



AAIR Newsletter November 2017

2017 AAIR Forum - Alice Springs, Australia

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Photo: Steven Collette, University of Tasmania

2017 AAIR Forum Dinner, The Old Quarry, Alice Springs

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FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

[... on the way to the Forum](#)

Well, another very informative and highly enjoyable AAIR Annual Forum was held in Alice Springs at the beginning of this month.

Thank you to all the delegates who attended and made the Forum, once again, a very special event. The keynote presentations, the panel session, and the variety of parallel sessions, all contributed to a stimulating and thought-provoking program. Along with the valuable networking that happens at these events, AAIR members also enjoy learning from their colleagues, sharing their knowledge, and mentoring others. This is also

demonstrated in AAIR's newly launched 'Sharing Expertise' program. AAIR aficionados can sign up on the AAIR website to offer their expertise to an AAIR member. Use of this database of experts is available to AAIR members only via a password protected portal. Anyone can visit our [Sharing Expertise page](#) to sign up to the service, and AAIR members can visit our [database search page](#) to find an institutional researcher who may be able to assist you if you are either new to the field, have moved into a new area of institutional research, or are genuinely struggling with an issue.



Back to the Forum now...The Forum dinner, which was held at the [Old Quarry](#), was certainly the highlight of the social calendar. It was located in a very unique setting, and many delegates said it was the 'best Forum dinner ever'.

Thank you once again to our Sponsors of the 2017 AAIR Annual Forum. Without their ongoing commitment, events like these would not be possible. Also, a big

thank you to the Organising Committee and to Charles Darwin University for their support as this year's host.

An important event during the Forum, was to bestow life membership on two AAIR members who have contributed a great deal to AAIR over the years. The recipients of life membership to AAIR are [Dave Marr](#) and [Dean Ward](#). Congratulations to both.

Lastly, it was announced at the AGM, that the 2018 [AAIR Annual Forum](#) will be held in Melbourne sometime in November, and will be hosted by La Trobe University. In July 2018, the [AAIR SIG Forum](#) will be held in Canberra and hosted by the University of Canberra. We look forward to welcoming you to both events next year.

And, if there are any institutions interested in hosting an AAIR event in the future, then please contact Don Johnston (don.johnston@scu.edu.au), who would be happy to provide more information on what is involved with hosting an event.

Don Johnston, AAIR Vice- President



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the final newsletter for 2017.

What better way to finish the year than with a summary of the 2017 AAIR forum held in Alice Springs, Central Australia (page 9).

Full acknowledgement to the organising committee: Don Johnston from Southern Cross University and Penny Szybiak and Rhianna Harker from Charles Darwin University who did an outstanding job.

Next year's AAIR Forum will be held in Melbourne and hosted by La Trobe University. AAIR Secretary Andrea Jeffreys will head up the organising committee and we hope to see you all again in 2018.

Our final profile of an Institutional Researcher for 2017 is Zanne van Wyk from the University of Newcastle. Zanne is also the current chair of the AAIR Data Warehousing, Business Intelligence & Analytics SIG. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the Research Corner this year – your experience and knowledge have contributed to the relevance of this monthly newsletter - all profiles are also on the new [AAIR website](#).

This is also the last newsletter from your co-editors as the 'dynamic duo'. Monica is taking maternity leave and all at AAIR wish her the very best – especially her co-editor ... so expect more typos.

Best wishes for the remainder of 2017

Monica and Tracy

SECTOR NEWS AND VIEWS

Student Data summary

The Australian [Department of Education and Training](#) released the 2016 full-year figures in mid-November. Postgraduates drive the overall growth in numbers, up 3.9 per cent to 401 000, while there are now over one million undergraduates, up 2.9 per cent. Public universities enrolled 90 per cent of students but while their enrolments expanded by 2.7 per cent, private providers grew by 10.2 per cent.

Indigenous student enrolments were up 10.4 per cent in 2016, but they are still significantly under-represented in higher education, accounting for 1.2 per cent of enrolments, (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples accounted for 2.8 per cent of the population in the 2016 census). And there was no growth in low SES commencements, up 0.1 per cent. Students from the bottom quartile of the community now account for 18 per cent of university enrolments.

DET also reports growth in work-focused courses, with IT up 19 per cent and architecture and building up 15 per cent although engineers who point to the present reliance of migrants to meet demand will notice enrolments in their area only grew by 3.9 per cent. The number of commencing students in education has dropped by 2.6 per cent.

Universities Australia's [response](#) to the release of data noted that the share of students dropping out of university is around the same as it was a decade ago – despite a dramatic expansion of access to a larger and more diverse group of Australians than ever before. Education and Training Minister Simon Birmingham [cautioned](#) against the high student dropout rates and the need for universities to take responsibility for these attrition numbers with greater levels of support.

Keeping it all in perspective Nadine Zacharias, senior research fellow at Curtin University's National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, writes for [Campus Morning Mail](#) (November 20) and reminds us that "the sector has systematically and substantially underestimated the numbers of students from low SES, regional and remote backgrounds at most universities and the sector overall".

Additionally (From the AFR November 15) [Universities fail to reduce dropout rates,](#)

[Simon Birmingham blames uni performance.](#)

The percentage of students dropping out from university has barely shifted in more than 10 years and the stubbornly high rate has prompted the Federal Education Minister to put universities on notice. Nationally 14.97 per cent of students dropped out after just one year in 2015, according to data published by DET. This compares to 15 per cent in 2014 and it's barely budged since the 14.86 per cent recorded for 2005.

The attrition data also showed that the student [dropout rate at WA universities has reached its highest point](#) in a decade. 16.05 per cent of WA students who began an undergraduate course in 2015 did not return to university last year.

Higher Education Reform Package

As noted in the last newsletter, the three-senator and one [MP Nick Xenophon Team has rejected](#) the government's \$2.8bn higher education funding cuts, ensuring the legislation has failed. In summary, NXT ruled out:

- cutting Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding for universities
- reducing the student loan repayment threshold
- a scholarship system for postgraduate coursework places
- performance based funding for universities
- student pay enabling courses

[Higher education cuts will be felt in the classroom, not the lab.](#) Michael Whelan from Southern Cross University has argued that the [proposed higher education reform](#) that would have seen A\$380m cut from university funding would see teaching-focused academics hardest hit, and the cuts would be felt in the classroom rather than the research laboratory.

Other news

The Productivity Commission has questioned the culture of Australian higher education in what the [Campus Morning Mail](#) (25 October) called a "scathing analysis" of universities' emphases on research in a new discussion paper. As well the Commission criticised university teaching cultures and outcomes, independent of yet to emerge results from demand driven enrolments, pointing to employment outcomes and attrition

The Commission also anticipates responses that surveys show undergraduates are happy, arguing; "Australian student surveys suggest while most students are satisfied with overall teaching quality, a more



forensic examination of student attitudes makes this overall finding somewhat inexplicable.

The full report, *Shifting the Dial: 5 Year Productivity Review* can be found [here](#). Specifically, Chapter 3 deals with Future Skills and work – 3.5 improving university outcomes (pages 100-111)

Note: This is the first document of its kind for the Productivity Commission. This report will be repeated every five years, similar to the Australian Government's Intergenerational Report.

Education experts responded to the Productivity Commission report, which makes a case for shifting the focus of universities towards improving teaching and student outcomes. UA's Belinda Robinson commented in *The Australian* (November 1) reemphasising the value of higher education in changing times. Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education director Professor Penny Jane Burke said the Shifting the Dial report contained some important insights for the sector, [but also included contradictions](#).

Julie Hare, former Australian Higher Education journalist and Honorary Senior Fellow, University of Melbourne, [discusses the sustainability of the international student market in Australia](#). Hare writes, "The challenge now is to ensure the boom in student numbers isn't undermined by bad experiences and lack of capacity. Marketing and messaging is important for attracting international students to Australia, but we need to encourage them to look beyond the two main cities".

The results from the [National Tertiary Education Union's survey](#) on the state of the nation's universities (13 500 university workers, split between academic and professional staff participated) has indicated that university leadership requires improvement with just 27 per cent of respondents expressing confidence in the people who run their various universities. Eight per cent thought the system could take a funding cut "without damaging the quality of education." And 84 per cent agreed "universities are under too much pressure to make money, reducing the quality of education."

Campus news

The University of Melbourne is moving to grow its [innovation precinct in Carlton](#). The university is in partnership with a Lendlease-led consortium to redevelop the former Royal Women's Hospital to house

innovators and locals alike. The project builds on the success of the Lab14 prototype. Campus housing developer Urbanest is another partner in the new project.

[Notre Dame University](#) has just spent \$21 million to buy a vacant lot next to its Sydney campus on Broadway and plans to knock up a six-storey building with 3,100 square metres of floor space. Broadway will become even more of a higher education hub, with the expanded Notre Dame campus positioned right between UTS and the University of Sydney.

And, Sydney University is set to [build a new campus in Western Sydney](#). The governing body approved an expansion plan for a Westmead campus on Wednesday to rival its existing 162-year-old inner-city site. With more than half of Sydney's population expected to live west of Parramatta within 20 years, university executives based in Camperdown and Darlington feared being "stranded in the east".

UNSW has named its new institute of education for Chancellor David Gonski. The [Gonski Institute of Education](#) will, "bring together scholars, policy-makers and practitioners to conduct research that will help improve academic and wellbeing outcomes particularly for disadvantaged students and those who live in rural and remote Australia." Director of the GIE is former NSW education minister Adrian Piccoli.

Monash University has launched [Lens](#), a "content publishing site ... sharing stories about the people, research and innovations of Australia's largest university." In creating its own content to build brand awareness and reach Monash University joins the University of Melbourne, which has its own research communications product, [Pursuit](#).

Curtin University's marketers have won the marketing team of the year award from the [Australian Institute of Marketing](#). Box Hill Institute won the education award and RMIT the customer experience marketing award.

Rankings

[The Economist](#) has announced that the University of Queensland has the 16th best MBA in the world, ahead of its nearest regional rival, the University of Hong Kong at 25th. The other Australian schools in the list are the Melbourne Business School (27) and the Macquarie Graduate School of Management (now being folded into the university's business and economics faculty) at 49. The other Asia-Pacific universities listed are University of Hong Kong (25), Hong

Kong University of Science and Technology (97), Nanyang Technological University in Singapore (78), National University of Singapore (99) and Sun Yat-sen University in Guangdong.

The [Graduate Management Association of Australia](#) ranking is out and MBAs at six universities are emblazoned with five stars. They are Griffith University, QUT (for both executive MBA and ordinary MBA), University of Adelaide, University of Queensland, University of South Australia and University of Wollongong.

The Times Higher Education (THE) has announced their 2018 [World University Rankings by subject](#) for psychology, life sciences and clinical. For the first time this year, psychology, education and law have been ranked separately from social sciences in the THE subject rankings. The US dominates the psychology table, claiming almost half (47) of the top 100 places, and eight of the top 10 spots. The UK is the second most-represented nation, but has just 13 featured institutions.

From the [LSE Impact Blog](#), Avtar Natt argued that the methodology used by Times Higher Education World University Rankings to calculate its citation metrics can have the effect of distorting benchmarking exercises.

Student Surveys

Omer Yezdani, Director of ACU's Office of Planning and Strategic Management, provided an excellent overview in [The Conversation](#) of recent analysis undertaken by [Quality Indicators of Learning and Teaching](#) (QILT) and the [Times Higher Education](#) (THE) that revealed a divide between what academics think defines quality and what students actually experience. This is demonstrated by world university rankings and student satisfaction surveys.

Meanwhile in New Zealand

[Educators](#) have said it's "too soon" to understand the implications of the New Zealand election after it was confirmed a Labour-led coalition would take power from National in October

[Students will suffer if Australia and New Zealand change tertiary fee agreement](#)

New Zealand's new Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, has asserted that the current tuition fee arrangements for Australian students in New Zealand will end if the policy does not remain reciprocal.



Around the world

Full-time in-state students in [California](#) would receive free tuition for their first year of community college under a state legislature bill. California now joins a growing number of states that have established state-wide free community college programs. New York, Hawaii, Arkansas, Nevada, and Rhode Island have all passed similar legislation. Nationally, the College Promise movement continues to grow rapidly, with now more than 200 programs in 42 different states.

[Smart city pours money into university-based research](#). Singapore's major investment in becoming a knowledge economy and digital 'smart city', in particular SG\$19.1 billion (US\$14 billion) being poured into research and innovation in 2016-20, is an ambitious government project that provides huge opportunity for its three main research-oriented universities

Perhaps one of the highlights for International Open Access Week 23-27th of October (well, for this particular editor anyway) was the public release of Professor Stephen Hawking's 1966 doctoral thesis. Demand for the 1966 PhD work, made freely available for the first time, caused Cambridge's repository website to [crash](#). Anyone can download and read Stephen Hawking's 1966 doctoral thesis "[Properties of expanding universes](#)" now that the scientist has given permission for it to be open access:

By making my PhD thesis Open Access, I hope to inspire people around the world to look up at the stars and not down at their feet; to wonder about our place in the universe and to try and make sense of the cosmos ... Anyone, anywhere in the world should have free, unhindered access to not just my research, but to the research of every great and enquiring mind across the spectrum of human understanding

International students have revealed how they feel about intensive undergraduate degree courses taken over two years instead of three, and whether they would be willing to pay a higher annual tuition fee for them, according to [new research](#). The new research, released by [QS Enrolment Solutions](#), the student recruitment and retention solutions company, surveyed more than 2,700 international students who are considering or already studying in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.

[Mobile-only app targets India's English learners](#). An Australian online learning company has announced its first product to specifically target India, which will take a conversation-like form known as 'Burst Learning'.

[International students foot the bill for UK research](#). A shortfall in the UK research budget has led to international students footing the bill with their fees, according to a [new report](#) by think tank, [Higher Education Policy Institute](#).

And from the US: [New International Enrolments Decline](#). After years of growth, enrolments of international students at American universities started to flatten in fall 2016, and a downward trend in new enrolments appears to be accelerating this academic year, with nearly half of universities surveyed (45 percent) reporting a drop in new international students this fall.

[Rankings Math Questioned](#). A Hong Kong university is accused of underreporting enrolment numbers to boost its faculty-student ratio and ranking. The university says it is commissioning an independent audit but emphasizes that there are differences in data definitions.



IT consultants [Gartner report a survey of 230 university CIOs](#) finds 59 per cent "expect significant business model change due to digital transformation." Peak US university IT administrator organisation EDUCAUSE reports what is engaging the experts, announcing the top ten issues for 2018; information security, student success, institution-wide IT strategies, all of institution data-enabling, student-centred technology, institutional funding realities, IT staffing and structures, data management equal with digital integration and change leadership.

Interesting interview with Harriet Wakeman in [Campus Morning Mail](#) this month on the use of customer journey map technology in the higher education context. Harriet consults to universities, corporations and government agencies on Customer Experience Design and Digital Innovation Projects and discusses the opportunity to combine journey mapping with data (to confirm priorities) and design (to help communicate and facilitate change) as the essential of disciplines of modern strategic management.

BIG DATA, ONLINE LEARNING, ANALYTICS & TECHNOLOGY

[5 reasons why analytics tech is a game-changer for universities](#). When you have nearly 38,000 students enrolled in your university, the data challenges are formidable. At The University of Alabama, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) team works with administrators to make sure that data is used effectively to help students—and the university—prosper. Lorne Kuffel, executive director of OIRA, leads a team that uses analytics and data visualisation to analyse and report on the university's enrolment and retention goals.

According to a report in [eCampus News](#) (November 2), high demand for data scientists makes them real-life superheroes among employers—but which fictional superhero would make a great data scientist? Batman would make a great data scientist, according to 43 percent of people participating in a poll conducted by data science training provider Metis

GRADUATE OUTCOMES AND EMPLOYABILITY

[MIT introduces Digital Diplomas](#). The Massachusetts Institute of Technology is offering some students the option to be awarded tamper-free digital degree certificates when they graduate, in partnership with [Learning Machine](#). Selected students can now choose to download a digital version of their degree certificate to their smartphones when they graduate, in addition to receiving a paper diploma.

From the US, an [ambitious project](#) to create public database of wage data and other information about all postsecondary credentials seeks to help students and employers know more about what's expected in academic and job-training programs. The project undertaken by [Credential Engine](#) seeks to change that by creating a centralized database of information about postsecondary credentials - all 250,000 or so of them in the US, ranging from PhD to badge, professional license to apprenticeship and certificate.



Graduates from the Australian National University are favoured by the nation's employers and are listed among the world's [most sought after degree holders](#), according to rankings released this week. Times Higher Education placed the ANU 21st in the world in the Global University Employability Ranking, up one place from last year.

LEARNING & TEACHING

[Tutors are key to reducing Indigenous student dropout rates](#). From Curtin University, Lesley Neale's piece in The Conversation (November 6) details a successful support strategy for Indigenous students: the [Indigenous Tertiary Assistance Scheme](#) (ITAS).

Health has taken out the top spot as the most popular field of study among early-bird university applicants. Statistics from the [Universities Admission Centre](#) (UAC) show that of the 62,000 students who have so far applied for courses, at least 25 per cent listed health as their first choice. Society and culture, including a mix of humanities courses such as law and psychology, placed close second with 21 per cent of first preferences.

Dean Cooley and Annette Foley from Federation University Australia call for a reassessment of the importance of ATAR in [Campus News](#) (November 6) noting, "ATAR rankings should be used for what they are, one piece of information about candidates, not an artificial hurdle set by politicians for optics".

Eighty-two percent of institutions say open educational resources (OER) will be an important source of course content in 5 years, according to a [survey of CIOs](#) detailed in an annual report that takes a look at campus IT. The results of the report were released during the recent [EDUCAUSE 2017 conference](#) held in Philadelphia in the US.

RESEARCH

Education Minister Simon Birmingham announced \$333.5 million worth of grants from the [Australian Research Council](#) for projects starting next year. The big winners are the research heavy Group of Eight universities which together pick up \$205 million. The biggest recipient is UNSW, which is getting \$32.7 million, closely followed by Monash University at \$32.4 million.

On November 1, Senator Birmingham put the importance of applied research firmly on the agenda with his [media release](#) detailing the outcomes of the Engagement and Impact Assessment pilot this year. The Turnbull Government and Australian Research Council (ARC) have outlined new measures that focus on the impact of university research and engagement with business and industry. A full overview of the pilot and the full report can be found [here](#)

A warning on institutional research funding. In a new [paper](#) from the L H Martin Institute, Professor Emeritus Frank Larkins warns of the rapid growth in discretionary expenditure on research. Professor Larkins calculates that while total operating expenditure rose by 39 per cent between 2008 and 2014, total research expenditure increased by 48 per cent. The growth in discretionary research spending, without external research income and funding from block grants, was 66.9 per cent. Professor Larkins does demonstrate that total research spending came back 2 per cent between 2012 and 2014, to 39.2 per cent but given rising incomes, outlays in the period still increased \$535m. "Universities have collectively determined that there are strategic benefits in accordng a higher priority to growth in research expenditure compared with the growth in resources directed towards other activities, principally teaching and learning activities," he writes.

[Researchers Ask: Does Academia Need Another Alternative to For-Profit Scholarly Platforms?](#) Researchers have long raised doubts over sharing work on venture-backed publishing platforms. Some scholars have even pushed for an [exodus](#) from sites like Academia.edu, pointing out that tech companies have access to academics' work, and prioritize profit. Qualms with the for-profit publishing industry was part of what inspired the creation of free, non-profit scholarly networking sites, such as [Humanities Commons](#), which launched in 2016 out of the Modern Language Association's social network and communication platform. And just last week another non-profit platform called [ScholarlyHub](#) announced its plans for a site where researchers can also exchange ideas and work—if they pay a subscription fee.

(MORE) REPORTS AND RESOURCES

[Choosing VET: investigating the VET aspirations of school students](#)

Research Report – NCVER

This study explores students' post-school aspirations for vocational education and training (VET), focussing on the interest in vocational training among both primary and secondary school students, from the perspective of the students.

Amongst the key findings: Young people who are keen on careers in VET-based occupations do not know that TAFE is where they can acquire needed skills, a new survey of student awareness of the training system finds.

According to Jennifer Gore and seven colleagues from the University of Newcastle and Kathryn Holmes from Western Sydney University, "many students, parents/carers and teachers perceived TAFE as only for the less academically capable students. The authors' survey demonstrates that TAFE has less an image than an awareness problem, that potential students and families have no idea of what the public training system does and many see it "as a lower-status destination, one designed for students who are unsuited to university study."

[Successful outcomes for regional and remote students in Australian higher education](#)

National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education: [Paul Farnhill, Nina Thomas](#)

This report provides an overview of the key issues, identifies the principal challenges and highlights the major policy responses in view of the findings and recommendations from recent research reports funded by the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE). It also draws on an August 2017 submission from the NCSEHE to the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education and some of the current work being done by NCSEHE's Equity Fellows, a program funded by the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP).



[NCVER's strategic plan: 2017-20](#)



National Centre for Vocational Education Research

NCVER's latest strategic plan outlines the vision and mission, and 7 strategic objectives and interrelated actions, that will direct company activities for the next 3 years. It also details the values that underpin our culture, our commitment to quality and integrity, measures of success against the objectives, and principles of practice and operation that explain the many stakeholders we support and for what purpose.

Included in the plan is a new plan to make it: "a leader in advanced data systems and infrastructure, big data analytics, data linkage and surveys, all deeply integrated with research".

ON THE MOVE

Jessica Vanderlelie is appointed PVC Student Success at La Trobe University. Associate Professor Vanderlelie is presently the Innovative Research Universities innovation fellow.

University of Newcastle Vice-Chancellor **Caroline McMillen** has announced plans to retire in 12 months, capping seven years at the head of the institution. She will leave her position in October 2018.

Professor Duncan Maskell has been announced as incoming VC of the University of Melbourne yesterday, and will replace Glynn Davis in October 2018. Professor Maskell's present role is senior PVC (planning and resources) at the University of Cambridge in the UK.

Bond University has announced the resignation of Pro Vice-Chancellor for Pathways & Partnerships **Catherine O'Sullivan**.

Engineering at the University of Sydney has created a new engagement role with robotics professor **Salah Sukkarieh** appointed Associate Dean Industry and Innovation.

Chief Executive **Belinda Robinson** will leave Universities Australia when her contract expires in October 2018. The six- year veteran of some of the most strident struggles in university funding policy announced her distant departure in early November.

Scott Bowman is staying on as VC at CQU, with a contract "extension" announced on November 7. The new contract supersedes a

previous contract and takes the VC's overall term through to the end of 2022

John Shine is the new president of the Australian Academy of Science. The biochemist and molecular biologist takes over from Andrew Holmes.

Colin McAndrew has retired from Griffith University. The VP corporate services joined as PVC administration in 1992 after registrarial roles at Flinders, Monash, University of Melbourne and UNE.

Rufus Black, who currently heads the University of Melbourne's Ormond College, has been chosen to be the next vice-chancellor of the University of Tasmania.

Tracy Chalk is to become chief marketing officer at the University of Newcastle. She is now communications director at the University of the West of England. She was marketing director at ANU from 2009 to February 2016.

Simon Biggs will move from the University of Queensland to become senior DVC at the University of Western Australia. Professor Biggs is now UoQ's dean of engineering, architecture and IT. He starts at UWA in March.

Pauline Nestor has announced she will leave Monash University at the end of March. Professor Nestor has served Monash for 30 plus years and is now vice provost, research.

BOOK REVIEWS



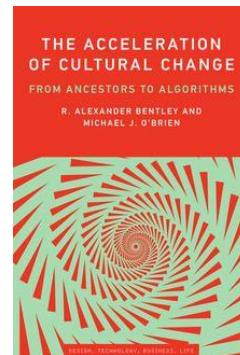
[Disrupt This! MOOCs and the Promise of Technology](#)

Karen Head

The author describes her experience teaching a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and the attendant pressure on professors, especially those in the humanities, to embrace new technologies in

the STEM era. She argues, MOOCs are just the latest example of the near-religious faith that some universities have in the promise of technological advances. *Disrupt This!* is a broader-based critique of the promises of technological "disruption" and the impact of Silicon Valley thinking on an unsuspecting, ill-prepared, and often gullible university community grasping for relevance, while remaining in thrall to the technologists.

Book review from [LSE Review of Books](#)



[The Acceleration of Cultural Change: From Ancestors to Algorithms](#)

R. Alexander Bentley and Michael J. O'Brien

Bentley and O'Brien describe how the transmission of culture has become vast and instantaneous across an Internet of people and devices, after millennia of local ancestral knowledge that evolved slowly. Long-evolved cultural knowledge is aggressively discounted by online algorithms, which prioritise popularity and recency. They suggest that in the future, artificial intelligence could be put to work to solve the problem of information overload, learning to integrate concepts over the vast idea space of digitally stored information.

[Review in Inside HigherEd](#)

POSITIONS VACANT

Seeking another opportunity in Institutional Research in Australia? Try our [Higher Education Jobs](#) webpage for current vacancies in the profession. If you are seeking an international career change, see our American colleagues [AIR Careers](#) page.



LOOKING FOR SOME TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT?

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



Upcoming altis events

<http://aaair.org.au/event-location/professional-development/>

LOOKING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCES AND EVENTS?

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

[28th ISANA International Education Association & 22nd Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association Conferences](#)

5-8 December 2017, STAR, Gold Coast, Australia

The theme for the conference is *Widening Perspectives of Student Success*.

The conference will give us the opportunity to explore and discuss the many factors that contribute to the overall student success, both within and outside the classroom. There will be an exciting program of speakers, workshops, social activities and lots of networking opportunities. Delegates will be able to share successful strategies, engage with key stakeholders and develop important partnerships.

ASCILITE 2017 Conference



4-6 December 2017, The University of southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Australia

The ASCILITE conference is the leading annual conference for practitioners and researchers committed to best practice and excellence in the use of technologies for teaching and learning in the tertiary sector throughout Australasia.

[Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group 3rd Annual National Conference](#)

7-8 December 2017, TAFE Queensland Brisbane South Bank Campus

Hosted by the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group, the 3rd Annual Conference on VET teaching and VET teacher education brings together a range of VET workforce practitioners, policy makers and researchers from across the nation. Together, these committed vocational educators will advance and share the knowledge and projects they are generating to drive the future quality of VET teaching in Australia.

[Bluenotes APAC 2018 Conference](#)



22-23 February, 2018, Southern Cross University, Gold Coast Campus, Australia

Informing the Future: Using today's feedback to improve tomorrow

December 6, 2017: LAST DAY – Early bird registration ends; Deadline for presentations proposals - January 4, 2018



[The 8th International Learning Analytics & Knowledge Conference](#)

SMC Conference and Function Centre, Sydney, NSW, Australia

March 5-9, 2018

The conference will be held at the SMC Conference & Function Centre in Sydney, Australia on March 5–9, 2018. The preparations for LAK18 are currently ongoing and organisers will be releasing information in the coming months.



Call for proposals:

[AIR Forum 2018](#)



May 29 – June 1, Orlando, Florida, US

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. This four-day conference includes more than 300 presentations by colleagues representing all sectors of higher education and an Exhibit Hall featuring the latest tools and resources to support data use for decision making.

[The 8th International Conference on Learning Analytics & Knowledge](#)

5-9 March, 2018

The International Conference on Learning Analytics & Knowledge moves to the southern hemisphere for the first time, convening in the centre of historic, vibrant Sydney. LAK18 is organised by the [Society for Learning Analytics Research \(SoLAR\)](#) and is hosted by The University of Sydney, one of Australia's leading research universities.

Save the date:

[HERDSA: \(Re\)Valuing Education](#)

2-5 July, 2018, Adelaide, Australia

HERDSA offers an annual international conference on topical teaching and learning issues with opportunities to meet colleagues with similar interests, exchange ideas about teaching and learning and learn about current developments from experienced researchers and practitioners.



SPECIAL FEATURE: 2017 AAIR FORUM



The 2017 AAIR Annual Forum was successfully wrapped on 2 November 2017, and what an interesting and motivating three day that was! The editors were lucky enough to attend and we hope you enjoy our special coverage of the Forum!



The Forum kicked off with pre-forum workshops and special interest group meetings on Day One. Naturally, the discussion topics focused on government reporting, QILT/ student evaluations, Business Intelligence (BI) and load planning. Regardless of what the topic of focus was, frequency of data and the increasing importance of (or demand for) 'real time' data is a common trend and challenge we all face in our roles as BI managers, institutional researchers, survey gurus and statistics analysts. Another emerging trend tied hand in hand with the demand for 'real time' data is the demand for easily digestible data that is fit for purpose and meaningful for busy executives who just don't have the time to filter through the plethora of data available. To do this you need to be able to answer the seemingly basic questions of Who? What? When? Where? How? The answers to those questions are not always easy to find, especially when you try to make one set of data meet the needs of a very diverse range of clients that want different things (e.g. teaching staff versus senior management).

On Day Two we opened with a keynote from Professor Adrian Miller, Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership from Charles Darwin University (CDU). Professor Miller outlined the criticality of robust research strategies and methodologies pertaining to Indigenous history and knowledge.



He also pointed out that the traditional forms of research have often been a source of distress for Indigenous people, as the research is often designed to serve the academic, political or professional needs of researchers rather than advancement of the Indigenous people. It is thus very important to keep these core principles fore of mind when conducting research:

- Building and maintaining relationships;
- Benefit;
- Capacity building;
- Active involvement;
- Gain insight into socio-political environment (the context at the time); and
- Outcomes to be shared and understood.

Professor Miller's keynote set the context for the stimulating Panel Session on Day Two. Panellists included Professor Hon Luamanuvao Winnie Laban QSO, Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika), Victoria University of Wellington; Associate Professor James Smith, CDU; Jessica Procak, Assistant Manager Indigenous Grants, CDU; and Shane Motlap, Indigenous Policies and Programs Analyst, also from CDU.



The Panel's discussion centred on equity evaluation and the challenging feat of working with arbitrary or generic performance measures that are consistency driven rather than context driven. The current measures fail to recognise the importance of individuals within the equity groups and it also does not take into consideration the cumulative effect of students belonging to multiple equity groups at the same time.

The Award for Best Session went to Wayne Franklin from CDU. Wayne shared with the audience the CDU's journey on streamlining data processes for unit evaluation survey and some of the tools and techniques they have implemented to achieve that. Wayne was also interviewed in our May 2017 Newsletter as part of our monthly 'Five Questions with...' segment. You can read his interview [here](#).

The Award for Best New Presenters went to Bo Liu and Annie Rose Smedley from Australian National University (ANU). Bo and Annie reported on their survey of survey managers' journey and was able to capture information on how universities manage their student evaluation activities any other institutional survey support, including relevant policy implementation.

The editors would like to do a shout out and thank the amazing forum organising committee for putting together such great event! Thank you Don, Penny and Rhianna for your looking after us so well!!!

And last but not least, here are some photos from the wonderful Forum Dinner at the Old Quarry. Until next time!



INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER'S CORNER

Five questions with Zanne Van Wyk, University of Newcastle



What is your job title?

Business Intelligence Manager, Strategy, Planning and Performance at the University of Newcastle (UON).

I also have the honour of being the current chair of the AAIR Data Warehousing, Business Intelligence & Analytics special interest group, otherwise known as the DW/BI&A SIG.

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

As the Business Intelligence Manager working with a diverse team within the Strategy Planning and Performance group, I help provide leadership and strategic direction to enhance business intelligence (BI) and support the delivery of the University's Strategic Plan. I also lead the engagement for business intelligence across the university. It is my responsibility to craft a compelling vision, and then carry it out in a well-developed BI Strategy, along with appropriate executive sponsorship. The BI maturity analysis determined the roadmap to implement the strategy, and the creation and ongoing development of the BI Governance Framework helps to define and operationalise the UON BI Strategy, align its BI initiatives with corporate strategic goals, and ensure return on its investment.

The BI team is committed to continuously improve the proactive way the team engage and deliver, by analysing processes and mitigating the risks associated with BI projects and issue resolution. Our expertise in complex systems analysis, combined with a

deep understanding of technology and modern, agile management and leadership techniques, makes the BI team uniquely positioned to find strategic solutions to tough problems. We are an innovative team, and strive to provide a more dynamic environment for information consumers. As a team, we foster an environment that promotes transparency, collaboration and knowledge sharing.

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

Data and analytics are becoming more strategic and business-critical in contemporary organisations of all types. To remain competitive, our strategies must reflect the same grip and insight. Hybrid organisational models and higher levels of analytics require universities to rethink how they deliver BI and analytics.

Universities have access to a vast reserve of data associated with their business activities, with information systems capturing a wide array of information across its student, teaching, timetabling, research, human resource, payroll, finance and administrative services. Transforming this data into high value information assets is a complex challenge that requires a highly skilled team with an in depth understanding of business processes, and an assembly of critical infrastructure and technology.

Business intelligence is essential for business growth and competitive advantage, yet reaping benefits from BI requires more than implementing the technology that enables it. Together, data and analytics are taking centre stage as the single most powerful catalyst for change in the enterprise, independent of the industry in question. Savvy business and BI leaders recognise the enormous potential of data and analytics as a driver for innovation and growth. Organisations that invest in the enhancement of their analytical capabilities using an enterprise-wide approach will see returns in cross-functional efficiency, as organisational silos are broken down. The capability to make timely, well-informed decisions based on the analysis of comprehensive data will result in significant competitive advantage within any industry.

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

There is a recognised need to build linkages and share information regarding BI and analytics capability in higher education. Gartner referred to advanced machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) in its top ten strategic technology trends for

2017. The answers to current business needs cannot be answered by BI or AI alone. It should be noted that organisations that do not have a BI strategy and allow data silos to persist, or do not make use of ML and AI technologies are missing opportunities to achieve collective intelligence.

The growing complexity of data, with influences such as the Internet of Things (IoT), algorithmic business and increased regulation, will force a more business-led, business relevant, and ethical information governance discipline. Information governance requirements are quickly growing as organisations struggle with managing risk, optimisation and value associated with data. Aligning universities information governance initiatives with these fundamental issues will deliver great dividends for the quality and impact of BI outputs. Data and analytics leaders need to transform their organisational understanding and the role of data governance, and soon.

The challenge is how to harness this rapidly expanding landscape—how to target the right opportunities, despite internal constraints such as budgets, governance mandates, skills and culture—and manage external forces like competition, market dynamics and regulatory and social pressures.

External engagement with BI experts and industry leaders is essential to ensuring universities are abreast of rapid change and innovation in enterprise analytics.

Complete this statement: *In my role, I can't operate effectively without ...*

... My daily cup of coffee, the collaborative spirit within the BI team, a work environment filled with laughter, and the established relationships with key members and industry leaders I have been fortunate to meet through my association with AAIR.



CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Institutional Researcher Issue 1, January 2018

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 AAIR Newsletter will be published in late January 2018. Please send your contributions to the editor@aair.org.au by January 12, 2018.

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](https://twitter.com/AAIRaustralasia)



Monica Chen and Tracy Creagh
The Institutional Researcher Editors.



An additional highlight for the editors at this year's AAIR Forum was invited speaker Sarah Brown, CEO, Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (WDNWPT). As CEO of WDNWPT Sarah spoke about The Purple House, who for the last 15 years have been working to improve the lives of community members with kidney disease and help them go home to country (Ngurra). In lieu of gifts for speakers, the AAIR forum organising committee agreed to make a donation to Purple House (*excellent Forum initiative #1*) and delegates also enjoyed a pop-up shop selling local wellbeing products from the House (*excellent Forum initiative #2*).



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