



**Monthly e-Newsletter – February 2009**

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**EDITORIAL OF SORTS**

I am flat and upset as I finish off this newsletter. Yesterday's devastating bushfires here in Victoria weigh heavily on my mind. While what we do from day to day remains important and urgent for learning, teaching and research, it seems a little less important and urgent today. As in Queensland's rising waters, much has been lost here in life, livelihoods and property. We have much to make up. As I wondered what I might usefully do from the sanctuary of suburban Melbourne, this long list of offers of support reminded me that common decency counts for a lot almost all the time: <http://blogs.abc.net.au/victoria/2009/02/offer-help---or.html>

The March edition of the newsletter may come to you later than usual as I'll be away from base in the first week of March which is ordinarily when I'd be seriously putting together the patchwork of this little tome.

I look forward to your feedback and contributions during 2009. 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)

**JOB OPPORTUNITY**

**GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY**

**Business Intelligence Analyst  
(2 positions) -  
Nathan campus**

Griffith University is searching for Business Intelligence Analysts.

Working at HEW7/8 level, the role is for someone who can interact with the wider University community to gather requirements, develop reports with a heavy emphasis on end-user involvement, and perform quality assurance activities, again with a user focus in mind.

The role isn't technical as such, although some aptitude with Business Intelligence reporting and query tools is highly desirable. The role focuses more on outward facing activities involving the wider University community. It may include some training activities.

While in-depth knowledge of tertiary education concepts isn't a mandatory criterion, such knowledge would certainly be well considered. That, or the demonstrated ability to rapidly acquire it.

Why come to Griffith? Among many other attractions, there's those that tertiary sector employees are familiar with (e.g. 17% superannuation), an emphasis in the work unit on work/life balance, a challenging role with huge potential for personal development, a fabulously leafy physical environment at Nathan campus, the Queensland lifestyle, and SUNSHINE.

The job has been advertised on Seek: <http://www.seek.com.au/users/apply/index.ascx?Sequence=48&PageNumber=1&JobID=14814273>

**Applications close February 20.**

## **SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY IS SEEKING INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH INTERNSHIPS IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES**

Marilee Bresciani from San Diego State University has asked us to ask you about the prospects of hosting interns undertaking an MA in Education with a specialisation in Student Affairs. Internships need to be at least 135 on-site hours. Marilee's note is reproduced below.

*Greetings AAIR!*

My name is Marilee Bresciani, Associate Professor of Postsecondary Education Leadership at San Diego State University (SDSU).

I coordinate the Masters in Student Affairs/Services in higher education (see: [http://interwork.sdsu.edu/student\\_affairs/](http://interwork.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/) for details) and the doctorate in postsecondary educational leadership at SDSU (see [http://interwork.sdsu.edu/eddleaders/community\\_college/purpose.html](http://interwork.sdsu.edu/eddleaders/community_college/purpose.html)).

I am writing to inquire about your interest in working with me to design internships for our masters and doctorate students at your university.

Our graduate academic programs enroll students who study administrative practices in higher education. In particular, these students focus their research and practice around identifying academic and student support services, policies, and processes that contribute to students' academic success. In other words, these students intend to learn about good practices for student success so that they can improve the designs of programs that support student success at their own institutions. These students' motivation and desire to excel tend to create mutually beneficial relationships on the campuses where they intern.

Students are interested in completing their internships during the period from late May to early August, the specific time for which can be arranged at the site supervisor's and student's convenience. Details of the internship requirements can be found at: [http://interwork.sdsu.edu/student\\_affairs/current\\_students/Internship\\_Opportunities.html](http://interwork.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/current_students/Internship_Opportunities.html)

The internship requires at least 135 on-site contact hours and we facilitate the learning via a hybrid lecture course. The internships are typically not paid, although those seeking to intern in Australia would welcome subsidized housing costs and any other travel aid possible. However, such subsidization and aid are not required for their participation.

If you have any questions or would be interested in discussing internship opportunities at your university, please:

- call me on 01-619-594-8318, or
- e-mail me at [mbrescia@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:mbrescia@mail.sdsu.edu).

I appreciate your consideration and time.

Best always,

Marilee

## PLACES TO GO – THINGS TO DO

### **AVETRA 2009 – 12th Annual Conference** **16-17 April 2009** **Crowne Plaza Hotel, Coogee Beach, Sydney**

The conference theme is 'Aligning participants, policy and pedagogy: tractions and tensions in VET research':

[http://www.avetra.org.au/annual\\_conference/index.shtml](http://www.avetra.org.au/annual_conference/index.shtml)

### **2009 AIR Annual Forum** **May 30-June 3** **Marriott Marquis Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia**

The Forum of the Association for Institutional Research attracts around 1500 delegates. Join the crowd. This year's theme is 'World class institutional research'. Not much detail yet, but keep checking:

<http://www.airweb.org/?page=1324>

### **AUQF 2009** **1-3 July 2009** **Alice Springs Convention Centre**

AUQF 2009 has lighted on the theme of 'Internal and external quality assurance: tensions and synergies'. The call for contributions closes on 13 March, and registration opens on 2 March. Book a seat – there'll be lots to discuss on the QA front this year:

<http://www.auqa.edu.au/auqf/2009/>

### **Community Services & Health Industry Skills Council: 2009 Annual Convention** **21-22 October 2009** **Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre**

The convention's central theme is 'Excellence, inspiration and action in training delivery and workforce development'. Sub themes are:

- Skills evolution and skill development
- Growing partnerships
- Rural and remote
- Making the difference – innovation and ideas in action.

Abstracts are due on 25 February. Conference website is here:

[https://www.cshisc.com.au/index.php?option=com\\_events&task=view\\_detail&Itemid=36&agid=19&year=2009&month=10&day=21](https://www.cshisc.com.au/index.php?option=com_events&task=view_detail&Itemid=36&agid=19&year=2009&month=10&day=21)

## **Fifth Annual National Symposium on Student Retention**

**September 30-October 2, 2009**  
**Buffalo, New York**

Rosemary Hayes (Executive Director of the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) at the University of Oklahoma) asked that we pass on a couple of messages.

First there is the detail about the National Symposium on Student Retention which is posted on the CSRDE website:

<http://csrde.ou.edu/web/symposium/index.html>

If you have any questions you can also email the Consortium at: [csrde@ou.edu](mailto:csrde@ou.edu)

Rosemary wrote that:

Institutional Researchers were the founders of the CSRDE and continue to serve as our advisors and institutional representatives. Our symposium has a strong emphasis on current research and evidence based strategies.

Rosemary's message continued:

The CSRDE presented the CSRDE Institutional Research Leadership in Student Retention Award this year to Jaclyn Cameron of DePaul University. Jaclyn is a research analyst at DePaul's Office of Institutional Planning and Research. Her paper was chosen from those presented at the 2008 National Symposium on Student Retention, for having best demonstrated the importance of institutional research to the field of student retention and success. Her paper, titled 'The attack of the killer courses: how course taking patterns affect retention', concerns specific courses and subjects that can be detrimental to student success. The award included a plaque and a \$1,000 prize. The paper was also published in the Proceedings of the 4th Annual National Symposium on Student Retention.

Thank you for your assistance. Hope to see you at the AIR Forum and at the next National Symposium on Student Retention in September 2009.

Unfortunately, this edition of the newsletter arrives as the date for abstract submissions passes by.

## IT ISN'T OVER YET ...

Many happy returns to Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln, both turning 200 on 12 February.

Also, best wishes to Cambridge University which is pushing 800 this year:  
<http://www.800.cam.ac.uk/>

This time next year a set of Tassie triplets will be 12 months old. On 1 January these three were born in an important day for post-compulsory education:

- Tasmanian Academy:  
<http://www.academy.tas.edu.au/>
- Tasmanian Polytechnic:  
<http://www.polytechnic.tas.edu.au/index.html>
- Tasmanian Skills Institute:  
<http://www.skillsinstitute.com.au/index.html>

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## NEWSLETTER NOTES

### **1. UK uni and college info to go**

In your idle moments I guess you are pondering the Bradley Review's thoughts about models for delivering information to prospective students about university and college performance on a range of measures – Section 4.1.6 in case you've momentarily forgotten exactly where it is. I figure we can do a helluva lot better than the Going to Uni website:

<http://www.goingtouni.gov.au/>

You could extend your ponderings to the UK's Unistats, if you haven't already done so. Easy to navigate, easy to manage comparisons between institutions on a variety of measures, and if you are into the detail, an array of spreadsheets to download which carry data across the sector and for each institution:

<http://www.unistats.com/>

### **2. Lëtzebuenger Tractor Pulling Federatioun**

See, what happened was that I typed LTPF into Google and what came up was the Lëtzebuenger Tractor Pulling Federatioun (<http://www.ltpf.lu/>), which you'll be comforted to know is a member body of the European Tractor Pulling Committee.

What I was really chasing was the just released allocations (a tidy \$73m) under the Learning and

Teaching Performance Fund for 2009. Despite my surprising detour, I did reach my destination:  
[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher\\_education/policy\\_issues\\_reviews/key\\_issues/learning\\_teaching/ltpf/2009ltpf.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/learning_teaching/ltpf/2009ltpf.htm)

### **3. Taking a good look at yourself**

While we ponder what quality assurance in the Australian tertiary sector might look like in the none too distant future, AUQA is still with us and still offering us goodies. A recent addition to AUQA's suite of publications is *Self-review for higher education institutions*.

Part A, written by Robyn Adams (RMIT), is a pretty handy primer on what's in a self-review and how to step one out. There are links to good institutional resources on pp 23-24. While the target audience is non-self-accrediting institutions who are soon pitching up for audits, there's more than enough to reward any reader working up to a self-review. Part B is written by a bunch of folks from UQ and is titled 'Self-review in higher education: experiences from the University of Queensland'. I haven't read Part B yet so I've only got the title to tell you about at the moment.

<http://www.auqa.edu.au/files/publications/self-review%20for%20heis.pdf>

### **4. The French do have a word for it**

It isn't true that former President Bush once remarked to ex-PM Tony Blair, 'the problem with the French is they have no word for "entrepreneur".' Pity: nice line. Anyway, the European Commission has been exploring, through an action called Education and Training for Entrepreneurship, how well member countries develop entrepreneurial skillsets. A couple of reports have been produced that suggest the French have a pretty good handle on the word:

- *Entrepreneurship in higher education, especially within non-business studies*
- *Survey of entrepreneurship in higher education in Europe*.

You'll find them here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support\\_measures/training\\_education/](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/training_education/)

The EC has called for proposals by April to tackle the following:

- Establish a European workshop program for entrepreneurship professors in higher education to share knowledge and learn from practitioners

- Create a common on-line platform for entrepreneurship educators and related practitioners
- Create a European Entrepreneurship Educators Network
- Foster entrepreneurship in female graduates
- Foster the entrepreneurial mindsets of young people outside the educational environment
- Develop innovative, practice-based teaching material on entrepreneurship in higher ed.

So if your interest is in business education (and I'm sorry if you read this far and don't have any fondness for it!) it may be worth keeping an eye on who is doing what when the successful proposals are announced. Here's the invitation to submit: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/document.cfm?action=display&doc\\_id=1249&userservice\\_id=1&equest.id=0](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/document.cfm?action=display&doc_id=1249&userservice_id=1&equest.id=0)

## 5. Being over here

The Victorian government's Overseas Student Education Experience Taskforce dropped off its report just before Christmas. It looks at five issues (accommodation, student welfare and safety, employment, social inclusion, and quality and coordination of information provision). On each of these, the findings are that there's some good and some bad, and each issue is accompanied by a set of recommendations. And now, the report: <http://www.diird.vic.gov.au/corplivewr/assets/main/lib60069/victorian%20overseas%20student%20experience%20taskforce.pdf>

## 6. Thoroughly modern

You may have missed it, but the Australian Industrial Relations Commission has been toiling away at producing draft modern awards for priority industries, one of which is higher education. The modern awards are part of the machinery that will replace Work Choices and they seek to specify minimum conditions of employment. There are two draft modern awards for higher education. One for academic staff: <http://www.airc.gov.au/awardmod/awards/HEAS.pdf> ... and one for general staff: <http://www.airc.gov.au/awardmod/awards/HEGS.pdf>

## 7. Online trends

A 25 page report on trends in the use of online learning in the US. *Staying the course: online education in the United States, 2008* provides an

interesting snapshot of the online state of play and what might happen next. For example:

- higher fuel prices (I assume they'll go up again) are expected to increase online enrolments
- a plateau may have been reached among those institutions believing online education is a critical part of their long-term strategy
- interestingly, the report says 'Institutions believe that online will open up their enrollments to more students from outside of their normal service area; however, the reality is that this has not yet occurred in any large numbers'.

The report is here:

[http://sloanconsortium.org/publications/survey/pdf/staying\\_the\\_course.pdf](http://sloanconsortium.org/publications/survey/pdf/staying_the_course.pdf)

## 8. Brother, can you spare a dime?

The US National Bureau of Economic Research has released a Working Paper titled *Evaluating methods for evaluating instruction: the case of higher education*. Ordinarily I don't include items that aren't freely available for download. This one will cost \$US5 and couldn't bring myself to do it. But it's mighty tempting.

Here's the abstract: 'This paper develops an original measure of learning in higher education, based on grades in subsequent courses. Using this measure of learning, this paper shows that student evaluations are positively related to current grades but unrelated to learning once current grades are controlled. It offers evidence that the weak relationship between learning and student evaluations arises, in part, because students are unaware of how much they have learned in a course. The paper concludes with a discussion of easily-implemented, optimal methods for evaluating teaching.'

If you're all cashed up, here it is:

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w12844>

## 9. Take a haiku

A couple of economists at George Mason University in Virginia run a top blog called Marginal Revolution. One of these awfully liberal bloggers posted an entry in November 2007 that sports quite a few econometrics haiku. I thought I'd mentioned these a while ago, but on a quick check, apparently not. A diverting read: <http://www.marginalrevolution.com/marginalrevolution/2007/11/econometrics-ha.html>

## 10. Take a walk

A newsletter reader from Curtin suggested AAIRies might like to check out this paper: 'The cognitive benefits of interacting with nature' in *Psychological Science* 19(12), 1207-1212. The nub of it is that your capacities to cope, to problem solve and just to be pleasant are boosted by a wander in the woods, or even by an online visit to, say, a national park. Strolling around the city block isn't half as good an elixir. Makes perfect sense to me. You'll have to grab it online through your library.

## 11. Old men are always young enough to learn, with profit

That'll be Aeschylus, and it just seemed to fit here. In September last, Universities UK released a policy commentary called *Private universities and public funding: models and business plans*. A fascinating taster, an overview – just 15 pages. Naturally, as the advocate for public unis, UUK isn't too chuffed about the game plans of private providers, but that angle aside, worth a look: [http://bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/Policy\\_Commentary1.pdf](http://bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/Policy_Commentary1.pdf)

## 12. Don't forget to say ranks

It would hardly be an AAIR newsletter if I didn't mention rankings one way or another. The European University Association has set up a working group to consider:

- The impact of rankings and the extent to which they contribute to the quality of European higher education at institutional, national and European level
- From a university perspective, how to use existing examples of good practice to enhance institutional learning in respect of tools that allow institutions to assess the outcomes of their teaching and research activities
- At the policy level, how best to improve data provision at the university level to improve the quality of information in order to respond to the needs of different publics.

The working group will report in October. Here's the announcement: <http://www.eua.be/eua-news/view-item/article/747/>

## 13. Canada's innovation system

Canada's Institute for Research on Public Policy released, last October I think it was, *Connecting the dots between university research and industrial*

*innovation*. It struck me as a useful thing to be reading in the weeks before the Australian government responds to the innovation and higher education reviews. It comes in three parts – Jorge Niosi spends 14 pages explaining the Canadian innovation system, comparing its operation to other national systems and suggesting some improvements. The US, he notes, is not the best measuring stick. His emphasis on SMEs rang bells from the Oz perspective, observing that:

'... it is exceedingly difficult to coordinate the myriad research activities in universities with the everchanging technology needs of industry ... businesses are much better equipped to judge the commercial potential of university research, but they are unwilling to shoulder the financial risk of carrying it out. This is particularly true of SMEs. The social benefits of encouraging businesses to do so are potentially large and would justify government support.'

There is a blizzard of unfamiliar acronyms, but beyond that, it's a model of clarity. Niosi's piece is followed by two short pieces that respond to his analysis and propositions. Go here: <http://www.marsdd.com/Recommended-Resources/mainColumnParagraphs/00/document/connectingthedots-irpp-2008.pdf>

## 14. Innovating early

Cracking Ideas is a nifty UK website designed to get ten-year-olds thinking about innovation. The stars are those two champions of whimsical machinery, Wallace and Grommit: [http://www.crackingideas.com/index\\_1.html](http://www.crackingideas.com/index_1.html)

## 15. VET governance

There is some interesting reading amongst the the submissions made to Skills Australia's Discussion Paper, *Future governance arrangements for the national training system*.

On the question of whether VET governance is really as messy as it looks:

- TAFE Directors Australia's paper 'maintains that the skills needs of Australia are best met by fewer not more national bodies that are charged with providing high level strategic and policy advice'
- The Australian Council for Private Education and Training reckons that 'The current system of ISCs and State and Territory advisory arrangements

can at times, waste resources through duplication’.

- Services Skills Australia holds that ‘The isolated committee structures of the current governance framework have limited the system’s ability to respond to broader systemic issues ... the system lacks a coherent intelligence gathering framework that truly draws together a range of views and sources of information around all elements of the VET system.’

Okay. So it is that messy. Only about twenty submissions – I’d expected more. Have a look: [http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au/Submissions\\_Skills\\_Australia\\_Governance\\_Discussion\\_Paper.htm](http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au/Submissions_Skills_Australia_Governance_Discussion_Paper.htm)

## 16. Designing the VET market

The newish think tank, Per Capita, has released a paper called *A better design of the market for vocational education and training in Australia? A discussion*. It helpfully pulls together the threads from which policy has been woven and pulls out the crystal ball on a couple of matters.

Part 4, ‘There is still a supply side’, brings into clearer view the question of how providers, especially public providers, will manage infrastructure needs and workforce renewal and development. There are 26 pages to look at here: [http://www.percapita.org.au/dbase\\_upl/A%20better%20design3.pdf](http://www.percapita.org.au/dbase_upl/A%20better%20design3.pdf)

## 17. A good Western

The Western Australian Department of Education and Training has produced *Apprenticeships and traineeships – good practice guide for Registered Training Organisations*. Draws on the evidence base, offers a couple of case studies, lines things up with the AQTF, lists indicators of good practice under key headings. Good value: [http://vetinonet.det.wa.edu.au/progdev/docs/good\\_practice\\_guide.v5.pdf](http://vetinonet.det.wa.edu.au/progdev/docs/good_practice_guide.v5.pdf)

## 18. West Coast special

West Coast TAFE has established a unit called Small Business Solutions. A neat way of bringing together training, advice, support, and small business. From way over here it looks like they’ve got the sizing right: <http://www.smallbusinesssolutions.wa.gov.au/content/home.asp?>

## 19. Where do we start?

I guess one of the most difficult questions for VET practitioners is sorting out what kind of literacy and numeracy support an individual learner needs in order to make a go of their training.

In NZ an Adult Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Tool is under development, the aim of which is to help trainers answer the question: where do we start? Trials of items will be conducted in March and August. More info here: <http://www.tec.govt.nz/templates/standard.aspx?id=3662>

## 20. It’s a long story

In the US, the National Endowment for the Arts has released *Reading on the rise: a new chapter in American literacy*. Here are the headlines:

- Literary reading is on the rise for the first time in the 26 years of the NEA’s periodic survey of U.S. adult participation in the arts
- For the first time in the history of the survey – conducted five times since 1982 – the overall adult literary reading rate has risen
- More than half of the U.S. adult population – 113 million Americans – did literary reading in the prior 12 months.

Not least, it’s risen most among 18-24 year olds. So fiction lives. I never believed the doomsayers; the long story is not dying. Well, not this year anyway. anyway. *Reading on the rise* is here: <http://www.nea.gov/research/ReadingonRise.pdf>

## 21. A pig’s ear

The Stationery Office, London, has printed by order of the House of Commons, *Re-skilling for recovery: after Leitch, implementing skills and training policies*, a report of the House of Commons Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee. Leitch refers to the influential 2006 report by Lord Leitch that provided the framework for training reform in the UK.

The Committee takes a few swipes at the outcomes of those reforms – for example, overwhelming complexity, and the failure to attend adequately to the role of training providers. Dr Collins of the Association of Colleges is quoted as saying in his evidence to the MPs: ‘There is a general view at the moment that the new arrangements are either a pig’s ear or a dog’s breakfast and need to be sorted out with a degree of operational clarity to make sure that we do not lose the progress that the

Learning and Skills Council has made over the last six or seven years.'

However, it isn't all bad by the sounds of it. A need for simplification and flexibility is urged. And the MPs argue that investing in training now, in the midst of a nasty economic shock, makes a helluva lot of sense. It's quite long – 124 pages. I picked my way through it:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmdius/48/48i.pdf>

## 22. Step back

I stumbled across an Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Policy Review from last September and couldn't resist reading it. Titled *Higher education review – need for VET integration and business focus*. The Bradley Review didn't disappoint. It bears reading – the matters raised aren't going away:

[http://www.acci.asn.au/text\\_files/ACCI\\_Policy%20Review/2008/APRIssue9\\_Sep08.pdf](http://www.acci.asn.au/text_files/ACCI_Policy%20Review/2008/APRIssue9_Sep08.pdf)

## 23. Power down

Something else that probably isn't going to go away is the need to minimise the carbon footprint of IT in education. Take a visit to the website of the UK project Sustainable Information Technology in Tertiary Education. There's money to be saved: <http://www.susteit.org.uk/>

For a US take on the same issue, have a look at the EDUCAUSE paper, *The Role of IT in Campus Sustainability Efforts*, which reports on the outcomes of a conference for HE IT and facilities folks held last November:

<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/PUB9003.pdf>

## 24. Where is everybody?

For more about the answer to this question, see the Wikipedia entry on Enrico Fermi.

Let me narrow the question down – where is everybody in the VET universe? Okay, that's a little easier. You could start a roll call via the UNESCO-UNEVOC Directory. The online version will help you find your way to earthlings in VET in a couple of hundred countries:

<http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/unevocdir2.php>

## 25. We do declare

In December Australia's education ministers made the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians. It replaces the old 1999 Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century. I think you are probably morally obligated to read these 14 or so pages. It's a reminder of the breadth and depth of what we ask pre-schools and schools to do. There's a refreshing emphasis on making strong links between system-wide activity (accountability, curriculum, leadership, professional development) and what kind of teaching works for individual learners.

Like this:

- 'Excellent teachers have the capacity to transform the lives of students and to inspire and nurture their development as learners, individuals and citizens. They provide an additional source of encouragement, advice and support for students outside the home, shaping teaching around the ways different students learn and nurturing the unique talents of every student.'

... and this:

- 'School principals and other school leaders play a critical role in supporting and fostering quality teaching through coaching and mentoring teachers to find the best ways to facilitate learning, and by promoting a culture of high expectations in schools.'

... and this:

- Schools need reliable, rich data on the performance of their students because they have the primary accountability for improving student outcomes. Good quality data supports each school to improve outcomes for all of their students. It supports effective diagnosis of student progress and the design of high-quality learning programs. It also informs schools' approaches to provision of programs, school policies, pursuit and allocation of resources, relationships with parents and partnerships with community and business.

So, yeah, you *should* read this:

[http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/resources/National\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Educational\\_Goals\\_for\\_Young\\_Australians.pdf](http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf)

## IT IS WRITTEN

The *New York Review of Books* recently carried a review by Tim Flannery (once upon a time Director of the South Australian Museum) of *Dry Storeroom No. 1: The Secret Life of the Natural History Museum*, by Richard Fortey, Knopf. This excerpt starts by quoting from Fortey's book:

'The old [British National History] Museum might have been hidebound by petty rules, but the staff's security of tenure meant that members of staff were free to be naughty', says Fortey. Perhaps they were naughty, but most of them toiled unrecognised, building the basic knowledge upon which our understanding of the natural world depends.

Accountability was the tool that changed that. Scientists had to be productive, and that meant publishing or perishing. It was no longer good enough to work for years on the one great monograph that would lay the foundations of an entire field. Instead, researchers had to complete to get published in the few leading journals. And they were expected to obtain a grant for their research, and (perhaps most irksome of all for some) to take part in public events so as to demonstrate their relevance. The pressures that such changes engendered meant that many natural history museums became war zones between staff and management during the 1980s and 1990s.'

- 'The Spider Man and Other Stories', *New York Review of Books*, Volume 55, Number 19, December 4 2008.

## FOR THE PODDIES, VODDIES AND BLOGGIES

### Get IT!

I'm cheating. There's no pod, vod or blog for this one – but you can still get the transcript of a chat between John Harvey, Executive Director of IBM Australia, and the ABC's Robyn Williams. First Harvey takes us for a bit of spin through changes in IT and IBM over his forty or so years with the company. Then he talks about how to lift the engagement of school age kids with IT, how to lift post-secondary enrolments in IT, and why these things matter:

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/inconversation/stories/2008/2/449741.htm>

## Pick a number, any number

The BBC has a wireless program for those who love statistics and want to protect them from abuse and misunderstanding. *More or Less* is presented by Tim Harford, an economist with a common touch.

The program does a sterling job of unpacking all manner of stats like those behind the financial meltdown or whether a stressful job is bad for your health. *More or Less* is a weekly 30 minute program. Check out the podcast archive: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/more\\_or\\_less/7784352.stm#2008a](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/more_or_less/7784352.stm#2008a)

## AAIR Committee – 2009

### President:

Josie Palermo, Lecturer, School of Psychology, Deakin University

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