

SA Chapter Launch: Runs on the Board in Adelaide

June 9, 2015 by SIMNA SA organising committee

SIMNA drew a sensational crowd at the end of a long working week. Instead of heading home to cozy lounge rooms and hot water bottles on Friday 29 May 2015, more than 50 people chose to ring in the weekend with fellow measurement and data enthusiasts.

SIMNA SA's launch event was honored with the presence and support of Adelaide based Australian Bureau of Statistics Regional Director, Dean Bowley and SA-NT DataLink's Associate Director Chris Radbone to talk about the social impact measurement challenge from a data perspective. More on that after the break.

Thanks to our generous venue supporter, the [Australian Centre for Community Services Research](#), **Ian Goodwin-Smith** welcomed us to the student hub at Flinders University overlooking Victoria Square, in the heart of Adelaide. **Chris Arbon**, Deputy Chair of SIMNA and Senior Manager at UnitingCare Wesley Bowden, (a finalist in the 2014 Impact Measurement Awards), ably compered the evening. Chris started by introducing the Chair of the local Chapter, **Cheryle Gray** to talk about SIMNA, her experience and what the network aims to do.



Above L-R: Ian Goodwin Smith, Cheryle Gray, Chris Arbon

Cheryle is a passionate social impact measurement practitioner and works for the City of Charles Sturt in the Western suburbs of Adelaide. Trained in Social Return on Investment and a self-confessed process/framework-nerd, Cheryle first came across SIMNA at the 2014 Measuring Social Outcomes Conference in Sydney. Cheryle was instrumental in the development of the SIMNA SA Chapter and continues to work tirelessly in supporting community development workers in her portfolio to improve the social connectedness, engagement and life skills of residents in her local area. Cheryle encouraged everyone to become a member of SIMNA to stay up to date with events in 2015. Membership is free.

First innings: Contemporary efforts

Chris handed us over to **Matthew Winefield** (right) who won the toss. The Director of Economic and Commercial Division of the [Department of the Premier and Cabinet](#) spoke about how the South Australian Government is keeping their end up in the push for improved measurement through their exploration of a Social Impact Bond. In recognition of the global movement to find new forms of capital and models to support new classes of investments the SA Government has called for expressions of interest from the SA community to find an investment-ready program to pilot SA's first Social Impact Bond. Matthew has engaged the ABS to assist with the tricky assessment of the measurement methodologies that underpin the bond proposals. We eagerly await more information from the SA Premier's Department.



Matthew Winefield, Department of the Premier and Cabinet



Richard Pagliaro, Together SA

Richard Pagliaro (left) from [Together SA](#) was in to bat, invited by Chris to give some context to the role of SIMNA in SA from his perspective and share how he sees it supporting the work of many organisations. Together SA is the organisation that is leading collective impact initiatives in South Australia. Richard shared his thoughts on these challenges using marvelous examples of process improvement from the engineering sector and more impressively, used an analogy of a bubbling cauldron (probably not a gaming reference) to describe the creativity required to address complex social problems.

Importantly, Together SA is here to foster the five conditions of collective impact success, one of which is shared measurement. Richard recognizes that while this work is complex, difficult and often stumps us, we are in a strong position in South Australia to move the needle on some wicked social problems and SIMNA will play a vital role in bringing information and people together to meet this challenge.

Second innings: The deal with data

Our major sponsor, the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#) took us back to school to talk about the accuracy of the ABS geographical information through census data and the index of relative socio-economic disadvantage. **Dean Bowley** applauded the Australian Government's investment of \$250m over five years which will transform the ABS infrastructure, systems and processes used to produce these statistics. SA continues to bat above the average with the ABS working closely with stakeholders to shape their ever-improving data service. Watch this space; big things to come.



Dean Bowley, Australian Bureau of Statistics



Chris Radbone SA-NT DataLink

Local champion [SA-NT DataLink](#) was heralded the 'quiet-achiever' with an impressive batting average. **Chris Radbone** walked us through their fabulous service which helps social researchers and policy makers use linked data to better understand the characteristics of communities. SA-NT DataLink Research Advisors provide access to linked, de-identified data, from various government sources while preserving the highest standards of privacy and safety. This can then be used for planning the best services. New capabilities in linking data make it possible for government to work more closely together to provide services which are more joined up around the needs of communities.

These speakers generated a positively electric vibe among the delegates. Each speaker had an important message to share.

“the work of the SIMNA is necessary, supported and welcome in South Australia”

...and while much work is ahead of us, we are in a strong position to get some remarkable runs on the board.



The [Social Impact Investment Network SA](#) Chair, **Paul Madden** needed no introduction from Chris. An undeniable guru in advancing the important issues in social services in South Australia for decades (not out). SIINSA is also a member network, disseminating knowledge of the global movement toward impact investing. Paul also recognised the need for improved, more sophisticated measurement to garner investor confidence, sharing that nationally there is a dearth of investment-ready models with robust measurement in place to offer up as pilots for eager investors.

We are all sympathetic to this need and delighted to welcome SIINSA as a strong supporter of SIMNA. The energy soared like a floater at the end of the second innings as Paul shared a joke and quoted a fellow speaker who, off his own bat, accidentally quoted himself, which apparently is near the knuckle. We broke for tea on a high note and enjoyed the fabulous catering from [Vite Gourmet to Go](#) with genuine thanks to our sponsors ABS and SA-NT DataLink.



Paul Madden, SIINSA

The wrap up

We recognize that while the drivers of improved measurement may be related to quality of data, collaboration for impact and the ever elusive proof (and associated warm-fuzzy feeling) that we've done a good job, we can't sidestep the obvious end game of attracting resources to the social sector to help those who are less better-off than ourselves. Measurement matters and good measurement is needed now, join the network and let's hit this for six.

Future events

SA's social impact measurement practitioners can look forward to an exciting line-up of training opportunities in 2015. In our inaugural year of operation we have planned:

- A July event to engage the membership in a dialogue about the years ahead.
- For later in the year to invite Mark Friedman to run a session on RBA™
- Further, we anticipate another international guest speaker before the year end.

The details of events will be provided to SIMNA SA members when confirmed. Attendees and interested parties are encouraged to sign up via the [SIMNA website](#) for a free membership to ensure we can stay in touch.



Hitting challenges for six - How's that for openers!



SIMNA SA Chapter volunteers are supported by
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