



President's Report

16 November 2016

As this will be my last Annual Report as President, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for their good-natured support and willing enthusiasm over the past four years of my term as President. What the Committee has achieved and continues to achieve is truly a team effort. It's not always easy fitting in a voluntary contribution to AAIR against more important commitments such as paid work and family, but this group continues to be available and committed.

I've been fortunate to have been either working part-time or casually for most of my term as President, which has allowed me more time to devote to the role. That's most probably not a situation AAIR's previously had the luxury of, and may not again for many years to come.

As the only nomination for incoming President, Kathie Rabel, from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, will take over from me as President for the term 2016 to 2018. I will remain on the Committee as the Immediate Past President at least for

2017. I have every confidence that AAIR is in strong hands with Kathie in the President's chair with a very strong and committed Executive Committee behind her.

Achievements in 2016:

AAIR Executive Committee

The Committee met on six occasions during 2016 via teleconference to discuss the regular business of the organisation, including our strategic projects.

Liesha Northover, AAIR's executive officer, continues to provide regular communications through her member's only bulletins, and her more focussed '*SIG Bulletins*', which allows us to communicate to our SIG members directly with news pertinent to them.

Liesha also provides regular bulletins on higher education job opportunities available in the sector, as well as maintaining the AAIR website and members database. And all this in only 7 hours per week!

In 2016, the Executive Committee comprised: myself, Dave Marr (President); Kathie Rabel (Vice-President); Bruce Guthrie (Honorary Secretary) who resigned from the Committee in March and was replaced by Andrea Jeffreys as Acting Secretary; David De Bellis (Honorary Treasurer), with Committee Members being Jeff Holmes who also resigned from the Committee in March, Don Johnston, Kerry Martin, with Milly Taylor co-opted onto the Committee and resigned in October this year. With Jeff and Bruce resigning from the Committee during 2016, it provided an opportunity to bring new members on to the

Committee. To this end, Malcolm Rees, Manager, Student Survey and Evaluation Unit at Massey University; Greg Jacob, Director, Strategic Planning at Federation University; and Alison Byrne, Manager, Planning and Analysis at Sydney University joined the Committee.

Joining Kathie Rabel on the 2017–18 Committee will be: Don Johnston as Vice-President; David de Bellis as Treasurer; and Andrea Jeffreys as Secretary, as they were the only people nominated to these roles.

The four ordinary member positions available will be filled by members of the current Committee, except for Kerry Martin who chose not to stand for election, but who has agreed to be co-opted onto the Committee. Louise Hargreaves has also agreed to be co-opted on to the Committee to provide her valuable input into AAIR's communication strategies.

Stuart Terry, Organisational Researcher at Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand will be the new face on the Committee in 2017–18. We welcome another New Zealander onto the Committee and look forward to his contributions.

Milly Taylor has decided not to re-nominate for the Committee for 2017–18. I wish to thank Milly for her involvement over the past two years and wish her all the best in her other endeavours.

AAIR Annual Forum

In keeping with AAIR's strategy to hold alternate year forums in either Sydney or Melbourne where our biggest constituencies reside, the 2016 Forum is being held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Coogee from 15 to 16 November with the 14 November being set aside for Special Interest Group sessions. The concept of a two-day forum comes as a result of feedback from members, so it will be interesting to see if delegates find this format

more productive with less time being spent out of the office.

For 2017 the Annual Forum will be held in Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. This is the first time AAIR has ventured into the Northern Territory so we're hoping a number of people will take the opportunity to extend their stay and enjoy the attractions this area offers. In 2018 we'll be back in Melbourne.

AAIR SIG Forum

By all accounts, the 2016 AAIR SIG Forum was a great success; a full house. This Forum continues to meet the needs of new and diverse audiences, and we can see it continuing to grow into the future. A special thanks must go to the Social Research Centre for incorporating their sessions on QILT and for the participation of members from the Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE).

Of course thanks must go to the three Adelaide universities for their effort in putting this event together; it's a lot of hard work and some sleepless nights, but worth it to see the success on the day.

I'd also like to give a big 'thank you' to Victoria Chapman and Leishman Associates who assisted in staging this event for the first time.

Regional Dinner Event

Wednesday 16 March saw AAIR's inaugural Regional Dinner meeting held at CQ Melbourne. Professor Hamish Coates kindly agreed to speak on '*Australian Institutional Research—Framing Upcoming Challenges & Opportunities*'. From all reports, the evening was a great success, with thirteen participants plus Hamish and Liesha Northover (AAIR's tireless executive officer). It was an intimate evening with great food and drinks, Hamish's insights, as well as a great networking opportunity.

The results of the obligatory feedback survey follow:

People generally liked the ‘informal, open discussion’, ‘excellent interactions’ and the ‘opportunity to network’. Some thought a group of less than 20 promoted good conversations and open discussions, although one person thought the group of 15 was ‘too small’. Surprisingly all respondents considered the length of the evening to be ‘about right’, so that’s useful feedback for us for the future.

An important question was whether there were other types of events that people thought AAIR could or should be running. The responses included:

- visits to other institutions’ IR departments to see how they operate and how they use IT;
- SIG coffee or other casual events say around milestone occasions such as government reporting deadlines; and
- include speakers from outside universities to discuss IR related things, such as churn scoring and attrition mitigation from say a retail perspective.

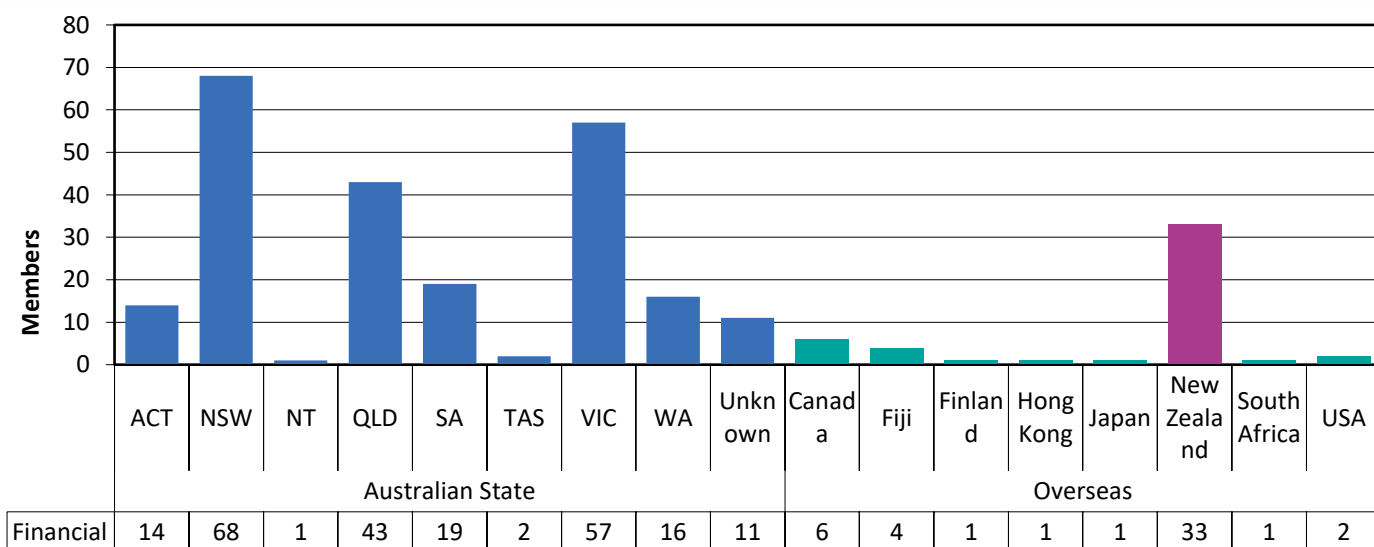
AAIR will be running a similar dinner event in Sydney in the first half of 2017, so stay tuned!

Membership

As of 30 June 2016 the Association had 280 financial members (191 in 2015), many of whom became members through the AAIR Forum in Wellington and the SIG Forums on Fraser Island and in Adelaide (see the chart below for a breakdown). The higher number of members is probably due to both SIG Forums occurring in the same financial year.

Again this year AAIR sent out membership renewals via AAIR’s PayPal account. This process proved to be much simpler than invoicing through MYOB. Many individuals chose to pay through PayPal, but a small number still chose to pay through a direct deposit into AAIR’s ANZ account.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) have become a very active part of the Association’s activities and provide its members access to resources not available through other networks, and at very little cost. So we are keen to continue to support them.



As at 30 June, there were: 201 subscribers to the DW/BI & Analytics SIGmail group (160 in 2015); 110 subscribers to the Load Management SIGmail group (96 in 2015); 107 subscribers to the Government Reporting SIGmail group (86 in 2015); and 116 subscribers to the Surveys and Evaluation SIGmail group (84 in 2015). If you are not a subscriber to any of the AAIR SIG mailing lists, please subscribe at <http://eepurl.com/nzpMj>.

AAIR Website

The AAIR website continues to provide a fantastic resource of the Association's history, as well as its current developments. If you've received one of Liesha's *Bulletins* you'll be aware of the number of job opportunities that AAIR pass on to our members. There is continued interest in the 'Higher Education Jobs' section of the website, with many institutions and recruitment companies utilising this currently free facility.

Forum papers and presentations continue to be published on the AAIR website. Other events that are occurring throughout the year either in Australasia or elsewhere overseas are also posted on the website.

If you have any ideas for items or pages that you would like to see on our website, then please email them to our Secretariat at info@air.org.au. We'd love to hear from you.

New Address

AAIR finally has a permanent address; well of a kind at least. In the past we've relied on the Honorary Secretary's address as the organisation's address, and we thank those people for assuming that responsibility. But as it is an elected position, it is possible that the Secretary could change every two years, in which case we've historically had to change our address in all the places in which we have business accounts, e.g. ANZ bank, MYOB,

Survey Monkey, website contact, email listings, etc., each time the Secretary changed.

National Postal Services (Natpost) offer a service to host a virtual suite or box in the Melbourne CBD. As AAIR is incorporated in Victoria, it seemed only appropriate that our address reside in Melbourne. Our new address is:

Suite 204
585 Little Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Natpost provide a range of services to support any correspondence we receive and we'll utilise those as required. At AUD\$12.00 per month it is a cost effective way to manage physical mail deliveries, which in this electronic age are not many, but definitely more than none. So please make note of that address as we'll be using it into the foreseeable future.

AAIR Fellowships

AAIR again offered two annual fellowships to the value of AUD\$2,500.00 each. Eligibility is restricted to current AAIR members with at least two years continuous membership. Office holders and members of the AAIR Committee are ineligible to apply for either Fellowship.

Each fellowship has a different objective:

- a. The 'Raj Sharma Fellowship' is in recognition of Raj's influence on Institutional Research in Australasia, and is focussed on academic or career advancement in the pursuit of IR knowledge;

- b. The 'Zimmer Travel Fellowship' is to assist an AAIR member to attend an international forum hosted by an AAIR affiliate by contributing toward their travel costs.

The winner of this year's Zimmer Travel Fellowship was Naomi Doncaster from Southern Cross University. The prize of \$2,500 supported Naomi's travel to attend the Higher Education Institutional Research (HEIR) conference at Liverpool John Moores University, UK in September 2016.

As Naomi pointed out in her application, 'Exposure to such a diversity of higher education environments offers a great opportunity for learning and for sharing practices and experiences. Discussion of the role of metrics and data in supporting institutional research and institutional decision making in different settings would be highly relevant to my professional development'.

Unfortunately we again did not receive an application for the Raj Sharma Fellowship, which was disappointing. Perhaps next year!

Naomi provided a report of her attendance, which was published in the October Newsletter. Her transcript follows:

'I was the recipient of the Bruce Zimmer Travel Fellowship awarded by AAIR in 2016 and used it to attend the Higher Education Institutional Research (HEIR) conference held in the John Lennon Art & Design Building at Liverpool John Moores University (UK).

The conference was relatively small, with 48 papers presented over 2 days. The majority of presenters were from the UK with others coming from further afield such as the US, Scandinavia, Turkey and Jamaica.

The conference theme of '*metrics that matter*' was discussed in the light of the forthcoming Teaching Excellence Framework (from the same stable as the Research Excellence Framework), including the notion



of measuring learning gain. Some pilot projects are underway to explore ways in which learning gain might be measured through use of longitudinal grade data, development of skills such as problem solving and critical thinking, work readiness and graduate earnings. The consensus seemed to be that whilst these may work for individual institutions they tend not to be scalable to a national level.

Whilst this agenda is unique to the UK, some of the other metrics discussed would be familiar to Australian institutions, such as student retention, graduate employment and metrics from surveys of student satisfaction & engagement.

It was interesting to hear over the two days where universities were working collaboratively on various projects, and also the active involvement of students in research projects, sometimes in a paid capacity.

The HEIR operates on a different basis to AAIR being a network of institutional researchers rather than a member based association. The main event each year is this conference but they also publish occasional papers, see <http://www.heirnetwork.org.uk/>

I would like to thank AAIR for providing this Fellowship and would recommend others to apply in the future. If anyone fancies a long flight, the 2017 HEIR conference will be held at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen.'

Co-marketing of Conference Events

In 2016, AAIR has continued to endorse conference events organised in collaboration with a number of partners, including Liquid Learning, Analytics 8, NCVER and Gartner. AAIR provided promotional material for these conferences, as well as having the AAIR logo displayed on their conference material. Discounts to some of these events were also provided to AAIR members.

In 2016 these co-marketing arrangements included endorsement of EduTECH Conference events, thus putting AAIR's brand in front of the more senior tertiary education managers.

Over the next two years, AAIR will continue its strategic program as well as offering the two leading forum events for IR professionals working in tertiary education. AAIR is committed to supporting effective decision-making.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Marr', is written over a faint, circular stamp or watermark.

David Marr
AAIR President