



Australasian Association for Institutional Research

Newsletter,
Funding is Gonski!

May 2013

President's Update

by Dave Marr

As I stated in the last Newsletter I plan to keep you informed as to what the AAIR Committee are doing to support your Association. The Committee met last week and discussed a range of matters:

- The **2013 Annual Forum in Perth** – plans are progressing well for the Forum although the venue is still to be finalised. However it is intended that this will be decided very shortly. As soon as we have more details, Liesha will send out a Bulletin.
- It was also agreed that the **2014 Annual Forum** will be held in Melbourne, the 2015 in New Zealand (the city still to be decided), the 2016 in Sydney and 2017 in either regional Queensland or Brisbane. We've been keen for a while to lock in cities further in advance and this will allow members to plan their future attendances at the Forums.
- The **2013 SIG Forum** will be held at the Fairmont Resort in Leura, NSW on 21st to 23rd August and will be hosted by the University of Western Sydney. Professor Shirley Alexander, DVC UTS (Learning and Teaching) has agreed to be the keynote speaker with Glen Bell acting as MC for the dinner. This Forum is shaping up to be a beauty so I'd encourage you to

start thinking about attending. Details of registration etc. will be released shortly.

- **Sharon Kitt** from the University of Ballarat has agreed to take on the role of JIR Editor. As her first task, Sharon provided the Committee with a briefing paper on where she sees JIR, its current shortcomings, the barriers to its future and some possible ways forward. This was extremely useful for the Committee. Sharon suggested that there may be opportunities to collaborate with other IR organisations in publishing a journal together and we'll definitely be exploring this idea over the months ahead.
- We plan to run **two quick surveys** over the next month or so: one looking at JIR; and the second looking at the Newsletter. In the months to come, we'll be sending out short surveys on your membership, the SIGS and the AAIR website.

The organisation remains financially strong with last year's Annual Forum returning ~\$18,000 to AAIR. Being in this strong position, there are a number of things we can do. We're always keen to hear your ideas so if you have any please feel free to pass them on.



Who Are We?

Back Left to Right: Dean Ward (Honorary Secretary), Don Johnston (Committee Member), Jeff Holmes (Honorary Treasurer), Kathie Rabel (Vice-President). Front Left to Right: Dave Marr (President), Bruce Guthrie (Committee Member), David De Bellis (Committee Member), and Andrea Jeffries (Committee Member).



Introducing...

David Carroll

If you've spent any time around AAIR in recent years, you are bound to have had the pleasure of interacting with David. I see David as an emerging leader in our field, always immersed in research, participating with those around him and genuinely engaged and passionate about what he does.

Remember, if you know someone inspiring please email me at editor@aair.org.au so I can harass them for a profile!



*David Carroll:
Senior Research Associate at
Graduate Careers Australia –
before the AAIR forum dinner.*

Name: David Carroll

Current Position: *Senior Research Associate at Graduate Careers Australia (GCA).*

Education:

- B Business
- Master of Business Research
- PhD in Economics (about to be complete!)

Career history:

David transitioned from a part time (while studying) to full time research assistant role after graduation at USQ. David spent the next 4 years at USQ before moving to a Research Associate role at GCA, and in 2010 was promoted to his current role.

In addition to the education and work experience that David has, he's also been busy producing papers in peer-reviewed journals, as well as authoring discussion papers, conference papers and research reports.

What's the best thing about publishing?

"For me, the best thing about publishing your own research is knowing that you have contributed in some small way to a greater body of knowledge".

While he acknowledges it is a lot of hard work, David promises that the months of hard work, and the potential rejections or iterations are well worth it in the end.

Where does David go for information?

EBSCO and JSTOR are usually David's first port of call when beginning a new research project. He also keeps his statistics and economics text books close at hand. Like me, David also finds great data on the Australian population and labour force on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' excellent website. Experiencing joy when visiting the ABS website isn't wrong, is it?!

Who does David approach for help?

Like most of us, David relies on his work colleagues (in this case the rowdy bunch from GCA). He tells me he's not just saying this because they read this newsletter...! David's also lucky to have a gifted PhD supervisor who is generous with his time.

What would David do if he were Prime Minister?

David says he would **"allocate additional funding for the conduct of basic research. Although it does not yield immediate commercial benefit, basic research is the key to future innovation and economic competitiveness"**. Couldn't have said it better myself, seems like a fundamental must-do to me.

What's the best thing about AAIR?

Surprisingly, David says the annual forum is the best thing about AAIR (clearly didn't prompt him about this Newsletter, did !!). **"Everyone brings along their best ideas, and I always leave with new knowledge that I can apply to my own work at GCA"**, says David. As a bonus, David also "hears", or recollects, that the AAIR forum dinner is a lot of fun.

What's David's best skill?

The ability to write and communicate his ideas.

What article does David promise me he'll write for a future Newsletter edition?

David does solemnly declare (he didn't realise it was this serious when I asked him) that he will write us all an article about *getting the most out of longitudinal data*. Anyone wishing to participate in this Newsletter by sharing ideas and or discussion pieces is very welcome to do so!

SPOILER ALERT

If you haven't found yourself at an AAIR forum dinner yet (you should go this year!), you'd probably be surprised to hear this over achiever has a reputation for letting his hair down (or his tie as this case is). David is often found at these dinners tie tied commando style around his forehead cutting loose on the dance floor.

No longer confined to one career, professionals can often change tacks during their life. In his next career you'll find David as an astronomer, a good one at that apparently!

Why not take a look at David's latest publication ([Over-education of recent higher education graduates: new Australian panel evidence](#)) which stems from his main research interest, over-education.

Higher Education@home

by Emma Liversidge

1. Conor King, Executive Director at *Innovative Research Universities* (IRU) kicked off a lively discussion in *The Conversation* after suggesting [ATARs could be done away with](#). If you're new to this area you'll get some good perspectives from the article and adjoining comments. While I think there is a demand/supply issue that it doesn't account for, my concern would be the ability of Universities to deliver quality, something which requires considerable investment.
2. *The Australian* published an opinion piece on performance measures in institutions by Dean of Science at UNSW, Merlin Crossley. "Academics pride themselves on critical thinking and strive to identify even the tiniest flaws in otherwise useful metrics. But if everything that is imperfect were discarded our universe would be an empty place", Crossley wrote.
3. A valuable summary of research projects, [Research messages 2012](#), has been published by *NCVER*. Themes and highlights from this collection include:
 - a. *the value of completing qualifications*
 - b. *trends in the labour market*
 - c. *pathways within and between VET, higher education and work*
 - d. *continuing education for workers*
 - e. *the education participation and experiences of equity groups*
 - f. *the educational experiences of school students*
 - g. *challenges faced by training providers and the broader tertiary education sector*
4. Want more information on [the online evolution](#), read a report by Andrew Norton from the Grattan Institute, on the online revolution, its potential and challenges.
5. Is big data scary? It possibly will be after you read this [article](#). In addition to privacy and cybercrime issues, the article refers to the three V's that define big data: volume, velocity, and variety. As the article goes on to state, we must then convert the coal in to diamonds. "Data alone is of limited value. Only when the disparate array of data sources is merged, consolidated, analysed and interpreted does its potential value emerge."
6. Feel like dabbling in the prestige comparison between teaching and research? *The Conversation* recently published an article about university's options for [specialisation](#). From my patch of grass it appears the ability to do this may be driven by market share and brand, and also the flexibility and willingness of the system to allow this.
7. Noticed the procession of articles concerned about the quality of reporting within the *Excellence in Research for Australia*? If not you may want to review a couple of articles in *The Australian* on [clever reporting](#) and [maintaining integrity](#).
8. Take a look at the [2012 graduate outlook report](#) delivered by Graduate Careers Australia. The report examines graduate recruitment and trends from an employers perspective.
9. Weak numbers in science, technology, and health degrees? Less so since the demand driven system according to a media release by the *IRU* Executive Director in March. Science, technology and health profession degrees are reported to have grown at a much higher rate than business, law and arts degrees.
10. [Dream of being an algorithmist?](#) Your opportunity may arrive soon enough according to an article in *QUARTZ* on the needs from Big Data.
11. *The Australian* published an opinion piece from Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of UNSW, Iain Martin last week on the [greater lee-way Chinese Universities have in operating by comparison to Australian Higher Education](#). Again the point has been made that policy settings risk the system heading on a "path to mediocrity" when what is optimal is diverse institutional missions.
12. Want to know what *ACER* has been up to? Take a look at their [bi-annual update](#) which provides an overview of their



contributions to higher education research and development.

13. *AAIR* is committed to building the capacity of our people and profession. Formal learning plays an important role in this, and we are delighted to support the new subject [Institutional Research in Tertiary Education](#) being taught for the first time in second semester 2013 by Professor Vic Borden (Indiana University; former President AIR) and A/Professor Hamish Coates (University of Melbourne, ACER). The subject is available for mid-year entry, and is embedded in the internationally delivered online Graduate Certificate in Quality Assurance. Fees are \$3500 and prerequisites are being waived. An information webinar is being held on 30 May, or for more information about the program please contact [Dr Chinh Nguyen](#) or call +61 3 8344 0756.



14. If you want to learn more about what *TEQSA* is up to, you might want to take a look at their [YouTube channel](#) featuring video's about its role, regulatory processes and approach.
15. Catch up on the soon due *Third party arrangements*, provider briefings and other *TEQSA* related happenings by downloading the [April TEQSA update](#).

Funding is Gonski!

I know the phrase isn't original, but I can't help but continue to appreciate it. It seemed a no-brainer to make funding as this editions main feature.

In mid-April the [government announced](#) an **efficiency dividend**, the removal of the **upfront student fee discount** and bonus for voluntary repayment of **HELP debts**, capping of tax deductions for **self-education expenses**, and the transfer of **student start-up scholarships** into loans that are now repayable as measures used to help fund the Gonski school reforms.

A barrage of feedback from inside and outside the sector occurred as a result of the government's announcement. Risks to quality, to access and equity, to future innovation and economic prosperity, and to leadership in Australian Higher Education against the global context are just some of the concerns raised. If you haven't already investigated this, the [May 2013 Go8 newsletter](#) provided a brief explanation of the cuts, and the Chair of Universities Australia Chair, [Sandra Harding](#), is an interesting watch in last week's National Press Club address.

In addition to the feedback the sector sent back to government, [students and staff rallied across the country in protest to the cuts](#).

To add to this, the release of [Future Focus: 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy](#) indicates a very high return for the economy and all Australians

Vice Chancellor of Melbourne University, Glyn Davis, backed calls for the government to consider [halting the agenda to grow student numbers](#) so money could be used to support quality. Worthy of more than a moment's thought in restrictive financial environments, one could think.

Despite our squawking, the release of the Budget this week confirmed the cuts to higher education. Some Budget sweeteners included funding for the operation of research facilities, future fellows, and additional diploma and masters level places but it goes a fraction of the distance unfortunately.

If you're after some expert opinions on the Budget more broadly you might want to take a look at [The Conversation's Federal budget 2013: expert reactions](#) article and comments.

Additional to the loss of funding to support the quality and future of Higher Education and the economy, Andrew Norton is right when writing that "[frequent fiddling undermines policies that are retained as well as those that are cut, as nobody knows what will go next.](#)"

FAST FACTS

\$26 for every \$1

Check out the [Future Focus: 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy](#) for more information on the return value to the economy and the lifting of national productivity. Chief Executive of Universities Australia, Belinda Robinson, is quoted in a media release stating the report shows "each extra dollar invested in tertiary education grows the economy by about \$26 and tax revenues by \$8."

2.8 million

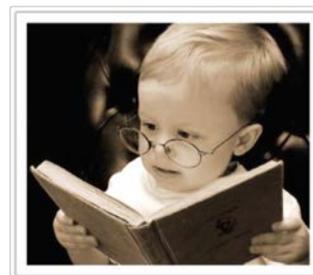
The estimated shortfall of higher skilled qualifications by 2025 according to the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency.

Cut the Red Tape



2000 working days!

If you're worried about the excruciating realities in to the cost of government reporting requirements take a look at the [Review of reporting requirements for universities](#). "*The dead weight of unnecessary, redundant and duplicative, regulation and reporting not only leads to waste in the allocation of university and government resources, it also diverts substantial funds away from the core business of universities - teaching, scholarship and research.*" said Belinda Robinson, Chief Executive of Universities Australia. Alternatively you may rejoice in the potential of a whole new coalition government world as Shadow Minister for Universities, Brett Mason, [promises cuts to red tape!](#)



Interesting reads

I recently purchased *Raising the Stakes – Gambling with the future of Universities* the book written by Coaldrake and Stedman of QUT. While I haven't got far, I'll be sure to give you an update in the next newsletter on its key themes. In the meantime, if anyone reads anything of value I'd be keen to get some reviews of articles, publications and books – send your feedback to editor@aaair.org.au.

POSITIONS VACANT



Seeking another opportunity in Institutional Research? Try our [Opportunities](#) webpage for current vacancies in the profession

Looking for some training and development?

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

Higher Education Abroad

by Emma Liversidge

1. Want a wrap up on major national movements on the Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings? Take a peek at [University World News](#). It shows Australia has blessed the top 100 list with another two of our Universities, congratulations to Monash University and the University of New South Wales
2. Ouch! "[Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique's oldest and largest training institution, has forced sixth-year medical students to retake modules, as punishment for participating in a doctors' strike in January.](#)" The strike was in relation to doctors salaries, and went for nine days.
3. *The Economist Intelligence Unit*, a business analysis publisher, recognises teachers who challenge and inspire by holding a "teach-off" with the winner awarded \$100,000 and the title of [Business Professor of the Year](#). Not surprisingly the competition is popular with the latest round involving 222 professors from 31 countries.
4. The author of [the global challenge of scaling up higher education](#) provides an alternative perspective from those who believe MOOCs will be the marker of extinction for Higher Education. The article reports India aims to reach the global standard of 30% of the population with a university education by 2020. This would expand enrolment from 13 to 40 million, and if countries around the world respond alike the shortage will not be demand, it'll be supply.
5. For some relief on higher education take a look at a great infographic on [wealth inequality in America](#). As one of my colleagues responded, "gobsmackingly awesome"!
6. Ladies unite; a [manifesto for change](#) for women in higher education has been endorsed at the Going Global 2013 conference. According to University World News: "Hong Kong: zero. Japan: 2.3. India: three. Kuwait: three. Turkey: seven. UK: 14. Australia: 17. The numbers tell a story. They are the percentages of universities that have women as leaders in a range of jurisdictions around the world."
7. The [Centre for Applied Data Analytics Research \(CeDAR\)](#), a government funded research centre, is being established in Ireland for big data and analytics. Its purpose: to lead to jobs and new business opportunities for Ireland.
8. You might want to check out [Big Data Now: 2012 Edition](#) which looks at the reality of big data. This free O'Reilly report covers essential information, expert guidance, examples in action, and thoughts on how big data may evolve.
9. [Which? University](#) is a free, independent UK website launched in 2012 for potential students. Users of this site were surveyed showing [prospective students focus on course content, academic reputation, distance from home and quality of academic facilities](#). Interestingly the least researched element was flexible learning options, only 5% of respondents researched this aspect.
10. New Zealand has announced [the student loan repayment rate will rise](#) from 10 to 12 cents in the dollar with the rise estimated to save the Government \$184 million over four years.
11. Take a look at the AIR Special Features page for an idea of [trends in Institutional Research from AIR members around the world](#)
12. [Global Universities and their Impact – Report II](#) by the European University Association, reports that rankings are not only increasing pressure on universities, they risk overburdening them and they're also "beginning to impact on public policy making". Not surprisingly the [main limitations of rankings surround efforts to measure teacher performance](#).
13. The amount of international talent Swiss universities are drawing is reported to be causing some significant challenges. [With some of the lowest student fees in the world, universities are bulging at the seams](#) and needing additional funding, while tax payers support the financial brunt of international students. If only our costs of living and the Australian dollar caused us this kind of problem!
14. In the last edition I mentioned a US initiative called *Rave* which was all about helping students with funding their education while studying. [SoFi](#) is another innovator in this domain by connecting students and alumni "through a dedicated lending pool and an original social community approach where all students, alumni, and schools" and are reported to benefit.

Well that's it from me this edition. Until next time!

Emma
AAIR eNewsletter Editor

