



THE AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH INC.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT
TO THE 2001 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

1. Introduction

During the past year, AAIR's Executive Committee has continued to focus on the pursuit of the Association's principal objectives:

- to raise the level of professional competence in both qualitative and quantitative analysis within the fields of tertiary education planning, policy analysis and institutional research within the Australasian region
- to enhance inter-institutional and international co-operation in the promotion, conduct and dissemination of comparative institutional research
- to facilitate the professional development of members by
 - organising an annual conference (the AAIR forum)
 - developing and fostering cooperative links with the AIR, the EAIR and similar organisations elsewhere in the world
 - encouraging regional meetings of members
 - publishing a journal of institutional research and other professional publications
 - circulating a regular newsletter to inform members of current developments.

The Committee's two key priorities continue to be the planning, organisation and conduct of the annual AAIR Forum and the further development of the Association's refereed journal. We have also given attention to a number of other matters as outlined in subsequent sections of this report.

2. Membership

The Association's membership continues to grow. As at 14 August 2001, our financial membership comprised 251 individuals - including 10 corporate members and 2 Life Members. This represents a welcome increase of 20 on the 231 financial members noted in the 2000 Report, and builds further on the growth of 20 members recorded for the previous year.

Reflecting our Australasian orientation, more than 90% of our members are drawn from Australia and New Zealand. Our New Zealand membership (55 members) received a major boost as a result of our highly successful 1999 conference in Auckland, and their numbers

have increased further since then. Within Australia, our strongest membership base continues to be in Victoria and New South Wales, with more than 100 of our members residing in these two States. In addition, we have a small but valued international membership - including 8 members located in Fiji and a dozen others in diverse locations across Asia, North America, Europe and Africa. The regional distribution of our membership is summarised below.

AAIR membership distribution, August 2001

New Zealand	58
Australia:	
NSW	49
Victoria	57
Queensland	21
South Australia	15
Western Australia	21
Tasmania	-
Northern Territory	1
ACT	9
Sub total, Australia	173
Fiji	8
Other Countries	12
Total Membership	251

3. Executive Committee

The current Executive Committee, as listed below, commenced its two year term of office at the close of the 2000 AGM at last year's Forum.

President:	Bruce Zimmer Manager, Analysis and Planning Chancellery Central Queensland University
Vice President:	Roni McDowell Manager, Statistics and Reporting Planning Group RMIT University
Secretary:	Lachlan Murdoch Senior Planning & Information Analyst Planning unit University of South Australia
Treasurer:	Nick Booth Senior Policy and Project Consultant Technology Systems & Information Unit University of Technology, Sydney

Immediate Past President:	Dennis Ham Director, Administration Curtin University of Technology Sarawak Campus, Malaysia
Committee Members:	Ivan Skaines Principal Planning Officer NSW Environmental Protection Authority
	Natalie Mitchell Planning Advisor Planning & Academic Affairs Monash University
Co-opted Members:	Tony Nolan OAM Information & Intelligence Analyst Faculty of Business University of Technology, Sydney
<i>Until March 2001:</i>	Julien Leys Manager, Corporate Research Unit UNITEC Institute of Technology Auckland, New Zealand
<i>From March 2001:</i>	Terry Fulljames Associate Director, Planning and Student affairs UNITEC Institute of Technology Auckland, New Zealand

With five new members (Natalie Mitchell, Lachlan Murdoch, Tony Nolan, Ivan Skaines and Julien Leys/Terry Fulljames) in addition to four returning members, the Committee has benefited from a good balance between new and continuing perspectives over the past year.

Thanks are offered for the service given by those members of the previous Executive Committee who stepped down from office at the 2000 AGM: Peter Manass (Vice President), Carmela Luscri (Elected member), Julien Leys and Barbara O'Connor (Co-opted members).

As no New Zealand members were elected to the incoming Committee, Julien Leys of UNITEC was co-opted to ensure continued New Zealand membership on the committee. However, following a career move from UNITEC to a position within the private sector, Julien Leys resigned from the Committee with effect from March 2001. Terry Fulljames was appointed to fill the casual vacancy this created. Terry is also from UNITEC and his input ensures that the Committee continues to maintain a broad Australasian perspective in its deliberations.

4. Executive Committee meetings

Since the 2000 AGM, the Committee has held one face-to-face meeting (at the University of Technology, Sydney on Thursday 7 December, the day after the 2000 Forum) and one meeting by teleconference (on 12 July 2001). Another meeting is scheduled for Sunday, 2 September at Central Queensland University, Rockhampton, in association with the 2001 Forum. Increasingly, the major proportion of our on-going business is conducted via e-mail, enabling us to reduce the frequency of our formal meetings and save on administrative expenses.

5. Annual Forum

The annual AAIR Forum makes a crucial contribution to the achievement of the Association's objectives, and the Executive Committee directs much of its energies to ensuring that the Forum will be a success.

2000 Forum

The 2000 Forum, our 11th annual international conference, was held at the University of Technology, Sydney over 3 – 6 December. Capitalising on the proximity in time and place to the Sydney 2000 Olympics, the conference theme *Institutional Research Practitioners in the New Millennium: Medal Contenders or Easy Beats?* focused on the recognition that the tertiary education sector has been coming under increasing pressure for change. Constrained public funding, increasing accountability for performance and competition from non traditional providers are requiring our institutions to adapt to a very different operating environment. Institutional researchers see their institutions struggling with the internal adjustments necessary to position themselves in this emerging environment. The theme thus posed the question: What will be the role for institutional researchers? The three day program drew a total of 99 delegates, drawn mostly from Australia and New Zealand, but with an additional number from other regions of the world. In particular, the strong delegation from the Fiji-based University of the South Pacific was most welcome.

Two pre conference workshops were held on 2 December: a full day Balanced Scorecard workshop and a half day workshop on Using Interactive Web Forms for Data Gathering. Both proved worthwhile for participants as well as being financially successful.

The financial risk for the Forum was taken by AAIR, and the conference returned a surplus of some \$8000 in addition to membership fees. This has enabled our association to maintain its sound financial position during 2001. There are probably few professional associations whose annual conferences are consistently attended by one-third or more of their members, as was once again the case with the Sydney Forum. This high attendance rate is a good indicator of the continuing relevance of our Forum programs to our members.

Thanks are offered to Peter Manass who undertook the initial planning of the conference in 1999, and to Nick Booth who assumed responsibilities for its organisation during 2000. Nick negotiated the hosting of the conference by the University of Technology, Sydney and served as Forum chair. Thanks are also offered to Garry Irwin of UTS for providing crucial organisational backup for Nick, as well as to a number of AAIR members at UTS and other universities in the Sydney region. Finally, thanks are given to host institution UTS for providing generous sponsorship by way of conference facilities and infrastructure support, and for hosting the Forum reception.

2001 Forum

The 2001 Forum, being held over 3-5 September, marks a return to the Rockhampton Campus of Central Queensland University - the venue of our inaugural AAIR Forum held in September 1990. The Forum theme, *Globalisation and Tertiary Education: Impacts, Responses, and Implications for the 21st Century*, continues the practice of previous AAIR Forums in focusing on a topic of current relevance to the planning and management of tertiary education institutions, and linking the role of institutional researchers to that topic. Globalisation is an increasingly all-pervasive phenomenon having major impacts on tertiary education systems throughout the world. As our institutions adapt to these impacts, the responses that are emerging generate a number of challenges to institutional researchers, managers, academics and others concerned with the planning and management of tertiary education institutions as well as the future development of the sector as a whole.

Recognising these challenges, the conference will offer a forum for institutional researchers and other stakeholders to explore a range of implications and responses arising from the impacts of globalisation on tertiary education. Further details can be found on the Forum website <http://www.aair2001.cqu.edu.au>.

2002 Forum

The 2002 Forum will be held in Perth/Fremantle, Western Australia, early in December. The Forum will be hosted by Edith Cowan University which will be celebrating its centenary year in 2002. The conference theme, *Quality in tertiary education: From whose perspective (Who's in charge? Who do we charge? What price do we pay?)*, deals with issues of immense current interest across the whole of the Australasian tertiary education sector. The Executive Committee looks forward enthusiastically to working with our host institution and the Forum organising group to achieve a highly successful conference.

2003 Forum

Although it is too early to advise of the venue and other details of the 2003 Forum, the Executive Committee is hopeful that a preliminary announcement can be made at this year's conference in Rockhampton.

6. AAIR Publications and Communications

Journal of Institutional Research

The Association's professional journal, *The Journal of Institutional Research*, completes its first decade of publication in 2001. It continues to develop as an international journal examining issues of relevance to institutional research, planning and related issues in tertiary education. The high standards it has achieved are a credit to Editors Angel Calderon and Ian Dobson, and Associate Editors Professor Alan Lindsay, Dr Gan Che Ng and Dr Raj Sharma. The most recent edition (volume 10, number 1, May 2001) features a selection of refereed articles by authors from Australia, New Zealand, America and Europe. Production of the second edition for 2001 is now well advanced.

This second 2001 edition will mark the final issue produced by our retiring editors Angel and Ian. The Executive Committee is currently in the throes of selecting a new editorial team to continue the excellent progress made by Ian and Angel toward making the Journal of Institutional Research a widely recognised and highly regarded international publication. It is hoped that the appointment of our new editors can be decided in the near future.

Professional file

The range of AAIR publications is being expanded with the launch of a Professional File series - a concept borrowed from our American peer association (AIR). The Professional File will be available to members electronically as PDF files accessed via the AAIR website, and will present refereed practitioner papers that synthesize and interpret issues, research and operations in the field of institutional research. It will complement the papers published in the journal, and provide an alternative vehicle for publication of members' professional work.

Newsletter

As we now have e-mail addresses for virtually all our members, this year we have discontinued the production of a traditional printed newsletter. Our e-mailed newsletter "The Electronic AAIR" is now our main vehicle of communication with our members, and editor Angel Calderon produces it as far as possible on a monthly basis. It publishes specialised news and reviews on issues in tertiary education, and reports on trends and

developments in institutional research, planning and management both in the Australasian region and worldwide. All members of AAIR are encouraged to e-mail items of interest to angel.calderon@rmit.edu.au.

The notice of AGM and draft agenda, distributed at the beginning of August, was the only "formal" news item circulated to members in both print (hard copy) and electronic format in 2001. Following the practice initiated last year, nearly all our members received it electronically - a print version being sent only to those for whom we don't have an e-mail address.

AAIR Website

The AAIR website <http://129.96.222.99/aaair/> has become the primary source of comprehensive information about our Association and its activities for both our members and a range of outside parties. The website continues to expand and now offers such features as:

- Improved membership enquiry link.
- Increased availability of newsletters; the latest edition of our Electronic Newsletter and a full set of previous editions since its commencement in 1996 (all able to be downloaded).
- Expanded information on the Journal of Institutional Research; list of contents and copies of abstracts for all editions beginning with 1995; publication policy and guidelines for contributors, etc.
- Summary reports on annual conferences since 1997 (and for 1999, a link to downloadable copies of the conference papers).
- Executive Committee Reports to the Annual General Meeting (commencing with the 1999 Report).

Further development of the website is underway. A new domain name <aaair.org.au> has been registered and a new Internet Service Provider has been engaged. After dealing with some initial technical problems, work is now in progress to develop, structure and format the content for the site and make it an active URL. Recent months have seen slower progress than initially expected, but this simply reflects the reality that our busy web weaver Maureen Clissold and volunteer Nick Booth can devote only limited time and energy to this very considerable task. ~~Current intentions~~ [Plans](#) are to migrate all website content to the new URL and expand the scope of the site progressively over 2001-2002 to include the provision of member-specific services. It is hoped that the new site will be active by the start of the 2001 Forum.

Forum website

The web has also become our primary means of communicating information about the Association's annual conference, and our AAIR website has a direct link to the current year's Forum website. The site for this year's Forum, <http://www.aaair2001.cqu.edu.au>, which includes a downloadable conference registration form, has been updated frequently throughout the year.

Electronic Discussion groups

Hotaair: Following suggestions made by several members at the 2000 AGM, this e-mail discussion list has been organised by Tony Nolan. It offers a forum for members of AAIR to engage in informal discussion and exchange of ideas on various aspects of institutional research. To subscribe, please contact Tony at Tony.Nolan@uts.edu.au.

Qual measures: The interest in qualitative performance indicators shown by several participants at the 2000 Forum has resulted in establishment of this discussion group for

exploring the definition, use and management of qualitative indicators/standards. To subscribe to this moderated list, hosted through Yahoo! Groups, please contact Ivan Skaines at s_ivan_c@hotmail.com (Note: available only to financial members of AAIR).

7. International Activities

The Executive Committee has maintained its international links with its colleague organisations overseas, with most communication being undertaken through e-mail. Our Hon Secretary (Lachlan Murdoch) is our designated AIR Liaison Officer, and Ms Vivienne Wood is our representative on the AIR External Relations Committee.

AIR Liaison

We were fortunate to have had Ms Denise Sokol, the Chair of the AIR External Relations Committee, as a keynote speaker and panellist at the 2000 Forum. The Executive Committee met with Denise during the Forum to explore ways of strengthening links between AAIR and AIR.

AAIR was officially represented by our Hon Secretary Lachlan Murdoch and by Dr Raj Sharma (Victorian AAIR Convener) at the 2001 AIR Forum held in Long Beach California, over 3-6 June.

A formal Reciprocity Agreement between AAIR and AIR is in place for 2000 – 2002, providing reciprocal benefits to the members of both associations in relation to conference registration fees and associated membership benefits. Members of AAIR planning to attend an AIR Forum (the 2002 Forum will be held in Toronto, Canada over 2-5 June) can qualify for the AIR member registration rate simply by enclosing a copy of their receipt for payment of AAIR membership fees. If the subscription was paid as part of AAIR Forum registration, an attached statement to that effect will suffice (if requested, our Treasurer and Membership Secretary Treasurer@air.org.au can provide a note confirming membership status).

AAIR Best Presentation

One of our links with AIR is the AAIR Best Presentation Award, given to the best practitioner paper presentation at our annual conference. Its special significance is that AIR invites the recipient to present their paper at the following year's AIR Forum in America. In recognition of the value that we place on this award, the Executive Committee pays the Forum registration fee for our nominated "Best Presenter".

Congratulations are extended to Annie Weir of the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, the "Best Presenter" at our 2000 Forum. Annie re-presented her AAIR Forum paper "External quality assurance of New Zealand tertiary education providers" at the AIR 2001 Forum in Long Beach, California.

To assist presenters who wish to be considered for the Award, the Executive Committee is preparing a set of guidelines for selection of the "AAIR Best Presentation."

European AIR

AAIR is being represented at the 2001 European AIR Forum (being held in Porto, Portugal over 9-12 September) by Dr Raj Sharma (Victorian AAIR convener). Other members of our association participating in the EAIR forum include our journal editors Angel Calderon and Ian Dobson.

South East Asian AIR

The South East Asian Association for Institutional Research (SEAAIR), established in September 2000, will hold its inaugural conference at Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia over 23-25 October 2001. Dr Raj Sharma (Victorian AAIR Convener), who is also the Honorary Secretary of SEAAIR, will represent our Association at the conference and associated SEAAIR Committee meetings.

8. Regional Activities within Australasia

Given the geographically wide Australasian region, the Executive Committee encourages regional meetings, seminars and workshops. Reflecting our large membership concentrations in Victoria and New South Wales, Melbourne and Sydney continue to be the most viable locations for such regional activities, with the following activities being held in 2001.

Victorian AAIR Seminars:

Convener: Dr Raj Sharma

AUQA and Future Implications for Institutional Researchers University of Melbourne, 9 March 2001

This one day seminar provided an opportunity to be informed about the newly established Australian Universities Quality Agency and the system of quality audits that it will be implementing. Speakers included Dr Ian Allen (Interim COE of AUQA), Professor David Beanland (Chair of AUQA), and Ms Vera Joosten (Quality Unit, RMIT). The seminar was fully subscribed with more than 60 attendees. A series of articles reporting on this seminar was presented as a special edition of the Electronic AAIR (April 2001).

An Entrepreneurial Institution: For Better or Worse? Swinburne University, Melbourne, 20 July 2001

This seminar, attended by some 40 persons, included presentations by Professor Ian Wallace (Vice Chancellor, Swinburne University), Professor Ruth Dunkin (Vice Chancellor, RMIT University), and Professor Craig McInnis (Director, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne). A comprehensive report on this seminar appeared in the August edition of the Electronic AAIR.

In conjunction with Victoria University, Melbourne:

When Somebody's Watching: Perspectives and Reflections on Academic Audit Victoria University Conference Centre, 6 July 2001

AAIR assisted in the promotion of this international seminar, organised by the Workplace Studies Centre of Victoria University, Melbourne. The seminar offered the opportunity to explore the impact of (and possible responses to) quality monitoring regimes and to reflect critically on values that underpin external quality monitoring. The program comprised a keynote address by Professor Don Anderson (Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University) and presentations by speakers from New Zealand, South Africa, and several Australian universities.

Proposed workshop on *Improving institutional effectiveness through surveys*

Unfortunately, unforeseen circumstances resulting in the unavailability of international presenter Dr John Muffo (Director of Academic Assessment, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University), forced the cancellation of this workshop, scheduled to be held at Swinburne University on 19 October. This cancellation is regretted as arrangements for the workshop were well advanced and a number of persons had already registered.

New South Wales:

Discussion groups and informal meetings

This year, our Sydney-based Executive Committee members have focused their attention on establishing and managing the electronic discussion groups outlined earlier. In one sense, this represents the trialing of an alternative to traditional regional meetings. At the same time, however, face to face meetings have been held in Sydney by a small group of AAIR members drawn from a number of NSW organisations. This group, convened by Ivan Skaines, has been discussing organisational performance measurement. The group has twice met informally so far this year, and proposes to meet again in mid October.

NSW Statistical Officers Meeting

In association with the University of Technology, Sydney, AAIR convened a meeting of statistical officers from universities in NSW and ACT on 30 April 2001. The main presenter was David O'Brien of DETYA who spoke on changes planned in the statistical collections in 2002-03. Soroush Sedaghat of UWS gave a presentation of a web-based system for the on-line collection and validation of student statistics, and there was discussion of progress in implementing new student systems.

9. AAIR Finances

Financial Position

The careful attention given to expenditure over the past decade while AAIR was establishing itself has allowed a substantial funds balance to be built up. Thus, whilst AAIR incurred an operating deficit of \$7,535 over 1999/2000, as at the 30 June 2000 our funds balance still stood at \$34,369. This deficit had been anticipated in view of the investment being put into the Journal of Institutional Research. Over the next few years, publication of the journal will continue to be AAIR's major operational cost, reflecting the priority being given to its further development as an internationally recognised publication.

Despite the increased costs of producing the journal in 2000/2001 (due to the timing of the publication of individual editions), the Association recorded a net financial surplus of \$5565 during 2000/2001. This surplus was due primarily to the fact that AAIR itself took the financial risk associated with running the 2001 Forum which returned a surplus of \$8004 (excluding membership fees). As a result, AAIR's financial position has improved by more than \$5500 over 2000/2001, with a healthy funds balance of \$39,934 as at 30 June. This is particularly important given the continuing need to devote resources to the development of the journal, and given that for the 2001 Forum, we have returned to our usual practice of the host institution taking financial responsibility (thus, any profits will accrue to the host institution rather than AAIR).

A further factor is the profit obtained from the highly successful seminars run in Victoria. The Committee is most grateful to Dr Raj Sharma, John Vander Pal, and others for their efforts in presenting these valuable professional activities.

The audited Financial Statement being provided to the AGM provides details of expenditure and income, and confirms that the Association is in a sound financial position.

Membership Subscription

The Australian Government's implementation of a 10% Goods and Services Tax (GST) has required AAIR to increase its annual subscription rates (to AUD\$55 for individuals) with effect from the 2001 membership year. Nevertheless, our rates remain very competitive in comparison to those of other professional associations.

10. Future Directions and Initiatives

In broad terms, the AAIR Executive Committee is focusing its attention on the following strategic priorities: the further development of AAIR's avenues for professional communication (the journal, the AAIR Professional File, and the AAIR web site); the recruitment of new members to expand our membership base; improved ways of providing members with professional development and skills training; developing the potential for links, collaboration and strategic alliances with other professional associations.

The increasing workloads faced by Committee members at their employing institutions have meant less has been achieved over this past year than intended. Nevertheless, progress is being made in relation to the journal, Professional File, website and electronic discussion groups - as outlined in previous sections. A draft membership brochure to assist in recruitment of new members is nearing completion. In addition, the continuing success of the Victorian seminars has been also been noted.

For the coming year, key challenges will be to deliver improved professional development to our members and to develop strategic alliances with other professional associations. Another major challenge, of course, will be ensuring the continued development of our journal under a soon-to-be-appointed editorial team.

11. Acknowledgments

Whilst all Executive Committee members work on a voluntary basis, the additional work volunteered by many others ensures that AAIR keeps moving ahead. With this in mind, we offer special thanks to journal editors Ian Dobson and Angel Calderon and their Editorial Board; to Angel again as editor of the electronic newsletter; to Maureen Clissold our webmaster; to Raj Sharma as Victorian convener; to John Vander Pal as our Public Officer (AAIR's designated contact with governmental authorities as an incorporated non profit organisation); to Vivienne Wood our representative on the AIR External Relations Committee. Further thanks are also offered to the institutions that support and host our program of activities.

As always, a final "thank you" is offered to you, our members, for your continuing support of your professional association.

Bruce Zimmer
Hon President
On behalf of the AAIR Executive Committee

20 August 2001