



THE AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH INC.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT
TO THE 2004 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

1. Introduction

During the year since the last AGM, the Executive Committee has continued to pursue 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, the SEAIR 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.

It is fair to say that the Executive has struggled at times, over the past year in particular, with the increasing demands of work and endeavouring to pursue the above objectives. Nevertheless, there have been a number of achievements as outlined in the report. However, we will need further support from our members and institutions to continue to develop AAIR into the future.

2. Membership

The Association's current membership stands at 126 financial members– including 25 provisional members who will be formally accepted at the next Executive Committee meeting. This is a substantial decrease from the 187 financial members noted in last year's Report and is of concern. This decrease is associated with the optional payment of AAIR membership fees associated with TEM registration, rather than AAIR membership fees being automatically included as part of the registration as was the case with AAIR Forums.

Whilst there was effort towards membership renewals by the Executive Committee, we clearly need more 'champions' of AAIR to encourage people to join and others to maintain

their membership. It is clear from the high membership at some institutions that we do have ‘champions’ out there and I thank those people for their efforts. The difficulty is in getting members from those institutions where we currently have none and encouraging past members to renew. Any suggestions in this regard would be greatly appreciated.

Table 1 shows the numbers of financial members from 1999 to 2003.

Table 1: AAIR Membership 2000-2004

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Members	231	251	193	187	126

Table 2 indicates that we currently have a total of 432 inactive members ie those who were members at some point in the past five years and have not renewed their membership. The regional distribution of our membership for 2003 and 2004 is summarised in Table 2. Reflecting our strong Australasian orientation, approximately 83% of our members are drawn from Australia and 14% from New Zealand.

Table 2: AAIR membership distribution, 2003 - 2004

	2003 Members	2004 Members *	2004 Inactive	2004 Total
Australian Capital Territory	9	9	15	24
New South Wales	40	24	79	103
Northern Territory	1	1		1
Queensland	15	8	46	54
South Australia	10	12	22	34
Tasmania	4	4	2	6
Victoria	47	37	109	146
Western Australia	19	10	42	52
<i>Sub total, Australia</i>	<i>145</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>252</i>	<i>420</i>
New Zealand	32	17	86	103
Fiji	2	1	8	9
Asia	2	1	8	9
North America	2	1	7	8
Europe (including UK)	2	1	4	5
Other	2	0	4	4
TOTAL	187	126	432	558

* Includes 25 Provisional Members and 4 Life/Honorary Life Members

3. Executive Committee

The members of the current Executive Committee are listed below.

President:	Wendy Marchment Manager, Management Information Group University of Adelaide
Vice-President:	Josephine Palermo Research Associate Deakin University
Secretary:	Lachlan Murdoch Coordinator: Analysis and Strategy Planning and Assurance Services University of South Australia
Treasurer:	Nick Booth Director Hestu Consulting Sydney
Immediate Past President:	Bruce Zimmer Manager, Analysis and Planning Chancellery Central Queensland University
Committee Members:	Ivan Skaines Director, Planning & Business Improvement University of Newcastle Dr Terry Fulljames Director, Academic Bay of Plenty Polytechnic Tauranga, New Zealand
Co-opted Members:	Tony Nolan OAM Strategic Intelligence Analyst Commonwealth Public Service Derek Klerck Team Leader IT Resources - MI&RU University of Tasmania

Derek Klerck was co-opted onto the Committee in late 2003 as AAIR's representative on the TEM2004 Organising Committee.

The Executive Committee will complete its two year term of office at the 2004 AGM. Lachlan Murdoch, Nick Booth and Terry Fulljames have indicated that will not be renominating and I thank them for their efforts over the past several years on the Executive. Nick has offered to continue to maintain the AAIR website and we greatly appreciate him continuing in this role.

4. Executive Committee meetings

The major proportion of the Committee's on-going business is conducted via e-mail. This enables us to communicate information, exchange views and discuss issues speedily and

efficiently, and also allows us to reduce the frequency of our formal meetings and save on administrative expenses.

Since the 2003 AGM, the Committee has held one face-to-face meeting (at the Adelaide Hilton on Wednesday 1 October 2003 immediately after the TEM2003 Conference) and three meetings by teleconference (4 December 2003, 22 April and 5 August 2004). Another face-to-face meeting is scheduled for Sunday 26 September in Hobart, just before the 2004 TEM Conference.

5. Annual Forum

The annual Forum is a major focal point of AAIR's program of professional activities and makes a crucial contribution to the achievement of the Association's objectives. In view of this, the Executive Committee directs much of its energies to ensuring that the Forum will be a success.

2003 Forum

As a new initiative, the 2003 Forum was held in conjunction with the Association for Tertiary Education Managers (ATEM) and Aappa under the banner of the Tertiary Education Management Conference (TEMC), over 29 September-1 October at the Adelaide Hilton Hotel in the CBD of Adelaide South Australia. The conference theme, "*Public Good and Market Commodity, Underpinning the Academic Enterprise?*" addressed issues of current interest across the whole of Australasian tertiary education.

The Forum organising committee, comprised members from the three South Australian universities and three professional associations. Registrations exceeded expectations with the final number being around 580. It was estimated that 80 AAIR members were present and there was an obvious and pleasing Institutional Research presence in the concurrent sessions.

At a Pre Conference workshop, Tony Nolan conducted an expanded version of the successful workshop conducted prior to the 2002 Forum entitled, *'The Knowledge Pirates Guide to Institutional Research'*.

A Member's Forum was conducted on the second day of the conference to gain feedback on the perceptions of the new venture. It was acknowledged that there were advantages and disadvantages with being part of TEMC but generally members felt it was worth pursuing the arrangement again in 2004, with some suggested changes.

2004 Forum

After receiving feedback from members via a survey and Member's Forum at TEMC 2003, and confirming the agreement with ATEM for 2003 would hold for 2004, the Executive decided to again hold the 2004 Forum in conjunction with ATEM and TEFMA. The Tertiary Education Management Conference is to be held in Hobart from September 26-29 2004 and the theme is "Better the DEVIL you know...or is it?"

Member's suggestions and feedback were taken into consideration in planning an AAIR Get-Together at the start of TEMC 2004 and for different coloured delegate badges for members of the different associations.

The Pre-Conference Workshop on 'CEQuery' was organized by AAIR and supported by the Graduate Careers Council of Australia.

Registrations have exceeded expectations with delegates numbering over 620.

2005 Forum

In late 2003, the Executive accepted a proposal from Raj Sharma to Chair the 2005 Forum in Melbourne with the theme: *Institutional Research, Innovations and Change in Universities of the 21st Century*. The proposed conference dates being 23 to 25 November 2005.

However, Raj has recently indicated that he is unable to continue in this role and we are seeking another Chair and corresponding support from their institution for the 2005 AAIR Forum.

6. AAIR Publications and Communications

Journal of Institutional Research

The Association's professional journal, *The Journal of Institutional Research (JIR)* is intended to be an international journal examining issues of relevance to institutional research, planning and related issues in tertiary education. No editions has been published over the past year and new editors are being sought by the Executive.

Professional file

The launch in 2003 of a Professional File series - a concept borrowed from our American peer association (AIR) – has expanded the range of AAIR publications. The Professional File, available to members electronically as PDF files accessed via the AAIR website, presents refereed practitioner papers that synthesize and interpret issues, research and operations in the field of institutional research. It complements the papers published in the journal, and offers an alternative pathway for publication of members' professional work.

Newsletter

During the year members have received our e-mailed newsletter "The Electronic AAIR". It contains news from the AAIR Executive, 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. Thanks are offered to editor Nick Booth.

AAIR Website

AAIR's website is <http://www.aair.org.au>. It includes a password-protected "member services" section containing such information as:

- list of members and their e-mail addresses
- papers presented at the annual Forums since 1998
- AAIR Professional file
- audited annual statements of accounts
- executive committee reports to the AGM

The website has now become the primary source of comprehensive information about our Association and its activities for both our members and outside parties. It provides internal links to information about the annual Forum, the Journal of Institutional Research and AAIR Professional file, the Electronic AAIR newsletter and other aspects of AAIR's activities, as well as a membership contact link plus a number of useful external links. The website will continue to be developed further, with a view to improving its level of service to our members. Top this end we have started adding copies of past editions of the Journal and

incorporated an area for the Executive to access information and logos so AAIR's historical record is passed on and kept in one place.

Forum website

AAIR website has a direct link to the Forum website - our primary means of communicating information about our annual Forum.

7. International Links

The Executive Committee has maintained its international links with its colleague organisations overseas, with most communication being undertaken through e-mail.

AIR Liaison

Our Hon Secretary (Lachlan Murdoch) is our designated AIR Liaison Officer.

AAIR Best Paper

The AAIR Best Paper Award, given to the best practitioner paper presentation at our annual Forum, represents a significant ongoing link with AIR. Its special significance is that AIR invites the recipient to present their paper again at the following year's AIR Forum in North America. In recognition of the value that we place on this award, the Executive Committee pays the Forum registration fee for our nominated "Best Paper".

Eric Skuja from Monash University and Sonia Whiteley from the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute were awarded the "Best Paper" award at our 2003 Forum for "Using institutional research to influence university policy making". Unfortunately they were unable to present this paper at the AIR Forum in Boston, Massachusetts. Congratulations are extended to Eric and Sonia.

AIR Program Support Grant

AAIR was successful in securing an AIR Program Support Grant of US\$400 for its submission of proposal to partially fund a workshop on the methods and techniques involved in institutional research. Since notification of the Grant was in late August and therefore too late for inclusion as part of TEMC 2004, we received permission from AIR to utilise the grant in 2005, rather than 2004 as originally envisaged.

Fellowship to the AIR Summer Data Policy Institute

In 2004, for the second year in a row, AAIR received one fellowship to the AIR 2004 Summer Data Policy Institute held from June 20-30, 2004, in Washington, DC. Thanks to a grant from the US National Science Foundation (NSF), all expenses in Washington were covered and up to US\$700 towards airfare costs.

Andrew McCann, University of Technology Sydney was the successful applicant for the Fellowship.

The Institute is an intensive hands-on experience with the national postsecondary education databases of NSF and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Part of the Institute is a series of presentations from policy analysts who use these data.

The Institute includes formal and hands-on instruction covering the following general topics:

- * review of national study design and database contents;
- * training in analysis of national postsecondary education data, and

- intensive work on the national databases; and
- * policy seminars with leading national policy researchers

AIR Forum

AAIR was officially represented by Wendy Marchment at the 2004 AIR Forum held in Boston, Massachusetts in May this year.

European AIR

AAIR was officially represented by Ivan Skaines at the 2004 European AIR Forum held in Barcelona, Spain in September this year where there was a meeting of international associations.

South East Asian AIR

Dr Raj Sharma, who is also an Executive Committee member of the South East Asian Association for Institutional Research (SEAAIR), is representing our Association at the 2004 SEAAIR Forum (Wenzhou, China on 21-23 September 2004).

8. Regional and Collaborative Activities within Australasia

Given the geographically wide Australasian region, the Executive Committee encourages regional meetings, seminars and workshops. Our large membership base within Victoria and NSW continues to make Melbourne and Sydney the most viable locations for such activity, with the following activities being held in 2004.

AAIR Victorian Seminar:

“Surviving The Nelson Reforms Through Institutional Research”

Melbourne, 19 March 2004

Convener: Eric Skuja

This seminar, hosted by Monash University, attracted over 70 participants from Victoria as well as other States and proved a highly successful event. The seminar explored two rather optimistic responses to the question of how to survive the Nelson reforms - by creating better on-line information systems and by treating DEST's Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS) as a resource rather than a burden. Speakers included Geoff Woods and Bruce Britts (University of Sydney), Hayden Gill and John O'Brien (University of Queensland), Robyn Adams (RMIT), Wayne Shippley and Phil Morgan (DEST).

AAIR South Australian Show and Tell

Adelaide, 22 July 2004

Convener: Lachlan Murdoch

This event, hosted by the University of South Australia, had 20 staff present from the three South Australian universities. It involved a demonstration of the University of South demonstration of the University of South Australia's developments in web based management reporting environment and enterprise planning.

DEST Briefings

Members in various states hosted the DEST Briefings, mainly associated with a presentation on changes to the 2005 Student Data Collection.

Collaboration in the Australian Universities Quality Forum (AUQF)

AAIR is represented by our President Wendy Marchment on the Joint Steering Group for the Australian Universities Quality Forum (AUQF). The AUQF has been an initiative of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) in collaboration with AAIR, ATEM,

HERDSA and other stakeholders. The 3rd Quality Forum, held in Adelaide over 7-9 July 2004 was a success with delegates attending. The next AUQF is scheduled for July 2005 in Sydney. Our Association looks forward to a continuing contribution to the work of the Joint Steering Group.

9. AAIR Finances

The careful attention given to expenditure during AAIR's first decade of existence has allowed a substantial funds balance to be built up. AAIR incurred an operating profit of \$14,847 over 2003/2004, as at the 30 June our funds balance still stood at \$42 848. This is a turn around from the deficit last year and was due to the \$10,000 share of the profits from last years TEM conference, \$5,000 from the Victoria Seminar and only one Journal being produced.

The audited Financial Statement being provided in the Treasurer's Report to the AGM provides details of expenditure and income, and confirms that the Association is in sound financial health.

10. Future Directions and Initiatives

Overall, the Executive Committee's strategic priorities are:

- the continuing delivery of a successful annual Forum offering a program of clear professional relevance to AAIR's membership
- the further development of AAIR's avenues for professional communication (the journal, the AAIR Professional File, the newsletter, the AAIR web site and electronic discussion lists)
- improved ways of providing members with professional development and skills training
- the recruitment of new members to expand our membership base
- developing the potential for links, collaboration and strategic alliances with other professional associations.

Whilst the increasing workloads faced by Committee members at their employing institutions have placed constraints on achieving these priorities to the extent desired, progress continues to be made in relation to development of the journal, Professional File, website and annual Forum - as outlined in previous sections. The continuing success of the Victorian seminars has also been noted. The focus on strategic alliances is exemplified by our collaboration with AUQA, ATEM, HERDSA and other partners in the organisation of the annual Australian Universities Quality Forum, and by the collaboration with ATEM and TEFMA with regard to the joint organisation of our annual conferences for 2004.

Key challenges ahead include the delivery of improved professional development to our members and the further development of strategic alliances with other professional associations. A key priority will be the development of our journal and we hope to appoint new editors in the near future.

11. Acknowledgments

Whilst all members of the Executive Committee work on a voluntary basis, the additional work offered by many others ensures that AAIR keeps moving ahead. With this in mind, we offer special thanks for the contributions made over the past year by: John Vander Pal our Public Officer (AAIR's designated contact with governmental authorities as an

incorporated non profit organisation). Further thanks are also offered to the institutions that support and host our program of activities.

As always, a sincere “thank you” is offered to you, our members, for your continuing support of your professional association.

In closing, let me also offer my own thanks to retiring Committee members Lachlan Murdoch, Terry Fulljames and Nick Booth, for their contributions to the work of the Executive and to the Association.

Wendy Marchment
Hon President
On behalf of the AAIR Executive Committee

22 September 2004