



AAIR Newsletter December 2023



Photo by Andrew Bradshaw: Kilchurn Castle, Dalmally, Scotland

Latest Musings From  
The President  
[PAGE 2](#)

AAIR Forum 2023 Summary  
Read a summary of our forum by  
Russell Yau, University of  
Canberra.  
[PAGE 4](#)

Institutional Researcher's  
Corner Interview  
Five quick questions with Brenwin  
Ang, winner of the Best Presenter  
and Best New Presenter Awards  
at this year's AAIR Forum.  
[PAGE 6](#)

## CONTENT

### [From the President](#)

#### [Editorial](#)

#### [AAIR News](#)

[AAIR Forum 2023](#)

[Association Awards Dinner](#)

[Institutional researcher's corner](#)

### [Sector News and Views](#)

#### [Big Data, Data Analytics, Business Intelligence](#)

#### [Reports and Resources](#)

#### [Journals](#)

#### [Positions Vacant](#)

#### [On the Move](#)

### [Training and Development](#)

#### [HE Conferences and Events](#)

#### [Call for Contributions](#)

#### [Disclaimer](#)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### The year in reflection – Moving forward

As I reflect on our Forum I am filled with a sense of purpose and direction for our association as we close off 2023 and look forward into 2024.



The AAIR Forum in Melbourne this year was such a vibrant platform for sharing insights, best practices, and innovative approaches in institutional research. The depth of discussions and the quality of presentations were exemplary, reflecting the expertise and passion that our members contribute. It was particularly heartening to listen to engaging presentations from both seasoned professionals and emerging talents, all contributing to a rich tapestry of knowledge and experience. I could feel a genuinely warm vibe at the Forum, thanks in part to the outstanding commitment from Don Johnston, the organising committee, and the

ongoing support provided by Brittany and Victoria from Leishman and Associates to bring us this successful event. If you attended the AAIR Forum this year, please don't forget to complete the feedback survey to tell us your thoughts about the forum, and to check out the photos uploaded to the forum site.

In the afternoon before the Forum, the AAIR Executive Committee met in a strategic planning session to review the ongoing alignment of our goals and actions. This year we centred our actions on the principles of financial responsibility and sustainability. In these times of rapid change and uncertainty, it is imperative that as an association we remain agile and responsive to the evolving landscape of higher education.



Our discussions centred on several key themes:

**Financial prudence:** We acknowledged the importance of managing our resources wisely, ensuring that AAIR remains financially robust and capable of supporting its members effectively. This means making sure we have the right



technology and resources to sustain us into the future.

**Sustainable growth:** We explored ways to grow our membership and extend our reach while maintaining the quality and relevance of our services. Sustainable growth for AAIR is not just about numbers, it's about enhancing our impact and influence in the realm of institutional research, and as always, ensuring we fully support every member in growing their professional practice.

**Collaborative partnerships:** We recognised the power of collaboration and discussed forging stronger alliances with our partners—Explorance, Altis, and the Social Research Centre. We further explored how we can grow and extend our connections with other organisations. These partnerships are vital in amplifying our voice and extending our influence in matters of policy and practice in higher education.

As we move forward into 2024, guided by the outcomes of our forum and strategic planning session, I am optimistic about the future of AAIR. We are in a strong position to not only navigate the challenges ahead created from documents such as the Australian Universities Accord and the ever-changing tertiary landscape in New Zealand, but to thrive as a community of professionals dedicated to excellence in institutional research.

I extend my warmest festive wishes to all our members and their families. May this season bring you joy, peace, and inspiration as we look forward to a new year filled with opportunities and achievements.

**Stuart Terry**  
AAIR President



## EDITORIAL

*Dear newsletter readers*

*Welcome to our final edition of the newsletter for 2023. The year has flown, and hopefully everyone is ready for a holiday, and to spend some time with family and friends.*

*In this edition of the newsletter, I have included a photo from my holiday in Scotland in July, with a historic picture of [Kilchurn Castle](#) (built in the mid-1400s). The castle rests at the northern end of Loch Awe.*

*Last week, over 120 institutional researchers gathered in Melbourne at the 2023 AAIR Forum. The theme of the Forum was "Life ACCORDing to AAIR". Many delegates were attending their first AAIR forum, and we also had many returners. The AAIR Forum Organising Committee and AAIR Executive Committee, hope everyone who attended had an enjoyable time. Hopefully, we will see you all at next year's AAIR Forum rumoured to be in Adelaide.*

*Finally, thank you to all our dedicated readers, and those who assisted in putting the newsletter together. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We shall return in February 2024.*

**Andrew Bradshaw**  
Editor, The Institutional Researcher

## AAIR NEWS

**AAIR Forum 2023****Life ACCORDing to AAIR**

After another successful forum held at Macquarie University post-COVID last year, the bustling city of Melbourne welcomed an even bigger crowd, with 125 registered delegates attending over three eventful days from 29 November to 1 December. The theme of the AAIR Forum this year was 'Life ACCORDing to AAIR', and we saw a strong program and a broad spectrum of presentations.

**Pre-forum workshops: Day 1**

The pre-forum kicked off with the Surveys and Evaluation special interest group (SIG) workshop focusing on QILT for the survey gurus in the morning, welcomed by the Forum favourite, Lisa Bolton, Director, QILT Research and Strategy at the Social Research Centre (SRC). The session tackled the development of new questions aiming to enhance the accuracy in representing the 'Mode of Study' variable. This topic sparked interesting discussions among attendees who are keen on refining study mode data reporting.

Following the QILT workshop, it was time for the welcome lunch and other discussion-packed SIG sessions. These discussion topics focused on Government Reporting, Surveys and Evaluation, Business Intelligence, and Load Management and Planning.

Particularly useful was the update from the Department of

Education on the collection of student information and the enhancement roadmap. This was followed by an engaging discussion on the [Australian Universities Accord](#) in the Load Management and Planning SIG.

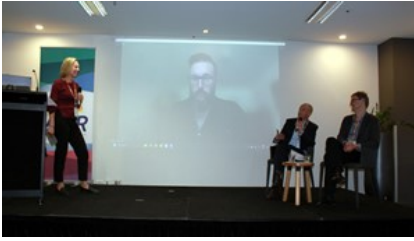
Rest assured that if you were in one of the QILT workshops with Lisa Bolton and team SRC, you would most likely get quite a full room. There were a great many active participants, as the 2023 SES changes, impact, and future use of survey responses and measurements were discussed.

As always, the first day ended with a social get-together and networking opportunities for all those attending the AAIR Forum. It was wonderful to be able to attend again in person and network face-to-face over drinks and tasty bar food.

**AAIR Forum: Day 2**

AAIR President, Stuart Terry opened day 2 with an acknowledgement of country and a welcome address. Following this was an insightful discussion among our panellists, Angel Calderon (Director, Strategic Insights, RMIT University), Gwilym Croucher (Associate Professor in Higher Education Policy and Management, University of Melbourne), and Andrew Herd (Director, Australian Department of Education). Topics ranged from funding, performance targets, the sustainability of both the universities and the sector, and how we can achieve long-term security and prosperity across the sector.





This session led into the AAIR AGM, followed by the platinum sponsor presentation by Explorance—a long-term AAIR partner who shows ongoing support of the AAIR Forum. Explorance presented, 'Beyond Numbers: Elevating Qualitative Analysis with Machine Learning', which explored Explorance's journey to empower institutions' qualitative data analytics, and how they use advanced algorithms using machine learning to transcend the limitations of traditional data.



Day two then swung into the parallel sessions. Regardless of what your interests are, the use or demand for 'real-time' data, machine learning, student experience, or the decadal changes from the Universities Accord, the common trends and challenges we all face in our roles as data analysts, institutional researchers, survey experts, and BI managers were addressed.

We saw both veteran presenters and new presenters raise hot topics, as they discussed the projects they have created. Projects ranged from 'assessing course viability through multi-dimensional analysis using ACEDE' and 'application of machine learning in institutional analytics', to 'QILT data linkage'.

These fantastic presentations shed light on some innovative ways to increase the capacity of the data and show how the data can be used by the broader university community to inform strategic decision making.

As is the tradition, the second day ended with the Forum dinner held at Treviso in the heart of Melbourne. The Forum dinner was sponsored by the lovely Social Research Centre (Thank you!).



### AAIR Forum: Day 3

Professor Adam Shoemaker, Vice-Chancellor and President at Victoria University, set the tone for the final day. He talked about the changing landscape and the future direction of the higher education sector, and how they try to make a difference at Victoria University. More importantly, it reminded us of the importance of the culture and values that guide and inform the actions of our institutions.



This keynote session was followed by a presentation from our second platinum sponsor, Altis, who shared, 'Reading off the same script with standardised reporting'. Altis shared some key focus areas for organisations to consider when taking the next

step to transform their data and analytics programs.



For the remainder of the final day, AI took over one of the conference rooms, with RMIT, SCU, and Altis Consulting, showcasing their works on machine learning applications, including visualisations and regular reporting practices. Simultaneously, the other conference room was occupied by team institutional performance – World University Rankings, cohort completions, KPIs frameworks, you name it, it was discussed!



Wrapping up the forum were two awards – and wait for it – Brenwin Ang from the SRC took out both the Best Presenter Award and the Best New Presenter Award. Big congratulations to Brenwin and his great work on his 'QILT Data Linkage' presentation.

Thank you to all our presenters during the AAIR Forum.



## A Thank You

The success of the AAIR Forum would not have been possible without the active participation of delegates and the invaluable support from the platinum sponsors Explorance and Altis, who continue to support the AAIR Forum, enabling its continuity. Special thanks also go to our silver sponsor, the Social Research Centre, for their unwavering support of the sector.

The AAIR Forum once again proved to be a nexus of knowledge, innovation, and collaboration, setting the stage for informed decision-making and advancements in the higher education landscape.

*Russell Yau*

Compliance Reporting Specialist,  
University of Canberra

## Association Awards Dinner



The AAIR Executive Committee nominated for the Association Turnaround of the Year Award.

On 21 November 2023, Alexandra Sieniarski (Co-Chair Load Management and Planning SIG at AAIR, and Director, Analytics, Planning and Performance at University of Notre Dame) and I, attended the annual Association Awards Dinner held at the Sydney Masonic Centre.

During Covid-19, the number of AAIR members reduced considerably. Members of the AAIR Executive Committee, explored new membership categories, including different levels of institutional membership to suit all institution sizes. The introduction of this new membership structure resulted in

a 60% increase in our membership, and our member numbers are now well over 300.

Other nominees in this category were Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine, Australian Association of Social Workers, Blue Mountains Basketball Association, Forestry Australia, Nursery and Garden Industry NSW and ACT, and Swimming Pool and Spa Association of Australia.



Many thanks to Pallavi Khanna, Liesha Northover and Stuart Terry for writing our nomination on behalf of AAIR. Unfortunately, AAIR did not win on this occasion, but we did receive a certificate for being in the final nominations. The winner in the end, was Forestry Australia, which is ironic given the reduced industrial timber forests across Australia.

## Institutional Researcher's Corner

*Five quick questions with Brenwin Ang*



### What is your job title?

Data Scientist in the QILT team at the Social Research Centre (SRC).

### Briefly, how would you describe your role in your institution?

In my role at SRC, along with my team, we handle the end-to-end processing and facilitation of the QILT data. This involves tasks such as overseeing the distribution of data to participating institutions, collecting and processing the data for fieldwork, facilitating the fieldwork execution, and collating and disseminating the data from the field. Additionally, part of my responsibilities includes analysing the QILT data to extract insights.

### From your perspective, what will be the key skills, capabilities, and knowledge required for institutional research moving forward?

In the evolving landscape of institutional research, I anticipate that data literacy will be a fundamental skill. As expansive datasets such as QILT data continue to grow, the capacity to



navigate, interpret and extract actionable insights from this abundance of information becomes increasingly crucial. Effectively deriving meaningful conclusions from data will significantly influence informed, evidence-based decision-making, thereby propelling institutional strategies forward. However, the 'where' to look in the data—that, is the ability to discern critical focal points within these datasets—is equally important.

Moreover, the ability to communicate with data, especially through data visualisation techniques, has become progressively essential. Presenting data in a digestible manner, and ensuring that key stakeholders can easily engage with and utilise this information effectively to inform strategic priorities, are crucial in this era of institutional research. I strongly believe the effective communication of data ensures that data is not just 'available' but also comprehensible and actionable.

### What do you believe will be the future priorities or the emerging areas of interest for institutional research?

I believe the future (currently emerging) might involve a notable focus on AI and machine learning, as evidenced by the many presentations and discussions on the topic during the 2023 AAIR Forum. However, while these technologies offer immense potential, a notable acknowledgement from these discussions was the cautionary aspect of 'over-engineering' models, which showcased the importance of the balanced and pragmatic application needed when utilising these technologies within the research context.

### Complete this statement: In my role, I can't operate effectively without ...

... coffee! That aside, in my role, I can't operate effectively without the collaborative support of my team. A lot of what we do requires a collective effort, and being able to draw different perspectives and ideas from various team members is essential for our success. Also, I am an 'R' programming language enthusiast because I genuinely love 'R', and the spinoff of that is that it significantly enhances our effectiveness in handling our tasks.

### Connect with Brenwin



Photo by Andrew Bradshaw: Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland

### SECTOR NEWS AND VIEWS

(NOTE: DATES ARE AN INDICATION OF WEB PUBLICATION ONLY)

**School Test Results: Not as Bad as they Look** by [Stephen Matchett](#). Initial teacher education providers have had a terrible ten years, accused of not preparing graduates for classrooms – with critics pointing out not-great school student scores on standard tests. But Sally Larsen (Uni New England) suggests results over time do not universally support a chronicle of decline. In a new (pre-print) paper Dr Larsen analyses Australian results from three international assessments, Progress in International

Reading Literacy Study, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and Programme for International Student Assessment, as well as local NAPLAN. The consensus of the four, she reports, 'fails to support the prevailing narrative of a broadscale decline in academic skills attainment.' Which is immensely important, given governments use test results as a measure of student skills and ITE performance but there have been few attempts to report the outcomes of the three international studies over time. (Future Campus – 5 Oct)

**Ways to Work with AI on Assessments** by [Stephen Matchett](#). Student use of AI is inevitable – the challenge is to establish its role – which a new paper for the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency addresses. In Assessment reform for the age of artificial intelligence, Jason M. Lodge, (Uni Queensland), Sarah Howard, (Uni Wollongong), Margaret Bearman, and Phillip Dawson, (Deakin U) (with input from many others) present five propositions for using AI in assessment:

- 'Appropriate, authentic, engagement.' 'If critical, ethical and productive engagement with AI is taught and integrated into assessment tasks in meaningful ways, then students will regard it as an essential part of their university studies'.
- Programmatic approaches that are aligned with discipline values, 'provides multiple means for educators to make judgements about student progress, without losing the emphasis on feedback and dialogue'.
- Incorporating into the process of learning, 'feedback on artefacts that reflect critical thinking, judgement, decision-making ... components of the process that AI is less able to simulate'.
- Student work with each other, and AI, in 'an articulation of, and design for, the acceptable ways students work with each other and AI. Students should describe and reflect on the role of people and technologies in how the collaborative work was carried out.'
- Understanding what students are capable of without AI ... 'identifying the key assessment moments at a program level, and securing those'. (Future Campus – 5 Oct)

**Credit transfer: VET takes charge.** The future of credit transfer is highlighted in the Employment White Paper, underscoring the importance of credit



transfer between VET and HE and making the system more transparent, Stephen Matchett reports. (Future Campus – 4 Oct)

[The Government's winning training trifacta](#). Always on-message Universities Australia was quick to respond to the latest skills-shortage warning, Stephen Matchett reports. (Future Campus – 5 Oct)

[The Australian Skills Quality Authority](#) has decided who needs to know what when will change. The authority announces that after October, its now monthly update will become a quarterly, 'which shares important information about our work and regulatory practice and trends and changes impacting the sector.' Providers will receive a monthly 'Lens,' 'with information and guidance specific to provider obligations and continuous improvement.' Whatever the agency's intent, as a way to ensure rumour and speculation in the four weeks between updates this will be hard to beat. (Future Campus – 5 Oct)

[Murdoch U announces three research centres](#), covering 'widespread Indigenous health and social equity challenges,' Yorga Centre: 'culturally secure health and social service systems.' Yarwadani Centre: 'culturally secure mental health services.' Coolamon Centre: 'widespread and cumulative effects of climate change, and the social, cultural and environmental factors impacting the lives of Aboriginal people.' (Future Campus – 5 Oct)

[The way TEQSA deals with allegations of sexual violence at universities is on education ministers agenda](#). It follows a scathing assessment of the agency's performance by a Senate committee which found the agency 'ill-equipped and failing to effectively enforce' safety standards (Future Campus, HERE). The agency has always stated it 'does not have a role in addressing individual complainants' request or grievances' but it also 'accepts complaints about higher education providers' compliance with the legislation we administer.' Last week Education Minister Jason Clare acknowledged the dilemma, 'Should TEQSA be about the investigation and responding to individual student complaints, or should it be about the regulation of universities? At the moment, it's got both. But should that be the responsibility of a separate entity?' Ministers will hear advice today. (Future Campus – 5 Oct)

[La Trobe U announces an Indigenous Strategy](#), including a Council of Elders to

'provide strategic and cultural advice on a range of matters' including on Indigenous access, participation and success and an Indigenous Research Framework, ('guidance and principles on conducting collaborative research'). (Future Campus – 5 Oct)

[Jobs and Skills Australia releases its first annual report](#), Towards a Jobs and Skills Roadmap, which for HE include extensive reporting of the Universities Accord Interim Report and the Employment White Paper. And it sets out what is looking more and more like a future for universities as agents of the government's jobs agenda. 'A more connected VET and higher education system should enhance the ability of students to navigate the education and training system to obtain the knowledge, skills and capabilities they need to successfully participate in the labour market. It should promote access to high quality tertiary education – where students are able to study at a world class provider regardless of qualification type. It should also encourage education and training providers, industry and employers to collaborate on designing curriculum and training programs that ensure leaders develop knowledge and skills that are needed by the Australian economy'. (Future Campus – 5 Oct)

[The government wants universities to provide more study support for students and packaged a requirement in a Bill which sailed through the Reps](#). But on August 10 the Senate sent it to committee -where unis made cases against it, ranging from the strong to the scathing (have a look at Uni Sydney's submission). The committee was supposed to report on September 13, but two days prior asked for an extension to the 27th – on which date it asked for another, until October 11. Opposition senators uncharitably suggest the government did not do 'the requisite work required' before introducing the Bill. Unless the delay is due to today's meeting of state and federal education ministers, where other HE issues that may need legislating (TEQSA's role in oversighting safety on campus, say) might come up. (Future Campus – 5 Oct)

[The government has rolled out responses, notably for international education, in the not officially released but widely read Nixon Review of the visa system](#). Ms Nixon urged government to consider regulating education agents and strengthen regulation of providers. And so, ministers announced Monday, \* monitoring of providers and students studying;

\* strengthening oversight of providers and student attendance;  
\* banning commissions on student transfers in Australia. This is presumably to support changes announced in August, to stop education agents helping student visa holders here for employment not study, switching enrolments from initial quality providers to others that teach less and more provide cover while so-called students work.  
To which Opposition education shadow Sarah Henderson responded, 'Labor is dripping out announcements over the course of a week to cover for their lack action and to distract from their mishandling of the Voice referendum.' On Tuesday Skills and Training Minister Brendan O'Connor added, that ASQA will have \$37.5m more for an integrity unit, 'to enable a compliance blitz on unlawful behaviour, targeting non genuine providers who may be exploiting international students.' Back in May ASQA head Saxon Rice provided a sense of what this might look like, when she announced the agency was working with 'partner agencies,' on Operation Inglenook, including 'site visits' 'to take appropriate regulatory activities,' which sounds rather like raids (Campus Morning Mail May 8). (Future Campus – 5 Oct)

[International graduates who stay in Australia on temporary visas 'struggle' to find work in their chosen careers](#) and a third return to study, typically in VET, 'suggesting that the visa is not acting as a stepping stone to full-time work in their chosen profession, according to a new Grattan Institute report. 'International graduates struggle in the Australian labour market for a number of reasons, including: employers' reluctance to hire temporary visa-holders; graduates' often-poor English language skills and weaker networks; and discrimination,' Brendan Coates, Trent Wiltshire and Tyler Reysenbach state. 'Graduates may be motivated by the hope of securing permanent residency, or simply to continue to access the higher wages offered in Australia. Either way, they are returning to study a degree that is unlikely to boost their lifetime income or career prospects.' The Grattan Three propose a redesign of the temporary graduate visa to target people, 'who are good prospects for permanent residency,' including:

visa duration: \* bachelor degrees (unchanged at two years) \* coursework masters (two Y instead of three) \* research masters (stays three Y) \* PhD: four Y down from six Y  
target extensions at good prospects: \*





remove study/work extensions for regions  
 \* remove extensions for degrees related to occupation shortage \* extensions for grads in high-wage jobs  
 tighten eligibility: \* reduce qualifying age from 50 to 35 \* lift English language requirement from IELTS six to 6.5 (Future Campus – 5 Oct)

[Designing a Future-Ready University from Scratch.](#) Achieving a personalized student experience can pose challenges within conventional frameworks, prompting the necessity for a fresh approach. Whether in a physical or metaphorical sense, it becomes imperative to transition towards a student-centric mindset. (EvoLLLution – 7 Oct)

[New Face of HE Post-Covid. A forensic examination of key trends across the sector indicates that the HE sector has largely been restored to pre-pandemic levels](#) – but with a range of new characteristics. Professor Andrew Norton's sixth edition of Mapping Australian Higher Education highlights a swathe of trends shaping the sector, including:

- There are more academics 40 or younger with fixed-term contracts than in continuing employment;
- There were 86,000 journal articles with one or more Australian affiliated author in '22 – double the tally in 2011;
- In 2020 universities spent \$12.7bn on research, with \$7bn identified from public and private sources, as to where the other \$5.7bn came from, 'surpluses on teaching are the only possible source;'
- Mental health is a major issue – half of the undergraduates who seriously considered dropping out in 2022 gave 'health or stress' as a reason; Public confidence in universities dropped almost 10% between 2019 and 2023 to 69%. (Future Campus – 12 Oct)

[Bed Crisis to Hit International Enrolment in 2024, by Tim Winkler.](#) While the cost and scarcity of accommodation options for international students has attracted headlines in Melbourne and Sydney this year, news of the housing crisis does not appear to have spread to significant numbers of prospective students in southeast Asia. However, a leading international recruitment expert who recruits thousands of students each year for Australian universities, AECC Global COO Daryl Fong, says that universities have only about six months to sort out the housing crisis before news of the issues

hits demand. 'The news about the accommodation issues hasn't really hit the offshore market in a big way yet, but if this issue isn't resolved next year, you are going to get news coming home from a lot of current students about the issues with cost and finding accommodation – and that will have a big impact in a very negative way,' Mr Fong said. With decades of experience recruiting students from Singapore, Mr Fong said that universities offering packaged course and accommodation options are seeing strong enrolments – and would continue to benefit as news of the accommodation crisis bites. In a wide-ranging interview, Mr Fong touched on a range of issues with significant relevance to Australian higher education leaders, including:

- Mergers: The proposed UniSA-Adelaide merger would likely attract the eye of students across Southeast Asia and help drive student numbers towards the City of Churches – as long as it was clearly explained.
- Marketing: ongoing reliance on broad brand-led campaigns meant that a number of universities were getting little return on investment in Southeast Asia.
- Fees: Australian course fees are among the highest in the world. While many institutions offset the 'sticker price' fee by offering substantial scholarships to students, agents and prospective students can have a hard time keeping track of scholarship discounts.
- Online opportunity: there is a niche for Australian institutions offering part of a course online, to reduce study costs for some international students. (Future Campus – 12 Oct)

[Elite teachers urged to HALT.](#) Rapid growth in certification and recognition of expert teachers is required to build pride in the profession and growth in teacher numbers, according to a new report. (Future Campus – 12 Oct)

[Data vs Dollars: the race for new AI research tools.](#) Microsoft has launched a global research network and resource platform – prompting questions about the future of AI tools for research. (Future Campus – 12 Oct)

[The next big thing in research assessment.](#) The Australian Research Council reveals ways it wants to measure research performance in a submission to the University Accord. (Future Campus – 12 Oct)

**The University of Canberra is set to add \$66m to its coffers,** announcing the sale

of 15 hectares on the University's Bruce campus to Peet Limited. The sale will see up to 1600 homes built on site, bringing the suburbs closer to the University's HQ and providing a handy nest egg and takes the University one step closer to its vision of a campus with 12,000 residents, 15,000 students and 18,000 workers and entrepreneurs. (Future Campus – 12 Oct)

**It looks like the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency will lose oversight over student safety.** Last Thursday the National Education Ministers meeting agreed that an all-jurisdiction working party would report by year-end on strengthening university governance, including 'ensuring student and staff safety through the prevention of gender-based violence and sexual harm, including on university campuses and in student residential settings.' It's part of an overall response to the University Accord Interim Report's first recommendation on staff and student safety, university governance and employment practices. And then on Friday, Education Minister Jason Clare told Radio National that the meeting heard a proposal for a National Student Ombudsman, 'independent of government, and of the universities, that would investigate complaints made by students and have the capacity to resolve disputes with universities.' Ministers will decide next month, but it seems a sure thing, with Mr Clare adding, 'I am not interested in setting up a body just for the sake of setting up a body. I want us to act here. The time for talk here is over.' At a Parliament House doorstep on Monday he added that the idea which might be put to the November minco was a, 'standalone, independent student ombudsman that would be responsible for investigating complaints and holding universities to account when something's gone wrong.' This all follows an inquiry into sexual consent laws, by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee which slammed TEQSA's management of complaints it receives about universities management of sexual assault investigations. In its response to a question on notice, TEQSA advised that from September 2017 to last month it had received 39 'concerns in relation to sexual harm.' All were assessed but none investigated, but seven universities were further assessed as part of re-registration. Overall, 'none resulted in enforcement action or sanctions.' The committee concluded TEQSA is 'ill equipped and failing to effectively enforce' its own standards,' Mr Clare is scheduled to address TEQSA's annual



conference on November – one worth waiting for. (Future Campus – 12 Oct)

**Union members at Swinburne U are fundraising for a billboard at Hawthorn campus-adjacent Glenferrie train station** – they want to graphically explain management failings in the present industrial dispute. There's a sort-of precedent for this. Back in 2016 university marketers paid for open-day signage at Glenferrie, identifying it as Swinburne Station (Campus Morning Mail July 22 2016). As of yesterday, word was the comrades had raised the cash for a billboard of grievance. (Future Campus – 12 Oct)

**Jason Clare foreshadows announcement of Commonwealth funded \$40,000 teacher ed scholarships plus an outdoor/online campaign promoting becoming a teacher.** The former may have more impact than the latter. (Future Campus – 12 Oct)

**The new proposed national science priorities are out for consultation.** The Academy of the Humanities and the Group of Eight have some similar ideas. 'Science and technology alone cannot deliver effective research impact. The challenges we face require complex, reasoned changes to attitudes and behaviour. ... Humanities, arts and social science disciplines, are integral to generating new ideas and reform agendas,' the Academy states. The Group of Eight agrees, (although it also makes a bunch of hard-science suggestions), 'human behaviour/societal responses need to be factored in from inception in any new system or venture, including the perspectives of people with lived experience ...' (Future Campus – 12 Oct)

**The Feds release 2022 employment data at least for some staff** (FT and fractional FT). All up, numbers are recovering from the 6.9 per cent decline in 2021. They grew 2.4 per cent last year, to 124,000, still down 6,000 on 2020. Teaching-only staff numbers have bounced back from the pandemic, now being higher than in 2020 – although there are still not many of them, accounting for just 5 per cent of the total university workforce. Professional staff still have not recovered from the nearly 7,000 job losses between 2020 and '21. Last year's workforce was 68,000, still 5,000 down on 2020. As for casuals, officials abstract individuals into notional FTE, but even on this artificial measure, the impact of the pandemic is clear. Estimated casuals by FTE fell 15 per cent from 23,900 in 2020 to 20,300 in '21 – the number recovered, but not much last

year, by 1.8 per cent, to just short of 20,700. (Future Campus – 12 Oct)

**La Trobe U is packaging five micro-credentials for registered nurses as a (for credit) Professional Certificate in Rural Nursing Practice,** part of the Commonwealth Government's micro-credentials pilot. There are 20 free places, but 'regional nurses who miss out' may get a 30 per cent discount, to pay \$1485. (Future Campus – 12 Oct)

**Committee Approval brings Adelaide Uni Closer.** The proposed merger of Uni Adelaide and Uni SA is closer with a committee inquiry by the State's Upper House reporting yesterday, it 'will advance the economic and social interests of South Australia.' The Government does not have the numbers in the Legislative Council, making the inquiry a make or break for the plan as now presented, given the merger timetable is for the proposed Adelaide University to exist by 2026. The recommendation could be enough for the government to stitch together a majority in the Legislative Council, albeit with the potential need for some amendments. Opponents of the merger warn the two universities are too disparate to successfully combine, its cost too high and the hope of international student cash to come, too fanciful. However, the State's business establishment appears solid in support and the SA Productivity Commission has made a case for growing the state economy through research output and sees the merger as way to do it. (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**UA Chief Resigns by Tim Winkler.** After five years at the helm of Universities Australia, Catriona Jackson has announced her resignation. Ms Jackson released a statement late yesterday afternoon announcing that her last day as Chief Executive of Universities Australia would be the 22nd of December 2023. 'I have loved serving the Australian university sector and will continue to work in and around Australia's great universities,' Ms Jackson said. Ms Jackson's decision to depart comes after a challenging year, including a chorus of public criticism of UA's aborted campaign to address campus sexual assault and harassment. The sector has also been subject to extensive scrutiny as part of the Federal Government's reform agenda. Ms Jackson said that the conclusion of the Accord process at year's end marked a good time to hand over the baton. 'Our universities are precious national assets, working every day to improve the lives of every Australian, making our nation

stronger, safer and more successful,' Ms Jackson said. UA Chair Professor David Lloyd paid tribute to Ms Jackson for her professionalism and advocacy on behalf of the sector. 'It is rarely an easy task and often a thankless one, but Catriona has performed with diligence and determination. She has runs on the board and leaves the sector in a good position for the future.' (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**Is India the world's next top knowledge power?** The Indian Government's HE commitment has set the nation on a trajectory to compete for supremacy in knowledge leadership. (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**Management 101: improving support by Stephen Matchett.** What accounts for student success, or not, in first year management subjects is worth universities knowing, notably in the case of internationals who pay high fees which funds rankings-lifting research. 'It is therefore in our best interests (both economical and reputational) to ensure our international cohorts' educational success' Anish Purkayastha and Elaine Huber (Uni Sydney) write. (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**Analysis of 960 first year management students at University of Sydney provides valuable insights into optimal approaches for student support.** (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**New scrutiny of international student levy.** Proposals for a new levy on international students, floated in discussion around the Accord, have been analysed by researchers in Melbourne. (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**Unis that Collect Research Dividends** by Stephen Matchett. Australian universities and research institutions generated \$307m and held \$945m in research contracts with for-profit companies last year, according to a survey of 55 participants by Knowledge Commercialisation Australasia (KCA). The 11 NZ participants received NZ\$155m in revenue, and held contracts valued at \$178m. KCA has surveyed universities, MRIs, rural research corporations and other public agencies for six years. The Department of Industry and Science stopped running a survey, so KCA took it on – earlier this year the Department of Education joined it, in a push to increase participation. Key performance metrics for '22 include:

- Commercialisation revenue (rounded A\$m): ANSTO – \$97, Uni Auckland –



- \$62m, Plant and Food NZ – \$57m, CSIRO \$55m, Uni Queensland \$47m
- New start-ups and spinouts: UNSW – 12, Uni Auckland – 11, Monash U seven, Uni Queensland four, Uni Melbourne: three
- Active start-ups and spinouts: Uni Auckland – 39, Uni Queensland – 32, CSIRO – 31, Uni Sydney – 28, Uni Melbourne – 28
- Annual gross income from research contracts with for-profits: Monash – \$132m, CSIRO – \$127m, Plant and Food NZ – \$112m, Uni Melbourne – \$75m, Uni Sydney \$62m (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**Good(ish) policy is good politics.** The Federal Government is making progress with legislation to implement key initiatives recommended in the Universities Accord Interim Report. (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**The who and how of graduate employability.** Staff working in graduate employability play a key role in preparing students for the workplace. A new journal edition takes a closer look. (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

#### **The Government sticks its bib in**

(i)  
'I have written to every Vice-Chancellor of every university this week asking them, 'what are you doing to make sure that we are protecting students and what further steps are you planning to take here?'. Because every university is potentially affected by this and as I said, I fear that this will get worse before it gets better in the weeks ahead.' Jason Clare on Sydney Radio 2GB on protests over attacks on Israel and Gaza.

and (ii)  
'the provider's processes for providing support by the provider's academic staff in relation to a student's unit of study, such as academic staff having regular contact with the student during the semester to check their progress in the unit of study, and, if those staff identify support is needed, providing students with flexibility in relation to assessments and connecting them to support services,' one of many requirements set out in draft guidelines for student support universities would be required to provide. (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**The Australian Skills Quality Authority warns there are Registered Training Organisations** that are not properly enrolling, training and assessing students in real estate certs and a dip, nor providing sufficient information to students on legal and licensing

requirements. Future Campus refrains from obvious snarkery. (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**Jason Clare will open Deakin U and Uni Wollongong's campuses in India** next month – helpful they are both in the same place, the GIFT City precinct, at Ahmedabad in Gujarat. (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**The National Tertiary Education Union has piled on pressure for Jason Clare** to be seen to do more about sexual violence on campus. The union reports a new survey of members that found 76 per cent of responders had 'a personal experience of sexual harassment' and of those who complained, 40 per cent plus were dissatisfied with the process/outcome. Just over half the sample report are being encouraged to drop it and just under half stated no action was taken. (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**The Government has delivered on its promise to make skills taught by TAFE the centre of post-school vocational education and training everywhere in Australia** – and the Feds have done it with State approval. Headline figures (\$30bn from all governments over five years) aside, there are three messages in the Prime Minister's Tuesday announcement;

- This is national policy based on a national approach to skills, 'a framework for cooperation across State borders and across National and State and Territory priorities;'
- Training is fundamental to the national interest, to 'coordinate strategic investment in skills across the economy, and support delivery of skills needed in national priority areas;'
- TAFE is core, 'the agreement places TAFE at the heart of the VET sector, with TAFEs to be supported by baseline funding commitment.' (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**Education Minister Jason Clare reminded the international education industry last week of the government's plan to stop corrupt agents**, including, strengthening the 'fit and proper' test in the Education Services for Overseas Students Act, to prevent cross ownership of providers and agents and prohibiting commissions on student transfers from one provider to another. 'I want to work with you to make sure we get this right. To make sure that we achieve the intent of this reform and don't open new loopholes of 'marketing payments' or 'commission equivalent payments' to

related entities or individuals,' Mr Clare said. (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**The Bill to extend demand driven funding to Indigenous students in cities, end the 50 per cent pass rate to keep an UG place** and extend universities' support for students is recommended by a Senate committee, thus making its passage into law all but assured, unless the Opposition and Greens unite to oppose it. The two proposals are among the first five from the Universities Accord, as set out in its Interim Report (see separate story for details). (Future Campus – 19 Oct)

**Business Lets Australia Down on R&D by Stephen Matchett.** Australia lags all serious nations on research and development spending, according to a new analysis by Frank Larkins (Uni Melbourne). Australia, at 1.68 per cent, is a distant last for gross expenditure on research and development as a percentage of GDP, based on the latest numbers, Professor Larkins reports. Australia lags the OECD average (2.71 per cent) and even the collective average of all 27 EU members (2.15 per cent). We are way underdone compared to leaders such as Republic of Korea (4.93 per cent) and the US (3.46 per cent). While research leaders have all increased outlays since 2015, Australia has slowly slid, from 1.88 per cent to 1.68 per cent. Blame not the feds. Professor Larkins reports R&D spending by government in Australia accounts for 9.5 per cent, marginally ahead of the top-five trading partner average. As for universities, what the lobbies announce is correct; HE funded research is a huge share of Australia's effort, 33 per cent of the national total, compared to 12 per cent among the top five nations. The problem is what business does not do. (Future Campus – 26 Oct)

**Savings International Ed from Shonks by Stephen Matchett.** Australian education reputation needs to be protected from nefarious education agents who are currently damaging the nation's brand, according to the new House-Senate Committee report on international education. The report identified a need for yet another national brand to attract international students but warned the brand needed to be protected from, 'nefarious education agents who are damaging Australia's reputation for international students by channelling students into ghost school providers and then onto illegal work practices.' Ways to grow the industry while ensuring its quality are key themes in the new report, which has a strong



focus on protecting students and institutions from agents, whose, 'practices can include misleading advertisements, false promises of guaranteed visas or employment, exorbitant fees, and inadequate support for students' welfare,' the report said. 'Such practices can exploit vulnerable students, mislead them about educational opportunities and outcomes, and lead to financial and emotional distress.' The report also proposes a two-tier system for international students in VET, with TAFEs exempted from regulations imposed on private providers. Recommendations in the comprehensive interim report include:

- A 'Team Australia' brand-build programme and a five-year plan to diversify markets
- Diversification of educational offerings in existing markets, especially India
- Better integration between education institutions and employers on work integrated learning
- Stopping professional accreditation bodies imposing 'unreasonable barriers' on internationals with Australian qualifications filling skills shortages
- The government 'review and consider' universities outsourcing CBD campuses catering to internationals to private providers
- Improving intel on exploitation of student visas
- 'Address persistent and deep-seated integrity issues in the private VET sector'
- Cost-recovery assessment of all 932 private providers
- Cracking down on agents and cost-recovery funded regulation
- TAFE to have the same standing as universities under the Simplified Student Visa Framework.

To which Independent Tertiary Education Australia responded, the preference for TAFE; 'is based on no more than the ideology that says the public provider is best, something that the government's own data says is a flawed basis for policy making.' (Future Campus – 26 Oct)

[Authenticity in assessment helps prepare grads.](#) A new paper suggests new approaches to making assessment more authentic, so that students are better prepared for work. (Future Campus – 26 Oct)

[Place-based learning vital to HE engagement.](#) Can engagement in higher education drive a more equal and socially-just society? Professor Jim Nyland

explores the answer. (Future Campus – 26 Oct)

[Slow growth in student equity.](#) While enrolments of Indigenous people and students with a disability grew strongly from 2015-21, equity groups remain a relatively small proportion of overall sector enrolments, according to a new report. (Future Campus – 26 Oct)

[As the government's skills juggernaut rolls on, Universities Australia is keen to stay on stage.](#) On Tuesday the Prime Minister announced a \$5bn Microsoft investment in new data centres in Australia plus a training partnership with TAFE NSW. To which UA responded (on the platform formally known as Twitter) 'our unis are here to help – equipping Australians with the skills and knowledge they need to enter the tech workforce and delivering the cutting-edge research and development that will lift productivity and drive economic growth.' Instructive that UA thinks it need be said. Relevance Deprivation Syndrome is a terrible affliction. (Future Campus – 26 Oct)

[Uni SA VC David Lloyd has a message for staff about what the new Adelaide U will look like.](#) The day after the state government announced the bill to create the succeeding university to Uni SA and Uni Adelaide is a happening thing, Professor Lloyd told his staff to look to their university's act for a sense of purpose for the new alpha A institution. The Uni SA Act is the announced basis for the merged uni foundation legislation and Professor Lloyd points out it includes specifics on serving Indigenous Australians, addressing educational disadvantage, working with industry, commerce and the professions and enhancing culture. 'Those values and goals were not just something people chatted about fondly at the time – they were something they enshrined in the legislation of this university. Three decades later, you can see the profound positive impact that has had.' Smart, very smart. While Premier Malinauskas's ambition for Adelaide U includes research growth he is a Labor leader and as such Lloyd's statement of where the new uni will go will speak to his base. (Future Campus – 26 Oct)

[The Fair Work Ombudsman Annual Report states](#) that in 2022-'23 it recovered \$96m in underpayments for 26,526 university employees, and took 'targeted enforcement action' against Charles Start U, Uni Melbourne, Uni Newcastle and UTS. Perhaps for university managements which have not paid

attention to FWO repeated warnings of problem areas it summarises sources of staff not being paid properly:

- no centralised human resources function
- lack of investment in payroll and time-recording systems
- control over human resources and pay-related issues mainly devolved to individual faculties and dealt with by academic managers.

The Ombudsman adds that universities are improving, but, and it is quite a qualification indeed, 'we are still seeing ongoing non-compliance requiring considerable investment by the OFWO, given the scale and complexity of the matters.' The FWO also sets out its two cases against Uni Melbourne which are filed in the Federal Court. In one, 'we alleged that the university threatened to not re-employ two academics after they complained they were required to work more hours than the 'anticipated hours' provided in their contracts and later that the university decided not to offer one of the academics any further teaching work after they made a further complaint or enquiry about working extra hours.' And in the other the Ombudsman is 'alleging the university underpaid 14 casual staff in the Arts Faculty around \$154 000 and made false or misleading records. We alleged staff were paid according to benchmarks rather than actual hours worked.' (Future Campus – 26 Oct)

[Universities Australia is getting in ahead of the final report from the O'Kane Universities Accord team on Work Integrated Learning.](#) In a Friday speech outgoing UA chief executive Catriona Jackson announced it will release a WIL strategy next month developed with 'business and industry groups,' Ms Jackson named Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Australian Industry Group, Business Council of Australia and Australian Collaborative Education Network. 'It will also keep all players accountable by providing measures to access and improve WIL progressively, and outlines steps to improve the WIL experience.' As a foundation, 'it will provide a common definition of WIL – something we do not currently have – that reflects the developmental stages of engagement between higher education providers, students and industry and community partners.' Smart move by UA and industry. The Accord Interim Report warns, 'there are numerous barriers preventing (WIL) uptake and broader implementation ... Developing the necessary mutual understanding and



meaningful relationships between universities and industry can require time, expertise and resources that are not always available.' By getting in first UA and partners may hope they can stop the feds getting involved. (Future Campus – 26 Oct)

[Six Month Reprieve to Fix HE Pay Model by Stephen Matchett](#). The termination of short-term research contracts is on hold for six months, as Government, union and employers attempt to find a way to adapt to legislation now in Parliament designed to protect long-term employees from the limbo of endless short contracts.

Thousands of casual staff are impacted by the impasse, which seeks to find new solutions to long-term issues with job insecurity borne from the tension between the prevalence of short-term research funding programs and the desire for longer term job security for the people funded by them. The six-month reprieve is a win for Australian Higher Education Industrial Association AHEIA, which has long complained the Government would not engage on the issue. But it is a skirmish in a way bigger battle over employment conditions. The National Tertiary Education Union told the current Senate inquiry on casual employment, that 'The use of casual employment has evolved as a cheap and convenient form of employment that has become a systematic approach to university teaching. There is little interest and even less investment by the institutions in their casual staff; they are there simply to deliver the required teaching at the cheapest cost.' (Future Campus – 2 Nov)

[Safe Spaces a Source of Success by Stephen Matchett](#). Indigenous student completion rates lag, but campus space where they can connect with each other, staff and 'their own cultural identities' can help. Bronwyn Fredericks (Uni Queensland) and colleagues talked to Indigenous graduates and university staff about how they succeed, reporting the results in a new paper. The research examines what occurs at four Group of Eight institutions and another. The five chosen have higher completion rates for Indigenous students over nine years than the national 47 per cent. Overall, they found students value centres for tech support and study space and to connect with others. Staff comments were similar, 'safe spaces that provide students with a sense of community and belonging.' However, such centres should not be the sole support and be part of 'broader institutional commitments to support Indigenous students.' (Future Campus – 2 Nov)

[NCRIS needs explaining](#). The obscurity of public understanding – or care – about NCRIS makes the \$650 million program vulnerable to pruning in future, writes Stephen Matchett, following a muted announcement of new funding. (Future Campus – 2 Nov)

[Middle-ranked Australian unis improve performance](#). 72 per cent of Australian university subjects are ranked in the world's top 200, according to THE discipline rankings – well ahead of the UK and US. Progress for our top ranked institutions is slower, however, Angel Calderon writes. (Future Campus – 2 Nov)

[The new edition of Andrew Norton's Mapping Australian Higher Education is out](#). Hundreds tuned in on Monday for the Future Campus webinar unpicking the secrets behind the numbers, with Professor Norton discussing what is in it and what it all means with Lisa Bolton (QILT), John Byron (QUT) and Gwilym Croucher. (Future Campus – 2 Nov)

[There is \\$2.5m in Commonwealth Government grants on offer](#) to fund technologies, (natural language processing, chatbots, data analytics and the like), 'to make it easier for small business owners to navigate the modern Awards system.' That's Awards as in employment terms and conditions. Cynics suggest AI is needed to explain a system beyond mortal ken. (Future Campus – 2 Nov)

[Push for R&D to Become Election Issue by Stephen Matchett](#). Science and Technology Australia wants R&D to be an issue at the next election, calling for major funding commitments to begin to catch up with the rest of the world. STA will call on political parties to set targets of 2.4 per cent of GDP going to research and development by 2030 and 3 per cent by 2035. At present it is 1.68 per cent, way behind Australia's top five trading partners. Noting the Biden Administration's Inflation Reduction Act, STA calls for 'a coordinated strategy across the country's R&D investment spending, research grant agencies, and policy levers.' Professor Larkins looks at new Bureau of Stats figures, from August, to find that the per centage of GDP spent on research and development declined from, 2013-'22. Business fell from 1.18 per cent to 0.89 per cent. Higher Ed dropped from 0.62 per cent to 0.56 per cent and government declined from 0.23 per cent to 0.16 per cent. (Future Campus – 9 Nov)

[Journal Giant Seeks to Curate Your Career](#). A new product from Interfolio offers to help university leaders profile

new recruits for their academic workforce – but is not welcomed by all. The company, which was purchased in mid-'22 by journal giant Elsevier, will pitch its capabilities to manage the 'professional journeys' of research staff to a Council of Australasian University Directors of IT at month end – presumably trying to reach directors of HR and DVC's Research by a circuitous route. This is an interesting step by the princes of paywall – helping institutions select researchers based on their publication performance – presumably as long as those publications happen to sit in Elsevier's Scopus citation database. Interfolio allows researchers to collect their Elsevier publications in a product called Dossier, helping to aggregate letters of recommendation and prepare to shop their CV to pastures greener. The idea is that an organisation specifies the field they are recruiting for, and the company comes back with a dashboard of suitable candidates, organised by five themes, with 30 indicators, helping to reduce time and bias issues in academic recruitment, in theory. Back in March, Elsevier's International Centre for the Study of Research announced a beta version of something way bigger, a digital dashboard that seeks to provide 'a more holistic view of candidates by highlighting attributes like mentoring, social engagement and collaboration.' The vertical integration of research output doesn't seem to have spooked the sector yet, although the idea of a private sector behemoth controlling where you publish, who gets to see it and options for where you work next may not suit all free thinkers. Professor Cameron Neylon said it was difficult to get enough staff engagement to make systems like this effective. 'This is a further play in the walled garden academic surveillance game. Data goes in but it is very difficult to get it back out again, locking in institutions and providing vertical integration opportunities for journal companies. Like other products in this category, the quality of the information will be highly dependent on what researchers are willing to put into it. Researchers are reticent about engaging with tools built for management rather than as support for them. 'Fundamentally, the question of whether it is a good thing to buy is really one of whether a university wants to have the flexibility and autonomy that control over its own information provides? Is it happy with black boxed solutions for researcher management or does it see the opportunities it provides for staff as a special feature of the university with



unique qualities, developed in collaboration with staff?’ (Future Campus – 9 Nov)

**New ARC approach.** The research national interest test is going but the Minister of Education will still be able to block grants. Stephen Matchett takes a dive into research funding changes. (Future Campus – 9 Nov)

**Five key risks to science security.** Great power rivalries and the potential for new technologies to be applied on the battlefield are impacting Australian science research and collaborations, the Academy of Science warns. (Future Campus – 9 Nov)

**How can campus design help women feel safer?** Given that 59% of domestic enrolments in Australia are women, re-thinking campus design to ensure women feel safe is critical, Campus Intuition founder Dr Samantha Hall writes. (Future Campus – 9 Nov)

**Aust unis ok in subject ranks.** Australian universities stand tall in subject rankings and outperform international peers, says RMIT’s Angel Calderon, who lifts the lid on the latest rankings secrets. (Future Campus – 9 Nov)

**Turns out talk of the end of Arts at Federation U was premature.** In August ‘22 the university said it would can its’ Bachelor of Arts, due to ‘an ongoing and steady decline in student numbers.’ It seemed no surprise at the time, as a year earlier the university had announced a restructure to ‘respond to employer and innovation demand’ including ending organisational structures, ‘which are designed around historically inward-facing models of academia.’ And it appeared part of the plan for the new ‘cooperative education model’ to ‘bridge campus-based learning with learning in the workplace so when our students graduate, they have real work experience.’ Which has never gone down well with the campus branch of the National Tertiary Education, ‘It’s a high-risk strategy that could do irreparable damage to education in the regions’ branch president Mathew Abbott said. But things changed. After a review, a ‘revitalised course’ is now announced for next year, with a history and heritage studies major and a ‘strengthened’ Indigenous Studies. And there’s more to come, ‘to get students work and world-ready through direct connection to employers.’ To which Dr Abbott responds, ‘this is a positive first step toward creating a distinctive Bachelor of Arts which will stand out in the market and serve the

needs of students and regional communities.’ It’s a win for teaching the humanities at a time when they are few. (Future Campus – 9 Nov)

**Margaret Sheil (QUT VC) has long argued careers are made of more than metrics.**

‘Talent is broadly distributed; opportunity is not. So whether we are selecting for admission to our universities or recruiting staff, we must not start with the assumption that each has the same opportunity to develop or demonstrate their ability,’ she recently wrote (Future Campus, September 27). Professor Sheil is speaking on how talent can be assessed in hiring at a webinar for the Council of Australasian University Directors of IT – so are representatives of Elsevier. (Future Campus – 9 Nov)

**The Commonwealth Government launches** its promised teacher education scholarships; \$40,000 over four years available to school leavers and \$20,000 for ITE postgrads. Recipients will have to teach in public schools for the equivalent of their scholarship years. (Future Campus – 9 Nov)

**The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education is on a mission from the Minister.** Last year Jason Clare gave the Curtin U based centre a new brief and (\$20m over four years to fulfill it). ‘The centre has been around for a while. And it does good research. But I want to see a step change. I want to see real results.’ And so he instructed NCSEHE to work with universities and other education institutions to evaluate and improve their equity programs, (Campus Morning Mail, July 11 2022). Which it is on to – ‘undertaking a major pivot towards a greater focus on research and evaluation of equity initiatives by building the evidence base and leadership capability of universities,’ the NCSEHE states. Last month it reported changes in equity enrolments across the system, not all the results were great) and now it is staffing-up to evaluate individual universities participation and partnership programs. Along with the Department of Education monitoring support for students at risk of failure, this is another government-mandated oversight that universities may not enthusiastically embrace. (Future Campus – 9 Nov)

**Big TAFE sees an opportunity in the Accord Interim Report** suggestion that VET self-accreditation of curriculum could be possible. In the AFR Monday, NSW TAFE MD Stephen Brady suggested such could enable ‘innovative and agile curriculum development to better meet

the evolving skills needs of industry. Last month the Victorian Skills Authority suggested the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority could accredit TAFE courses, or perhaps TAFE could self-accredit. (Future Campus – 9 Nov)

**Uni Newcastle announces Hanson Yuncken will build its \$63m Gosford CBD campus,** with local federal member, Labor’s Gordon Reid (Robertson) celebrating the Commonwealth’s \$18m commitment, ‘to ensure future generations can learn and study closer to home.’ Which was pretty much the message from the Coalition when it announced support before the election. In April last year, then Liberal member for Robertson Lucy Wicks was doing the celebrating while Emma McBride, Labor member for the adjacent electorate of Dobell was not invited. To the victor, the spoils. (Future Campus – 9 Nov)

**ARC Failing on Funding Research by Stephen Matchett.** A review of the Australian Research Council finds stakeholders have ‘low levels of confidence in grant outcomes,’ and the ARC has ‘limited knowledge and capability’ to deliver a ‘best practice’ National Competitive Grants Programme. The review, from consultants Icení (‘not your usual consultants’), was commissioned by ARC chief Judi Zielke at the start of her term, as part of a performance assessment package. The Senate directed its release, and it was tabled Tuesday, five months after being delivered. Icení concludes the council’s ‘operating model, culture and organisational capability do not support the ARC to adopt and implement the principles of effective scheme design and delivery.’ (Future Campus – 16 Nov)

New Ways to Reward Research by Stephen Matchett. Rewards and incentives based on conventional research metrics minimise opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds and with interrupted careers, and they restrict innovation and cooperation across universities, government and industry. The limitations of the existing system, and what can be done about them, are set out in a major report commissioned by Chief Scientist Cathy Foley, from the Australian Council of Learned Academies, supported by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. Key findings include:

- common cultures of research performance create conformity and can exclude long-term research;



- researchers specialise, which restricts mobility between industry, government and universities;
- hiring decisions can depend on metrics, regardless of 'disciplinary and contextual differences;'
- there are opportunities for system-wide changes, such as, data to identify potential recruitment bias and researcher potential, but care is needed, lest they are 'inappropriately developer or inappropriately applied.' ACOLA proposes six pillars for research assessment
- transparency: a common language to, 'underpin accurate judgements of fair, reasonable, reasonable and comparative assessment across disciplines, career stages and sectors.' Including, a standardised framework for competencies, indicators and metrics, aligned with 'international good practice;'
- integrity, accountability, equity and diversity in assessment;
- collegiality: including metrics that recognise good leadership;
- collaboration: better value multi, inter and trans-disciplinary research;
- leadership: 'new technologies and open science present opportunities to develop more efficient new tools and metrics, especially regarding leadership.'

#### A Key Take-out

'There are beneficiaries of the current system, however it also creates challenges and ingrains distortions and biases that in aggregate have a greater negative and impact than positive impact on the innovation and effectiveness of our research sector.' (Future Campus – 16 Nov)

#### [Student Evals of Academics Surprisingly Positive by Stephen Matchett.](#)

That student evaluations of teaching (SET's) are unfair is widely assumed. New research suggests not. But an analysis of 375,000 SETS at an 'Australian university' by Richard O'Donovan (Monash U) found common worries about SET don't hold water. Amongst some surprising findings, Dr O'Donovan found that:

- Analyses show the highest ratings are for staff from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- Male students rate women academics higher than men.
- Revenge reviews don't dominate – with just one in five students who fail or don't like the lecturer filling out the SET.

'SET data are not compromised by factors outside the control of educators.' 'While

these results do not mitigate the negative effects of 'incivility' experienced by Australian academics ... it is at least comforting to know that such attitudes appear to represent a tiny minority of students, and that overall, students' feedback on teaching is not riddled with bias and bigotry'. (Future Campus – 16 Nov)

#### [Husic's four sells on skills: more Chifley than Whitlam.](#)

The research national interest test is going but the Minister of Education will still be able to block grants. Stephen Matchett takes a dive into research funding changes. (Future Campus – 16 Oct)

#### [Pandemic adaptations endure in HE teaching.](#)

COVID-19 restrictions changed teaching – but post-crisis, teaching approaches haven't changed back. (Future Campus – 16 Oct)

#### [New Report Shoots Down Proposed Regulator by Tim Winkler.](#)

Commission (TEC) will help boost enrolments in areas of skills need, according to a new report by ANU Professor Andrew Norton. In the Paper, prepared for the Centre for International Studies, Professor Norton reviews about the role of a potential new regulator, the Tertiary Education Commission, as proposed by the interim report of the Universities Accord review panel. Professor Norton points out the practical challenges of setting up a TEC and attempting to match course enrolments with employer demand for graduates. 'The labour market can change more quickly than the flow of graduates from three-year degrees,' Professor Norton observes 'The number of professional jobs in skills shortage has almost tripled since 2021. 'The 2010s graduate boom times predicted by a previous higher education review were instead the worst ever period for new graduates looking for work. 'The centralised approach preferred by the Universities Accord interim report is unlikely to outperform the more flexible block grant or demand driven systems.' The report points out that the allocation of student places for medical courses had not been effective, with the nation relying on attracting overseas-trained doctors to prop up its health system. Professor Norton is unequivocal in shooting down the Interim Accord's proposed TEC. 'The Universities Accord final report ... should drop its plan for more university bureaucracy. Decentralised decision-making by universities and students is a lower-risk way of achieving its labour market goals.' (Future Campus – 16 Nov)

#### [Lobbies want more in legislation to protect research.](#)

Federal Government plans to change the way the Australian Research Council works have triggered a range of responses from lobby groups keen to see more detail. (Future Campus – 16 Nov)

#### [New tools for women ready to lead in HE.](#)

Women seeking to prepare for senior roles in the HE sector have a fresh set of resources available through a new website. (Future Campus 16 Nov)

#### [The Commonwealth Government has long made it plain VET skills are core policy.](#)

Ed Husic demonstrates they are also fundamental to Labor's political pitch. In a speech to the Sydney Institute, the industry and science minister mentioned universities but focused on the nation-building importance of skilled workers, (see the story in this week's edition). (Future Campus – 16 Nov)

#### [The Fair Work Ombudsman sets out where the government's proposed legislated limits on fixed term contracts would – and wouldn't apply.](#)

One where they would not be is a win for medical research institutes and universities managing publicly funded, time-limited research grants. The FWO spells out the exemption; 'work that is funded by the government (completely or partially) for more than 2 years and where the funding is not likely to be renewed afterwards.' There is no faulting Elsevier for strategy smarts. For years, the for-profit journal giant dug in against funding agency demands that publicly funded research should be open access from pub date. Elsevier is still conducting a fighting retreat to protect its pay-to-read and pay-to-publish journal earnings, but it is now mining the vast amounts of data in published research it already has to create new products. Like a possible prototype for an academic recruitment product, using the immense amount of information Elsevier holds on people's research output and achievement. And like its new PharmaPendium, which enables companies to make decisions about what drug candidates to work on, 'using machine readable data,' predictive tools and 'unparalleled research capabilities.' If information is the new oil Elsevier not only extracts, it refines. (Future Campus – 16 Nov)

#### [The Commonwealth wants to make defence cooperation easier with AUKUS partners, by making it harder to share research covered by the Defence and Strategic Goods List with everybody else.](#)

Providing access on research to US and



UK partners will not require an export licence, which will apply to all others. 'This will revolutionise trade among and between AUKUS partners and encourage industry, higher education, and research sectors in all three nations to innovate and cooperate. ... (to) provide Australia and our partners a genuine capability development edge,' the explanatory memorandum on the draft legislation states. Good-o, but what of research partnerships outside the AUKUSphere? Like with China, which now produces more papers than the US or EU. The Australian Academy of Science set the context for the broad issue of research cooperation in a paper earlier this month (Future Campus November 8). And this week academy president Chennupati Jagadish warned, 'to comply with the new laws, I will have to lock down my communications and restrict my collaborations.' Australia's Ambassador to Washington, Kevin Rudd, suggests while medical and life science collaboration with China would continue under the new rules, it will be difficult for researchers at the 'hard edge' of science. The Australian National Audit Office is looking at how the ARC handles its credit cards. The Australian Research Council is in good company – the ANAO is also examining the Productivity Commission and the National Disability Insurance Agency. (Future Campus – 16 Nov)

[Deakin U opens admissions for the first two courses at its Indian campus in the Gujarat free-trade GIFT City.](#) Masters in Cyber Security and Business Analytics will start in July with annual fees around \$A19000 – about half the course costs for international students at Deakin U in Aus. Uni Wollongong; also in GIFT city will be right behind in starting courses at GIFT. But the first university, at least the first Australian, to set up in India under local rules, will be the real achiever. At this stage it looks like being Western Sydney U which is said to be keen on IT-strong Bengaluru (see separate story). WSU also announces a campus in Indonesia teaching engineering, business, and IT, initially to 10000 students, in Surabaya. (Future Campus – 16 Nov)

[Communicating Value and Embracing Innovation in Higher Ed.](#) Keeping pace with the rapidly changing postsecondary landscape requires building connections with industry, communicating higher education's value and offering the skills and tools students need to succeed. (The EvoLLLution – 21 Nov)

[New Action to Combat Sexual Assault on Campus by Stephen Matchett.](#) The

Federal Government proposes a national student ombudsman with powers to investigate student complaints and resolve disputes with higher education providers on gender violence. It is part of a draft plan by a working group on university governance chaired by Our Watch CEO Patty Kinnersly, which was adopted by Education Ministers this week and will be implemented after Ministers receive feedback on the proposals. The new plan follows criticism of universities management of student complaints of gender-based violence from student groups and a Senate Committee. 'Students and staff in higher education deserve to be and feel safe. Over the last several years, evidence has shown that sexual assault and sexual harassment continue to occur in university communities at significant rates,' the draft plan states. (Future Campus – 23 Nov)

[Accept Cheating, Focus on Learning – and Incorporate AI Right Now by Tim Winkler.](#)

Universities should learn lessons from the tax office to improve security of assessment, refocus their attention on improved assessment of student work and start embracing AI in courses immediately, according to expert advice this week. In a wide-ranging presentation to a Victoria University symposium on academic integrity and assessment security, University of Sydney Academic Director Professor Cath Ellis said that universities made a compelling pitch for universities to rethink the approach to teaching and assessment. Professor Ellis said universities couldn't wait a couple of years to work out how to incorporate AI tools into teaching and assessment, as industry were using these tools right now. 'Otherwise we are going to produce unemployable graduates,' Professor Ellis said. 'In a world where Chat GPT exists, what is the work (that is relevant for students to do)? 'We need to shift our energy from worrying whether cheating has occurred to worrying whether learning has occurred.' (Future Campus – 23 Nov)

[Academy calls for beefed up research scrutiny.](#) The Australian Academy of Science calls for a 'a robust and fair' research integrity process. (Future Campus – 23 Nov)

[Another take on UG access. Charles Sturt U has NSW government funding](#) for five-day programmes to assess participants for direct entry to science, technology and health courses. The university will pick up the costs of participating. 'Many students capable of completing university

study face barriers to entry through traditional pathways.' Its open to people from regional NSW. 'University is for everyone, regardless of your ability,' is the pitch. (Future Campus – 23 Nov)

[Ministers are always on message – that nation building, economy growing research is what Australia needs.](#) Jason Clare was making the point Monday at a ceremony for Australian Research Council Laureate Fellows. The Education Minister's released remarks congratulated fellows for their work to deliver, 'research that remakes the world we live in and reimagines what the future might be like. Work that has a real economic impact.' And he quoted a recent consultants' report for the ARC on the multiplier of the National Competitive Grants Programme, 'every dollar we invest ... generates more than three dollars of economic output. Think about that – one dollar in, more than three dollars out.' Which can't cheer up the humanities and creative arts community – their researchers received just 35 (\$14.8m) out of 421 (\$220m) grants in the recent Discovery round. Or basic science researchers whose work may or may not turn out to have a commercial application. This does not get talked up by ministers – basically because they think voters want to know what is in research for them. 'Twas ever thus, at least recently. Coalition education minister Dan Tehan was no opponent of the abstract in research – he announced \$35 for the search for dark matter in 2019. But he also started the research commercialisation strategy the present government has grown, telling Vice-Chancellors in 2020, 'if I can put a compelling case to my colleagues that we are absolutely instrumental in driving productivity in this nation for the next decade then I think that we can get the support that we need to grow the sector.' Coincidentally, the Australian Research Council launched Monday a research centre advanced manufacturing with 2D materials, to 'generate greater economic output in this fast-growing market.' (Future Campus – 23 Nov)

[Data analytics provider Clarivate \(Web of Science is one of its brands\) releases its annual high cited researchers list.](#) Australia rates fifth, with 321 HCRs, although there is less a gap than a chasm between the United States (2669, 37 per cent) and China (1275 17 per cent) and the rest. The UK is third (574) and Germany fourth (336).

72 per cent of local HiCi researchers are based at the top five.





Uni Melbourne and Uni Queensland (both with 25) and UNSW (36) are on the world top 50 list for number of researchers. But the Australian top ten are not all at Go8 institutions, it includes researchers at CSIRO, James Cook U, and Deakin U. Uni Wollongong, has two, Shahriar Akter (marketing and business analytics H index 34) and public and environmental health researcher Thomas Astell-Burt (H index 41). The HiCi list is the sort of ranking criticised for reducing the potential and achievement of researchers whose work is not conducive to citation measures or whose circumstances impact conventional productivity measures. Which will not stop researchers pouring over the list and university research managers and marketers promoting results every way they can. (Future Campus – 23 Nov)

[Nationally, the percentage of students that commenced further study in VET after completing a VET course was 15.7 per cent](#), while the progression to higher education was 6.7 per cent, pre pandemic. The top courses associated with high transitions to higher education are at the Diploma Level, in fields such as nursing, information technology, business and media (some in the 20 per cent to 30 per cent range.) Conversely, courses with the lowest progression rates to HE tend to be in strong demand fields with good employment outcomes and high median income, such as Engineering and Related Technologies. Education dogma holds that students en masse could, indeed should, move seamlessly from VET to HE. They aren't doing it now. (Future Campus – 23 Nov)

[The SA universities merger bill has passed state parliament](#). In the House, Deputy Opposition Leader John Gardiner set out the reasons for not opposing the legislation, in a long and considered speech. Perhaps the best expression of ambivalence in a divisive campaign. The question now is who is the 'independent expert' the government will appoint to 'provide independent advice and recommendations ... on the measurement and achievement of proposed economic benefits, possible impacts on staff and students and risk management.' The price, perhaps of the government's \$200m research fund and \$120m for student support. (Future Campus – 23 Nov)

[Regulation Rules Over Uni Independence by Stephen Matchett](#). There is a 'pattern of actual or proposed interference in matters previously left to academic or university judgment,' HE governance

expert Professor Andrew Norton has warned. In a post released this week, the ANU's Professor Norton raises concerns about Government wading into areas that had previously been the exclusive preserve of universities. 'This is unusual in a country where university autonomy over academic matters has mostly been respected.' Last week, Education Ministers released a draft plan for a Student Ombudsman with authority to investigate student complaints of gendered violence on campus. Professor Norton points to the Ombudsman policy requirement for safe teaching and learning environments, which would be overlooked, at least at first, by the Department of Education, rather than individual universities or regulator TEQSA. (Future Campus – 30 Nov)

[Giving a Voice to a Million Have Nots by Tim Winkler](#). A new report highlights the crushing disadvantage of lack of access to government funding for migrants who have come to Australia on humanitarian visas – allowed to stay, but not allowed a loan to study. While 40% of Australians aged 25–34 hold a Bachelor degree and above, the proportion of Maori and Pasifika people living in Australia with degrees is below 15%. More than one million permanent Australian residents lack access to HELP loans due to the nature of their visa status, according to a new paper on connecting with disadvantaged communities by Professor Andrew Harvey, Strengthening university engagement with communities. Drawing on insights from the Pathways in Place program – a program involving Griffith University engaging with Logan in Queensland and Victoria University engaging with Brimbank, the report notes that place-based approaches can be pivotal in addressing disadvantage. The Universities identified underserved groups in each community and set about examining ways to drive inclusion. In particular, the report notes that 'better data is critical to identifying and serving marginalised communities.' If an academic paper can approach a love letter, then this one is a sonnet especially for Education Minister Jason Clare. As the Federal Government mounts a reforming crusade through the Accord process to open up access to the marginalised and disadvantaged, this practical guidebook for understanding and quantifying issues in key localities of need provides invaluable insights. The paper stops short of funding solutions, noting that consulting First Nations people and then including other underserved populations with the opportunity to contribute to

reports and solution-finding is an essential foundation for change. In doing so, it points to a critical matter that the Accord must address if it is to seriously tackle disadvantage – what to do for and with the million permanent Australian residents to tackle HE access, given many cannot afford to participate on a fee-paying basis. (Future Campus – 30 Nov)

[Research collaboration with unis 'very unsatisfactory' for business](#). Australia's labour productivity growth is the lowest it has been in 60 years, and what we need – but aren't getting – is research that can be commercialised, according to a new report. (Future Campus – 30 Nov)

[The oft-announced 4000 university places in submarine related STEM subjects is announced again](#), including the 1000 guaranteed for SA universities. 700 of them are for the now Uni Adelaide and 300 for Flinders U. (Scroll down for the national spread). The problem might be finding people who want to study for careers in submarine construction, because indications are AUKUS will not be the only jobs growth game in town. A new report from the SA Centre for Economic Studies, at the University of Adelaide, suggests aged and disability care will soak up skilled workers – in 2010-202 job growth in the sectors accounted for 64 per cent of the state total. (Future Campus – 30 Nov)

[There's more in the Accord! Jason Clare announces a new brief for Mary O'Kane and colleagues](#) – to come up with a standard national approach to early offers of UG places. Apparently, state education ministers want such and so Professor O'Kane got the job. 'Some people love them. Some people hate them. Some teachers say it causes students to take their foot off the pedal. Some universities tell me they are worried about other universities poaching their best and brightest,' are issues the Education Minister mentioned in commissioning the stakhanovite O'Kane. 'Poaching', huh! Apart from the usual ATAR is everything, or isn't at all, arguments this might, or might not, relate to a States' rights issue as old. In 2016 ANU raised WA and SA universities admissions centres with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, arguing they were not making it easy for their states' students to apply to the national u (Campus Morning Mail April 13 2016). (Future Campus – 30 Nov)

[Legislation is before the Parliament enacting the government's response to Margaret Sheil and colleagues' review of](#)



[the ARC Act](#). Education Minister Jason Clare says the Government agrees to all ten of their recommendations and the Bill covers the six that require legislation. The Sheil review went down well with the research community, which bitterly resented Coalition minister's vetoing of research grants and Mr Clare says the bill delivers on his promise to 'end the days of ministers using the ARC as a political plaything.' He points to the creation of an agency board, 'which re-establishes peer review as the driving principle in grant approvals.' And while the Minister will set rules on funding, they can be overturned by the Parliament. While Mr Clare makes no mention of how this might happen – it is not impossible to imagine Greens Senators making cause with an Opposition, in a mood for mischief. However the legislation also allows the Minister to fund 'nationally significant investments,' not individual grants but 'projects which can drive research, infrastructure, training and collaboration.' This sounds innocuous enough but 'nationally significant' may alarm discovery scientists, acute to anything indicating the government values research that has foreseeable benefits more than work which may, or may not lead to anything that isn't theoretical. The bill also allows the minister to veto a grant or terminate funding awarded, on national scrutiny grounds. There was never any chance the government would surrender this power. The father of Australian research policy, former Labor minister Kim Carr explained why in a Senate committee considering a Greens Bill to stop Ministers blocking research grants. He invited a hearing to consider, 'the theoretical possibility that ministers, being responsible to Parliament, under our system of government be obliged to act on information that is not known to the agency, despite the best intentions of the expert panel and the peer review processes or even the administration of the Australian Research Council ... there might be grounds on security or criminal intelligence that requires the minister to intervene,' (Campus Morning Mail, March 10 2022). This Bill is as good a protection of ARC funding independence as the agency and its constituents are going to get. In producing a report that ministers will wear, while reducing opportunities for them to stick their bibs into ARC decisions Margaret Sheil and colleagues did the research community a service. (Future Campus – 30 Nov)

[Just as uni managements and unions were getting their heads around the new enterprise bargaining rules](#), change is

afoot, notably in cases where the sides are at an impasse and the Fair Work Commission can intervene to broker a deal. The Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023, which seems set for the Senate, includes a requirement that changes to an enterprise agreement cannot be 'less favourable' to employees and 'bargaining representatives' than what now exists. This would be more supportive or stringent, depending on the side one takes, than the old 'better off overall' approach. The Australian Industry Group goes with stringent, 'this unbalanced proposal offends fairness and common sense. Companies are often faced with changed circumstances (and) the enterprise bargaining process is intended to enable these issues to be worked through between employers and employees and, where necessary, with the assistance of the Fair Work Commission. But the National Tertiary Education Union thinks it is a splendid idea. 'Excellent proposals by the Government and Greens to amend intractable bargaining laws so that they cannot leave workers' conditions 'less favourable' than their existing conditions. We have seen rogue university employers try to game these provisions to cut wages and conditions,' NTEU General Secretary Damien Cahill Xd (as in what was Twitter) yesterday. What happens next appears to be up to crossbench senators Lambie, Pocock and Tyrrell. (Future Campus – 30 Nov)

[The Accord discussion paper floated the brave idea of a levy on international student income to be used by the government to do good in HE](#). That's brave in the Sir Humphrey sense, with sector responses largely based on what universities would have to win or lose. Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia has weighed in against the idea, 'there is of course the ever-present risk that without clear and defined outcomes, funds could be used on a discretionary basis to fund political priorities of the day.' While ITECA does not state it, the council would be forgiven for suspecting that private providers might not be on Labor's list. (Future Campus – 30 Nov)

---

## BIG DATA, DATA ANALYTICS, BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

---

[Not Ready for AI: Business Process Automation May Be the Next Step](#). With the need to stabilize and grow enrollments in a post-pandemic higher education world, institutions must favor business process mapping to ensure

enrollment management meets students' needs. (The EvoLLLution – 16 Oct)

[Now the new requirements for universities to support students](#) struggling with study have passed Parliament, Universities Australia is working through the operational issues. (Future Campus – 2 Nov)

[UA reports meeting DoE](#), 'to discuss the sector's concerns around the guidelines underpinning the government's support for students policy.' UA's Catriona Jackson says the department commits to a working group on the guidelines for the new policy 'to ensure they are appropriate and implementable.' And she raises two particular issues. How university's existing policies can meet requirements and the 'potential conflict' between the guidelines as covered by the Higher Education Support Act and compliance with provider threshold standards, regulated by Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. (Future Campus – 2 Nov)

[We are very focused on prevention through education and awareness-raising](#), Fair Work Ombudsman Anna Booth told Senate Estimate last week, about universities not paying staff correctly. 'It's early days for me in stakeholder consultation, but I intend to meet with the Higher Education Industrial Association as well as the National Tertiary Education Union to discuss these matters further,' she said. Ye gods – with 23 'open active' FWO investigations involving universities, if managements are not across the problem now, it might be time for less discussing and more laying down the law. (Future Campus – 2 Nov)

[Domestic graduates \(70 per cent\) have a 10 per cent lead on professional employment over internationals](#) (on temporary entry visas) three years after completing courses, according to a new Jobs and Skills Australia analysis of existing data. (Future Campus – 2 Nov)

[Culture Trumps Grammar in Language Classes as AI Does the Talking](#) by Stephen Matchett. Macquarie U wants to cut its Modern Greek course (along with other European languages) and expand global studies. Languages are a hard sell for universities, what with insufficient demand and translation technology that already meets the utility needs of travellers and basic business. And not just here. Total languages other than English enrolments at US colleges and universities dropped 16 per cent in the five years to 2021, according to the US



Modern Languages Association. Nothing seems to stop the rot – especially given the already parlous pipeline from schools here. There were 20,000 Y 12 LOTE students in 2021 out of 234,000 Y 12 students. Plus, AI translation resources will continue to reduce the case for languages. As Xong Zhao, from the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education puts it; 'Despite teachers' great and hard work and students' genuine interests and efforts, most of the students are far from competent after one or four or even ten school years.' It is, he suggests, time to re-think courses in learning languages other than English to focus on global competence, 'cultures and issues beyond one's own culture in local communities.' (Future Campus – 23 Nov)

#### [Researchers Ambivalent About What OA can do with their Data by Stephen Matchett](#)

A revolution in research as AI searches masses of open data maybe the next big thing, but researchers are not ready for an imminent arrival. The '23 edition of Digital Science and partners survey of researchers' attitudes to open data finds they still do not believe they are appropriately credited for sharing, pointing to low citation rates. Having the time and knowledge to publish are also continuing issues. And grant conditions that mandate open data are not helping, they argue. 'We may also be seeing some fatigue in enthusiasm for open research in general as open data policies come into place and researchers find themselves with even less time to comply with the directives of their funders,' the authors suggest. Certainly, altruism is up there, with 'public benefit' as the second most common reason why data should be public. But not everybody is sold on open data as a research principal, 10 per cent of responders are uncomfortable with theirs' being re-used in any format. This reflects a broader issue – ambivalence about what AI can do with small data sets. 'Only a small proportion' of researchers have considered using it to collect, analyse and annotate their data in previously machine un-readable formats – figures, tables, supplementary files. This is despite the potential of large language models that can write code. When they work, they can be a researcher's personal data scientist, exploring data sets, proposing research questions, designing statistical analysis and presenting results graphically, all within minutes. 'AI raises the tantalising prospect of data finally taking its place at the heart of our scientific articles, with integrated transparency and reproducibility as to how the data were

processed and analysed,' the report states. Which may be what makes some researchers nervous. (Future Campus – 23 Nov)

[The SA Parliament committee report on AI is out](#), including recommendations that the State Government get involved, notably:

- the Premier and trade departments, 'attract companies and research bodies with significant investment potential'
- 'State Government spearhead custom initiatives to increase the number of AI professionals in South Australia, particularly within the State's largest employer, the public sector'
- 'State Government identify narrow, focused areas of specialised AI expertise, where South Australia can be the world's best'
- the Government consider an AI 'growth accelerator,' 'to promote advancement in strategic economic areas' (Future Campus – 23 Nov)

#### [Universities Australia announced a charter on sexual harm last week](#)

which will 'drive new and improved measures to build on the many initiatives already in place at organisations across the nation.' In September UA was scathingly criticised by a Senate committee on universities handling of sexual assault cases. The announcement was ahead of the widely expected announcement of a draft action plan on gender-based violence in HE, at the Education Ministers minico on Tuesday (Nov 21). The announcement did occur, and includes a Student Safety Ombudsman, which UA supports, but warns will also cover universities student administration (see story in FC this week). To which the peak body responds, 'this would constitute a significant reform and detailed examination is appropriate. It would be inefficient to create duplication and overlap with existing regulation and regulatory bodies which deal with these issues.' (Future Campus – 23 Nov)

#### [Five ways to make Assessment work in the AI era](#)

TEQSA has released a new paper suggesting five ways to enable assessment to work in the AI era (Future Campus – 30 Nov)

## REPORTS AND RESOURCES

[March quarter apprentice and trainee commencements remain above pre-COVID levels](#). Although apprentice and trainee commencements in the March 2023 quarter declined since the 2022 peak, they are 13.1% higher than what

they were in the March 2019 quarter. Between the March 2022 and March 2023 quarters, apprentice and trainee commencements declined by 37.4%. The largest decreases were seen in the Accommodation (66.5%), Construction (30.8%) and Administrative and Support Services (29.5%) industries. As at 31 March 2023, there were 387 505 apprentices and trainees in-training, a 3.4% decrease from 31 March 2022. (NCVER – 16 Oct)

[VET instrumental in sustainable employment of First Nations people](#). The latest NCVER research report shows that vocational education and training (VET) significantly improves the chances of sustainable employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The report found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who commenced a VET program in 2016 were at least 19% more likely to achieve sustainable employment than those who did not enroll in VET. The type of VET program also impacted chances of sustainable employment. Apprentices and trainees were 150% more likely to gain sustainable employment than other VET enrolments. Additionally, the level of qualification impacted chances. Those enrolled in Certificate IV qualifications were 100% more likely to achieve sustainable employment than those enrolled in lower qualifications. (NCVER – 25 Oct)

Government VET expenditure at record high. The latest NCVER report shows that government expenditure provided towards vocational education and training (VET) reached an all-time high in 2022.

[Released today, the Government funding of VET 2022 report](#) shows that Australian federal, state and territory government expenditure across VET activities increased to \$10.9 billion in 2022. It was largely driven by employer assistance expenditure which totalled \$4.0 billion, an increase of \$0.3 billion (or 7.8%) from 2021. Government expenditure on direct VET delivery totalled \$5.5 billion, an increase of \$87.8 million (or 1.6%) from 2021. Government expenditures on student assistance increased by 15.6%, while expenditure on VET systems and administration and governance increased by 7.2%. (NCVER – 26 Oct)

[Presenting JANZSSA Volume 31, Issue 2](#). The Journal of the Australian and New Zealand Student Services Association (JANZSSA) team are pleased to present Volume 31, Issue 2. This issue explores the three central themes of cross-institutional



and interdisciplinary collaboration, widening participation and the need for tailored student services models, and the importance of student voice. The issue was launched at the 2023 ANZSSA Conference, alongside a JANZSSA professional development session for emerging authors. Submissions for the April 2024 issue are now open and the JANZSSA professional development series will continue in coming months. More information can be found on the JANZSSA website (29 Oct)

[Employers continue to engage strongly with training.](#) The latest NCVER report shows that employers continue to use accredited vocational education and training (VET) to train employees, while their use of other forms of training has increased. Released today, the biennial Employer's use and views of the VET system report found that 56.8% of Australian employers engaged with at least one form of accredited training in the last twelve months. Between 2021 and 2023, there were increases in employers using unaccredited training (up 2.2 percentage points to 54.4%), and informal training (up 4.6 percentage points to 81.2%). In 2023, the percentage of employers who were satisfied with accredited training remained stable, while satisfaction with unaccredited training grew by 2.6 percentage points from 2021 to 86.1%. (NCVER – 9 Nov)

[From Chaos to Clarity: Creating A New Credential Framework.](#) Given the rapid proliferation of digital credentials within higher education, a pressing need for clarity arises. To foster a cohesive and seamless student experience, it becomes imperative for learners, institutions, and other stakeholders to align their understanding and expectations. (The EvoLLLution – 18 Nov)

[In the UK, its 'Back to the data future'.](#) Data collection is one of those bits of the system we just assume will work, and for the most part that confidence has paid off. Since the establishment of the Universities' Statistical Record in 1992, the sector has benefited from high-quality quantitative intelligence about a dizzying array of sector facets. With every decision, from regulation to recruitment, backed and interrogated with plentiful and credible open data, it's easy to think that it always has and always will be. Not so fast. For the first time in more than 40 years, the 2022–23 data will come with a huge asterisk linking to several caveats – data customers (from the Office for Students to the Home Office, via the Office for National Statistics) will face

non-trivial problems in using it. We won't know, to the usual degree of certainty, how many students we have or where they are. The numerous and complex rules applied to data on collection do not appear to be being applied consistently or reliably. The delays and concerns around Data Futures have been mounting for years. Set up as a means to reach the Holy Grail of in-year data collections (and thus less latency and the chance of near-real time data), it has atrophied into confusion and blame. Now, last week's announcement of an inquiry into the project, and a pause in implementation, will push the realisation of any remaining benefits much further into the (data) future. The deadline for submission and sign-off is nominally this coming Wednesday, though regulators have been helpful about extensions where these are needed. On the site, Andy Youell describes the impact on staff engaged in data returns – a unique and often underappreciated group who have endured an impossible year. And David Kernohan outlines how the problems with data collection are an issue with significance far beyond the concerns of the sector. (Wonkhe – 20 Nov)



Photo by Andrew Bradshaw: Charlie Chaplin statue at Ballinskelligs Beach, Ireland (he would often visit for holidays)

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

[Data Analytics micro-credential scholarship on offer – study for free](#)

Want to upskill and be in demand in data analytics? Learn to analyse and interpret information, and take consumers on a journey through visually appealing and

engaging insights, with one of our micro-credentials. We've created four data-focused micro-credentials – developed in partnership with IBM and proudly funded by the NSW Government – to help you upskill and take your career to the next level:

- Data driven storytelling
- Data analytics for non-data minds
- Data analytics for business success
- Data analysis and insights.

[Find Out More at Charles Sturt University.](#)

### [Data Science Melbourne](#)

This is a group for anyone interested in 'Data Science'. We are not quite sure what the exact definition of a Data Scientist is, but if you deal with something generally related to converting data into useful insight then you will hopefully benefit from joining the group. Please follow the link to join in the group and [follow the events posted on Meetup.](#)

### [AIR Webinars](#)

AIR provides online resources, innovative practices, professional development opportunities, and training for AIR members and non-members and the higher education community, including assessment, planning, and related fields.

## THE CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

### [ATEM programs](#)

The Association for Tertiary Education Management provides high quality professional development and leadership programs for the tertiary education sector in Australia and New Zealand.

Professional development events can be found by [Browse the ATEM PD programs calendar](#) or [Search programs and events by region.](#)





INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCES & EVENTS

# LOOKING FOR AN EVENT?

Look no further!

AAIR finds the most relevant events in the IR space and brings them together for you on our website.



**CONFERENCES, EVENTS, TRAINING, PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT, WORKSHOPS, AND MORE ...**

Click here to visit [air.org.au/events](https://air.org.au/events)



### Altis Public Training Courses

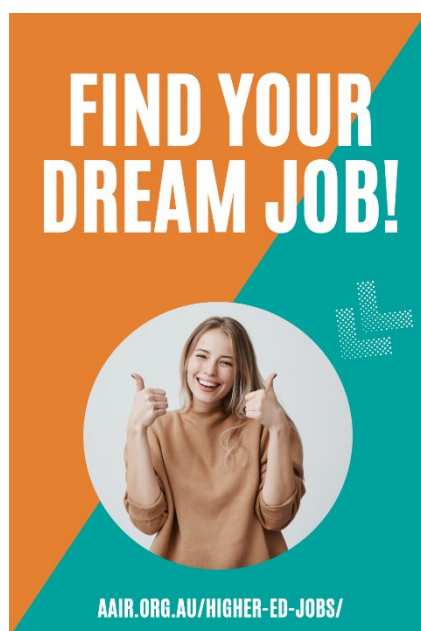
Build your Information Management knowledge and hone the skillsets required to manage the proliferation of organisational data. From strategic planning to implementation and management, our extensive suite of training courses provides you with critical insights and structured learning across the IM value chain.

### JOURNALS

[Call for Papers — Journal of the Australian and New Zealand Student Services Association](#)

Submissions are now open for JANZSSA's April 2024 issue. Invited themes include equity students; mental health, wellbeing, and safety; peer learning, mentoring, and student leadership; and career readiness. Showcase your work on these—or any other—areas of research and practice contributing to the evolution of student services in Australasia and internationally. Submissions close 31 January.

### POSITIONS VACANT



**FIND YOUR DREAM JOB!**

AAIR.ORG.AU/HIGHER-ED-JOBS/

Find a Job

If you have a vacancy you'd like advertised through AAIR, please submit a job ad for consideration.

Advertise a Job

### ON THE MOVE

Jonathan Covell is confirmed as Macquarie U's Chief Information and Digital Officer. He has acted since June.

In Victoria new premier, Jacinta Allan appoints her ministry. Deputy premier Ben Carroll is minister for education and medical research. Gayle Tierney continues as minister for skills and training and while it is not mentioned presumably keeps higher education. And in NSW Steve Whan becomes minister for skills, TAFE and HE – replacing the dropped Tim Crakanthorp.

Patricia Forsythe is announced as the next chancellor of the University of Newcastle, replacing Paul Jeans who retires at year end. This is the second go at replacing Mr Jeans. In 2021 council chose former National Party leader and some-time deputy prime minister under John Howard, Mark Vaile. Mr Vaile qualified as a local – representing the Newcastle adjacent seat of Lynne in the Reps. However post-Parliament he chaired a local coal mine, which caused such campus uproar that he withdrew acceptance of the offer (Campus Morning Mail, June 11, 22, 2021. Ms Forsythe is also a sort of local, being a Uni Newcastle graduate and former resident. In her first speech as a Liberal member of the NSW upper house she mentioned coal as one of Newcastle's 'key industries, that provide benefit for the whole State, indeed to all Australia.' Presumably the staff and students who opposed Mr Vaile's appointment will give her a pass on this, what with it dating from 1991.

Renee Hindmarsh will join Universities Australia as Deputy CEO in a fortnight. She was most recently SA Skills Commissioner and is a former ED of the Australian Technology Network.

Margot Powell joins La Trobe U as Chief Advancement Officer – she moves from QUT.

Michelle Lincoln has been appointed DVC A at Uni Canberra. She moves up from ED Health at the university, replacing Geoff Crisp, who is retiring.

Matthew Clarke is Deakin U's new DVC Research and Innovation. He steps up from PVC Researcher Development.

Verity Firth leaves UTS to become inaugural VP, Societal Impact, Equity & Engagement at UNSW.

Cheryl Fullwood has been appointed Academic Registrar and Director of Student Administration, ACU, moving from Swinburne.

Kerrie Wilson (QUT) starts work as Queensland Chief Scientist.

### CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

**A great way to get involved with the AAIR community is to share your thoughts and ideas. Do you have something you would like to share with your IR colleagues? Please send your contributions to the [editor@air.org.au](mailto:editor@air.org.au).**

**A reminder about the organisations' social media links to keep you up-to-date and in touch with all the latest news and events.**



ENEWS SIGNUP

 AAIR on Twitter [@AAIRaustralasia](https://twitter.com/AAIRaustralasia)



[Andrew Bradshaw](#)  
Editor, *The Institutional Researcher*

### DISCLAIMER

***The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers/authors and not necessarily those of AAIR or the institutions that make up the AAIR membership.***

