



AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH INC.

**COMMITTEE REPORT
TO THE 2006 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

1. Introduction

In starting this report, we should remind ourselves of the Association's principal objectives. They are:

- 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.

The following sections reflect upon what has been achieved in the past year.

2. Membership

The Association's current membership as at 6 November 2006 stands at 153 financial members – including 10 provisional members who will be formally accepted at the next Executive Committee meeting. This is a 6% decrease from the 163 financial members noted in last year's Report.

It could be questioned whether AAIR currently has sufficient numbers and breadth of membership to realistically cover all the objectives in an effective manner. Some institutions are noticeably absent from the membership lists but it is possibly difficult to attract members in places where there are no current advocates. Whilst AAIR has been successful in attracting non-members to regional activities, this has not translated into increased membership.

Table 1 shows the numbers of financial members from 2000 to 2006. The regional distribution of our membership for 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 is summarised in Table 2.

Reflecting our strong Australasian orientation, approximately 84% of our members are drawn from Australia and 10% from New Zealand.

Table 1: AAIR Membership 2000-2006

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Members	231	251	193	187	126	165	153

Table 2: AAIR membership distribution, 2003 - 2006

	2003 Members	2004 Members	2005 Members	2006 Members *
New South Wales/ACT	49	33	43	41
Northern Territory	1	1	1	0
Queensland	15	8	16	20
South Australia	10	12	16	15
Tasmania	4	4	3	0
Victoria	47	37	45	41
Western Australia	19	10	13	12
<i>Sub total, Australia</i>	<i>145</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>129</i>
New Zealand	32	17	22	16
Fiji	2	1	3	1
Asia	2	1	1	1
North America	2	1	0	1
Europe (including UK)	2	1	1	1
Other including Unknown	2	0	1	4
TOTAL	187	126	165	153

* Includes 10 Provisional Members and 4 Life/Honorary Life Members

3. Committee

The members of the current Committee are listed below. The constitution was changed to expand the Committee membership at the last AGM. In particular, the addition of the next Chair/representative of the upcoming AAIR Forum, which has been Don Johnston over the past year.

President: Wendy Marchment
Director,
Quality, Planning and Statistics
Griffith University

Vice-President: Josephine Palermo
Research Associate
Centre for Health through Action on Social Exclusion

Deakin University

Secretary: Ivan Skaines
 Manager, Strategic Planning & Review
 University of Western Sydney

Treasurer: Nick Booth
 Director
 Hestu Consulting
 Sydney

Immediate Past President: Bruce Zimmer
 (retired and currently travelling somewhere in the world)

Committee Members: Aleks Alimpijevic
 Deputy Director & Principal Data Analyst
 University of New South Wales

Bob Hall
 Director, Planning and IR
 University of Canterbury
 (Resigned Feb 2006)

Don Johnston (from Nov 2005)
 Institutional Research Officer
 Southern Cross University

Andrea Matulick (from Nov 2005)
 Business Analyst: Student Load Planning
 University of South Australia

Tony Nolan OAM
 Strategic Intelligence Analyst
 Commonwealth Public Service

Rob Sheehan (from Nov 2005)
 Sharp Words Editing & Writing Services

Dean Ward
 Manager, Strategic Planning
 Edith Cowan University

The Committee will complete its two year term of office at the end of the 2006 AGM.

Two long-serving members, ie Nick Booth and Tony Nolan, will be stepping down from the Committee and I thank them both for their invaluable contributions over the years. Nick for his tireless work, often hidden behind the scenes as Treasurer and as the ‘nit-picker’ that every Committee needs to have. Thank goodness one of us refers to the Constitution regularly! Tony, for his endless stream of ideas and creation of the workshop, ‘The Pirates Guide to Institutional Research’ which he conducted at the 2002 and 2003 Forums.

4. 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 2005 AGM, the Committee has held one face-to-face meeting (in Melbourne on 25 November 2005, immediately after the AAIR Forum) and one meeting by teleconference on 4 May 2006. Another face-to-face meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 21 November in Coffs Harbour, just before the 2006 AAIR Forum and one immediately after the 2006 Forum on Friday 24 November.

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 Committee is grateful to those members who assist in ensuring that the Forum will be a success.

2005 Forum

About 90 delegates attended the 2005 Forum from 23 to 25 November 2005, held at Victoria University's historic Queen St campus. The theme was *Institutional Research, Innovations and Change in Universities of the 21st Century*.

There was a great 'buzz' at this Forum due to the excellent program and, I think, the re-establishment of AAIR with its own Forum after being part of the much larger TEM Conference in 2003 and 2004.

Maree Conway ably stepped into the Chair's role and did a superb job. Despite burning her throat badly just before the Forum, she continued to be there early every day and made sure that the small details weren't overlooked.

2006 Forum

The 2006 Forum from 22 to 24 November 2006 will be hosted by Southern Cross University and held at the Novotel Resort, Coffs Harbour, NSW. AAIR is underwriting the Forum and a professional conference organizer was engaged to assist with the Forum tasks, which has proved to be a welcome move. The theme is *Community, Customers, Clients, Colleagues and Competitors: Defining Relationships through Institutional Research*.

I sincerely thank all those who have contributed their time and effort toward the organisation of the 2006 Forum. Thanks especially to Don Johnston, who has been the key point of contact for all our myriad of queries and put up the initial proposal for Southern Cross University to host the 2006 AAIR Forum.

2007 Forum

The President worked hard to try and reach an agreement in regard to a joint arrangement with respect to AUQF2007. Unfortunately the timing of AUQF in July seemed to be immovable and ended up being a major stumbling block. Under Victorian law, AAIR is required to present its audited accounts to a General Meeting held not later than five months after the end of the financial year. We would be unable to have the accounts audited in time to realistically hold an AGM in July. Nevertheless, AAIR members are encouraged to attend. AUQF2007 will take place in Hobart on 11–13 July 2007. At this stage there is no AAIR Forum planned for 2007.

2008 Forum

The Australian National University has offered to host the Forum in Canberra in November 2008. The dates and theme are yet to be determined.

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. However, this intention has not been fulfilled in recent years with the last edition being in October 2003.

Josie Palermo has recently indicated a willingness to take on responsibility for the Journal. We have a number of good papers from the 2005 and 2006 Forums so all going well there will be an edition out by the end of June next year and JIR will be back on track again.

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 relevant articles, trends and developments in institutional research, planning and management both in the Australasian region and worldwide. Thanks are offered to editor Nick Booth who will step down as Newsletter editor after this year's AGM. Thanks also to Rob Sheehan who was a regular contributor this year and undertook the role whilst Nick was overseas.

AAIR Website

AAIR's website is <http://www.aair.org.au>. It includes all *Journal* issues, papers presented at the annual Forums, and a password-protected "member services" section containing such information as:

- list of members and their e-mail addresses;
- AAIR Professional file;
- audited annual statements of accounts;
- committee reports to the AGM.

The website is 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.

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

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 Committee pays the AIR Forum registration fee for our nominated "Best Paper". In 2005, a \$1000 prize for the Best paper was introduced and the winner will be announced at the 2006 Forum.

AAIR Best Presentation

The AAIR best presentation award was introduced in 2005 with a prize of \$1000. The winners were Jim Cleary, Julie Herraman & Terry Gozzard (University of Newcastle) and Ivan Skaines (UWS) for the presentation 'Listening to the Student Voice: An analysis of the 2003 CEQ comments at the University of Newcastle'.

Fellowship to the AIR Summer Data Policy Institute

In 2006, for the fourth year in a row, AAIR received one fellowship to the AIR 2006 Summer Data Policy Institute held in June 2006, in Washington, DC. Thanks to a grant from the US National Science Foundation (NSF), all expenses in Washington are covered and up to US\$700 towards airfare costs. Unfortunately no applications from AAIR members were received this year.

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 Robyn Peutherer at the 2006 AIR Forum held in Chicago in June 2006.

South East Asian AIR

Dr Raj Sharma, who is also an Executive Committee member of the South East Asian Association for Institutional Research (SEAAIR), represented our Association at the 2006 SEAAIR Forum (Langkawi, Malaysia on 5-7 September 2006).

8. Regional and Collaborative Activities within Australasia

Given the geographically wide Australasian region, the Executive Committee encourages regional meetings, seminars and workshops. The following activities were held in 2006.

AAIR Qld/Northern NSW DEST Student Data Collection and Graduate Destination Survey Get-Togethers

Brisbane, 7 March 2006

Convenor: Wendy Marchment

This event was hosted by QUT at the Gardens Point campus and attracted 40 participants. The two groups gave a regional focus to the long-standing DEST Special Interest Group and newly formed Graduate Destination Survey Special Interest Group from the 2005 AAIR Forum.

The Graduate Destination Survey Group was chaired by Wendy Marchment, USC. There were 20 participants from GCA and nine institutions. Cindy Tilbrook, GCA provided an overview of GCA's current and future activities followed by Bruce Guthrie, GCA who provided information on the GDS Enhancement Project findings. The afternoon session was generally around survey management issues and sharing of practice.

The DEST Student Collection group was chaired by Kerry Martin, USC. There were 20 participants from DEST, QTAC, Qld government and nine institutions. Tanya Tietze, USC, gave an overview of the DEST working groups on HEIMS and the Course Information System (CIS). The afternoon session focused on student collection issues with Matthew Hardy and Adam Kennedy from DEST contributing.

There were extensive Q&A sessions in both groups which came together for morning tea and lunch. This proved a successful event with participants keen to have future gatherings.

Datawarehouse SIG

Adelaide, 17-18 July 2006

Convenors: Andrea Matulick and Graham Poole

The first meeting of the Data Warehousing and Business Intelligence Special Interest Group of AAIR was hosted at UniSA in Adelaide in July 2006. Graeme Poole and Andrea Matulick as members of AAIR coordinated the two-day event at City West Campus which included speakers from five Australian universities and two major software vendors (COGNOS and Microsoft). COGNOS also assisted by providing some sponsorship towards catering. The event was attended by over 50 representatives from 18 Australian and two New Zealand universities.

The presentations included case studies and demonstrations of architecture, design, performance, software selection, and reporting environments from five Australian universities already involved in data warehousing. Discussions covered integrating, standardising and combining data from major institutional source systems (e.g. student, finance, human resources and research) plus national benchmarking data and other external data sources. The speakers were Ken Diefenbach (Central Queensland University), Wayne McCullough (Queensland University of Technology), Dave Underwood (Adelaide University), Mick Gibson (Deakin University) and Tony Dalwood (University of South Australia).

The forum provided an excellent opportunity for staff involved in Data Warehousing and Business Intelligence environments to meet and discuss common issues and current developments. A large amount of positive feedback was received, along with ideas for future events. The email list server for members of the SIG now has over 80 members from over 30 universities and has hosted discussions on such topics as organisational structure, future

dated records, missing dimensional data, technical documentation and upcoming Kimball Data Warehouse courses in Australia. Central Queensland University has offered to host a forum for the SIG at Rockhampton in 2007.

Victorian Regional AAIR Forum

Melbourne, 22 September 2006

Convenor: Rob Sheehan

RMIT University generously hosted the Forum, attended by 75 participants from four states, 16 universities and bodies with an interest in higher education such as ACER and GCA. It was especially heartening to note that the Forum attracted both academic and general staff from both central units and from faculties.

Registration was set at \$75 for AAIR members, and \$95 for non-members.

The Forum ran from 9.30am to 4.00pm. The program's theme was the place of, and approach to, data analysis, planning and management functions in higher education. The Learning and Teaching Performance Fund and the Research Quality Framework were considered as illustrations to theme. Speakers were:

- Anne Baly, Branch Manager, Teaching, Equity and Collaboration Branch, DEST
- Leanne Harvey, Branch Manager, Research Systems Branch, DEST
- Angel Calderon, Head, Institutional Research, RMIT University
- Professor Jim Barber, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), RMIT University
- Dr Geoff Sharrock, independent Consultant who in worked on the University of Melbourne's *Growing Esteem* strategy project
- Professor Erich Weigold, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), La Trobe University
- Professor Richard James, Director of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne

A Panel of institutional researchers – Wendy Marchment (Griffith University), Lachlan Murdoch (UniSA) and Andrew Brion (Monash University) – drew the program to a close.

Raj Sharma supported the Forum through refining the program and contacting a number of speakers and potential registrants.

Nick Booth's support was inestimable in managing the banking of registrations and resolving money errors and quirks.

The financial outcome for the Forum, which will appear in next financial year accounts, was:

Income - \$4,672
Expenses - \$2,637
Surplus - \$2,035

Collaboration in the Australian Universities Quality Forum (AUQF)

Since early 2003, AAIR has been represented by 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 Fifth Quality Forum, held in Perth with the theme *Quality Outcomes and Diversity* over 5-7 July 2006 had a 180 delegates attending. The next AUQF is scheduled for 11-13 July 2007 in Hobart with the theme *Evolution and Renewal in Quality Assurance*. Our Association looks forward to a continuing contribution to the work of the Joint Steering Group.

9. AAIR Finances

AAIR incurred an operating profit of \$10,940 over 2005/2006, as at the 30 June our funds balance stood at \$66,753. The audited Financial Statement provided in the Treasurer's Report to the AGM provides details of expenditure and income, and confirms that the Association is in very 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
- 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.

No doubt the incoming President will drive specific future directions. However, members are always encouraged to provide ideas or constructive feedback as to how AAIR may better deliver on its strategic priorities or in other areas which are consistent with AAIR's objectives.

11. Acknowledgments

Whilst all members of the Committee work on a voluntary basis, the additional work offered by many others ensures that AAIR keeps moving ahead. Thanks are offered to members and institutions that support and host our program of activities.

In particular, thanks to Maree Conway, John Kleeman, Greg Marie, Dave Marr and Gavin Moodie in assisting with refereeing of papers and the assessment of the Best Paper.

Since I will be stepping down as President at the 2006 AGM, I wish to extend a huge thankyou to all the people who have assisted, guided, supported, challenged and encouraged me over the past four years in this role. I will certainly be maintaining my interest in the future of AAIR but feel it's time to step back for a while and 'hand over the reins'.

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

Wendy Marchment
Hon President
On behalf of the AAIR Committee

14 November 2006