



## Australasian Association for Institutional Research

Electronic Newsletter Editor: Rob Sheehan [rob@sharpwords.com.au](mailto:rob@sharpwords.com.au)

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### Monthly e-Newsletter – December 2008

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#### EDITORIAL OF SORTS

Well, there you go – 2008 done and dusted. What a doozy! Education under review at all levels, innovation, student services, ERA, research funding.

The Bradley Review will come along just in time for Christmas so forget the holiday novel. You might ask for a highlighter and a thick wad of post-it flags instead.

Thanks for your readership, contributions and feedback during the course of the year.

Welcome to new AAIR members who have joined following the AAIR Forum last month.

Subject to space and relevance to members, the newsletter can run job vacancies and items on upcoming events. And always keen to include items you think will be of interest to others.

Please feel free to contact me by email: [rob@sharpwords.com.au](mailto:rob@sharpwords.com.au)

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#### **The 2008 AAIR Forum was a winner!**

Many thanks to Dave Marr, Chair of the 2008 Forum Organising Committee, Committee members, the ANU Statistical Services team, and the redoubtable Andrea and Brigitte from Leishman Associates, our conference organisers.

Forum papers/presentations are already accessible on the AAIR website:  
<http://www.aair.org.au/2008Papers/index.htm>

#### **And now for 2009 ...**

The 2009 Forum will be held in Adelaide from 11-13 November. The Organising Committee brings together people from UniSA, Uni of Adelaide, and Flinders, under the leadership of Andrea Matulick from UniSA.

Our 2009 theme is:

*Turning water into wine:  
Institutional research as an essential  
ingredient in strategic decision-making for  
tertiary education.*

## PLACES TO GO – THINGS TO DO

### **Universities Australia Higher Education Conference 4-6 March, 2009 Hotel Realm, Canberra**

I'm not sure how we are going to fit everything in next March. The Big Skills Conference and the Australian Higher Education Congress (see below) are all jostling for your attention, too. Perhaps we should all take a month off.

Anyway, UA reckons this will be the premier forum for the sector. The Deputy PM, the Minister for Innovation, Denise Bradley, Peter Noonan and Margaret Sheil are all gracing the stage, along with a conclave of VCs.

The conference themes are diverse: learning and teaching, innovation, international education, social inclusion, community engagement, and more besides. This one will cost you \$1650 for two days – extra for the bibs and bobs. The third day, at additional cost, will be given over to the Academies and other groups in the HE sector.

Here's the brochure:

[http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/policies\\_programs/conference/IHEC-March2009.pdf](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/policies_programs/conference/IHEC-March2009.pdf)

### **BIG Skills Conference**

**2-5 March 2009**

**Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre at Darling Harbour**

Luckily it's a quick trip down the highway from Canberra to Darling Harbour for the BIG Skills Conference. It's a trip that the Deputy PM and Denise Bradley are making, so why not you, too?

The program really is huge – comprehensive you might say. Speakers from all over the planet – enough keynotes to strangle a butcherbird. And no stone on the skills pathway is left unturned: everything from innovation and entrepreneurship to climate change and professional development.

DEEWR is putting on the turn, and your three conference days will cost you \$1500 including the bibs and bobs – cheaper if you early bird:  
<http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/17EA2DC8-A9CC-4283-AE25-C5F3EF8BA667/24751/08241VETBIGskillsconferenceprogram.pdf>

### **Australian Higher Education Congress**

**24-26 March**

**Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre at Darling Harbour**

The conference theme is 'Transforming education'. A two day event, with an optional third day on Marketing your University. The list of speakers includes John Dawkins on the AQF, Peter Godfrey from Engineers Australia, Martin Riordan from TAFE Australia, and another conclave of VCs. You can tuck into Bologna, what an Australian version of a systems governance model might look like, remaking the MBA, making the student experience a good one, managing change.

The two days will cost you \$1754.50, or less if you early bird. The extra day on marketing is a tick under a grand. Brochure:

[http://www.acevents.com.au/education2009/pdf/Education\\_Congress\\_2009\\_Brochure-2.pdf](http://www.acevents.com.au/education2009/pdf/Education_Congress_2009_Brochure-2.pdf)

### **Association of Pacific RIM Universities**

**Doctoral Students Conference**

**6-10 July 2009**

**Kyoto University, Japan**

This is the tenth Doctoral Students Conference – the link to the conference details isn't up yet, but you can check back on other conferences at:  
[http://www.apruds.org/\\_mgxroot/page\\_10730.html](http://www.apruds.org/_mgxroot/page_10730.html)

### **Second International Conference on Teaching and Learning**

**November 16-18 2009**

**Crown Plaza Riverside Hotel, Kuching, Sarawak**

A/Professor Dr. Saw Sor Heoh from INTI University College let us know about this one at the AAIR Forum in Canberra. INTI is hosting the conference which is themed 'Achieving educational excellence through student centred approach'. We're a long way out, so no confirmed program yet, but the conference topics will include instructional strategies and technologies, e-learning, assessment and more besides.

Conference cost is \$USD350 for early birds – I quail at offering an Aussie or NZ dollar conversion just at present. You'd want to stay on a bit and check out Borneo, I imagine. Here are the details:  
<http://ictl.intimal.edu.my/>

## IT ISN'T OVER YET ...

A shard from the time of Tiananmen, 4 June 1988:

At dawn on June 4 China Radio announced that the army had "pacified a counterrevolutionary riot" during the night. I tuned in to the Voice of America and the Taiwan radio station for details. Unable to go back to sleep, I got up and explored the [Jiaotong University] campus on my bicycle. The student-controlled PA system was spreading the news of the bloodbath, protest posters were fluttering, and students were gathering on the playing fields to march into town. In preparation to join them I ran home and put on a white headband; then I wrote AIM YOUR GUNS HERE on a piece of paper and had my wife pin it to my chest. ...

The following morning, June 5, I drafted a protest poster and then headed for the store to buy paper and a calligraphy brush. On the way I ran into ... a few other faculty members who helped me finish making the poster. We took it to the department office, where we read it aloud and collected faculty signatures. Then we posted it on the notice board at the campus gates. [Fellow faculty members] made copies and distributed them widely.

- *Confessions: an innocent life in Communist China*, Kang Zhengguo, trans. Susan Wilf. Norton and Company, New York, 2007, excerpts from pp. 368-370.

Education isn't a recipe for the easy life. It's worth keeping in mind that just being an educator in some nations is to invite the minatory attention of state and non-state actors alike.

As a reminder of how dicey it can be, you could read the five pages of *Education under attack: a global study on targeted political and military violence against education staff, students, teachers, union and government officials, and educational institutions*. It was published last year by UNESCO: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001505/150548e.pdf>

## NEWSLETTER NOTES

### **1. NATSEM report**

The University of Canberra's National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling has done some neat work for us on how individuals and households come to grips with paying off HECS debt. *What price the clever country?: The costs of tertiary education in Australia* indicates what the benefit is over time in terms of higher income gained from a university education. Lots of interesting charts. As HECS-style loans enter the VET arena, there are useful prompts to thinking about what that will mean for VET learners. 36 pages of good information:  
[http://media.corporate-ir.net/media\\_files/irol/21/219073/infocus/21nov.pdf](http://media.corporate-ir.net/media_files/irol/21/219073/infocus/21nov.pdf)

### **2. Get primed**

Ako Aotearoa, NZ's National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, is progressively developing an E-Primer series. Essentially, a series of documents that looks at the theory and the practice of deploying e-learning strategies. Nice practical stuff in the two I've read. There will be five in all, with three now available online:

- e-learning in context
- e-education and faculty
- designing for e-learning.

You can tell a teacher wrote these:

<http://akoatearoa.ac.nz/projects/eprimer-series>

### **3. Tweaks speak**

The South Australian Division of Engineers Australia released in November *Technically speaking: Confronting the challenges facing science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and promotion*. The Division reprises the profession's anxiety about where the next generation of engineers will come from as it offers to work with the state government on a long term fix. The proposed fix to the problem is often focussed on action in secondary schools. This report reaches deeper down into the school system and suggests that a lot of groundwork has to be laid in primary schools. The report also advocates that engineering needs to be spoken of as often as science. For more:

[http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file\\_uuid=889FB3EA-EF49-6AF2-8F61-CDBBE87477EB&siteName=ieaust](http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uuid=889FB3EA-EF49-6AF2-8F61-CDBBE87477EB&siteName=ieaust)

## **4. Educating archis**

Seems highly appropriate to follow the engineers with something about architects, who delight in throwing curly ones at engineers. The ALTC (what once was Carrick) supported an investigation into architectural education in Oz, the result of which is a two volume document titled *Understanding architectural education in Australasia*. I can't seem to download volume 1, but I have investigated *Volume 2: Results and recommendations*. It's a bit of a mix of the uncomfortable and the upbeat. Morale, we read is 'fragile' in architecture schools for a variety of reasons with a longish history. On the other hand, the 17 recommendations seem pretty soundly directed at getting things sorted out. Overcrowding of the curriculum comes in for a serve, and that will be a familiar plaint at all levels of education. If someone doesn't set priorities no-one will ever finish primary school. So Volume 2 is here:

[http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants\\_db1\\_architecture\\_vol2\\_oct08.pdf](http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/webdav/site/carricksite/users/siteadmin/public/grants_db1_architecture_vol2_oct08.pdf)

## **5. PowerPoint 'papers'**

Online you'll find a multitude of PowerPoint presentations from the OECD conference on Outcomes of HE: The quality, relevance and impact of higher education, held in September. I've had a look at a couple – some are great, and some probably were great except you can't tell from most PowerPoint presentations. You can't beat a paper, I reckon. Anyway, take your chances:

[http://www.oecd.org/document/53/0,3343,en\\_2157136\\_1\\_38973579\\_41399797\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,1.00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/53/0,3343,en_2157136_1_38973579_41399797_1_1_1_1,1.00.html)

## **6. The word on postgrads**

Papers are now online from the 2008 Quality in Postgraduate Research Conference. Some are abstracts only. You can access conference papers from way back at this site:

<http://www.qpr.edu.au/papersdatabase.php?orderBy=author&byYear=2008>

## **7. Tips for supervisors**

Sometimes a 'how to' tip is just the ticket. Can't replace the reflective and thoughtful approach, but can be a valuable prompt or reminder. So with that caveat, *The Scientist* magazine offers 'Mentoring Magic – How to be an effective mentor: tips from two highly successful principal investigators':

<http://www.the-scientist.com/2008/12/1/70/1/>

## **8. Redesigning the AQF**

John Dawkins, newly minted as chair of the AQF Council, gives us a glimpse of what might be in store for the AQF in his address to a conference run by the Martin Institute in November.

Dawkins observes: 'The questions for enhancement of the AQF include the appropriateness of the inclusion of strategies for:

- a credit or articulation framework including links between qualifications and parts of qualifications
- the promotion and removal of barriers to effective credit arrangements
- the development of processes to benchmark and report on credit
- the removal of barriers that inhibit "coherent post-secondary provision" and transferability between sectors
- transparent and objective recognition and credit transfer.'

So get ready:

[http://www.mihelm.unimelb.edu.au/chartingnewterrain/conf\\_docs/Paper-%20A%20New%20Terrain%20-%20John%20Dawkins.pdf](http://www.mihelm.unimelb.edu.au/chartingnewterrain/conf_docs/Paper-%20A%20New%20Terrain%20-%20John%20Dawkins.pdf)

## **9. Linking QA and qualification frameworks**

ENQA – the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – has released *Quality assurance and qualifications frameworks*. It contains half a dozen papers that reflect on the experience of linking QA and qualifications frameworks in various parts of Europe. Quite a patchwork; lots of references to a bewildering array of bureaucracies and processes.

The Hungarian contributor notes, perhaps ruefully: '... the main elements of the Bologna process, the Bachelor and Master programme structure, and internal quality assurance are now implemented at all Hungarian higher education institutions. The details, such as the significance of student involvement in education and quality assurance processes, and the real meaning of output-based, learning-based education, are conceptual questions that require time to be fully understood and accepted.'

So there you have it; the devil and the purpose are in the detail. Read up:

<http://www.enqa.eu/files/Quality%20Assurance%20and%20Qualification%20Frameworks.pdf>

## **10. National numbers**

I'm sure there were Aussie AAIRies lined up on the ABS website at 11.29am (Canberra time), on Wednesday 26 November waiting for the ABS embargo to lift on the latest instalment of *Education and work*. Here are all the high level numbers, from school to postgrad:

[http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/656CB57FE56C0491CA25750C000EF65B/\\$File/62270\\_may%202008.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/656CB57FE56C0491CA25750C000EF65B/$File/62270_may%202008.pdf)

## **11. ideaCHECK**

The Melbourne Business School has produced this year a series of short explorations – ideaCHECKs – of the ideas that sit behind public reports from governments, industry bodies, and others. Just taking the temperature on how the grey literature stacks up against the academic literature. There are ideaCHECKs on, for example, the Garnaut report and the Dusseldorf Skills Forum paper on green collar jobs. You might be particularly interested in the one released in September on the Cutler Review report – there are links to the suite of ideaCHECKs here:

<http://www.mbs.edu/index.cfm?objectid=9A0FEBDD-5056-AD5A-237DFAA65F63C4CC>

## **12. Sessional/contract teaching in the US**

The American Federation of Teachers – Higher Education Division has released *Reversing course: the troubled state of academic staffing and a path forward*. It caused me to think again about the significant role that sessional and fixed term contact teachers play in Australian education – from primary schools onwards. The whys and wherefores are oh so complicated. But they do a helluva job and the question really is whether we are doing a helluva job in supporting them.

The RED report published by ALTC earlier this year suggests we could do a tad better. RED reckoned that 40-50% of higher education teaching in Oz is done by sessionals. *Reversing course reports* '... a dramatic growth in fixed-term full- and part-time instructional jobs without tenure. About 70 percent of the people teaching in college today hold these temporary jobs ... in the case of part-time/adjunct faculty members, contingent instructors receive disproportionately low pay and inadequate employment benefits such as pensions and health insurance.' More:

[http://www.aftface.org/storage/face/documents/reversing\\_course.pdf](http://www.aftface.org/storage/face/documents/reversing_course.pdf)

## **13. Boundary hopping**

A US mob called the Consortium on Fostering Interdisciplinary Inquiry held a conference in mid-November which sounded pretty interesting. Haven't yet found any papers or conference reports, but if you track anything down, let me know:

[https://www.myu.umn.edu/metadot/index.pl?id=15624\\_06](https://www.myu.umn.edu/metadot/index.pl?id=15624_06)

## **14. How much?**

The Center for International Higher Education at Boston College gives us *International comparison of academic salaries: an exploratory study*. I've just scanned it – doesn't really push my buttons. The charts you probably want to look at are on pages 21 and 22. They show that Australian academics come in third (in the basket of countries included) for entry level salaries behind Canada and the US – NZ academics run eighth. Aussies are fourth for overall average monthly salaries behind Saudi Arabia, Canada and the US, with NZers sixth:

[http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/soe/cihe/salary\\_report.pdf](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/salary_report.pdf)

## **15. What happened in US HE this year?**

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education has released *Measuring up 2008: the national report card on higher education*. Came out on December 3, so I haven't done any more than read the headlines which say:

- modest improvements
- persistent disparities
- eroding global competitiveness.

You might want to delve a little more deeply. Tell you what – email me a summary by 19 December and I'll send you a Chrissie card. Here it is:

[http://measuringup2008.highereducation.org/print/NCP\\_PHEMUNationalRpt.pdf](http://measuringup2008.highereducation.org/print/NCP_PHEMUNationalRpt.pdf)

## **16. What's on the UK HE horizon?**

John Denham, UK Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, asked a series of individuals and organisations to contribute papers and thinkpieces on where higher education might go. There are nine such documents now available, and I've done 2/9 of the reading – one by Paul Ramsden on teaching and the student experience, and one from Hefce called 'Understanding higher education institutional performance'. Links to the nine are here:

<http://www.dius.gov.uk/policy/HE-debate.html>

## 17. Ranking

You might enjoy an excursion into *Higher education rankings – robustness issues and critical assessment: how much confidence can we have in higher education rankings?* Of course the answer to the question is, not bloody much. And so, I gather, the European Commission is going to develop its own ranking system. Yep – another one. This report considers what a better methodology might look like, which seems to be a hybrid of the THES and the Jiaotong.

But it's a paradox, isn't it? We know a one size fits all ranking system can't work, but we have to have a one size fits all ranking system anyway. I suppose we may hope that the European Commission's system does a better job of representing the continental universities.

Now if I understand it aright, the report is published by Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning, which is part of the Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen which is part of the Joint Research Centre which is an organ of the European Commission. Thankfully, the url is shorter than its bureaucratic home:  
<http://crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Publications/CRELL%20Research%20Papers/EUR23487.pdf>

## 18. On message

I'm often struck by how little well-informed people outside the education sector know about the big issues in HE and VET, especially HE. It often seems to me that we are talking to ourselves and then assuming because we've had a good chinwag that everyone else is informed. The messages aren't really cutting through. I didn't even find it extraordinary when the *Campus Review* reported that the chair of a Parliamentary Committee set up just a moment ago in NSW to look at university governance was unaware that governance had just been reviewed, and didn't know that there was a Bradley Review or that it was looking at governance. More extraordinary that we might think they should have known.

So a good move by Universities Australia to establish the UA Media Awards. A good move as long as the sector works out how to explain itself in accessible terms to the broader publics it needs to reach. The National Press Club carries an item about the awards, which will be announced at UA's conference in March next (see page 2):  
<http://npc.org.au/notice-board/304.html>

## 19. Engaging universities

The UTS Shopfront and the engagingly acronymed CURL (Center for Urban Research and Learning) at Loyola University, Chicago, have launched *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*. Free and online: <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/ijcre/index>

## 20. Did you miss this one?

You've probably got a bad case of review rash and policy fever if you're in Oz education. It may be that the contagion will spread to NZ with a new government ensconced. Nonetheless, you might want to scratch around *ABC and SBS – Towards a digital future: discussion paper*. Released in October, views are sought on many questions about the role of our national broadcasters.

Chapter 4 is titled Education, skills and productivity. There are three questions posed at the end of the chapter:

- Will there be a role for national broadcasting in education and training in a 2020 media and communications environment?
- Is there likely to be public benefit in a national digital education channel and how could such a channel be constructed to provide for cost-effective delivery of educational and training content?
- Would there be a public benefit in the national broadcasters playing a more significant role in the vocational education and training environment, beyond their current activity?

Good questions, posed in a sometimes limited context that might sell the possibilities a bit short. Maybe you'd like to widen the view. You'll find the Discussion Paper here:

[http://www.dbcde.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/87674/0043002001\\_ABC-SBS\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.dbcde.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/87674/0043002001_ABC-SBS_WEB.pdf)

## 21. I am Master of all I survey

The LH Martin Institute has launched its Master of Tertiary Education Management with a first intake planned to start studies in March next – first round applications close on 19 December. Be good to see AAIRies signing up. Program outline is here: [http://www.mihelm.unimelb.edu.au/award\\_programme/MTEM\\_outline\\_2009\\_21nov08.pdf](http://www.mihelm.unimelb.edu.au/award_programme/MTEM_outline_2009_21nov08.pdf)

(Actually, the poem starts 'I am monarch of all I survey' – apologies to Bill Cowper:  
<http://www.bartleby.com/106/160.html>)

## **22. Way too hard**

Let's congratulate Latrobe and a range of VET providers on sorting out articulation agreements so that VET graduates have clarity about their credit standing for Latrobe programs. Other unis and VET providers have laboured at this, too. That it should be so time-consuming for institutions is disappointing. That it should be so hard for learners moving between sectors is unforgiveable. Let's hope the expectations are met that the Bradley Review will bring sense to pathways, assisted by the proposed 'strengthening' of the AQF. For Latrobe's good works, go here:  
[http://www.latrobe.edu.au/articulation/assets/downloads/2008\\_10\\_01\\_existing\\_tafe\\_articulation\\_agreements.pdf](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/articulation/assets/downloads/2008_10_01_existing_tafe_articulation_agreements.pdf)

## **23. VET's cornucopia**

We are still digesting the mighty meal of VET reform before us. It's pretty clear there is another course or two to come. An inkling of what might be dished up is in *Learning for jobs: OECD reviews of vocational education and training – AUSTRALIA*. For example, the report reckons training packages are cumbersome and need to be fitter for purpose:  
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/27/11/41631383.pdf>

You can keep tabs on what's happening in VET elsewhere in the OECD membership. Reports in the same series are available here (with more to come) on Hungary, Norway and Sweden:  
[http://www.oecd.org/document/42/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_39263238\\_40344106\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/42/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_40344106_1_1_1_1,00.html)

## **24. Teaching and business**

The teaching profession and business have long been worlds apart. The Business Council of Australia (BCA) has put conceptual effort into bringing the two together. Julia Gillard has seen promise in the convergence of orbits and proposed that top graduates across the disciplines take a turn in the classroom before embarking on a corporate career. It'll be tricky – teacher training for one, promises of delayed corporate careers for another. But Gillard has put money down through the COAG school funding agreement, and the BCA has backed it. I think we should give this a red hot go.

Gillard:

<http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/NewPathwayintoTeaching.htm>

BCA:

<http://www.bca.com.au/Content/101510.aspx>

## **25. Covering the education waterfront**

Reforms in VET are well advanced and HE is on the cusp of a makeover. The school sector is just as busy. On 24 November the Deputy PM delivered a speech at an Education Forum at Melbourne Docklands which was titled 'Leading transformational change in schools'. It's a pretty good summation of what the Feds have in mind: <http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/LeadingTransformationalChangeinSchools.htm>

## **26. Learning technologies at school**

HE and VET students arrive with expectations established in their school years about how ICT and learning fit together. Monash Uni's Centre for Educational Multimedia gives a taste of what those expectations are likely to be in case studies published in *Exemplar schools: using innovative learning technologies*. Haven't read it all, but enough to know it's perilous for HE and VET providers to ignore the advanced ICT pedagogies that are already a vibrant part of primary and secondary education. Worth a visit:  
[http://www.digitaleducationrevolution.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/76996B88-A7B3-40CC-AE33-444125A7D279/23977/exemplar\\_schools\\_report1.pdf](http://www.digitaleducationrevolution.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/76996B88-A7B3-40CC-AE33-444125A7D279/23977/exemplar_schools_report1.pdf)

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## **AAIR COMMITTEE**

Details of the new AAIR Committee will be included in the next edition of the newsletter.

Suffice to say for now that Josie Palermo from Deakin University is our new President.

We also welcome Bob Hall from the University of Canterbury to the Committee, so we now have better access to voices across The Ditch.

Our grateful thanks to Ivan Skaines, AAIR President for the past two years. Ivan now takes up the role of Immediate Past President.

A farewell and many thanks to Wendy Marchment from Griffith Uni, who steps down from the Committee after a long and valued contribution.

## **FOR THE PODDIES, VODDIES AND BLOGGIES**

### **2008 Boyer Lectures**

Rupert Murdoch is the Australian Broadcasting Commission's 2008 Boyer lecturer. The fourth in his series of six lectures is 'Fortune favours the smart'. In it, Murdoch pays out on our school education system, believing that it is nestled in the nineteenth century and ill serves the young and the nation. You can access the full series here:  
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/boyerlectures/default.htm>

### **Testing times**

Also from the ABC comes EdPod which collects interviews and commentary about education from across ABC radio programs. The 6 November edition explores the dark side of frequent school testing and comparative school reporting in Britain:  
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/edpod/stories/2008/2411563.htm>

### **Options**

Melbourne Uni's podcast, Up Close, departed from usual programming to ask Simon Marginson and Glyn Davis about the policy choices before higher education in Australia. The discussion is here, sandwiched twixt episodes 52 and 53:  
<http://upclose.unimelb.edu.au/>

### **MIT Mobile Web**

As the website has it: 'The MIT Mobile Web offers up-to-date information, optimized for different types of mobile devices. Find people, places, events, course news, shuttle schedules, and more.' I understand that MIT will make the system available for nix to other institutions:  
<http://mobi.mit.edu/about/>

### **Feisty views about learning now**

New VC at the Uni of Gloucestershire – Patricia Broadfoot – delivered a top Inaugural Lecture titled 'Learning for life: an educational agenda for the third millennium'. HE teaching practices are out of touch, she thinks. Change they must:  
<http://www.glos.ac.uk/pressreleases/Pages/vlecture.aspx>

I haven't listened to it, but am told the inaugural lecture by Professor Stephen Hill, titled 'The Archaeology of Learning', is good too. It's here:  
<http://www.glos.ac.uk/research/news/Pages/shillonline.aspx>

## **IT IS WRITTEN**

The following passage might have some resonances for trades teachers and teachers of music and performance arts. It's a father and son reflection, but you could as easily exchange those words for teacher and student:

What I do now, which I have never let anyone know, is I close my eyes whenever I have to do something practical apart from the daily chores everyone has, and then I picture how my father would have done it or how he actually did do it while I was watching him, and then I copy that until I fall into a proper rhythm, and the task reveals itself and grows visible, and that's what I have done for as long as I can remember, as if the secret lies in how the body behaves towards the task at hand, in a certain balance when you start, like hitting the board in a long jump and the early calculation of how much you need, or how little, and the mechanism that is always there in every kind of job; first one thing and then the other, in a context that is buried in each piece of work, in fact as if what you are going to do already exists in finished form, and what the body has to do when it starts to move is to draw aside a veil so it all can be read by the person observing. And the person observing is me, and the man I am watching, his movements and skills, is a man of barely forty, as my father was when I saw him for the last time when I was fifteen.

- Per Petterson, *Out stealing horses*,  
Vintage Books, London, 2006.