

# IAPA Announces the Top 25 Leaders in Analytics in Australia

Strength of Top 25 Analytics Leaders shines in covid impacted business

Sydney, NSW – 17 June 2021 – IAPA, the Institute of Analytics Professionals of Australia, last night announced the 25 people at the top of analytics leadership in Australia as part of the IAPA 2021 Top 25 Analytics Leaders program.

IAPA, is the peak body for data and analytics in Australia, incorporating data analytics, data science and analytics-driven insights for better business decisions.

The number one ranked analytics leader for 2021 is Lionel Kho, Vice President, Data and Analytics, Dentsu International. Within the Dentsu business transformation program, Lionel demonstrated the value analytics added to the renewed organisation, c-suite and clients – expanding the data and analytics service in the face of COVID19.

“Lionel’s ability to deeply understand organisation strategy, influence leadership and embed a new way of working with the business is what the Top 25 program is all about – analytics adding real ROI to organisations,” stated IAPA Managing Director, Annette Slunjski.

Lionel commented that, “It is truly an honour to be so highly recognised by a judging panel of my peers, and IAPA in 2021. Data practitioners are now being elevated to C-Suite positions and creating an organisational culture for data practitioners to thrive is paramount. I am proud to play an active role in this work at Dentsu. Furthermore, as a person of colour, I hope my own recognition inspires young data and analytics practitioners from a wide cross section of our community, and I will use this opportunity to continue to advocate for cultural diversity in executive leadership in corporate Australia.”

2021’s number two ranked analytics leader is Virginia Wheway, Vice President, Data and Analytics, koala, a brand synonymous with online only furniture. Virginia’s diverse experience over the judging period included leadership of data projects for billion-dollar outcomes, delivering predictive analytics benefits to operations, and identifying additional online revenue flows during covid.

Virginia says that “It’s an honour to be recognised as one of Australia’s top analytics leaders, it’s a role and profession I’ve been passionate about for over 30 years.

I have been supported in developing and deploying koala’s first data and analytics strategy, as well as being an analytics’ change agent - it is refreshing for me working in a such a fast paced environment with such a thirst for using data and analytics as koala moves from start-up to scale-up, whilst also being able to have analytics contribute to that awesome customer experience it is known for.”

Rounding out the top five analytics leaders are Brad Petry, Executive Director, technology and Insights, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, Alex Antic, Head of Data Science, Australian National University and Sally Smith, Head of People Analytics at National Australia Bank.

“This is the most diverse set of entrants we have ever seen in the Top 25 Analytics Leaders. We are encouraged that the industry is so robust and represented by an incredible range of talent in Australia,” stated Annette Slunjski, Managing Director, IAPA. “This is the first time we have seen someone from the legal profession enter into our top 10 and we are excited that we are broadening the recognition of data analytics in this country.”

While there is a widely known gender imbalance in the industry, 40 percent of the top ten are women, encouraging Slunjski that Australian businesses are well positioned to navigate key industry issues of bias and ethics.

“With a spotlight on advanced analytics techniques like machine learning and AI, it’s important for analytics teams to have strong governance and ethics guidance but it’s impossible to discuss bias and ethics without discussing diversity and having diverse teams in the discussion. Forty percent is encouraging but we still need more women and more diversity in analytics teams,” noted Slunjski.

The 2021 cohort of top 25 leaders in analytics represents a range of industries including government, education, banking, retail and agencies.

Judged by a panel of leading analytics and business leaders, the 2021 IAPA Top 25 Analytics Leaders recognises excellence in four key areas strategy and impact; influence and advocacy; innovation and improvement; and team growth and leadership. The top ten for 2021 are as follows:

Lionel Kho, Vice President, Data and Analytics, Dentsu  
Virginia Wheway, Vice President, Data and Analytics, koala  
Brad Petry, Executive Director, Technology and Insights, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, Victoria State Government  
Alex Antic, Head of Data Science, Australian National University  
Sally Smith, Head of People Analytics at National Australia Bank  
Karthik Venkatasubramanian, Vice President, Data and Analytics, Oracle  
Shaheen Saud, Head of Data and Analytics, Minter Ellison  
Lisa Marchant, Head of Communications Transformation, National Australia Bank  
Nonna Milmeister, Chief Data and Analytics Officer (CDAO), RMIT  
Andrew Woods, Strategic Analytics Manager, Sydney Water  
The IAPA 2021 Top 25 Analytics Leaders program is proudly sponsored by Sisense and Zetaris.

“The future of analytics is moving to more AI-driven insights that provide actionable intelligence to everyone, regardless of title or skillset,” said Eyal Mekler, Regional Vice President of Asia Pac at Sisense. “We believe it’s about supporting an industry which is thriving in Australia, and diversity is key.”

“This year’s entries demonstrate how Australian businesses are focusing on data and analytics, integrated into their businesses. We have all gone through transformation, flux and change over the last 12 months and we have seen the resilience and agility of our industry alive and well in the Top 25 submissions. With the support of organisations like Sisense we are able recognise the excellence in the Analytics industry more broadly.” said Slunjski.

A complete list of the IAPA Top 25 Analytics Leaders cohort for 2021 can be found at [iapa.org.au](http://iapa.org.au)

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About IAPA

The Institute of Analytics Professionals of Australia (IAPA) is the professional organisation for the analytics industry in Australia, incorporating business analytics and data mining across multiple disciplines and sectors. Its mission is to unite, inform, support and promote analytics professionals in Australia. The 8,000 plus IAPA community represent a diverse range of industry verticals and brands including financial services, government, utilities, retail/FMCG and telecommunications as well as leading analytical consultants and software providers. IAPA is part of the Australian Computer Society (ACS)

The IAPA Top 25 Analytics Leaders for 2021

Alex Antic  
Head of Data Science  
Australian National University  
Jolie Baasch  
General Manager, New Business and Information Services  
NSW Land Registry Services  
Arnie Bhattacharya  
Chief Analytics Officer & Vice-President of Data  
Infomedia Ltd  
Edwin Camilleri  
Senior Data Scientist  
Wesfarmers  
Vishal Kapoor  
Head of Innovation

Prospection  
Duhita Khadepau  
Director-Analytics and Data Science  
Assignar  
Lionel Kho  
Vice President, Data & Analytics  
Dentsu International  
Kerri Lam  
Analytics Lead  
Wesfarmers  
Catherine Lopes  
Head of Data Strategy & Analytics  
ME Bank  
Jeremiah Mannings  
Associate Director Data Science  
Capgemini Invent  
Lisa Marchant  
Head of Communications Transformation  
NAB  
Dave Massage  
Director, Data & Analytics - Strategy, Growth & Digital  
KPMG  
Nonna Milmeister  
CDAO  
RMIT  
Dominic O'Halloran  
Analytics Lead  
Wesfarmers  
Brad Petry  
Executive Director, Technology and Insights  
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions  
Kshira Saagar  
Chief Data Officer  
Latitude Financial Services  
Kay Salcedo  
Head of Analytics & Optimisation  
Coles  
Shaheen Saud  
Head of Data and Analytics  
MinterEllison  
Romina Sharifpour  
AI/ML Specialist Solutions Architect  
Amazon Web Services  
Sally Smith  
Head of People Analytics  
National Australia Bank  
Raymond Tse  
Head of Data Science  
Tabcorp  
Karthik Venkatasubramanian  
Vice President, Data and Analytics  
Oracle  
Virginia Wheway

VP, Data and Analytics

koala

Andrew Woods

Strategic Analytics Manager

Sydney Water

Ben Yi

Head of Analytics

Prospection

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