

The National Research Officers' Conference 2009

Developing Innovative Evidence Gathering Tools and Research Frameworks to Guide Future Policy Directions

Liquid Learning is delighted to present this highly informative conference which will provide practical advice on how Research Officers can become more effective in all aspects of their role.

FEATURED SPEAKERS



Heather Burns Manager, Information Skills Program
Australian Bureau of Statistics



Dr Laura Dan Committee Member, ACT Chapter
Australasian Research Management Society



Professor Meredith Edwards Member and Former Inaugural Director
National Institute of Governance



Carol Ey Acting Branch Manager, Research and Analysis
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and
Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)



Dr Matthew Gray Deputy Director, Research
Australian Institute of Family Studies



Alix Goodwin Executive Director
Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, New South
Wales



Anne Hampshire Manager, Research and Social Policy
Mission Australia



Dr Elizabeth Hartnell-Young Group Manager, Research
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development,
Victoria



Professor Graeme Hugo Director GISCA
University of Adelaide



Dr Patrick Kilby Lecturer School of Archaeology and Anthropology
Australian National University



Dr Andrew Pik Consultant and Former General Manager Engagement,
Collaborative Research Centers, CSIRO



Dr Judy Putt General Manager, Research Services
Australian Institute of Criminology



Dr Fiona Spencer Survey Team Leader
Tourism Research Australia



Dr Bryony Wakefield Committee Member, ACT Chapter
Australasian Research Management Society



Dr Greg Wickham eResearch Program Manager
Australian Academic Research Network (AARnet)

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Australasian Research
Management Society Inc

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27 & 28 May 2009
The Hotel Realm, Canberra

EXPLORE

- Expanding Traditional Skill Sets Towards Current Research Demands
- Developing Existing Frameworks for Enhanced Performance
- Streamlining the Research Process Across Multi-Disciplinary Teams
- Understanding and Utilising Emerging Research Technologies

PLUS WORKSHOPS

Two Separately Bookable, Half-Day
Workshops on 29 May 2009

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Day One 27 May 2009

8.30 - 8.55 **Registration and Morning Coffee**8.55 - 9.00 **Official Welcome & Opening Remarks from the Chair**9.00 - 9.45 **OPENING KEYNOTE COMMENTARY****Informing Decisions - Where Policy Begins**

If evidence-based policy is shaping the world we live in, then the ways in which research supports and interacts with policy makers is more important than ever before. Often working with different constraints and priorities, obstacles to working and communicating effectively are common between those who gather information and those who act on it. This session aims to:

- Demystify the mindset of policy makers
- Outline methods to institute effective communication channels
- Provide guidance in drawing attention to actionable data
- Suggest stages of policy development most amenable to research findings

Professor Meredith Edwards Member and Former Inaugural Director

National Institute of Governance

9.45 - 10.00 **Questions and Discussion**10.00 - 10.45 **CASE STUDY****Building Commitment to Research**

In tough budgetary times, research expenditure is sometimes seen as a luxury. This session will look at strategies to ensure that investment in research is seen as core to the development of high quality policy advice and, hence, as important to the ongoing functioning of the organisation as IT systems or investment in staff development. Strategies to be discussed include:

- Assuring the quality and relevance of research
- Maximising the accessibility and useability of research outcomes
- Developing ongoing relationships with researchers

Carol Ey Acting Branch Manager, Research and Analysis

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)

10.45 - 11.00 **Questions and Discussion**11.00 - 11.15 **Morning Tea**11.15 - 12.00 **CASE STUDY****Keeping Track - Investigating Trends and Taking Action**

Methods for dealing with crime and administering justice are two subjects which society rarely agrees on. Deciding future directions for crime and justice policy should, according to government, be based upon relevant factual

evidence. The primary function of the Australian Institute of Criminology is to provide research in order to determine the provision of appropriate services and protection for the community. Consider:

- What makes research policy-relevant?
- How can established monitoring programs be managed to remain current?
- Which new technologies are providing support to research communities?

Dr Judy Putt General Manager, Research Services
Australian Institute of Criminology

12.00 - 12.15 **Questions and Discussion**12.15 - 1.15 **Networking Lunch**1.15 - 2.00 **CASE STUDY****Developing Strategies to Support Research-Informed Policy**

The Department of Education and Early Childhood (VIC) has continued to develop strategic research priorities and frameworks to ensure that its research is of high quality and meets the current and future needs of the Department in developing policy and practice. This session looks at work currently being undertaken by the Department to broaden and improve research activity and outcomes. Consider methods to:

- Design and implement research frameworks
- Deliver enhanced services through promoting an evidence-based approach
- Support innovation through research activities
- Create criteria for assessing research quality

Dr Elizabeth Hartnell-Young Group Manager, Research

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria

2.00 - 2.15 **Questions and Discussion**2.15 - 3.00 **EXPERT COMMENTARY****Creating Successful Collaborations - Working Together Towards Better Understanding**

Drawing on his wide experience of cooperative research, Dr Andrew Pik discusses facilitating and managing beneficial collaborations between a broad range of external bodies. By bringing together organisations, the potential impact of research can be greater felt through shared knowledge. Focus on:

- Assessing the benefits, limitations and pitfalls of collaborations
- Effective structuring for collaboration
- Building and maintaining relationships

Dr Andrew Pik Consultant and Former General Manager Engagement, Collaborative Research Centres, CSIRO

PLUS WORKSHOPS!

TWO Post-conference workshops on 29 May 2009

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Receive up to \$200 off registration if you register and pay by 13 March 2009

3.00 - 3.15 **Questions and Discussion**

3.15 - 3.30 **Afternoon Tea Break**

3.30 - 4.15 **CASE STUDY**

Divided Knowledge-Accessing, Sharing and Utilising Collective Resources

Where the ever increasing digitalisation of our world is providing huge potential for data sharing, growing digital collections are also creating immense challenges in relation to collation, management, ownership and access. The Australian Academic and Research Network (AARnet) has the long term goal of providing technological network solutions and services for the benefit of the research community. Discover the potential of:

- Creating Cost-Effective eResearch Networks
- Future Security and Data Protection capabilities
- Understanding Light Paths - the Next Stage for Collaborative Connection

Dr Greg Wickham Program Manager, eResearch Australian Academic and Research Network (AARnet)

4.15 - 4.30 **Questions and Discussion**

4.30 - 5.15 **CASE STUDY**

Widening the Net - Developing Existing Frameworks for Better Performance

Tourism Research Australia aims to support the needs of visitors, industry and government through improved decision making. Through widening the scope of their research capacity TRA is seeking to provide increased value to key stakeholders. Discover methods to:

- Cost-effectively increase sample size
- Overcome the language barrier
- Produce supporting interview material to aid complex respondent requirements
- Use supplementary topics

Dr Fiona Spencer Survey Team Leader
Tourism Research Australia

5.15 - 5.30 **Questions and Discussion**

5.30 **Concluding Remarks from the Chair**

5.30 - 6.30 **Networking Drinks**

8.30 - 8.55 **Morning Coffee**

8.55 - 9.00 **Opening Remarks from the Chair**

9.00 - 9.45 **CASE STUDY**

Driving Innovation - Promoting Evidence-Based Policy through Research

Historically, a one-size-fits-all approach often applied to community services; complex needs were not addressed and vulnerable groups had no voice in changing the assistance offered to them. These days, the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care is striving to implement policy based on skilled research. Drawing on strong ties with health agencies and their experience of implementing evidence-based policy, the Department has built up a wealth of knowledge in the area of community engagement. The challenges which have been addressed and overcome provide valuable insight for all associated with current social analysis. Focus on:

- Effectively managing research outsourcing
- Avoiding difficulties with research services - Troubleshooting when things go wrong
- Furthering research indications through pilot programs

Alix Goodwin Executive Director
Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, New South Wales

9.45 - 10.00 **Questions and Discussion**

10.00 - 10.45 **INTERACTIVE ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION**

Maintaining Research Standards

When engaging private sector firms to conduct research, the public sector must pay attention to the quality of study undertaken. Research organisations accredited by various societies can offer assurance of the level of standard to expect but how are these standards monitored within the public sector and what can be done when standards do not meet expectations? Drawing on the views of those reflecting vendor, client and regulator perspectives, this session seeks to address current and future priorities in maintaining research standards. A discussion of present initiatives will draw attention to strategies already in place whilst also allowing an opportunity for service users to raise questions regarding the implementation and regulation of these.

10.45 - 11.00 **Morning Tea**

11.00 - 11.45 **CASE STUDY**

Analysing Advocacy - The Role of NGOs within Policy-Centred Research

Independent of government and other profit-making organisations, Mission Australia seeks to broadcast the voices of the vulnerable and disadvantaged to ensure their representation within policy making decisions. The annual National Survey of Young Australians is just one

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Supporting Innovation whilst Maintaining Standards

example of how Mission Australia aims to gather views which feed into regular policy submissions and major reports. Explore:

- The development of NGO based research
- Complex stakeholder engagement - Accessing remote and vulnerable groups to gain critical insight
- The importance of independent study in reviewing policy efficacy

Anne Hampshire Manager, Research and Social Policy
Mission Australia

3.15 - 4.00 CASE STUDY

Getting the Message Across - Transforming Research to Policy

The Australian Institute of Family Studies is an Australian Government statutory agency in the portfolio of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It was established in February 1980 with the role of conducting research into factors that affect family wellbeing and communicating findings to policy makers, service providers and the broader community. In this final session, Matthew Gray will focus on:

- Undertaking policy relevant research
- Effectively communicating findings
- Establishing effective information services for policy makers, service providers and the wider community

Dr Matthew Gray Deputy Director, Research
Australian Institute of Family Studies

4.00 - 4.15 Questions and Discussion

4.15 Concluding Remarks from the Chair and Close of the Conference

11.45 - 12.00 Questions and Discussion

12.00 - 1.00 Networking Lunch

1.00 - 1.45 CASE STUDY

All Together Now - Engaging Communities through Participatory Research

With current cost-cutting methodologies moving towards greater use of online resources, it is important to consider the value of participatory research; where communities may more greatly benefit from involvement in the design, execution and reporting of studies. Drawing on over twenty years experience researching marginalised groups of society, Dr Patrick Kilby highlights the dangers of ignoring the needs of those not represented by digital technology. Look at:

- Designing effective focus groups
- Generating data which genuinely reflects community need
- Building trust between researchers and communities

Dr Patrick Kilby Lecturer, School of Archaeology and Anthropology
Australian National University (ANU)

1.45 - 2.00 Questions and Discussion

2.00 - 2.45 CASE STUDY

Utilising Geographic Information Systems in Research

Computerised Mapping is leading the way in providing greater opportunity for analysis of data. Allowing comparative relationships to be drawn between locations and key factors, computer mapping can give accurate insights into future populations. In this session:

- Consider the implications of GIS and its use in policy intervention
- Explore the ways in which data can be presented
- Look to the future of national GIS research in planning for future communities

Professor Graeme Hugo Director, GISCA
University of Adelaide

2.45 - 3.00 Questions and Discussion

3.00 - 3.15 Afternoon Tea Break

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The 'National Research Officers' Conference 2009' is a unique two-day conference intended for researchers and policy specialists engaged in public sector work. The central goal of the conference is to promote professional development through increased awareness of streamlined processes and clearly defined 'best practice' paradigms. Understanding advances in key technologies and methodological capabilities is the underlying theme of our conference.

The challenges and successes discussed through speakers' case studies will provide the main framework of the conference and allow delegates to consider approaches to their own fields.

This conference will provide ample opportunities for networking with a combination of interactive sessions and social functions. There will also be the opportunity to participate in hands-on practical workshops whereby participants can address the issues as a group with the assistance of an expert facilitator. These workshops have been scheduled on a third day attached to the event (May 29).

The event is delivered in a peer-to-peer format in which leading practitioners will share their experiences by way of a forty-five minute case study which conveys the key lessons surrounding a particular issue, or obstacles that researchers commonly face. There will also be a small number of expert commentary sessions from specialist research firms, solution providers and academia.

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Workshops 29 May 2009

9.00 - 12.00 WORKSHOP A

Statistics for Qualitative Researchers

Ever flick to the back of the report and skim the numbers? You're not alone. This specially designed workshop has been put together with the needs of qualitative researchers in mind and offers the opportunity to increase your understanding and interpretation of statistics in a supportive environment where no prior knowledge is assumed. Participants will develop an understanding of the role of statistics in developing evidence-based policy. When do statistics form good evidence and when do they not? The workshop will introduce participants to the ABS's Data Quality Framework as a simple tool to determine when statistics are likely to lead to good evidence - and good policy decisions. Through the use of engaging materials, learn to become more confident with statistical concepts. This workshop aims to:

- Discuss the role of statistics in evidence-based policy
- Make informed interpretations and employ critical analysis
- Provide participants with some tools to access a range of statistics
- Provide participants with a simple guide to make statistics meaningful

Expert Facilitator: Heather Burns Manager, Information Skills Program

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Heather Burns has worked with the Australian Bureau of Statistics for many years. Over the last two years she has specialised in training clients to better use ABS Websites and Products. With an academic background in geography, Heather demonstrates particular skill in social statistics. Heather's sessions also include introducing basic statistical literacy concepts to clients, to help them use ABS data more effectively in their research, analysis, program planning and evaluation.

12.00 - 1.00 NETWORKING LUNCH

1.00 - 4.00 WORKSHOP B

Essentials for Effective Research Management

The Australasian Research Management Society's principal focus is to promote professional standards and improve the interface between research, management and end objectives. Relative to all involved in providing research support, this informative session looks at how we can better maintain the quality of work carried out through employing strategies to provide improved foundations for study. Explore ways to:

- Source collaborative networks and funding for research
- Identify key areas of risk and take steps to strengthen research integrity
- Engender attitudes which value the importance of unbiased research
- Uphold standards in a multi-party environment

Expert Facilitators: Dr Laura Dan Committee Member, ACT Chapter

Dr Bryony Wakefield Committee Member, ACT Chapter

Australasian Research Management Society

ACT chapter committee members of the Australasian Research Management Society, Dr Laura Dan and Dr Bryony Wakefield are the joint Managers of the Research Management Policy and Training Development section of the Australian National University's (ANU) Research Office. They have both spent more than thirteen years in the tertiary education sector developing a track record in research and research management.

During June 2008 – January 2009 Bryony and Laura jointly acted as Director of the Office of Sponsor Research at the ANU where they led a team of dedicated staff to provide the highest quality research management befitting a world-class research university. In June 2008 they won the first prize for a poster on the ANU model of research management at the International Network of Research Management Societies in Liverpool, UK.

WHO WILL ATTEND

- Research Officers
- Social/Public Policy Researchers
- Market Researchers
- Research Managers
- Survey Managers
- Policy Officers
- Policy Advisors
- Program Managers
- Branch Managers
- Stakeholder Engagement Specialists
- R&D Specialists

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No. #	Options	Standard Rate	Early Bird Rate*	Super Saver Rate **	Group Discounts Available:				
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Conference + 1 Workshop (2.5 days)	\$2095 + GST = (\$2304.50)	\$1995 + GST = (\$2194.50)	\$1895 + GST = (\$2084.50)	5 - 7 people: 15% off Standard Rate				
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