



Monthly e-Newsletter – June, 2010

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EDITORIAL OF SORTS

Sorry to take you by surprise. Late for the last two months, and early this month. As the June diary is crowded to the very margins, I thought I'd best get an early march, or June to be more precise.

Don't forget that the Call for Papers for the 2010 AAIR Forum is open until 28 June. The keynote speakers have been confirmed – see page 4 for a little more detail, or visit the Forum website: <http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/air2010/>

If you are receiving the Newsletter and would prefer not to, please let me know. The bigger problem is that I lose track when you change email addresses: let me know and I'll make the adjustment to the distribution list. As always, your contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. Subject to space and relevance to members, the Newsletter runs job vacancies and items on upcoming events. My email address is: rob@sharpwords.com.au

Flick your eyes right to see an invitation to you to share with us your IR Coming of Age Story.

And thanks for reading along.

AAIR e-Newsletter – June 2010

AAIR Annual Forum

10-12 November 2010

Four Points by Sheraton Hotel,
Geelong, Victoria

Our theme for 2010 is:

Has institutional research come of age in Australasia?

The theme invites us to focus on strategic priorities in the tertiary sector. Sub-streams will focus on:

- the equity agenda, 2010 and beyond
- supporting models for academic standards
- improving participation and retention
- improving VET pathways and partnerships.

Call for Abstracts Open until 28 June

More details about the Call for Abstracts can be found here:

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/air2010/downloads/FINALAAIRCallforPapers.pdf>

More Forum details

General information about the Forum, including registration and venue/accommodation details, can be found here:

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/air2010/>

An invitation to send in your IR Coming of Age Story

It's AAIR's 21st birthday!

On pages 4 and 5 of the Newsletter, AAIR Presidents, Josie Palermo, shares her IR coming of age story. Josie encourages AAIR members and friends to send in their own IR coming of age stories. We will display them at the Forum and on AAIR's new website (soon to be launched).

Please email your contributions to:

rob@sharpwords.com.au or Josephine.palermo@deakin.edu.au.

PLACES TO GO – THINGS TO DO

ABS Training

Throughout the year

In all states and territories & online tutorials

The Australian Bureau of Statistics runs an ongoing series of half, one and two day courses in all states and territories. The courses are of both general interest or related to specific ABS collections. Like these:

- Principles of questionnaire design
- Analysing survey data made simple
- Turning data into information
- Introduction to labour statistics.

The training calendar is at this link, where you'll find links to course profiles and online video tutorials:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/ABS+Training:+Training+Calendar>

TAE10 Training and Education Training Package PD Workshops

The new Training and Education Training Package was endorsed in mid-May. The new package includes a revised Cert IV in TAA, nationally accredited qualifications in language, literacy and numeracy, and a sustainability skill set. There are a few complexities in introducing the new Package, partly related to the current review of the Diploma of Training and Assessment. All will be revealed through a series of workshops that IBSA is planning to announce shortly – which means there are no dates/venues/workshop outlines yet, but you might want to bookmark this link which is where the workshop program will be advertised:

<http://www.ibsa.org.au/products-and-services/workshops-and-amp-events/event-news.aspx>

Do wages matter, or the value of completing an apprenticeship or traineeship?

15 June 2010

2.00pm-3.00pm AEST

This is the next instalment in NCVER's Webinar series. Under the expert guidance of Tom Karmel, the webinar will ponder what influence low wages have on our low completion rates. The webinar comes to you free of charge and at your desk. You can register at this page:

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/webinar/2010.html>

Managing University Reputation in a Competitive World

22-23 June

The University of Hong Kong

The website says: 'The conference will present some of the leading thinkers in strategy, reputation, communications, branding and international relations, and deliver findings from ... [research] on staff engagement in world leading universities [and on] addressing the corporate impact of rankings within world ranked universities.'

The conference is run by the World 100 Reputation Network which associates units in the top 100 under the *THE* and Jiao Tong rankings. But you don't have to belong to a top 100 before you can roll along. In fact, so far as I can tell, there are only nine member universities so far. Details here:

<http://www.theworld100.com/worldconference/>

2010 AUCEA National Conference

5-7 July 2010

Launceston Campus, University of Tasmania

The Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance is steering its attention to the very specific issues of increasing community participation and addressing social equity under its theme of Communities Participation & Partnerships. The conference brochure is here:

http://aucea.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/2010registration_brochure1.pdf

3rd Annual Learning & Development Summit

30 June-2 July 2010

The Grace Hotel, Sydney

The Summit's theme is 'Developing people & organisations through innovative learning techniques'. It's for a cross-industry audience, so if you are weary of bumping into the same people, or tiring of talking to yourselves, this might offer a new perspective and a chance to do some left field networking. The speakers array includes:

- Craig Liddy, Group Head of Learning, Westpac
- Kerrie Field, GM – Human Resources & Media Solutions, St Vincents & Mater Health
- Jens Beckmann, Associate Professor, Australian Business School, University of Sydney
- Simon Paine, Member, New South Wales Flexible Learning Advisory Group

Here's the deal:

<http://www.tonkincorporation.com/?m=5&id=509&t=6#>

ACPET 2010 National Conference

26-27 August, 2010

Crown Conference Centre, Melbourne

ACPET's 2010 conference runs under the banner of 'Quality through diversity'. There are a couple of Master Classes on offer prior to the conference proper. A wee bit early for a program yet, but some early details here:

<http://guest.cvent.com/EVENTS/Info/Summary.aspx?e=6e54de0c-c683-4e42-a637-09dfbe0f9e57>

VETnetwork National Conference 2010

15-17 September, 2010

Adelaide Convention Centre

The VETnetwork is a mob I keep meaning to find out more about, but I admit to stumbling at the jump. What I do know is that it's a group that brings together people involved in VET in Schools and in supporting kids in their transition from school. The conference theme is 'Creative futures: the changing landscape'. The conference program includes a series of concurrent workshops with enticing titles like:

- Creative partnerships between schools and business: 'Mission possible'
- The importance of being cybersmart when applying to enter the workforce
- Trade training centres & effective partnerships
- VET and the senior secondary certificates of education: charting a new policy landscape

Here's the conference brochure:

http://www.vetnetwork.org.au/dbase_upl/flyerreg_conference2010.pdf

Cultural Research Conference for Postgraduates and ECRs 2010

20-21 September 2010

University of Western Sydney, Parramatta

This conference goes by the long title of 'The Next Generation of Cultural Research: Building New Cultural Intelligence for 21st Century Problems'. The intended audience is postgrads and ECRs who are delving into areas like cultural sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, film studies, media studies, museum studies, heritage studies and art history. The conference is hosted by postgrads from Centre for Cultural Research at UWS.

<http://ccr.uws.edu.au/home/index.php/crc.html>

Australian International Education Conference

Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre

13-15 October

This year's AIE Conference comes under the theme 'Engaging for the future'. It's preceded by a suite of 10 workshops on 12 October, including:

- How much more change can I take?: Managing international education well in the new regulatory environment
- Using peer mentoring to internationalise campus culture

Here's the Conference brochure:

<http://www.aiec.idp.com/pdf/AIEC2010BrochureWeb.pdf>

World Universities Congress

Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

20-24 October 2010

The conference is on the lookout for answers to a big question: What should be the new aims and responsibilities of universities within the framework of global issues? The list of themes under which answers might be pursued is long and edifying – just a sample:

- Understanding & preventing global climate change
- Preventing global terrorism
- Eradicating global poverty
- Eradicating inequality in educational opportunities.
- Securing world peace
- Developing lasting solutions to rapid population growth.

Go for it:

<http://www.comu.edu.tr/unicongress2010/index.php>

AAIR 20th Annual Forum

10-12 November, 2010

Four Points by Sheraton, Geelong

Open your diary and mark these dates in. Right now. Quick sticks. The Forum is focussed on responding to this question: 'Has Institutional Research come of age in Australasia?' It's the right question for AAIR which turns 21 this year. On the following pages, AAIR President Josie Palermo offers her IR Coming of Age Story.

The call for abstracts is open until 28 June.

The Forum website is here:

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/air2010/>

AAIR Annual Forum
10-12 November 2010
Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, Geelong, Victoria

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS OPEN UNTIL 28 JUNE

Our theme for 2010 is:
Has institutional research come of age in Australasia?

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- **Hon John Dawkins AO**, Chair, Australian Qualifications Framework Council
 - **Dr Carol Nicoll**, CEO, Australian Teaching and Learning Council
 - **Dr Rod Carr**, Vice-Chancellor, University of Canterbury

Has institutional research come of age?

Reflections from Josie Palermo, President of AAIR

What's institutional research?

As a member and now President of the Australasian Association for Institutional Research (AAIR) most people ask me, what's institutional research? And then they ask me why an academic teaching and researching in organisational psychology is involved.

AAIR promotes the use of institutional research in decision making and policy development across the tertiary sector. In other words, AAIR promotes research about what makes tertiary institutions better at what they do. It is concerned with questions such as:

- How can better plan for an institution's growth?
- What will students of the future want from their institutions?
- How do we manage workloads and increasing student enrolments?
- How can we present information to staff and students in ways that engages them in continuous improvement?
- Do student evaluations really make a difference?
- What is the 'student experience' and how can we monitor to improve it?

My IR Coming of Age Story

If you will bear with me, I will share an historical account of my association with AAIR. I hope through my own coming of age story you will see how AAIR intersects with the experiences of academics, teachers, professional staff and students.

I became involved in AAIR about 18 years ago. I was finishing my Graduate Diploma in Applied Psychology and working full time for the Swinburne Student Union (SSU). The federal government was embarking on a quality agenda (Dawkins reforms were imminent) and universities were scrambling to formalise evaluation systems which until then had been fairly ad hoc. SSU was one of the most innovative student unions with an incorporated structure and a focus on educational outcomes. For example, SSU instituted a policy of '50% Educational Content', which meant students had to design all events with an educational focus. They couldn't just throw a BBQ with light entertainment; they had to also include promotion of educational services, or an informed speaker about educational issues of the day. It is not surprising then that at that time SSU was the only organisation on campus conducting formal summative student evaluations. It was my job as Education Research Officer to coordinate the program. Once the Quality Rounds got under way, I was quickly seconded to the Vice Chancellor's Office to lead a team which introduced new, University-wide student evaluation systems.

We developed principles for conduct and use of student feedback, and the introduction of new technologies. This involved not only the logistics and pedagogic issues associated with developing and implementing the surveys, but also facilitating the required shift in learning and teaching cultures towards more student-centred approaches. This early start as a 'boundary spanner' within a large and complex dual sector university led to my involvement in other change programs in the areas of quality enhancement as the AUQA audits began to take shape in the early 2000s. I was lucky enough to work alongside very bright academics with a passion for improving the student experience as well as insightful university managers who knew it was important to lead from behind and take academics with them on the change journey. I was also encouraged to take a scholarly approach to my practice and published in peer review journals on topics of quality enhancement, action learning, strategic planning, student equity and transnationalisation of education. This scholarly approach was in part encouraged by colleagues in AAIR who mentored my presentations at annual fora and proof read drafts that were submitted to the Journal of Institutional Research (of which I am now Editor).

In 2004 I left a senior administrative position in the Planning Unit at RMIT to take on Research Fellow and Lecturer roles at Deakin University where I learnt to be an academic (and am still learning!). I continued applied research in educational institutions, mostly in the Sultanate of Oman, where I collaborated with Ministerial departments on change projects levelled at developing quality assurance systems in-country that were empowering for staff, inclusive of more student-centred approaches to teaching, and involved participatory rather directive decision making processes. This more recent work has been the highlight of my association with institutional research. Presentations of outcomes won a 'best presentation' award at a recent AAIR Forum.

IR – evidence for the future

In the Australasian higher education sector, institutional research is often misunderstood as merely administrative practice. I hope that my story provides some insight that moves beyond this perception.

AAIR members often work to provide management within an institution with the business intelligence they need to make effective decisions about today and the future. They are concerned with translation of data to knowledge and often use sophisticated statistical and technological solutions to achieve that aim. Institutional research in the USA, in particular, is a discipline within its own right with a myriad of bachelor to PhD programs available to students. AAIR is an affiliate of the American based Association for Institutional Research (AIR), which also has affiliate chapters across the globe including Europe, China, South-East Asia, Canada, South America, South Africa, Pacific Islands etc

Our 2010 Forum theme: Has institutional research come of age in Australasia?

The theme of this year's Forum invites discussion about the maturity of institutional research in our region. For long standing AAIR members, this will provide an opportunity to consider the changes that have occurred over time and to assess how far institutional research has come. It might also provide an opportunity to re-learn some of the lessons for surviving and prospering in times of government-led reform. As well as encouraging reflection, our theme is intended to encourage participants to showcase examples of current day 'best practice' and to consider likely developments for the future.

Send in your own IR coming of age stories

I would like to encourage AAIR members and friends to send in their own IR coming of age stories. We will display them at the Forum and on AAIR's new website (soon to be launched). You can forward them to me, or to Rob Sheehan:

josephine.palermo@deakin.edu.au or rob@sharpwords.com.au

More details about the Call for Abstracts can be found here:

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/air2010/downloads/FINALAAIRCallforPapers.pdf>

General information about the Forum, including registration and venue/accommodation details, can be found here:

<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/air2010/>

Dr Josephine Palermo
President
Australasian Association for Institutional Research

NEWSLETTER NOTES

1. Getting a kick from education

A report from KPMG Econtech, *Measuring the impact of the productivity agenda*, was released recently by Julia Gillard. Education is a key element of the so-called Productivity Agenda, which seems to have come into the foreground as an organising schema – or perhaps I haven't been paying close attention. In any case, quality education outcomes are a key means of improving economic outcomes.

There's a pretty chart on page v of the Exec Summary which I can't copy for you, but the message is that by 2040 we could expect a 6.1 per cent improvement in labour productivity from reforms to early childhood, secondary and tertiary education and paid parental leave. (The equally pretty chart on page vi shows a 3.8 per cent lift in labour participation rates as a result of that suite of reforms, plus the child care rebate.)

To 2040, higher education and VET are the big contributors. To 2070, early childhood is the biggest contributor. You may want to argue with the assumptions. You may want to argue about whether improving outcomes from our present economic arrangements means we'll all be happier in the long run. In any case, while you wait on the proof, here's the pudding recipe:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Documents/KPMGEcontechReport.pdf>

2. Action Analytics

Kathie Rabel from Victoria Uni at Wellington passed this website to us. Action Analytics is a community practice for those interested in linking data and performance in higher education. As long as you've got a .gov or .edu address, you're in. The website will lead you to reports, media pieces and good practice – join and find a path to the likes of:

- *In their own words: effectiveness in Institutional Research*, by William E. Knight from the Association for Institutional Research, which 'seeks to understand and improve effectiveness in institutional research (IR) by interviewing, observing, and analyzing resumes of IR practitioners who have been identified by their colleagues as particularly effective in having an impact on decision-making, planning, and policy formation.'

Need I say more:

<http://www.edu1world.org/PublicForumActionAnalytics/>

3. The NZ budget and tertiary ed

New Zealand's Budget, brought down in May, contains lots of changes for the tertiary sector. Performance-based funding will be emphasised in the next round of funding agreements, which in turn puts considerable weight on institutional research. New measures become the touchstone, including ones like 'Tertiary education organisations responsiveness to business, industries, community and learner needs'. Completions rather than enrolments gain prominence.

The Budget background papers are here:

<http://www.tec.govt.nz/Funding/Budget/Budget-2010/Budget-2010--sector-information/>

The Tertiary Education Commission's Statement of Intent 2010/2011-2012/2013 is here:

<http://www.tec.govt.nz/Documents/Publications/Statement-of-Intent-2010.pdf>

The New Zealand Vice-Chancellor's Committee's dim view of the Budget outcomes is here:

<http://www.nzvcc.ac.nz/node/470>

4. The peerage (1)

RMIT's College of Science, Engineering and Health has a webpage dripping with resources on student mentoring and peer tutoring. In addition to giving you a pretty good idea of how it works in the College, there are links to external resources, a handy literature review and a description of pilot designs and project outcomes for RMIT's internal Learning and Teaching Investment Fund. This is a pretty good place to start if you are considering starting or refurbishing a peer tutoring program:

<http://www.rmit.edu.au/seh/students/mentorpeertutor>

5. The peerage (2)

In 2009, the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at Melbourne Uni released *Involving students in peer review: Case studies and practical strategies for university teaching*, put together by Jon Pearce, Raoul Mulder and Chi Baik. The four case studies are on peer programs in:

- experimental animal behaviour
- peer review in multimedia & communications
- reshaping environments
- programming language implementation.

There's a good section on student perceptions of the value of peer review to their learning:

http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/downloads/Student_Peer_Review.pdf

IT ISN'T OVER YET

I like reading David Malouf. He has the knack of slowing down moments and thoughts so we can observe their working parts, without ever losing the pace of life. And the writing has Queensland breathing through its pores. Here's an extract from a Malouf short story, *Southern skies*.

'From the beginning he was a stumbling block, the Professor. I had always thought of him as an old man, as one thinks of one's parents as old, but he can't in those days have been more than fifty. Squat, powerful, with a good deal of black hair on his wrists, he was what was called a "ladies man" – though that must have been far in the past and in another country. What he practised now was a formal courtliness, a clicking of heels and a kissing of plump fingers that was the extreme form of a set of manners that our parents clung to because it belonged, along with much else, to the Old Country, and which we young people, for the same reason, found it imperative to reject. The Professor had a "position" – he taught mathematics to apprentices on day-release. He was proof that a breakthrough into the New World was not only possible, it was a fact. Our parents, having come to a place where their qualifications in medicine or law were unacceptable, had been forced to take jobs as labourers or factory-hands or to keep dingy shops; but we, their clever sons and daughters, would find our way back to the safe professional classes. For our parents there was a deep sorrow in all this, and the Professor offered hope. We were invited to see in him both the embodiment of a noble past and a glimpse of what, with hard work and a little luck or grace, we might claim from the future.

'... Aged six or seven, in my knitted bathing briefs, and watching out in my bare feet for bindy-eye, I would set out over the grass to where the great man and my father ... would be pursuing one of their interminable arguments. My father had been a lawyer in the Old Country but now worked at the Vulcan Can Factory. He was passionately interested in philosophy, and the Professor was his only companion on those breathless flights that were, along with the music of Beethoven and Mahler, his sole consolation on the raw and desolate shore where he was marooned.'

- David Malouf, *The complete stories*, 2007, Sydney: Random House.

6. AUSSE, AUSSE, AUSSE!

ACER has released the report on outcomes from the 2009 Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE), Staff Student Engagement Survey (SSES) and Postgraduate Survey of Student Engagement (POSSE). It's called *Doing more for learning: enhancing engagement and outcomes*. Thirty-five unis in Oz and NZ participated in the 2009 AUSSE, nine in the SSES and four piloted POSSE.

There are numerous take homes from the report, which runs to around 100 pages. A couple:

- 29.4 per cent of international students report frequently keeping their resume updated, compared with 19.5 per cent of domestic students, 37.7 per cent frequently network for job opportunities (only 26.3% of domestic students do this frequently), and 43.5 per cent often or very often set career development goals and plans, compared with 34.9 per cent of domestic students.
- A significant proportion of students – 30.0 per cent – has seriously considered or plans to depart their current institution. The levels of first- and later-year students who plan to leave or have seriously considered leaving their institution are very similar – 30.1 per cent of first-year students and 29.9 per cent of later-year students. It is important to note that these figures, particularly the later year estimate, are underestimates given they exclude people who have already left the institution. Interestingly, the proportion of students who have seriously considered leaving is underestimated by teaching staff.

Have a read here:

http://ausse.acer.edu.au/images/docs/AUSSE_2009_Student_Engagement_Report.pdf

7. Researching undergrads

Hard to know what will remain standing in UK HE as the budget repair process under the new government gets underway. I hope this one sneaks through. The Reinvention Centre for Undergraduate Research at Warwick Uni lists a bundle of resources for integrating undergrads into research practice and culture. You can also access papers published in *Reinvention: a Journal of Undergraduate Research*, the most recent edition of which was released in April:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/rsw/undergrad/cet/>

8. Attracting HRD students

The Go8 released in March *International Higher Research Degree students: research to inform strategies designed to grow Australia's market share*. Funded by DEEWR, the research proceeded via focus groups, benchmarking and a large online survey. The report's a whopper at 243 pages, so I was grateful for the 24 page Exec Summary. The outlook is good, on the whole, but there are upsides and downsides. For example:

- Participants frequently observed that Australia, more than other destinations, is well versed in combining the core decision making variables of scholarship, supervisor and place; thereby giving the impression that Australian universities actively seek and welcome international research students.
- The lack of affordable and appropriate accommodation. Participants consistently reported difficulties acquiring accommodation, particularly accommodation which is a) furnished b) more suited to research students and, c) tailored for families.

Here 'tis:

http://www.go8.edu.au/storage/go8statements/2010/int_research_report/Australia_as_a_research_destination_March2010.pdf

9. La Trobe's curriculum review

La Trobe has embarked on a thoroughgoing curriculum review. As part of that a paper was released for staff consultations scheduled earlier this year. The paper – *Making design for learning work: implementation proposals 2010-2013* – considers the practicalities of moving ahead with the task. The recommendations posed for consideration included:

- Ensure that, at a minimum, all course and subject learning outcomes are explicitly taught and assessed – and that students are provided with relevant learning activities and feedback to improve learning – in cornerstone, midpoint, and capstone elements built into each course.
- Each faculty appoint an academic staff member as First-Year Experience Coordinator, responsible for coordinating the planning, implementation, support and evaluation of all First-Year Experience-related activities and programs within that faculty, across all relevant campuses, and with other relevant staff from across the University.

You can access the Word document here:

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/ctlc/assets/downloads/dfl/making-design-for-learning-work-v1-3.doc>

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10. Sessional staff in tertiary education

VU has posted posters and slide shows from the 2009 National Colloquium: Sessional Staff in Higher Education and Vocational Education – Towards Sustainable Practice. A topic of considerable, and probably growing, importance to both sectors:

<http://tls.vu.edu.au/sscoll2009/presentations.html>

The Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) knows how important it is, and how important postgrads are in making undergrad teaching work. CAPA is running its Casuals in Higher Education: The Research Workforce Campaign. Campaign background, with useful links at the bottom of the page, is here:

<http://www.capa.edu.au/casuals>

11. The university workforce in HE

Ian Dobson has written a fascinating piece for the journal *People and Place*, published by Monash Uni's Centre for Population and Urban Research. The paper is titled 'Uneven development: the disjointed growth of university staffing since Dawkins'. That's the long view for you.

Dobson's analysis indicates that since 1989, 'teaching staff numbers have increased by only 33.7 per cent, and staff with continuing or time-limited contracts by only 19.0 per cent, and over half of the growth in teacher numbers was generated by casual staff.' He asks: 'Is it reasonable, therefore, for the number of support staff to have increased by 42.5 per cent?' Dobson sees this as an imbalance created by government funding mechanisms and poor policy.

I recommend you have a read. You can probably source the article through your library (though Dobson notes that in 2007 there were 23 fewer staff in libraries than there were in 1989). If not, you can buy the article online, or wait two years and it will be free online. You could make a start with the abstract:

<http://elecpress.monash.edu.au/pnp/view/issue/?volume=18&issue=1>

12. You're kidding!

Copyright can drive teachers to distraction. What can I use? Why not? You're kidding! The Australian Flexible Learning Framework provides the Copyright Kitchen, and helps teachers put together their own Copyright Cookbook. Check out the fridge:

<http://copyrightkitchen.flexiblelearning.net.au/main.php?About>

13. IPPTN

Institut Penyelidikan Pendidikan Tinggi Negara (IPPTN) is Malaysia's National Higher Education Research Institute. It has a snappy website with lots of useful info, not least its Global Updates which are mostly two page summaries on issues of the moment. Among those released in 2010 are:

- Hong Kong targets itself as an education hub
- Inflation of credentials
- Millenium Development Goals: universities as drivers
- Pursuit of creativity in higher education.

You can access the Updates here, noting that you'll have to go through a simple registration process first:

<http://www.ipptn.usm.my/index.php/publication/global-updates/global-updates-2010>

14. Writing books on the web

Macquarie, UTS and Murdoch alumnus, now a fixture Stateside at The New School in Greenwich Village, Mackenzie Wark has written *Gamer Theory*, published by Harvard Uni Press. It's about the idea that computer games are the coming cultural form and it isn't really my cup of tea so I won't read it. I mention it because of the manner in which he wrote it. Working with the Institute for the Future of the Book, Wark progressively posted his drafts on the web and invited others – any others – to comment on the way through. Nice use of the web, I reckon. Here's the website (now an artefact as the book is done):

<http://www.futureofthebook.org/gametheory/>

15. Equity 101 – a reminder

I was reminded by Gavin Moodie to remind you that Equity 101 is great resource for info on access, equity and participation in education. Equity 101 has grown like topsy since it was established by the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education – about 750 items in the library now:

<http://www.equity101.info/content/welcome-equity101>

16. Centre for Tertiary Education Partnerships

Deakin Uni is working up a head of steam in developing tertiary pathways, most recently with its proposal to provide associate degrees in collaboration with secondary schools. Deakin's Centre for Tertiary Education Partnerships is outlined here:

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/news/homepage/ctep.php>

17. Gown and bush

DEEWR has just released *Regional participation: the role of socioeconomic status and access*. What's alarming, I guess, is that the participation gap between city and country kids has widened in recent years. The report makes useful observations on the variations between inner metro, outer metro and regional participation, noting that in many ways what holds for kids in the bush also holds for outer metro kids. We still need better data, as the report suggests, but this is a pretty useful overview of what we know:

http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Programs/Equity/Documents/RegionalParticipation_report.pdf

18. Getting serious about VET-HE credit

Sandra Walls and John Pardy from Box Hill Institute have written a top report for the NCVET, titled *Crediting vocational education and training for learner mobility*. In some ways, it's a disappointing story – pathways have been there for the taking for so long, but too often we've left them on the shelf for a bunch of pretty ordinary reasons. We're getting much better at developing pathways, belatedly. This report maps out a productive way ahead. As the report notes:

- When education attained is not recognised equitably or without prejudice, a student's potential learning career is compromised, as is the purpose of credit transfer. The differences surrounding knowledge acquisition and skills development represent a further area for resolution. In the issue of theory versus practice, which has troubled some VET-higher education discussions, a rapprochement must be achieved to enable students to build learning careers. A more holistic approach is required.

The report makes the interesting observation that training provided through Enterprise RTOs 'goes unrecognised in broader credit transfer and articulation policy discussions.' Hadn't thought about that before. We need to fix that if we are serious about closer links between industry, education and training. The report is here:

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/proj/2249.pdf>

And the authors have created a nifty *Guide to credit transfer* that ought to be compulsory reading for everyone:

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/proj/2248.pdf>

IT IS WRITTEN

'Societies can do a lot to ameliorate the stresses on families to support early childhood development. From the very start of life, some societies do more than others to promote secure attachment between mother and infant through the provision of paid maternity leave. Using data on the duration of paid maternity leave, provided by the Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth & Family Policies at Columbia University, we found that more equal countries provided longer periods of paid maternity leave.

'Sweden provides parental leave (which can be divided between mothers and fathers) with 80 per cent wage replacement until the child is 18 months old; a further three months can be taken at a flat rate of pay, and then another three months of unpaid leave on top of that. Norway gives parents (again either mother or father) a year of leave at 80 per cent wage replacement, or forty-two weeks at 100 per cent. In contrast, the USA and Australia provide no statutory entitlement to paid leave – in Australia parents can have a year of unpaid leave, in the USA, twelve weeks.

'As well as allowing parental leave, societies can improve the quality of early childhood through the provision of family allowances and tax benefits, social housing, health care, programmes to promote work/life balance, enforcing child support payments and, perhaps most importantly, through the provision of high-quality early childhood education. Early childhood education programmes can foster physical and cognitive development, as well as social and emotional development. They can alter the long-term trajectories of people's lives, and cost-benefit analyses show that they are high yielding investments. In experiments, disadvantaged children who have received high-quality early childhood education are less likely to need remedial education, less likely to become involved in crime, and they earn more as adults. All of this adds up to a substantial return on government investments in such programmes.'

- Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett,
Why more equal societies almost always do better, 2009, London: Allen Lane.

PS. Good book. Makes you contemplate what the average of anything is good for. Loaded with data to appeal to a certain species of AAIRie.

19. HEPPP

I'm sure you've all downloaded and carefully highlighted many sections of the Higher Education Support Act 2003: Other Grants Guidelines (Education) 2010. I was a bit focussed on the guidelines for Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), and the dollars attached thereto. Examples of the kinds of activities that will qualify for HEPPP money are listed:

- inclusive entry processes;
- transition programs to support cultural and geographical issues of inclusion;
- academic preparation;
- modifications to teaching delivery and learning methods to better meet the needs of students from a low SES background;
- mentoring, peer support, tutoring and continued academic support;
- education programs for parents of low SES students, particularly those with children who are first in their families to access higher education;
- monitoring of student progress.

Good list. Lots of room to move. Much more to mull over here:

[http://www.comlaw.gov.au/ComLaw/Legislation/LegislativeInstrument1.nsf/0/0A3C2A5F3B17849DCA257714001A86E7/\\$file/HEPPPGuidelinesAttachmentFinbrief220410changesaccepted.pdf](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/ComLaw/Legislation/LegislativeInstrument1.nsf/0/0A3C2A5F3B17849DCA257714001A86E7/$file/HEPPPGuidelinesAttachmentFinbrief220410changesaccepted.pdf)

20. The ways of Navitas

Navitas has purchased Health Skills Australia (HAS), an RTO operating in Melbourne and Sydney, but goes bush too. HSA delivers certificate level quals, in-service, short courses and stand alone competencies. With an eye to developing pathways, Navitas has paid \$2m for HSA, increasing to \$3.5m in total if earnings targets are met in the 2010 and 2011 financial years. That's not a bad return for an RTO which has only been with us since 2005. Here's a peek at HSA:

<http://www.healthskills.com.au/>

Navitas subsidiary, ACL, has been awarded five contracts worth \$21m over three years to deliver LLN Program services in four Sydney and one country NSW region. Here's a look at ACL:

<http://www.acl.edu.au/>

And here's the Minister's announcement of tender winners for the LLN Program in each state and territory:

http://www.deewr.gov.au/ministers/gillard/media/releases/pages/article_100526_103248.aspx

21. SIT

Just 12 months ago the Singapore government announced the establishment of the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), which will manage partnerships with offshore providers to provide degree programs through Singapore's polytechs. Without too much ado, SIT is up and running, offering two year full time programs to Singapore polytech graduates in the areas of allied health and nursing, design, digital media, engineering and applied sciences, and hospitality. SIT's offshore partners are:

- Culinary Institute of America
- Digipen Institute of Technology in the US
- Newcastle Uni in the UK
- Technische Universität München
- University of Nevada.

SIT's website is here:

<http://www.singaporetech.edu.sg/>

22. ACPET on the QSI

The 2010 Commonwealth Budget launched the Quality Skills Incentive (QSI) worth \$129.8m – a performance-based pool for the 100 largest RTOs by enrolment. Funding will be eked out from 2011-12 by assessing improvements against defined benchmarks. The top 100 providers will include, I think, all 59 TAFE Institutes. So there will be 41 other eligible providers.

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training issued a QSI fact sheet, which restates info on the Commonwealth's fact sheet, but goes a couple of steps further. ACPET indicates it 'does not support a focus solely on the "biggest" RTOs and believes that all training providers should be supported to develop quality improvements'. It's hard to argue with that, but the QSI strikes me as a pretty interesting way for the Commonwealth to make a start on direct funding to the sector. The ACPET fact sheet lists a set of questions it is seeking clarification on:

- How will the 100 largest RTOs be determined?
- Will providers outside of the 100 biggest RTOs be able to opt into the scheme?
- When will consultations on benchmarks begin?
- If there is an intention to expand the scheme beyond the 100 biggest RTOs, will it be compulsory to participate?

Good questions. The fact sheet is here:

http://acpet.edu.au/sites/default/files/documents/Policy_Matters/FactSheet_Quality_Skills_Incentive.pdf

23. National Workforce Literacy Project

AiG has released *National Workforce Literacy Project: report on employers views on workplace literacy and numeracy skills*. I've been watching out for a while now for this wrap up on the first phase of the project. It was worth the wait. The report notes that: 'Generally employers preferred workplace-based approaches to skill development that can be customised to the needs of the business and the individual.' That's the workforce development approach for you.

Phase 2 now kicks off with solutions being trialled in companies in Victoria, NSW and Qld with which LLN trainers will be matched. So, while you wait on the outcome of Phase 2, here's the very good report on Phase 1:

http://www.aigroup.com.au/portal/binary/com.epicentric.contentmanagement.servlet.ContentDeliveryServlet/LIVE_CONTENT/Publications/Reports/2010/8783_Workforce_Literacy_Project_Report.pdf

24. What does a completion rate explain?

Service Skills Australia has launched a project to examine completion rates for the service industries. The website notes a longstanding, understudied beef: 'Industry overall, and the service industries in particular, believe that they have been unfairly disadvantaged by the use of completion rates as a measure of success of industry training.'

JMA Analytics is conducting the project and we already have a terrific literature review on the subject of completions/non-completions on the website. To put the project in the right light, allow me to quote from the preamble to the lit review:

- ... this literature review and this project deliberately put the spotlight on student non-completions, but this is not meant to oppose those who champion and promote student completions of full qualifications. Far from it: student completions of full qualifications deserve to be honoured and respected. However, industry stakeholders have indicated to Service Skills Australia that the reasons for student non-completions deserve more attention than they have received to date. This project is designed to unpack the wide range of reasons why people do not complete a course, to ensure that these reasons are also respected.

The project home page is here (along with a link to the lit review):

http://www.serviceskills.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1068&Itemid=2304

25. WorldSkills Australian National Competition

I'm an enthusiast for WorldSkills so you'll just have to forgive me as I rave about it again. The Australian National Competition was held in Brisbane last month. I couldn't help but noticing that nine of 11 gold medals in the VETiS comp went to kids from regional areas, and that four of those went to kids from the Illawarra region. That's a pretty grand haul, isn't it? They were:

- Business Services: Anna Harley from Ulladulla High School
- Commercial Cookery: Meredith Nightingale from Shellharbour Anglican College
- Construction: Billy Rofe from Chevalier College
- Food and Beverage: Carina Serray from Wollongong High School.

All the competition results are here:

<http://www.worldskills.org.au/>

26. AVETRA papers

Papers and slide shows from AVETRA's 13th Annual Conference are on the web. The conference went under the theme of 'VET Research: Leading and Responding in Turbulent Times'. I've done no more than bookmarked the page, so can't give you any specific leads, but the papers I've already picked out to have a look at are these:

- Preparing to teach in TAFE: a curriculum inquiry into initial teacher education in the Victorian technical and further education system – Sandra Walls, Box Hill TAFE
- 'The elephant in the room': audit culture & TAFE teachers – Stephen Black & Ann Reich UTS
- An investigation of TAFE Efficiency – Peter Fieger, NCVER
- Teacher leadership in VET – Jennifer Davids, Southbank Institute of Technology.

Make your own selection here:

<http://avetra.org.au/publications/conference-archives/conference-archives-2010/2010-papers>

27. Once upon a time in VET...

NCVER has given unto us a 'Historical time series of vocational education and training in Australia, from 1981'. Packed with good data. For example, in 1981 there were 40,900 VET learners aged 40-49, and 258,300 in 2008. You'll have a lark in here:

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2244.html>

ATEM NSW/ACT Region Conference

9.30am-4.30pm

23 July 2010

University of Technology, Sydney

What Does the Future Hold? Challenges Confronting the Australian Tertiary Education Sector

The conference is open to all tertiary education administrators and managers and all those interested in tertiary education issues.

Speakers at the conference are:

- Dr Michael Spence, Vice Chancellor and President University of Sydney on 'A Vice-Chancellor's Perspective- decision making Challenges'
- John Cairns, First Assistant Secretary, Ministerial Support Unit, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet on 'The People Management Challenge'
- Prof Geoff Scott, Pro Vice-Chancellor Quality and Provost, Penrith Campus, UWS on 'Leading Quality in our Universities'
- Ms Melissa Williams, Director, Indigenous Employment and Engagement, UWS on 'A case study on developing and implementing an Indigenous Traineeship program'
- Sally Varnham, Ass/Professor, Faculty of Law, UTS, and Patty Kamvounias, Lecturer, Faculty of Economics and Business, Sydney Uni, on 'More than just customers: what students want from their university: Student Grievances and Discipline Matters in Australian Universities'.

For more information:

- http://www.atem.org.au/education_training.cfm?id=109&t=/2010-Region-Conference

28. CEDEFOP on in-company trainers

Someone might have a word in the EU's ear about the clumsiness of CEDEFOP as an acronym. Maybe it sounds okay in Polish or Spanish. That aside, you might find value in CEDEFOP's report, *Professional development opportunities for in-company trainers: a compilation of good practices*. We've got 13 case studies from EU countries. Interesting to look at different ways of organising accreditation and development of in-company trainers' skills.

Nothing like a contrast to set you thinking about how we do VET teacher/assessor training at home:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/15673.aspx>

29. Which way did they go?

We now have the seventh annual *On Track Survey 2009: the destinations of school leavers in Victoria – statewide report*. The main changes from 2008:

- a higher proportion at university (up from 44.1% to 45.4%)
- a lower proportion in apprenticeships or traineeships (down from 9.9% to 8.0%)
- a lower proportion in full-time employment (down from 11.5% to 8.9%)
- a higher proportion in part-time employment (from 12.6% to 13.6%).

The report charts the rise and rise of VETiS, from 11,805 enrolments in 1998 to 40,877 in 2008. You can read about HE participation by school sector: 64.4% for government schools; 73.9% for Catholic schools; and 84.5% for Independent schools. Conversely, the report notes, 'participation in VET courses is highest among government school students. For higher-level VET, the participation rate was highest for students from government schools (27.8%).' Lots to keep you entertained here:

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/voced/ontrack/destinations2009.pdf>

30. Curriculum for everyone

In late-May, the draft senior secondary curriculum was released by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. You've got until 30 July to have your two bobs worth. You can download the drafts here for English, mathematics, science and history:

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Home>

31. ICT literacy at Years 6 and 10

John Ainley from ACER has completed, for MCEEDYA, another iteration of the National assessment program with his *ICT literacy Years 6 and 10 report 2008*. Lazy to a tee, this is another occasion in which I've read only the Summary. The finding that struck me was this: 'At both Year 6 and Year 10 the tendency was for metropolitan students to record higher ICT literacy scores than students in provincial areas who, in turn recorded higher scores than those in remote areas.' Unless we are thoughtful we may disenfranchise learners from the bush whose participation in tertiary ed we want to increase: the drive to online learning and the simplistic view that all kids are ICT savvy may mislead us about the real work we need to do:

http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/NAP-ICTL_2008_report.pdf

32. Assessing teacher performance

In May, Ben Elson of the Grattan Institute released his report, *What teachers want: better teacher management*. Elson worked with data from the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey, giving voice to the views of teachers and principals about the adequacy of teacher performance evaluation.

It isn't a good look. We know that teachers are the single greatest resource in the school learning environment, and yet teachers themselves report being unclear about the purposes or value of current evaluation frameworks, think good teaching goes unrecognised, and reckon poor teaching is rarely called to account.

While I don't underestimate the challenges of effectively evaluating teacher performance and all the glorious intangibles involved, it does need to be a priority concern. Unless we do it, we can't reward good teaching, share best practice, or target professional learning. The report is here:

http://www.grattan.edu.au/publications/033_report_what_teachers_want.pdf

There was some good reporting of Elson's paper, and he took some industrial stick. Magically, days after Elson's report, along came the Victorian Auditor-General's report, *Managing teacher performance in government schools*. It gives strong backing to the views of teachers and principals which Elson reports, but this time from the system, funding outcomes and management perspectives. The Auditor-General suggests a more rigorous approach to assessment, while recognising that great strides have been taken. The seven recommendations made would be pretty standard fare for HR practitioners. The report is here:

http://download.audit.vic.gov.au/files/20100526_Teacher_performance_Audit_Summary.pdf

I was prompted by the flurry of observations on teacher performance to reach back into 2009 and retrieve the MCEEDYA report, *The performance management and development of teachers in Australian schools: report to the Teacher Quality Steering Group*. It records in awful clarity the mish-mash that is teacher performance assessment across the Australian jurisdictions and school systems. Blimey. This copy of the report is a bit scratchy – there's probably a better copy around, but this is the one that came to screen:

http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/The_Performance_Management_and_Development_of_Teachers_in_Aust_Schools.pdf

33. Lots of charts

EdSource's Charts & Data Index may prove a diverting website for some AAIRies. It's a collection of squads of tables, charts and graphs about the Californian education system:

http://www.edsource.org/data_index.html

34. Australia Unlimited

This page will now go from marginally relevant to south of Esperance in a dinghy. The Australian government has come up with a new brand identity for Oz: Australia Unlimited. Austrade based this branding on research outlined here:

http://www.brandaustralia.gov.au/documents/BA_Research_1.pdf

One of the sources for this research was the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index, which has Australia at number 9 in the top 50 overall brand rankings:

http://www.gfkamerica.com/newsroom/press_releases/single_sites/004729/index.en.html

Now, there must be something wrong with that survey, because NZ doesn't make it in the top 10. But never fear, you can always get the answer you want. Try Mercer's Quality of Living worldwide city rankings 2010, where Auckland comes in at number 4, Sydney at 10 and Wellington at 12:

http://www.mercer.com/qualityoflivingpr#City_Ranking_Tables

But that can't be right. Melbourne is number 18. Wait a mo. What about *The Economist*? Ah, that's the right order: Melbourne is number 2, Perth is at 5, and Sydney is number 9:

http://www.economist.com/blogs/gulliver/2009/06/liveable_vancouver

Rankings are so obvious, aren't they?

35. A Roman education

Apropos of absolutely nothing whatsoever, *Lapham's Quarterly* Fall 2008 number lists the monthly salary for teachers per pupil in Rome, circa 301:

- Elementary school: 50 denarii
- Arithmetic or shorthand: 75 denarii
- Greek or Latin literature and geometry: 200 denarii
- Rhetoric and public speaking: 250 denarii.

They were the days, weren't they? If you haven't tasted the pleasures of *Lapham's Quarterly*, I recommend you spoil yourself by visiting the website:

<http://www.laphamsquarterly.org/>

FOR THE PODDIES, VODDIES AND BLOGGIES

A productive thought

In case you thought my current obsession about productivity in education behind me, I regret to inform you of a Sydney Institute address by Craig Emerson (Minister for Small Business and Much Else Besides). In the podcast Emerson makes it clear that the easy gets in economic reform and productivity growth are behind us – education is more difficult, but it's got the best prospects:

<http://www.thesydneyinstitutepodcast.com/2010/04/08/TheHonCraigEmersonWhyProductivityGrowthNeedsCompetition.aspx>

Huffy goes to College

Huffington Post has devoted a section of its website to College – from the serious to the odd:

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/college/>

The best Commencement Speeches of 2010 are worth viewing:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/05/21/the-best-commencement-spe_n_584914.html

On the market for education

In this brief video Rod Jones, Managing Director of Navitas, outlines to investors the company's business strategy, scope and growth prospects:

http://www.navitas.com/media_centre.html

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