idea what that is in the not too distant future.

## *Dr Raj Sharma*

*Higher Education Consultant,  
and Past President of the AAIR*



### *Dr Raj Sharma gives an account of the establishment of the AAIR...*

In late 1988, AIR Officials contacted me to form an IR Organization in the Australasian region. I discussed this matter with his institutional head, Prof Arthur Appleton (first Vice Chancellor, CQU) who fully supported the establishment of AAIR, including hosting the first AAIR conference in Rockhampton in 1990. Dr John Muffo of Virginia Tech and State University, one of the AIR senior officials, provided much encouragement and support during the formative years of the organization.

Initially, an interim AAIR Management Committee was formed. It comprised the following IR and planning colleagues in Australia: *Robert Taylor (FIT), Dr Gan Che Ng (LaTrobe), Terry Hand (University of NSW), Dr Rex Hunter (University of Adelaide), Dr Barry Cameron (Darling Downs), Dr Raj Sharma (Chair).*

The Interim Management Committee's principal role was to raise the profile of IR in Australasia, plan the inaugural conference of AAIR and conduct the first AGM of the Association in conjunction with the first forum. Very early on some general principles were established by the above founding members of AAIR, inter alia,

- Convene an annual conference for AAIR members and interested IR practitioners in the region in conjunction with the AGM.
- Management Committee (later Executive Committee) are responsible for the academic aspects of the conference.
- Host institution and local forum Chair are responsible for the operational dimensions of the conference.

I commenced planning the first conference (with his other hat as member of the host institution) till late 1989 when he moved to Swinburne, and Bruce Zimmer completed the tasks and implemented the 1990 AAIR Forum with the full support of Prof Appleton. The 1990 AGM elected the following inaugural AAIR Executive Committee:

- President: *Dr Raj Sharma (Swinburne)*
- Vice President: *Bruce Phillips (Deputy CEO, Wellington Polytech)*
- Hon Secretary: *Dr Gan Che Ng (Senior Lecturer, LaTrobe)*
- Treasurer: *Dennis Ham (Statistician, Curtin)*
- Members at Large: *Terry Hand (Head of Planning, UNSW), Bruce Zimmer (Head of Planning, UCQ) and ?*

The AAIR Executive Committee implemented a number of initiatives including:

- Dr Gan Ng designed the AAIR logo (representing sustainable and holistic approaches to higher education planning and management in a world of changes)
- Raj and Gan led the establishment of the AAIR Journal and production of a manual for IR
- Gan and Dennis Ham drafted the AAIR Constitution



- International links were developed with AIR, EAIR and some institutions in the neighbouring region, including South East Asia (later this led to the formation of SEAAIR). Further the Executive Committee was successful in receiving some initiative grants from AIR to develop AAIR.
- Implementation of AAIR workshops (separate from the conference).
- Implementation of pre-conference AAIR workshops.
- Strengthening the financial position of the Association by minimising costs and optimising revenue for future initiatives.
- Implementation of the Best Paper Awards at the Conference.
- Development and implementation of Merit Awards for members making exceptional contribution to the Association.
- Joint national institutional research and associated application for research grants.

Establishing the association required much effort from all of us involved at the time. In my case without the support of Prof Appleton at Rockhampton and Frank Bannon and Prof Iain Wallace at Swinburne, it would have been impossible for me to lead the development of AAIR and implement the first two conferences of the Association. I also owe a great deal to my wife (Sew Sharma) and two daughters (Allison and Anne) who sacrificed much during those early years when I was often working seven days a week and hardly at home particularly during 1989-1994. My sincere thanks go to them and others mentioned above who were crucial in the establishment of the AAIR.

## *Bruce Zimmer*

*Past President*

*Australasian Association for Institutional Research*

### *My IR Coming of Age Story...*

As I've been 'retired' from active involvement in institutional research for a full five years, I dare not offer gratuitous advice on either the current state of the art or the current state of the nation with regard to any aspect of institutional research or AAIR. Instead, this account of my own involvement with the Association must be a personal story, as the only meaningful way to tell it is through the biases of my own perspective. Hopefully this will be of some interest to those of you prepared to read what I've written.

It was in 1988, whilst working as Planning Manager at the institution which is now Charles Darwin University, when I was contacted by phone by my ex-RMIT colleague Raj Sharma. Raj was proposing the establishment of an Australasian AIR and invited me to join him on the interim committee he was organising to guide this process. Being well aware already of the American-based Association of Institutional Research (AIR), I agreed wholeheartedly that the time was indeed right for establishment of an Australasian AIR.

Australian tertiary education was then in the early stages of the "Dawkins Reforms" which irrevocably changed the nation's higher education system. These changes included such initiatives as introduction of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), development of the "relative funding model" which eliminated much of the funding distinctions between universities and colleges of advanced education, and creation of the "unified higher education system" followed by the consequent amalgamation of many institutions and the associated disappearance of a separate CAE sector. Only a couple of years earlier we had witnessed the introduction of computer based annual statistical data collections. Attention was about to be turned to quality assurance and quality improvement, the adoption of performance indicators was being proposed - and in the early 1990s we would see the beginnings of government-driven quality processes within the sector.

All in all it was a time of major change and upheaval within higher education. Many institutions were recognising the need to strengthen their planning and management processes and associated support systems. There was clearly a role for a new professional association which could offer a forum for those involved in supporting these processes, whereby they could share and further develop the skills and knowledge they needed to perform their institutional responsibilities. AAIR had the potential to meet this growing need, and Raj and colleagues set themselves the task of achieving this potential.

A year later I had moved to Central Queensland, and had commenced work in Rockhampton at the institution now known as CQ University. One fortuitous outcome of this was that I had inherited from Raj, who had moved from there to take up a new position at Swinburne, the role of local coordinator/organiser for the inaugural AAIR Forum, to be hosted by my institution in September 1990. Over the next year I found myself increasingly immersed in the work of putting things into place locally to ensure the success of the forum in addition to my ongoing role on AAIR's interim committee. It was extremely fortunate that my institution's top management was highly supportive of the establishment of AAIR and of hosting the forum in particular.

I have enduring memories of those first couple of years during which I contributed to AAIR's initial establishment and the groundwork which led to achievement of AAIR's first major milestone - the resounding success of the inaugural AAIR forum in September 1990.

Over the decade of the 1990s, AAIR continued to grow and develop due in large measure to the energetic and committed leadership of Raj, Dennis Ham, and other management committee members. Our membership base broadened in scope and depth, and the synergies created among our members and their diverse contributions made AAIR a success. Successive annual forums brought in new perspectives and forged new links between institutional researchers and practitioners across the diverse components of Australian and New Zealand tertiary education.

In 1998, I took up the challenge of serving as AAIR's President when Dennis Ham stepped down after two terms in this role. After two eventful terms as President I stepped down in turn, to be ably succeeded by Wendy Marchment in 2002.

In 2001, I found myself serving for a second time as AAIR forum convener, when Central Queensland University again hosted our annual conference. The Australian and New Zealand post secondary education systems, as well as their component institutions, had become larger and more complex. Funding bodies and stakeholders held higher and more demanding expectations. Practitioners of institutional research faced correspondingly greater challenges than they had in 1990. Fortunately, AAIR had matured and evolved to keep up with the times - and our forum program reflected this.

For more than 15 years, AAIR provided me with many professional development experiences and opportunities. These included participating in every annual forum held between 1990 and 2004, preparing and presenting a number of conference papers, taking part in numerous workshops and seminars as both attendee and presenter, and on rare occasions attending and presenting at North American conferences. As well as this, I took full advantage of the informal networking that we all engage in during conferences, workshops and other professional get-togethers. These learning experiences strengthened and broadened my skills, and improved my understanding of how to use them to best advantage in performing my work responsibilities. In short, AAIR provided me with much that enriched my professional development.

I've also had the pleasure and privilege of having played a continuing part in AAIR's formative years of development, serving successively in the positions of management committee member, Honorary Secretary, Vice President, President, and finally Immediate Past President over a period of more than fifteen years.

All these experiences improved my perspective on how institutional research can contribute to our tertiary education systems and how AAIR can help its members make their own contributions more effective and meaningful. Hopefully, I gave something back in return.

In 2005, I realised it was time for me to wrap up some 30 years' involvement in institutional planning and management and move toward new directions. I left Australia to spend a couple of years overseas, during which time I pursued a new focus - teaching English as a foreign language. It was also time to wrap up my active participation in AAIR as it was clear I could no longer maintain a meaningful professional involvement in the rapidly evolving world of institutional research.

Five years later, I find myself 'retired' and working as a community based, volunteer tutor in English as a second language as well as in adult literacy and numeracy. The busy life I had led for many years in the hectic world of institutional management and planning now seems light years ago. But those times when I could operate as an "institutional researcher", exchanging ideas and perspectives with my AAIR colleagues, still remain strong in my memory. I am sorry that it has not been possible to join with you in attending this year's 20th AAIR Forum, as I am sure I would find it most rewarding.



## *Kevin Duggan*

*Management Information Analyst  
Victoria University of Wellington*

### *My IR Coming of Age Story...*

Longevity, rather than an intrinsic desire to be an “Institutional Researcher”, has been the hallmark of my tertiary education career.

Way back, 3rd February 1969, I was appointed Assistant Registrar (Statistics) at Victoria University of Wellington, then a single campus university located in New Zealand’s capital city with a student population of just over 6000. Forty two years on, the university now boasts four city campuses, all within a three mile radius of the original site, with a student body numbering in excess of 22,000. One of my original duties was management of the university’s only computer – an IBM 12K 1440 requiring a raised floor, air conditioning and a half day downtime every week for servicing! My staff consisted of a team of hard working, fun loving card punch operators. As the only computer on campus, and one of the few in Wellington, I was constantly besieged by academics wanting to use the equipment when it was not required for administrative purposes - finance, payroll, class lists, results processing, statistics etc. Other memorable moments include the embarrassing time when the payroll program I had written “blew up” when it couldn’t cope with the vice-chancellor’s newly acquired five figure annual salary.

As the job title suggested a large part of my responsibility comprised the compilation of the official university statistics required for both internal and external use. Then, as now, statistics provide the basic building blocks for “business intelligence”. Thus, as the funding for the tertiary education system in New Zealand changed over time from quinquennial grants (does anyone else remember these?), to open ended funding based on demand driven student load, cost category and level of study, to capped funding based on agreed EFTS targets within an Investment Plan framework (with penalties for both under and over achievement), I have been surreptitiously sucked into “Institutional Research”!

Have I been disappointed in this career progression? Not one little bit. It has enabled me to use my accounting and legal training in dealing with university management, government departments and a whole range of internal and external stakeholders. My involvement with all aspects of academic and administrative life at the university for more than four decades has raised my profile enabling me to represent the general staff (approximately 1500) on the university governing body for the last sixteen years, where the institutional and sector knowledge I have accumulated has been put to good use at the governance level.

In earlier times, when life was much simpler, there were few colleagues at our institution involved with forward planning, so I found AAIR conferences excellent fora to meet with kindred spirits, and discuss common problems. There is no doubt in my mind that these conferences have successively become more professional and valuable over time for networking, problem solving and illumination of the way ahead, and so long as this trend continues, I am confident that institutions will be prepared to fund staff to attend even in periods of financial restraint. As for me, I will always take a keen interest in the future of the Association, as I reflect on my “institutional research” career, from the serenity of my rocking chair.



*Kathie Rabel*

*Manager, Institutional Analysis  
Victoria University of Wellington*

## *My IR Coming of Age Story...*

I am not sure if I have always liked numbers and data, but I have certainly come to appreciate them and what they can and can't do.

I suppose that I was "doomed" from the start as my father was an electrical engineer who after an MBA eventually got into finance and budgeting. He controlled millions of dollars of expenditure for the New York Telephone Company until he retired in the mid-1980s and started his second career as a mathematics teacher. He ended up dealing with both ends of the spectrum at high school – students who were challenged and those who excelled. My mother was no slouch either when it came to numbers, having been a chief surgical nurse in a New York City hospital before becoming a teacher aide so you can see why I feel like it is in the genes.

I was never a great student at either mathematics or statistics, but one of my highlights was the "A" I got in first year statistics at University. It foolishly led me into a false sense of security in the area and a second year paper in nonparametric statistics for which I was thrilled to end up with a "C".

I was also very lucky to study at the University of Nairobi in Kenya for 6 months while an undergraduate at St Lawrence University. I ended up in an internship in the Department of Veterinary Physiology, working on a project on thermo-regulation and respiratory water loss in giraffe. Amongst other things (which included taking rectal temperatures of giraffes but that is another story), I was responsible for correlating all the environmental data we had with the animal data we collected. I think this is where I first started to think that data could be a really powerful tool. However, I also decided that I was never going to be a serious scientist, but didn't want to lose the interest that I had in science. That is why I did my masters in environmental management at Duke University, focussing on policy, economics and the international aspects of environmental policy.

I moved away from numbers and data for a while, although not completely and had several jobs in the United States (which involved travel to Nepal on a regular basis but that also is another story) and eventually New Zealand that involved evaluation and analysis using numbers and data. In New Zealand, after a short stint of working for the Department of Labour, my roles have been all in the University sector at two different institutions. For more than 20 years, I was at the University of Otago and for the past three and a half years at Victoria University of Wellington. It was in the latter part of my time at Otago and more recently at Victoria that my enthusiasm for using data and working with numbers has been rejuvenated. I now deal with the Tertiary Education Commission on a regular basis on funding, load management, equity and performance matters. It was through this work that I became aware of AAIR and the benefits of being a member and having the ability to network with colleagues who are working in similar areas. Of course, now we call it "business intelligence", "data warehousing", "data visualisation" and being "agile" but I am still happy to be known as a "numbers" person.





## *Ivan Skaines*

*Past President*

*Australasian Association for Institutional Research*

### *My IR Coming of Age Story...*

In 1997 I joined the Hunter Institute of Technology in Newcastle in a role related to profiling and data analysis. I had worked for 17 years for an independent, not for profit regional research organisation in Newcastle called Hunter Valley Research Foundation doing market and social research and had managed projects using customer and community surveys for both private and government organisations of all types but had never heard the words Institutional Research.

Somehow, I got to attend a seminar at UTS in Sydney in that year and met Dave Marr and others from the University of Newcastle. We got to talking about the benefits of having ongoing meetings between staff working in the Institutional Research and Survey and Evaluation Units at the University of Newcastle and the Planning Unit at the Hunter Institute. Our regular meetings included information sharing and discussions about the challenges of working in the area of Institutional Research.

I'm not sure exactly how it happened but later I offered to do a presentation at Swinburne University (I think it might have been a seminar for Victorian members) about Hunter Institute's initiatives with the Australian Business Excellence framework. I also had dinner with Raj Sharma, and in his own inimitable style, he converted me to the professional faith we call Institutional Research!

I think I might have "come of age" with Institutional Research during my involvement with the AUQA audits at the Universities of Newcastle and Western Sydney and then become one of the elders of Institutional Research when I served a term as President 2006-2008 and also Chair of the AAIR Annual Forum in Sydney in 2007.

In preparing this piece I went to Wikipedia, that modern oracle, and the definition provided for coming of age is a young person's transition from childhood to adulthood and many cultures retain ceremonies to confirm the coming of age, and significant benefits come with the change.

Therefore, would there be any benefits in having a ceremony to become an institutional researcher where people have to pass through a physical challenge or test, like jumping off a tower with vine ropes attached to your ankles like the young men of Pentecost Island? Probably not, given the associated issues of occupational health and safety and such feats of daring would probably not be covered by insurance! Are there any benefits associated with becoming an institutional researcher?

Like many others I fell into the area of Institutional Research and my learning was unstructured via information sharing with my colleagues both here in Australia and internationally through informal contacts and it has taken me to conferences in Australia, Europe and Southeast Asia as a presenter and attendee. But a more structured and systematic approach to professional development, and a clear indication to new Institutional Researchers about how one "comes of age" in the profession, would do much to lift the profile of our association and its members.



*Annie Weir*  
*Member of the AAIR*

## *My IR Coming of Age Story...*



Happy 21st birthday to all members of AAIR! I was delighted to be asked to share my coming of age story. I first became interested in institutional research in 1999 when I was employed at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand as the Academic Analyst with oversight of course and programme evaluations. My senior colleagues encouraged me to enrol in a PhD and encouraged my research interests. The focus of my PhD research was on the quality assurance of tertiary education (the source for future papers to AAIR forums).

I was encouraged to attend and present a paper at my first AAIR Forum in 1999, in Auckland. My paper was on "Course Feedback: Its Role in Institutional Evaluation" I was very nervous and I hoped no one would ask me difficult questions. They did, but it was not as bad as I imagined and they were also very supportive. I enjoyed attending a variety of sessions with outstanding speakers as well as the social aspects. Then I started planning to come to the AAIR forums.

Highlights of my coming of age include being awarded Best Conference Paper Presentation in 2000. I was thrilled as it meant I was given help to attend and present my paper at AIR in Long Beach, California. I made it to the big stage in 2000 when I took part in an AAIR plenary providing a New Zealand perspective on academic audit.

The 2001 AAIR at Rockhampton stands out for me, with all that sunshine, we focused on globalization which influenced my subsequent work. My most recent interaction with AAIR was having my article on "Assuring quality in higher education: the New Zealand experience" published in 2009 in the online Journal for Institutional Research.

At present I have a great opportunity to work at the University of Edinburgh as a Research Fellow at the Centre for Educational Sociology and also as a Healthcare Management Research Fellow with the Business School. The focus of my work is the interface between health and higher education. At the end of 2011 I plan to move back to the Southern Hemisphere, either to Australia or New Zealand and I hope to pursue a position in research or in academic administration.