

# Newsletter Issue 3/2017

March  
2017



## From the President

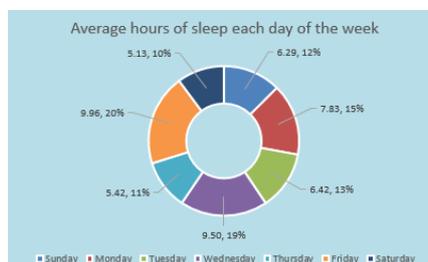
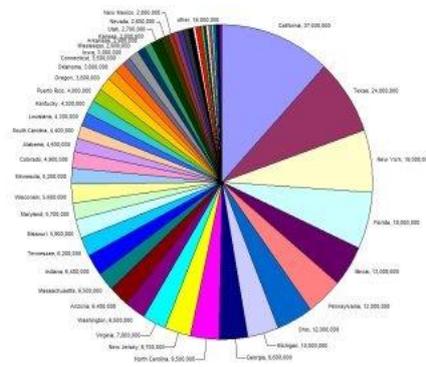
### Pet Peeves

We all have them – those things that get under our skin or drive us mad. We just can't understand why someone would do that or even think that what they are doing is sensible. In my office, everyone knows my pet peeves. My colleagues always know how to get me going by showing me presentations of information or data that doesn't help the viewer to understand what is happening or doesn't help anyone to make a decision.

Here are just a few things that really get me going.

**Pie charts and donut charts.** Why people use them at all is a mystery to me. Maybe it is because there are no edges or it reminds them of playing with a ball, but seriously, what do they tell you?

If you want to make sense of them, you usually have to add so much information to them that you may as well have just presented the information in a table. Here's what I mean.



Pies and donuts are for eating, I say!

**Overly decorated tables, or tables with too much information.** I realise that for most of us, a great deal of work goes into analysing information, but you don't really have to put it all in a table, do you? People can only absorb so much information at one time and you need to help them focus on what is important.

I try to distil everything down to what is needed to understand what is happening.

If you really want people to see how hard you worked and all the calculations you did, then use an appendix, otherwise you are wasting their time. If you have to use colour or borders everywhere then you are going to mask or hide what is important. And don't forget about those who are colour blind who won't be able to see what you are presenting in many cases!

Forecast Change in Student Numbers					
Faculty	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Arts	50	(25)	(10)	(90)	75
Science	10	10	3	(12)	15
Law	0	12	(10)	5	8
Engineering	42	33	25	18	15
Medicine	12	8	10	(15)	12
Education	18	14	(5)	(8)	(10)
Agriculture	(15)	(8)	10	5	8

See what I mean!

**Infographics.** Don't get me wrong, infographics do have their place, and those that are well done can not only be enlightening, but also entertaining. However, I am sure that we have all seen some that not only try to tell you too much, but also leave you scratching your head over what was being said.

Here's [an example from the New Zealand Ministry of Education](#).

I particularly like the baby swinging from the star at the bottom right hand corner – not sure what it means though. I am certain that there would have been many ways of presenting the information contained in the infographic in other ways that would have made much more sense.

And if you want more examples, there is a wonderful website called WTF Visualizations. [Check out WTF Visualizations here!](#) They have an archive, but also allow you to submit examples for others to enjoy.

So, have I missed the mark or do these things bother you too? What are your pet peeves? Does anyone have examples of good and bad they would like to share?

### Share Your Pet Peeves



**Kathie Rabel**  
AAIR President

## March Newsletter

### [Editorial](#)

### [Sector News and Views](#)

### [Big Data, Online Learning, Analytics and Technology](#)

### [Graduate Outcomes and Employability](#)

### [Learning & Teaching](#)

### [Research](#)

### [Reports and Resources](#)

### [On the move](#)

### [Book Reviews](#)

### [Positions Vacant](#)

### [Higher Education Conferences and Events](#)

### [Special Coverage – AAIR Regional Dinner Meeting, Sydney](#)

### [Institutional Researcher's Corner. Five quick questions with ...](#)

### [Call for contributions](#)

## Editorial

Welcome to the March 2017 edition of the AAIR Newsletter.

First things first – We want to know what you think!



**The AAIR newsletter survey is still open (closing March 29) and we encourage our members to take this short [survey](#) about the monthly newsletter and your information needs as a member.**

Now that you have completed the survey, let's talk about March.

This month Monica Chen (co-editor) provides a special coverage of the AAIR Regional Dinner meeting in Sydney with special guest Tony Nolan, Innovation Officer at the Australian Tax Office (ATO). As well, our 'Five Quick Questions' this month is with David Collings, Survey Manager for Edith Cowan University.

Of note this month, the Universities Australia Higher Education Conference (March 1–3) saw the official launch of the UA Indigenous Strategy 2017-2010 and included the Graduate Employability Forum. There was also significant media interest in the keynote address from former US Ambassador to Australia [Jeff Bleich](#) who discussed the plausible global impact of the current international political environment.

Prior to the Conference, current Universities Australia and University of Western Sydney VC Chair Barney Glover made an impassioned speech on the value of higher education at the National Press Club – edited extract [here](#) and full speech [here](#)

Also in the issue, we draw your attention to a new report (funded by the Department of Education and Training) from La Trobe's Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research: [The re-recruitment of students who have withdrawn from Australian higher education](#). The report details significant findings relevant to how institutions collect and report on institutional data.

**Take the Newsletter Survey**

Happy reading!

## Sector News and Views

Last month this newsletter reported on [Duties and Functions of Institutional Research](#) list developed by our US counterpart, the Association of Institutional Research (AIR). Their latest newsletter expands on the duty and function area: [Educate information producers, users, and consumers' component](#). Also worth noting is AIR's profile this month of what the [average Director of Institutional Research might look like](#): Results from the National (US) Survey of IR Offices, in combination with AIR's membership data, show that the average IR Director is 50 years old, has an advanced degree (46% have master's degrees and 43% have doctoral degrees), has spent 11 years in IR, and 6.5 years leading IR at their current institution.

The University of Melbourne's Centre for the Study of Higher Education has released a collection of 13 papers addressing the issues facing higher education. [Visions for Australian Tertiary Education](#) includes papers on funding models, leadership, equity, big data and analytics, graduate employability, standards and quality, VET, internationalisation and the future of the HE workforce – both academic and professional.



A number of scathing [reports](#) have brought much needed attention to the issue of inappropriate policies and practices for responding to student reports of rape, attempted rape and sexual assault at Australian universities. Although we do not currently have reliable statistics on the victimisation rates of sexual violence in Australian universities, figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) more broadly report that 1 in 5 women have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15, compared to 1 in 22 men.

The previously mentioned La Trobe report lines up with Professor Marcia Devlin's (Federation University) recent piece in [The Conversation](#) which noted the diversity of the student cohort in higher education and called for a redress of how we measure attrition in Australian higher education. Marcia says:

*Many assume that the people who aren't there a year later have dropped out. Indeed, they may have. They may have done so permanently. But they may also have left*

*temporarily, to come back to that program and institution, or others, at a later date.*

Other significant reports from [NCSEHE](#): [Draft Guidelines for Improving Student Outcomes in Online Learning](#) and [Regional Student Participation and Migration](#). As well [Access to higher education: Does distance impact students' intentions to attend university?](#)

### Reviews, Reviews, Reviews

Did you know the federal government has spent \$4.5 million on [26 reviews, options papers, inquiries and discussion papers into the higher education and research sectors since it came to power in 2013](#), and that does not include a 2015 review of higher education reviews prior to 2013 or the new review into rural and regional education.

Anyhow, the [Australian Government](#) is set to conduct (another) comprehensive review of regional education with the aim of getting more regional, rural and remote students to not just be successful at school but to go on to further study, training and employment. In light of the [ASG Planning for University Index](#) results the review is timely. The [Regional Universities Network](#) has welcomed the independent review. A discussion paper and online platform for public submissions will be available from April 2017. Information and public submission details can be found at <https://www.education.gov.au/independent-review-regional-rural-and-remote-education>

In addition, the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training has commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to [review its Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire \(PREQ\)](#) and analyse whether, after more than 15 years in use, it is still appropriate for measuring the experience of postgraduate research students in Australian higher education at the completion of their course. If you would like to contribute to the consultation process for this review, please email [highereducation@acer.edu.au](mailto:highereducation@acer.edu.au)

### Indigenous Strategy

[Universities Australia](#) has committed to accelerating indigenous student enrolments by 50 per cent above overall growth. In 2015 there were 15 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders studying, just 1.6 per cent of domestic enrolments and significantly less than the 2.7 per cent of the working age Australian population who identify as ATSI peoples. Report: [Indigenous Strategy 2017-2020](#)

Further on indigenous student support, in what believed to be an Australian first,

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander undergraduate students starting classes at the [University of Sydney](#) in Semester 1, 2017 are being provided with guaranteed and fully subsidised accommodation.

From the [National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education \(NCSEHE\)](#), new research confirming equity students are satisfied with their academic experience however, are still at increased risk of exiting university prior to graduation. [Factors Influencing University Student Satisfaction, Dropout and Academic Performance: An Australian Higher Education Equity Perspective](#) also notes that first year indigenous students were six percentage points more likely to be at risk of dropping out than non-indigenous students.

### Enrolments and Student Experience

Growth in university student numbers was subdued in the first half of 2016, increasing by 2489 compared to 4200 in 2015, as reported in [Campus Morning Mail](#) on 1 March 2017. The new figures continue the trend to slow growth, replacing the explosive expansion that accompanied the introduction of demand driven funding.

University students could be under increased financial pressure as a result of the Australian Fair Work Commission decision to cut penalty rates with the academic union predicting increased drop-out rates. The [National Tertiary Education Union](#) said many students were already under extreme financial stress due to rising accommodation and other costs.

[International students studying in Australia reach record number, Education Department figures show](#) Australia has cemented its reputation as an international education destination of choice with student numbers surging more than 10 per cent to 554,179. Minister for Education and Training Simon Birmingham said as the number of international students coming to Australia to study continued to soar, so too had their satisfaction levels. According to the [Infographic](#) of key findings from the 2016 International Student Survey Results, the tertiary student experience in Australia sits at 89% with the top factor for deciding to study in Australia being the reputation of the qualification.

In the US, four in 10 colleges are seeing drops in applications from [international students](#) amid pervasive concerns that the political climate might keep them away. Not surprisingly, the highest reported declines involved applications from the Middle East. Thirty-nine percent of universities reported declines in undergraduate applications from the Middle East, while 31 percent reported declines in graduate applications.

[Pacific Islanders suffer by being denied higher education loans](#) A new study from Judith Kearney and Matthew Glen of Griffith University argues that rules preventing many Pacific Islanders living in Australia from accessing the government's higher education loan scheme should be relaxed as they are effectively making university too expensive. This "institutionalised disadvantage" increases the risk of a pattern of intergenerational poverty for Pacific Islanders, who make up 1.3 per cent of the Australian population. The article was published in [Education, Citizenship and Social Justice](#)

[Promoting Study Abroad Using Your Existing Digital Platforms](#) Many universities set ambitious targets to increase the numbers of students studying abroad, some as part of IIE's [Generation Study Abroad](#) initiative, some to attract prospects who demand opportunities for global experience, and some who feel it's simply part of their educational mission.

[Universities will have to adapt to the demands of the modern era](#), casting aside self-interest to work instead on delivering for their many partners, says La Trobe University's head John Dewar. It's what he's dubbing the University 4.0 model — a new style of university partly defined by its 1000-year evolution, but adaptive to demands of the modern world.

The UK Higher Education Academy has set up an [Australian and New Zealand Advisory Group](#) as well as a new [global teaching award](#). The award will be run in conjunction with Times Higher Education, publisher of the THE World University Rankings. Closing date for entries is 2 May 2017 and entry details can be found on the Global Teaching Excellence Award [webpage](#)

[NZ: more int'l students stay and work than return home one year on](#). In New Zealand, international students are more likely to find a job than they are to return overseas a year after completing their qualification, according to a landmark [report](#) on the destinations and employment outcomes of more than 130,000 international students at government-funded institutions.

[Lower Indian applications dampen New Zealand's visa approval rates](#). Declining visa applications from India have led to a 20% drop in the total number of students applying for a visa to study in New Zealand from offshore in 2016, according to new statistics from [Immigration New Zealand](#). Detailing the number of student visas granted and declined for offshore applicants during the 2016 academic year, the statistics show 11,000 fewer applications than 2015, down from 61,500 to 50,200. The decrease in

turn resulted in 37,600 visas granted, a decline of 5,700 from 2015.

And still in New Zealand - [Qualifications deal to boost NZ-South Korea mobility](#) A new qualifications recognition statement paves the way for students to transition directly from high school in South Korea to higher education programs in New Zealand and vice versa, without having to take a high school or foundation program in the destination country.

Meanwhile in the UK, a recent report claims that [British universities suffer from "groupthink"](#) with a strong left-wing or liberal bias among academics. It argues that the trend poses a threat to higher education because it raises the possibility of future clashes with right-of-centre governments that may strip universities of funding.

The University of Tasmania (UTAS) is moving its STEM sites into the Hobart CBD. Both the [ABC](#) and the Tasmania's key newspaper [The Mercury](#) reported on the initiative to expand its growing footprint in the centre of Hobart by building a flagship science and technology precinct to cater for an extra 4000 students. [Infrastructure Australia](#), the main independent body that advises the Commonwealth on where it should direct infrastructure funding, is backing the university's "head-turning" plan as way to boost Hobart's economy and defy projections of sluggish population growth.

[The great escape: boltholes for academics fleeing Brexit and Trump](#). In *Times Higher Education* David Matthews and John Elmes weighed up the pros and cons of likely academics venturing to other destinations (from Australia to Singapore) post Trump and Brexit.

Worth reading is Simon Marginson's piece in *University World News* [Higher education – The key to greater freedom](#) The article is adapted from Marginson's keynote address at the conference of the Centre for Global Higher Education, held on 1 March in London, and notes that while the recent negative positioning of higher education and research in both the UK and the US due to political changes was a wake-up call, higher education has transformative capacity and can 'cut the ground from under the alt-right'.

Also at this conference, the release of the report from Leiden University in the Netherlands, [UK Universities Interacting with Industry: Patterns of research collaboration and inter-sectoral mobility of academic researchers](#), which indicates large United Kingdom research-intensive universities are most at risk of having their collaborative links with industry damaged by Brexit.

The establishment of a new academic [Centre for the study of Western Civilisation](#) has been announced as a result of the biggest philanthropic gift ever to Australian universities from health magnate Paul Ramsay. The centre is to be headed by Simon Haines, who is currently a professor of English and director of the Research Centre for Human Values at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Prior to that Simon was head of English at ANU.

And still on philanthropy, the Deputy VC of the University of South Australia Professor Tanya Monro has [made a personal donation of \\$80 000](#) to the Research Momentum During Maternity Leave scheme to assist new mothers regain their research momentum during their leave on their return to academic life.

### Lastly, Here Comes the Rankings

2017 [QS World University Rankings by Subject](#) have been announced. Some highlights:



*In Australia* - Overall, the [Australian higher education sector performed well](#) with its strongest national performance in Mineral & Mining Engineering. Six Australian universities can be found in the top 20. This year five institutions recorded a top three position, including Curtin University, which was placed second in mineral and mining engineering, with UQ placed third. UQ was also placed third in sports-related subjects — the first time such a category has appeared. The University of Sydney is one of the two best places in the world to study sport science

*In New Zealand* - [Otago University](#) was judged to be among the world's top 10 universities for the study of Sport and sport-related disciplines, placing 7th internationally. This was the highest ranking achieved by any New Zealand university for any subject area in the 2017 rankings.

The new edition of the [Ranking Web of Universities](#) is out, published by Spain's Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas. The ranking is based on ranking based on volume and impact of institutions' on-line content, rather than surveys and bibliometrics. The top five Australian universities (world ranked 61-90) are: University of Melbourne, University of Queensland; University of NSW, Australian National University and University of Sydney. In New Zealand, the top five (world

ranked 157-462); University of Auckland, University of Otago, University of Canterbury, Victoria University of Wellington and Massey University.

Times Higher Education revealed the [Best Small Universities](#). To be eligible for the rankings, universities must appear in [Times Higher Education's World University Rankings 2016-17](#), teach more than four subjects, and have fewer than 5,000 students. Australia's [Bond University](#) came in at number 20.

## Big Data, Online Learning, Analytics & Technology

### [Why service portals are the next big thing.](#)

The average US college student brings five devices to campus. With 21 million total college students in the US, that's 105 million devices that need internet access on our college campuses alone. The proliferation of devices, and lack of manpower to handle all the maintenance and technical issues that arise, has led to some innovation in the way of self-service portals. The knowledge-based centres connect students, staff and administration when it comes to fixing technical problems, often without the need for IT interaction.

### ['Conversation Starter' on Ethical Data Use.](#)

The Washington-based think tank, *New America*, has released a [five-point framework](#) intended to help US colleges navigate the ethical concerns surrounding predictive analytics as they flip the switch on adaptive learning, early-warning and other data-driven systems.

A suite of articles from [The EvoLLLution](#) this month related to institutional data notably: [Using analytics in decision making](#); A quick but comprehensive overview of [big data in higher education](#) (includes the Internet of Things IoT); A [case study](#) and [strategies](#) for embedding a culture of centralised institutional research and business intelligence, and finally; [Using data to support and improve the student experience](#)

## Graduate Outcomes and Employability

The [Government](#) is set to name the best Australian universities to train up the country's next generation of cyber security specialists to help address statistics that show Australian companies predict nearly one in five cyber security jobs will go unfilled by 2020. Universities can apply to be recognised as Academic Centres of Cyber Security Excellence (ACCSE) for their work delivering specialised training to address Australia's critical need for cyber security professionals.

The federal government released its latest [figures on completion rates](#) at Australian universities earlier this year. It shows that students who study off campus, are on a part-time course, are older, Indigenous, from disadvantaged backgrounds or regional areas of Australia are less likely to complete their university course. [The typical student is no longer 18, middle-class and on campus.](#) We need to change our thinking on how we measure drop-out rates.

There are growing connections between [research and commercialisation](#), which sits at the heart of the government's attempt to boost the local defence industry. As Australia settles in to an era of increased spending on defence material, the question remains whether the most innovative defence technology has to reside in the massive "prime" contractors, or whether defence contracts can tease-out innovation from thousands of local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) [and university research teams](#).

The Law Society of NSW has partnered with research and consultancy firm Urbis to develop a [tracking survey](#) specifically to look at employment prospects for law graduates. The Law Student Tracking Survey will be available to approximately 3,000 students across 14 law schools in NSW and the ACT. It is the first of its kind in Australia to focus on the legal profession in particular, according to Urbis director Alison Wallace.

## Learning & Teaching

### [Online Education Costs More, Not Less](#)

A US survey of distance education has challenged perceptions that digital or online education is cheaper to produce. The survey, conducted by the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET), found that most colleges charge students the same or more to study online. And when additional fees are included, more than half of distance education students pay more than do those in brick-and-mortar classrooms. Subsequent [criticism](#) of the original study say the original paper saw it [temporarily pulled by its publisher](#), the National Bureau of Economic Research.

### [Students not abandoning pen and paper – 10-nation study.](#)

Reading and writing skills are changing with the use of digital technologies according to a ten country study. Students also found handwriting helps to retain knowledge. The study by Dr Jane Vincent, a researcher with the London School of Economics and Political Science or LSE, surveyed some 650 students from Europe and Asia – Italy, the United Kingdom, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Russia, China, Portugal, Finland and Germany. The full journal article was published in [Journal of](#)

[Print and Media Technology Research](#) (Open Access)

### [Western Sydney University makes textbooks free for new undergraduate students in 2017](#)

To help with the cost of study, Western Sydney University is giving all new students free digital textbooks, in one of the world's largest rollouts of its kind. More than 10,000 students commencing their undergraduate studies next year will be given free digital textbooks (via ProQuest) worth up to \$800. Western Sydney University's Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Barney Glover, says the ground breaking initiative is in direct response to student feedback. This revealed that the cost of expensive textbooks was one of the key challenges to starting university. In his regular communication, the Campus Morning Mail [wondered](#) whether WSU would actually allow staff to access the digital data on user patterns of students.

Victoria University in Melbourne will establish a First Year College. As reported in [Campus Review](#) the rationale behind the proposed First Year College is to provide personalised support to VU's first year cohorts to improve student retention rates at the university. The college will be staffed by teaching specialist academics, vocational education teachers and administration workers. The announcement of the new College coincides with the news of [job losses at VU](#)

An interesting infographic from [Eduventures](#) (a research and advisory firm focused on higher education) who have assembled a collage of company logos of major players in the online assessment, system integration and learning management systems – titled [Higher Education Technology Landscape 2017](#)

It has been ten years since Sir Ken Robinson gave his first [TED Talk](#) (noted as the most popular TED talk of all time). At a recent event held in Minneapolis, US on February 22, co-hosted by [the Bush Foundation](#) and the School Leadership Project, Robinson delivered a [keynote address](#) in which he spoke to the "learning revolution", arguing that the shift to personalised learning is a non-negotiable in the United States if education is to prepare students for the future, instead of simply the "now."

[Berkeley Will Delete Online Content.](#) The University of California, Berkeley, will cut off public access to tens of thousands of video lectures and podcasts in response to a US Justice Department order that it make the educational content accessible to people with disabilities. The Justice Department, following an investigation, in August determined that the university was violating the *Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990*.

The department reached that conclusion after receiving complaints from two employees of Gallaudet University, saying Berkeley's free online educational content was inaccessible to blind and deaf people because of a lack of captions, screen reader compatibility and other issues.

[Aspiring teachers will have to pass a UMAT-type test to begin education degrees at Flinders University](#), which quizzes them about such issues as children coming to school with no breakfast or wearing dirty clothes. The test is a response to a Federal Government requirement for all universities to widen selection processes into teaching degrees beyond high school results.

Concerns in the UK around the implications of moves towards two-year degrees: [Fast-track degrees 'would create two-tier academy' in England](#) and [Two-year degrees? On the road to enlightenment, speed kills](#) both detail the implications of accelerated degrees and the impact on academic workload.

If you have access to *Campus Review*, an interesting [podcast](#) from Open Universities Australia manager of student experience, Andy Sheats on using data to help students make study choices.

## Research

The [Cooperative Research Centres](#) (CRC) - administered by AusIndustry, a division within the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science- has announced the [successful applicants for the 18<sup>th</sup> round of the CRC Programme](#). A range of Australian industries will benefit from a \$151.5 million investment by the government in four new Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs): CRC for High Performance Soils will receive nearly \$40 million over 10 years; CRC for Honey Bee Products will receive \$7 million over five years; Food Agility CRC will help Australia's food industry grow its comparative advantage through digital transformation and receive \$50 million over 10 years; iMove CRC, which will receive \$55 million over 10 years, will explore digital and evolving vehicle technologies to help traffic to flow more smoothly.

The [OECD says Australia's research and business collaboration is still weak and decision-making within the innovation system](#), particularly at the government level, fragmented. But it has broadly backed the federal government's science and innovation agenda, saying it is optimistic that reforms are under way. The OECD's annual review of the Australian economy, released this month, gives extensive attention to innovation-driven productivity and policy.

## (More) Reports and Resources

[The re-recruitment of students who have withdrawn from Australian higher education.](#)

Source: *Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research, La Trobe University/ Australian Department of Education and Training*

This study was conducted by La Trobe University and funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training (DET) through the 2015 National Priorities Pool. The report highlights the growing importance of attrition to institutional reputation, student decision-making, and government funding and outlines major causes of attrition.

Included in the findings and relevant to how institutions collect data:

- The sector lacks common language and definitions around stages of enrolment, such as deferment, leave of absence, absence without leave, discontinuation of enrolment, withdrawal, and re-enrolment. This opacity is confusing for students and complicates data and policy analysis
- Institutional completion and re-enrolment data is limited, but could potentially be collected and published through the Higher Education Information Management System and the Quality Indicators for Teaching and Learning
- Students who withdraw are unlikely to complete an exit interview or survey, unlikely to be contacted personally after their withdrawal, and unlikely to receive tailored re-recruitment advice from their university.

[Expenditure of education and Training in Australia 2016](#)

Source: *Mitchell Institute*

Brings together data across all areas of education to prompt governments to consider a more planned and consistent approach to distributing resources.

[Strengthening Research across Asia: An Asia Research and Innovation Network](#)

Source: *Innovative Research Universities (IRU)*

The IRU has identified four crucial issues for the Australian research system each of which address the Government's aims to improve the commercial outcomes from research: Industry driven research; strengthening interaction with expanding economies;

Emphasising translational research, and; Encouraging regional and outer urban research ecosystems.

[Moving places: Destinations and earnings of international graduates](#)

Source: *Ministry of Education, New Zealand*

This report looks at what international graduates do and earn after they complete their tertiary education studies in the New Zealand tertiary education system. The report focuses on students who complete qualifications at government-funded providers.

[Gender in the Global Research Landscape](#)

Source: *Elsevier*

A large-scale analysis of gender disparities in research output and impact finds that while the number of women researchers has increased over the past 20 years, women researchers publish fewer papers on average than men. They are also less likely to collaborate internationally and to undertake research that cuts across the corporate and academic sectors. The report examined research performance by gender across 12 countries or regions, over 20 years and in 27 fields.

[Startup Smarts: Universities and the Startup Economy](#)

Source: *Universities Australia and Startup Muster*

More than four in five Australian start-up founders are university graduates, according to this new report that declares universities are a key plank in the growing area of the digital economy. The report, which drew from data of 600 Australian start-up founders, found top skills for founding team members were strongly tied to professional university-level qualifications.

[The University for the Future: Evolutions, revolutions and transformations](#)

Source: *Lee Hecht Harrison (Consultancy)*

This sector is currently undergoing major structural reformations and trying to balance a variety of stakeholder interests, and needs to make fundamental choices to ensure its sustainability. Lee Hecht Harrison (LHH) conducted interviews with key leaders in the sector from major Australian/New Zealand universities. This primary research aimed to determine how well-equipped universities are of the changing structure, and identify areas which need to be reformed.

## On the Move

**Margaret Gardner** is the new chair of Universities Australia and is currently the Vice Chancellor of Monash University. Margaret has taken over from Western Sydney University VC **Barney Glover**. In addition to her UA appointment she is also a director of the Group of Eight.

**Alexandra Elibank Murray** is joining Federation University as director of its [Brisbane Centre](#), which is scheduled to open in November 2017, offering a masters and two bachelor degrees to international students. The Brisbane venture is part of the university's strategy to expand its base. In November Federation University announced a new joint-venture campus in Kuala Lumpur teaching degrees in business, IT and hospitality and management. The campus at Berwick, on Melbourne's southeast fringe, which it took over from Monash is expected to be the largest in the network in five years

**Christine Keller** has accepted the position of Executive Director of the Association of Institutional Research (AIR). In the US Christine serves on multiple boards including the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Advisory Board and the Postsecondary Data Collaborative of the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP).

University of Melbourne's PVC Engagement **Professor Ian Anderson** is leaving the University to become a deputy secretary in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

After five years as DVC Students and Registrar **Deidre Anderson** is leaving Macquarie University.

**Tonianne Dwyer** is the new Deputy Chancellor of the University of Queensland. Tonianne replaces **Dr Jane Wilson** who stood down after a decade in November 2016.

**Air Chief Marshall Angus Houston** will become chancellor of the University of the Sunshine Coast next month. He replaces **John Dobson** who is stepping down after a decade in the chair.

Maori businessman **Michael Ahie** is installed as the new chancellor of Massey University. He replaces **Chris Kelly**, who stood down after two years.

Deakin PVC Industry and Partnerships **Guy Littlefair** is moving to the Auckland University of Technology, where he will be PVC and Dean of Design and Creative Technologies.

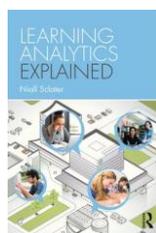
**Linda Trenberth** is set to be the new Vice Provost (Academic and Equity) at Victoria University of Wellington. She moves from Griffith University where she is the Business School's academic dean.

**Tanya Rhodes-Taylor** joins the University of Sydney as Vice Principal for External Relations and **Stephen Phillips** also joins the University as Vice Principal of Operations

**Joanne Tompkins** is the Australian Research Council's new Executive Director for the Humanities and Creative arts. She joins from the University of Queensland where she is now Associate Dean Research in the Humanities and Social Science Faculty.

**Stephen Gerlach** will continue as chancellor of Flinders University for a third four-year term, taking him through until 2022.

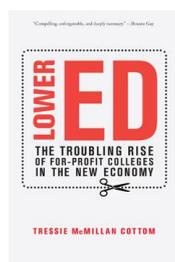
## Book Reviews



### [Learning Analytics Explained](#)

Niall Sclater

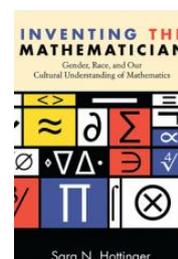
*Learning Analytics Explained* draws extensively from case studies and interviews with experts in order to discuss emerging applications of the new field of learning analytics. Educational institutions increasingly collect data on students and their learning experiences, a practice that helps enhance courses, identify learners who require support, and provide a more personalized learning experience. There is, however, a corresponding need for guidance on how to carry out institutional projects, intervene effectively with students, and assess legal and ethical issues. This book provides that guidance while also covering the evolving technical architectures, standards, and products within the field.



### [Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy](#)

Tressie McMillan Cottom

In the US more than two million students are enrolled in for-profit colleges. These schools have been around just as long as their not-for-profit counterparts, yet little is known about why they have expanded so rapidly in recent years—during the so-called Wall Street era of for-profit colleges. Drawing on more than one hundred interviews with students, employees, executives, and activists, *Lower Ed* tells the story of the benefits, pitfalls, and real costs of a for-profit education. It is a story about broken social contracts; about education transforming from a public interest to a private gain; and about all Americans and the challenges we face in our divided, unequal society.



### [Inventing the Mathematician: Gender, Race and Our Cultural Understanding of Mathematics](#)

Sara N Hottinger

Given the ongoing focus on STEM education, Sara Hottinger's book is timely as she believes "everyone can do mathematics" and that "you may need to work really hard at it and try multiple times before you understand. It may come easier to some of us, but all of us can eventually succeed." In her new book, Hottinger argues that part of the problem is how we learn to see math and the people who excel at it: typically male, white and relentlessly objective.



### [Globalizing University Research: Innovation, Collaboration, and Competition](#)

Karen Holbrook and Kiki Caruson

This volume, the tenth and final report in the Global Education Research Reports series, examines the many ways in which universities can support international research, equip scholars with tools for

success, engage students, create institutional partnerships, and connect with the community to facilitate research that reflects our globalised world.



**Not a book, but ...**

### **Special Issue: Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management**

*Note: Free access online until August*

Former journal editor Ian Dobson has compiled a 'virtual special issue' of the journal, in electronic form, that comprises a selection of past papers valued in one way or another by that ex-editor. Dobson has included his own selection of favoured papers which include administration' and AITEA/ATEM; staff other than those with academic appointments; student attrition; and ethics committees.

## 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.

**Editor's note: There are plenty of vacancies at the moment – please explore these at [www.aair.org.au/pages/higher-education-jobs](http://www.aair.org.au/pages/higher-education-jobs).**

## Looking for some training and development?

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

## 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.

### **ATEM University Finance Conference**

**11-12 May, 2017 Palazzo Versace Hotel, Gold Coast, Australia**

The theme for the conference is '[Navigating the World of University Finance](#)'.

[Registrations](#) and the [Call for Papers](#) are now open! NB. Discounts are available for [groups of 3 or more](#).

More information:

<http://www.atem.org.au/conferences/uf-conference>

### **Times Higher Education Young Universities Summit**

**5-7 April, 2017, QUT Brisbane, Australia**

The summit will gather representatives from the world's best young universities to share insights of how they are competing and succeeding against their well-established rivals. Influential speakers from leading universities, multinational corporations and international governments, will instigate debate on topics such as diversity in leadership, new models of collaboration, real-world futures and integrating STEM and creativity



### **Masterclass: Big Data Analytics: Transforming university business**

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> of April, 2017, QUT Brisbane, Australia**

As part of the pre-summit workshop program for the [Times Higher Education \(THE\) Young Universities Summit](#), QUT will be hosting a workshop titled *Big Data Analytics: Transforming university business* on Tuesday 4 April 2017

This masterclass will focus on how analytics can be applied to large, complex or novel data, enabling universities to be clever and successful in their decision-making, strategy development and transformation processes. The event is ideal for strategists, analysts and senior staff with decision-making responsibilities.

*Speakers*

- Distinguished Professor Kerrie Mengersen, Professor of Statistics and Australian Laureate Fellow, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia
- Duncan Ross, Data and Analytics Director, TES Global, London, United Kingdom

- Alexander Nebel, Deputy Head Budget and Planning, EPFL, Lausanne, Switzerland

To register for this workshop please use this [link](#) and follow the prompts to register for the *Pre-summit workshops only*.

### **Campus Review's Futureproof 2017**

**16 May 2017, Sydney, Australia**

*Engage – Influence – Innovate.*

### **AIR Forum**

**May 20 – June 2, Washington DC, United States**

The Forum, the annual conference for the Association for Institutional Research, is the world's largest gathering of higher education professionals in institutional research, effectiveness, assessment, planning and related fields. The four-day event features more than 300 educational sessions and an Exhibit Hall showcasing the latest tools and services for these higher education fields

More information on [Forum webpage](#).

### **EduTECH International Congress & Expo**

**8-9 June, Sydney, Australia**

EduTECH is the LARGEST education event in Asia-Pac and the Southern Hemisphere consisting of one large exhibition with eight parallel conferences, and eight pre-event masterclasses.

More information:

<http://www.edutech.net.au/> and AAIR members might consider the Tertiary Education IT Leaders stream of the event <http://www.edutech.net.au/tertiary.html>

### **Bluenotes Americas 2017**

**1-4 August, 2017 The Brown Hotel Louisville, KY United States**

This year's *Bluenotes Americas Conference* theme is 'Higher Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Using Data to Respond to Opportunities and Challenges'. A three-day conference to connect, share expertise, and learn from best practices.

### **EAIR 2017**

**3-6 September, 2017**

[EAIR](#) is the The European Association for Institutional Research (International association for higher education researchers, practitioners, managers and policy-makers). In 2017 the conference will be titled: "Under pressure? Higher education institutions coping with multiple

challenges". There will be eight major tracks: governance and management, teaching and learning, quality management, strategy and strategising, professionals, performance and assessment, funding and regional innovation.

### SEAAIR 2017 Annual Conference

6-8 September 2017

*Theme: ASEAN Higher Education at the Crossroad: Challenges, Changes, Capacities, and Capabilities*

From networking with peers to presentation sessions by leading experts in the field, the annual conference is the must attend event for academics, educators, researchers and practitioners in higher education.

### Special Coverage - AAIR Regional Dinner Meeting, Sydney

It's 2026 and universities have ceased to exist, at least in the traditional sense. 'Is that possible?' you wondered. Tony Nolan believes it is. Probably more than any of us would like to believe though, for selfish reasons.

Tony Nolan OAM is the Innovation Officer at the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), where he has been for the past 14 years. His main roles within the ATO relate to data science and intelligence gathering and analysis. He is also the developer of the cohort analysis digital profiling technique, which is a combination of digital hash scores and relativity transformations using a system of systems approach. How is this relevant or transferrable to us university statisticians, institutional researchers, business intelligence developers and data analysts? With that curiosity in mind, a bunch of us went to find out at the AAIR Regional Dinner meeting in Sydney, one Wednesday evening in February.

Thus began a night filled with interesting conversations, inspiring talks, intellectual debates and intelligence sharing amongst, well, fellow university statisticians, institutional researchers, business intelligence developers and data analysts. Tony posed the 2026 question to us at the beginning of his talk, and asked if any of us have projected student load planning to 2026 already. The underlying point is, of course, not whether we have or have not, but that there may not be a necessity to project to 2026 anymore, as traditional universities will have morphed into different organisations by then. Sure, such concept is by no means a recent one, and many have

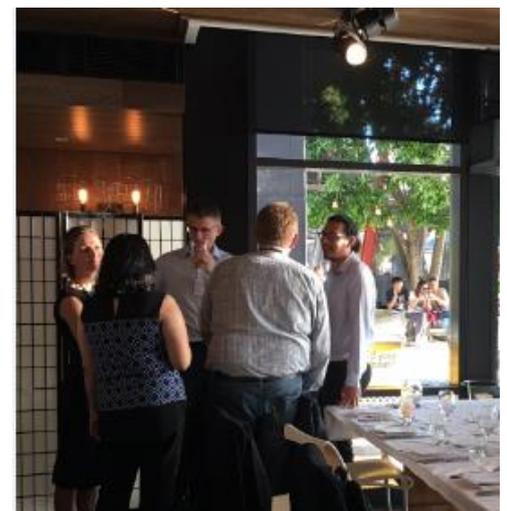
predicted the way technology will (or has) fundamentally disrupted higher education. Just recently, Dr Ken Coates, Canada Research Chair in Regional Innovation at the University of Saskatchewan also discussed the uprising of specialised, boutique institutions replacing traditional universities by 2050 in a [podcast](#) with Michelle Grattan AO from The Conversation.

Whether it's 2026 or 2050, one thing is becoming increasingly more certain: the rise of the non-traditional students. And if domestic, undergraduate, full-time, on campus, 18–21 year olds are [no longer your average student cohort](#), what does that disruption mean to our normal load pattern predictions and modelling forecasts? This is where, perhaps, cohort analysis using open source datasets could assist for your strategic, operational and tactical planning purposes. It helps you understand who your students are—their behavioural patterns and choices—through data frequency and data foot printing. This, in turn, enables you to predict student profiles going forward, based on various scenarios impacted by internal and external changes.

Tony believes in the inclusivity of all data, and that 'data is the new water in the digital age.' That is, data is everywhere and one should never take one's data for granted. Data exists in two states at the same time: data and metadata. Tony uses six data pillars to build an enhanced dataset where you use as many variables as you can.

Tony has a gift of making very complex systems and data science processes sound simple and easy to produce. But any attempt to predict the (accuracy of the) future, connecting dots and seeing interrelationships between elements, with or without the help of statistical computing systems, is no easy feat and probably won't happen tomorrow.

Having said that, Tony's talk was inspirational and left us feeling motivated to do more. To look at data we don't always or currently look at, think outside the box to include different data, analyse datasets using data patterns, anticipate our students' needs and identify emerging behaviours ahead of the curve. If we can do all of these, then hopefully by 2026 universities will still exist, even if not in their traditional forms.



## Institutional Researcher's Corner

### Five questions with David Collings, Edith Cowan University



#### What is your job title?

Survey Manager

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

Based in a planning and performance unit, I oversee a range of survey related activities. My unit looks after all the key surveys from internal unit/teaching evaluations to national benchmarking-oriented survey projects such as QILT, ISB, or those conducted with UA.

We assist people with advice on survey design, methodology, reporting and interpretation, and will often conduct survey work on their behalf. As owners of the survey policy, we have a central role in coordinating the core surveys along with the more ad-hoc survey requests, and seek to keep a level of control over the extent to which students (and to some extent staff) are being asked to complete questionnaires.

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

The ambitious QILT project. Many of us are still getting to grips with the nature of the instruments and data. In the employability space, methodological issues still require addressing. More broadly, there are clear signs that people are looking at the value proposition of HE qualifications. QILT is attempting to deal with concepts of underemployment and job relevance. But while this value proposition aspect of HE is being pushed, I wonder if the focus on employment KPIs might be at the expense of other, less tangible benefits of a well-educated population. I think there's a

concern that much institutional research in the student experience/outcomes space is primarily feeding the marketing beast and reinforcing institutional competition and individual economic imperatives, rather than broader social goals.

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

In terms of student experience, as the continuous monitoring and benchmarking imperative cranks up, the demands on students to be providing regular feedback are increasing. One of the concerns with this is that we may end up relying on more shallow feedback, collected more regularly.

With increasing demands on students to be supplying feedback, perhaps the way to reduce burden is to shorten questionnaires. The logical extension is a single like/dislike button. And with attempts to reduce the time/effort involved, response rates may improve at the expense of quality of response. For example, a decline in the proportion of students who actually provide comments when surveyed about their units/teachers.

So perhaps a future priority should be to guard against a dashboard-driven oversimplification of evaluating student experience.

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

The AAIR Newsletter, of course. And the occasional good old moan to other survey managers in the sector - and my team who do all the work.

## Call for contributions

### AAIR Newsletter Issue 4, April 2017

Again, we encourage our members to take this short [survey](#) about the monthly newsletter and your information needs as a member.

**Take the Newsletter Survey**

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 mid-April. Please send your contributions to the [editor@aaair.org.au](mailto:editor@aaair.org.au) by **Tuesday 11 April 2017**.



Monica Chen and Tracy Creagh  
AAIR e-Newsletter Editors