



## August 2009

Focus on London 2009 launched

Yorkshire Futures publish think piece on former coalfields

Spotlight on... the South West

emda launches "The East Midlands in 2009"

NERIP relaunch website

IEM report on plans to build analytical capacity in the region

Insight East continues to make an impact

SEE-IN moves to a new home

NWRIU conference report

NERIP highlight recent environmental research

West Midlands: Fit for the Future?

Identifying the top ten interventions to cut carbon emissions

## ARO network event - the value of getting together

The ARO network event on June 23<sup>rd</sup> brought together 40 colleagues from around the country. The day started with an overview of the policy landscape around the 'analysis of place', from Derrick Johnstone. Steve Bond from ONS outlined the work that has been happening to develop area classifications, based on Census data, which can be used to bring depth and context to a wide range of information. The afternoon session, led by Nic Suggit from the National School for Government, provided an interactive session exploring pressures on policy-makers, and how research does (or does not!) contribute to that process.

Attendees had a chance to win a £25 voucher by completing a short survey, both before and after the event, with Ed Poulter from Yorkshire Futures and Tessa Lambri from Insight East emerging victorious.

Throughout the day, colleagues had a chance to see a "Window onto Work" – a five minute presentation outlining a recent piece of work

done by an observatory. Bec Riley, Head of the North West Regional Intelligence Unit, showcased the "Places" work which informs much of their current programme of work. John Mooney from the North East Regional Information Partnership provided an insight into the way that NERIP are shaping their approach to functional economic geography, working with partners in their region. Helena Duignan from the West Midlands Regional Observatory shared the learning from work the observatory has been doing on economic inclusion, showing that by starting from an identified shared need, buy-in is achieved from the beginning of the process. Ed Poulter demonstrated the futures work that Yorkshire Futures have undertaken, talking about the impact of scenario and future planning in the region.

Whether or not you were able to attend the meeting, it would be really valuable to know the kinds of topics that you'd find it useful to cover in future meetings – drop a line to the Coordinator.

## Events coming soon

### September 2009

**2nd:** Data sharing, 1pm, Nottingham

**15th:** Developments in Geodemographic Visualisation, 1.30pm, London

**16th:** Digital inclusion: tackling exclusion & promoting life chances, 9am, Birmingham

**30th:** Evaluation - use in policymaking, 10am, Derby

**30th:** Why does economic policy need to take the environment into account?, 11am, Newcastle upon Tyne

### October 2009

**7th:** Changes to the Office for National Statistics' SIC codes, 10am, Newcastle upon Tyne

**20th:** West Midlands Regional Observatory Annual Conference, 9.30am, Sutton Coldfield

**21st:** Environment, well being and healthy lifestyle 2009, Stoke on Trent

Further details on these, and other, events can be found on the Events calendar on the ARO website

This quarterly newsletter is designed to regularly update the Association of Regional Observatories and stakeholders with current events and news of note. Please feel free to circulate this to those who might be interested. Submissions for the next newsletter should be made by the end of October to [nicola@regenerationem.co.uk](mailto:nicola@regenerationem.co.uk).

## “Focus on London 2009” launches to wide acclaim

The Greater London Authority launched its annual compendium of statistics for London on 13th July. The report was edited by Gareth Piggott from the Data Management and Analysis Group (DMAG) at the GLA. The report analyses a range of data from demographic, social and economic datasets, that relate to current key issues and aims to provide an evidence base for London’s decision makers.



City of London (as seen from the DMAG office)

DMAG worked with a range of colleagues from organisations such as the London Development Agency, ONS, London Health Observatory, Metropolitan Police, London Ambulance Service, and the London Fire Brigade.

There has been a statistical compendium on London produced virtually every year since 1890, though it has been titled Focus on London only since 1997 when ONS began producing it in conjunction with the London Research Centre. This is the second year that the GLA have produced the report independently of ONS, though ONS were happy for us to continue using their ‘Focus on’ brand name, which we like to think is a tribute to our professionalism.

The report begins with some interesting and quirky top ten rankings, covering anything from longest rivers to tallest buildings. Following this are thirteen chapters, which provide an outline of the key statistics for each theme. Each chapter begins with a set of bullet points which summarise those findings.

Some interesting facts from the report:

- London earns £8.2bn from overseas

A point of considerable interest is the number of people leaving London to live elsewhere in the UK almost halving since 2004 (year ending June 2008). Along with house price trends, this appears to be one of the first recorded indications of the impact of the credit crunch on mobility.

tourists, five times as much as the next UK region, the South East;

- Heathrow is the 3rd busiest airport in the world;
- A quarter of cinema admissions in the UK are in London;
- Overseas-born women account for over half (54 per cent) of London’s births, the next highest region being the West Midlands at 21 per cent;
- Almost one-third of London employees work in just three per cent of London’s wards;
- The average deposit paid by first-time buyers in London has approximately doubled in the last year, even as prices have fallen, and is now equal to more than the average annual first-time buyer income.

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**“Take a look at this fabulous new report called ‘Focus on London’. It’s full of fascinating gems.”**

Boris Johnson, on Twitter

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The report, and its underlying datasets, are available to download from [www.london.gov.uk/focusonlondon/](http://www.london.gov.uk/focusonlondon/). You can also access some material from the 1909 publication, which makes for interesting comparisons. The Guardian’s DataStore blog has publicised the report and you can view an interactive London borough map from the DataStore page: <http://bit.ly/bhFRre>.

## Towards a thriving future - a new look at Yorkshire’s ex-coalfield areas

After ongoing discussions in the region and prompted by the 25th anniversary of the Miners’ Strike, Yorkshire Futures and Yorkshire Forward have produced a think piece about the region’s ex-coalfield areas.



A former coalfield, Yorkshire

Mining has played a major role in Yorkshire’s industrial history. In the region’s ex-coalfield communities, the mine was dominant not just as an employer, but something that bound communities and framed their culture, environment and economy; something that gave places their purpose. Today, despite concerted regeneration work, many of the same areas face huge economic challenges. This paper analyses performance in the region’s ex-coalfield communities and identifies a suite of interrelated problems and radical solutions to address them.

The report and summary are available to download from Yorkshire Futures website at [www.yorkshirefutures.com](http://www.yorkshirefutures.com)

### Departing...

Richard Hanna will be leaving SEE-IN on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September to start a PhD at the Centre for Environmental Strategy, University of Surrey. The PhD will examine strategies to manage peak energy demand, smart metering and microgeneration. **If you have any related research, or would like to contact Richard regarding this topic area, his email address is [richardhnn@gmail.com](mailto:richardhnn@gmail.com)**

## Positioning the South West to respond to the Sub National Review

At the end of last year there was growing consensus about a role for the South West Observatory in developing a shared evidence base to support



delivery of parts of the Government's Sub National Review (SNR). Two main strands of the Observatory's future work will therefore be to contribute to the evidence base for a Single Regional Strategy (SRS) and to support Local Authorities in coordinating their approaches to evidence for Local Economic Assessments (LEAs).

To deliver this work, the Observatory Core Unit has created two new posts: a Network Research Coordinator, who will work to tie up the activities of all parts of the network in order to provide a comprehensive evidence base to support a SRS; and, with funding from the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP), an LEA Evidence Coordinator.

In this profile, we look at the work carried out in the South West in preparation for the SRS and LEAs.

### Supporting an Evidence Base for a Single Regional Strategy

The 'State of the South West' Report is updated annually for the web and comprises the latest key statistics across a range of public policy areas that together build a comprehensive picture of the region. Every three years a hard copy report is produced and this year the Observatory network also produced a snapshot 'What's Changed?' printed report.

As work progresses in relation to the

SNR, the Observatory hopes that the 'State of the South West' can form the descriptive backbone to an evidence base to support a SRS. The Report has not been reviewed since 2004 and so the SRS provides an opportunity to update and renew its content, style, and structure to best assist all network partners. The Network Research Coordinator will lead on this review.

One of the key considerations includes how to provide more insight into the sub-regional picture, where appropriate, with the 2010 publication representing the first step in moving towards a regional and sub-regional resource for future years.

The review will also consider the merits of including an academic peer review, altering the focus of certain chapters, commenting on 'cross-cutting themes', as well as providing a more formal 'State of the South West: Executive Summary'.

It is the intention that the end product will not only support the requirements of the emerging SRS, but will also maintain the document's breadth and usefulness, which over the years have earned the 'State of the South West' its reputation as the Observatory's flagship publication.

The next printed copy will be made available in March 2010. For more information on how the South West Observatory is preparing to support an evidence base for a Single Regional Strategy, in particular through a review of the 'State of the South West', please contact [sarah.hardwick@swo.org.uk](mailto:sarah.hardwick@swo.org.uk).

### Supporting Local Economic Assessments

In November, the South West Observatory hosted an event with the RIEP to consider the merits of developing a joined-up approach to LEAs, which Local Authorities are likely to have a duty to carry out from April 2010.

The event drew together individuals working in economic policy and/or research at the regional and sub-regional level. Speakers from Communities and Local Government (CLG), the South West RDA, and Dorset County Council considered the aims, challenges and opportunities of the new duty from each of their perspectives, whilst a multi-agency panel considered the base from which the region was starting.

The outcome of the event was resoundingly positive, with



participants buying into developing a consistent approach to LEAs where appropriate; outlining work that needed to be done; and asking the Observatory to take a lead role in supporting Local Authorities in developing consistency in their approach to LEA evidence.

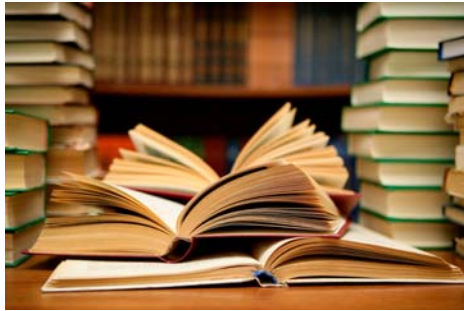
As a result, an action plan was drawn up, consulted upon and agreed. This informed a submission to the RIEP, which agreed funding for a dedicated post, hosted by the Observatory Core Unit, to support Local Authorities in their work on LEAs and to facilitate agreement on the foundations of the evidence base.

This work is being steered by a multi-agency group with strong Local Authority representation and will link into those working on the SRS, balancing consistency of approach across the region with the need to allow local flexibility. The South West is now at the forefront of developing a joined-up approach to LEAs and in a good position to hit the ground running when the definitive guidance on LEAs is published.

For more information on LEAs in the South West please contact [lorna.gibbons@swo.org.uk](mailto:lorna.gibbons@swo.org.uk).

## emda publishes 'The East Midlands in 2009'

'The East Midlands in 2009' is the updated Evidence Base that supports the Regional Economic Strategy, 'A Flourishing Region'. It presents a statistical portrait of the East Midlands that identifies key challenges and issues that the RES must address in order to create and sustain a 'flourishing region'.



*The East Midlands in 2009: also available electronically*

'The East Midlands in 2009' reflects the latest data and research available to emda. New content has been developed in response to feedback on the previous document. Content includes:

- Demography
- Economy and Productivity
- The Spatial Economy
- Housing
- Transport and Infrastructure
- Employment and Skills
- Deprivation
- Environment
- Sub regional profiles (supplied by the upper tier authorities)

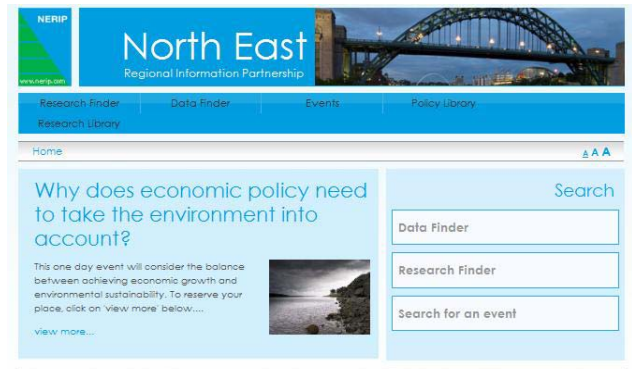
emda is keen to test this Evidence Base with regional partners and stakeholders. 'The East Midlands in 2009' is being published as a consultation draft. We wish to identify gaps, errors and omissions that can be addressed as this body of work is developed for final publication early in 2010.

'The East Midlands in 2009' is available to download from the Intelligence East Midlands website ([www.intelligenceeastmidlands.org.uk](http://www.intelligenceeastmidlands.org.uk)).

The deadline for responses is October 2009. In parallel with this public consultation, 'The East Midlands in 2009' will also be subject to an independent academic peer review.

## NERIP develops website as valuable regional resource

The new NERIP website was released in July. The Policy Library on the site is the only place where you can access all North East regional strategy documents, including those produced at regional, sub-regional, city region or local authority level. The Research Finder module will help you find research reports that are relevant to your area of policy from the thousands that are available, whilst Data Finder will enable you to search quickly through over a thousand sources of data published by central Government.



### Welcome To NERIP

Welcome to NERIP, the Regional Observatory for North East England. NERIP's Research Finder helps policy-makers locate research that is relevant to their work, whilst Data Finder enables researchers to locate over 1000 sources of data to support research and policy. NERIP also runs events to facilitate policy discussions in the light of new research, and the Regional Policy Library on this site is the only place where all Regional Strategies, and local Community Strategies, can be found in one place.



*The new NERIP website's clean look and easy to navigate homepage*

**Data Finder is an adaptation of CLG's Data4NR product, and CLG are keen to offer a similar facility to other Regional Observatories.**

Later this year NERIP will launch its on-line State of the Region module, the successor to 30 years of hard-copy State of the Region Reports. NERIP will maintain the data and commentary in the new module on an on-going basis and will also include links in the new product to reports produced elsewhere. This will enable a range of perspectives about what the basic data means to be explored.

## Events in the North East

The new website also features an on-line booking facility for NERIP events. NERIP will be holding five free events this autumn, and you can already book places at two of them.



The first, aimed at policy-makers, considers how economic policy and environmental priorities come together.

The second, hosted jointly with the

ONS, is aimed at a more technical audience and will consider the implications of the transfer from SIC 2003 to SIC 2007. Both events will be held in Newcastle and you can book places on-line.

The other NERIP events this autumn will include:

- a look at Economic Geography in the context of Local Economic Assessments and the Regional Strategy (September)
- NERIP Annual Conference (October)
- Closing the ethnic employability gap (November)

More details of these will be available shortly from [www.nerip.com/events](http://www.nerip.com/events)

### Building analytical capacity: Intelligence East Midlands reports on an exciting collaboration with the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership

Intelligence East Midlands have been working closely with the East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership this year. Around May, the IEM co-ordinator met with those in charge of the relevant workstream ('economic growth and worklessness'). We agreed a programme of training and events which could be funded through the RIEP and therefore enable the delegates to attend free of charge. Collaboration with the RIEP would also extend the circulation lists of both organisations wider than their usual networks and hopefully raise awareness of both. The programme of events was left fairly flexible to be developed over the year with the aim of meeting both the needs of the 'data community' and the Local Authority-based contacts of the RIEP.

At the same time as these initial discussions were going on, the RIEP (who have delegated the majority of their funding to the sub regional level) were also reviewing the local partnership workplans and noticed several bids for funding to purchase Mosaic licences. Sensing an opportunity to make efficiency gains in joint purchasing of licences, the RIEP then initiated a piece of work around 'Customer Insight' across the region. They commissioned a Local Improvement Advisor, Derrick Johnstone. The work quickly expanded to an assessment of the analytical capacity within the Local Authorities to be able to interpret and use the Customer Insight tools effectively.

IEM were (fortunately) involved in the research and Derrick Johnstone attended the (IEM facilitated) 'Local Information Systems and Observatories Group' to gather their views. (LIS/OG involves representatives from each of the counties and unitaries, along with the regional bodies such as public

health observatory, emda and the ONS regional statisticians.)

Derrick's final report, presented at a workshop on the 16<sup>th</sup> July, made several recommendations to enable the RIEP to prioritise their work. Given the nature of the project, there was clearly going to be a large cross over with the work of the regional observatory and it was reassuring that, where these potential duplications occurred, the report tended towards strengthening the networks and services already in place, rather than setting up new initiatives.



*IEM already run successful training courses, as described in the last ARO newsletter*

It has also given some direction to the remainder of this year's training and events programme with the suggested list of skills requirements below, (although, as always, the final list would be agreed by the IEM steering group). Any comments or advice (e.g. 'good' speakers, effective interactive sessions) from other observatories in terms of their experiences in running, or attending, any of these is welcome.

- data sharing (already arranged 2<sup>nd</sup> September)
- evaluation (already arranged 30<sup>th</sup> September)
- data presentation/ visualisation
- data analysis for improvement (service managers)
- consultancy skills for analysts
- data analysis for commissioners
- more advanced quantitative skills for analysts

### Insight East continues to make an impact for the region

Insight East continues to monitor the impacts of the recession via its monthly economic outlook reports, and its monthly labour market updates. In June, Insight East published reports and intelligence resources from the *East of England Forecasting Model*. This forecasting model is updated twice per year, in Spring and Autumn.

In July, Insight East launched its *Regional Economic Atlas* (<http://bit.ly/jRvak>) which provides over 150 indicators of economic progress and sustainability in an easy to use and intuitive map-based system. The regional economic atlas provides information on the regional economic strategy's performance measures, the regional integrated sustainability framework, and other central government local targets. This tool will be valuable in supporting local economic assessments, as well as a way of allowing stakeholders to self-serve for their routine data enquiries.

In the next 6 months, Insight East will start work on a labour market and skills programme. This aims to provide regional analysis to address the main policy questions and gaps in understanding about skills and labour issues. Labour market forecasts have also been commissioned from the University of Warwick's Institute for Employment Research in order to bridge the gap left since the latest working futures forecasts were run in December 2007.

Another strand of work we will launch in Autumn is *International Insight* – an international benchmarking study of the East of England with other world regions. We will also undertake a review of the tradeable economy of the region, so we can better understand the export markets of the region, and the export potential of the region's businesses.

### A new home for SEE-IN



On 13th July, SEE-IN moved from being based at SEEDA to sit within the South East England Partnership Board, following agreement from core funding partners

(SEEDA, Partnership Board and GOSE). The Partnership Board was previously the South East England Regional Assembly, up to its dissolution on 31 March 2009. The Partnership Board is responsible for regional planning and the production of a new Regional Strategy – combining, and building on, the South East Plan and Regional Economic Strategy.

SEE-IN will continue to be funded by partner contributions, and reviewed by partners through the existing Working and Steering Groups and additional Regional Strategy project team meetings. The Partnership Board will continue to fund the Regional Co-ordinator's post. Line management is provided by the Partnership Board's Regional Analyst, Kate Aulman.

SEE-IN's future work programme will have the following aspirations:

1. Providing a single point of access to intelligence related to the evidence-based policy and monitoring activity of the core partners.
2. Enabling a network that supports the data and information activities of the core partners.
3. Providing advice and support to core partners in the development of monitoring systems and frameworks.
4. Facilitating a network for sub-regional observatories and local authority data experts.
5. Ensuring data, information and associated monitoring is placed high on the regional agenda for policy development.

6. To actively engage in and support the Association of Regional Observatories.

At the Partnership Board, SEE-IN will benefit directly from being based in the organisation which will develop the regional evidence base and monitor the regional strategy. SEE-IN can utilise the strong networks of stakeholders, Government agencies and local authorities that the Partnership Board has built while continuing to pursue its own networking opportunities for regional policy working. The Partnership Board will provide a route from SEE-IN users to key information providers in the region. An example of this is the information collected by local authorities on housing, commercial and leisure development. This data is critical to regional monitoring and, from this year, will be collected via the SEE-IN Data Hub.

### NWRIU research conference reaches wide audience

The Northwest Regional Intelligence Unit held the second Northwest Research Conference on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2009 at the Arena Convention Centre in Liverpool. Approximately 220 people attended on each day to learn about the findings of recent research projects funded by the NWDA Research Team and regional partners, and to find out more about regional and local data produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Presentations and sessions on the first day followed a Business and Economy theme with many people attending the presentation on Leading Indicators in addition to the ONS lead sessions. Day two focused on Places, Environment & Opportunity for All with key sessions including the recent Places work and Environmental Considerations in Achieving Sustainable Economic Growth (ECOSEG). Presentations given at the event are available to download from the RIU Extranet site at <http://bit.ly/Fpt8c>. Participants commented that they enjoyed the conference and individual sessions were well presented and interesting.

### Recent research

#### Assessing the impacts of economic growth on consumption and the environment

Alistair Paul et al (Stockholm Environment Institute);  
Sadia Sheikh et al (Experian)

This study assesses the environmental impact of economic growth in the North East of England. It sets out to answer the question: if the North East region were to be successful in meeting its economic objectives what consequences would this have for the environment?



It addresses this question from the perspective of consumption: that is, what impacts arise through the products and services either purchased directly by people living in the North East or purchased on their behalf by government institutions.

The focus on consumer emissions (the emissions that occur both through consuming products and in the upstream supply chains of those products) distinguishes this report from the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Baselines and Trajectories Study carried out by AEA in 2008.

This work was funded through DEFRA's Sustainable Development Transition and Transformation (SDTT) Fund and by regional partners. You can view online here: <http://bit.ly/14JrLk>

## West Midlands: Fit for the future?

The West Midlands Regional Observatory has engaged the region's leaders and decision makers in a debate about economic recovery, launching a book entitled 'West Midlands: Fit for the Future?'



Sir Roy McNulty, incoming Chairman of Advantage West Midlands, welcoming the publication

'Fit for the Future?' comprises ten chapters, written by ten different authors, reflecting their views on how the region can best place itself in readiness for the economic upturn.

Rosie Paskins, Chief Executive of the Observatory said, "The Observatory recognised a need for the West Midlands to prepare now for the upturn, so that we can be 'quick off the blocks' when the economic recovery comes. 'Fit for the Future?' is the start of a debate, designed to help the region's policy-makers engage with the evidence available to them, so that their decisions can be based on real facts, real issues and real lives."

Chapters in the book have been written by a range of experts, including Professor David Bailey from Coventry Business School, Dr. Chris Upton from Birmingham University and sustainability consultant Roger Levett. Chapters cover subjects ranging from skills to innovation, green manufacturing to leadership.

In the foreword, Regional Minister for the West Midlands Ian Austin states,

*"We need to plan for the future today. That is why I welcome this piece of work by the Observatory and its aims to address the challenges faced by the West Midlands as we emerge from recession."*

The Observatory's annual conference on 20th October will be the main forum for debate on the book, and delegates will be encouraged to develop an evidence-based way forward for the region.

## Yorkshire Futures identify the Top Ten interventions to cut regional carbon emissions

The Climate Change Act has an ambitious target of reducing our national carbon emissions by 80% by the year 2050. Yorkshire Futures commissioned SQW Energy to carry out a study to help inform Yorkshire and Humber regional policy, strategy development and priority setting. In particular, the study will inform the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS) which will be a key vehicle for achieving reductions in carbon emissions.



The study has identified the Top Ten most viable and cost effective interventions, which could reduce the region's carbon emissions baseline by up to 23% by 2020 (compared to a 2006 baseline).

The Top Ten interventions identified were:

- Standard insulation (in residential buildings)
- Lifestyle change (of households) e.g. reducing room temperature by one degree centigrade which will not deteriorate lifestyle but will bring financial and carbon gains
- Efficient heating (in residential buildings)
- Efficient lights and appliances (in residential buildings)
- Double rail passenger kilometres (shift from car)
- Smarter travel choices (reducing road traffic)
- Building energy efficiency and management (non-residential)

- Energy and resource efficiency in industry
- Biomass heating
- Onshore wind

It should be noted that future regional carbon emission levels may evolve in a number of ways depending on national policies, new housing provision, increased transport infrastructure development and other policy drivers. This uncertainty has a direct impact on the rationale for, and effectiveness of, the Top Ten interventions. They may either reinforce the effect of interventions leading to reduced emissions or undermine their impact if they lead to more emissions. Beyond 2020, the focus is likely to shift to technical interventions that bring a new generation of energy supply, transport networks and buildings.

Both the report and summary are available to download from Yorkshire Futures website at [www.yorkshirefutures.com](http://www.yorkshirefutures.com)

## Representing the Association

ARO is really pleased to be let you know that Steve Denman from Insight East has been welcomed on to the Board of Burisa (the British Urban and Regional Information Systems Association). Steve will be able to represent the interests of regional data users in shaping the work that Burisa do, including the newsletter and popular annual conference. If you are attending meetings and you'd like to share the information you gather with

colleagues across the network, or if you'd like ARO support to join an organisation such as Burisa, please let the Coordinator know.

