



AAIR Newsletter February 2024



Photo by Andrew Bradshaw: Royal National Park, Sydney

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

AAIR Events
Register for our upcoming [Fresh
AAIR Newbies Networking](#) event
and [Debunking Power BI Myths](#).
[PAGE 3](#)

**Institutional Researcher's
Corner Interviews**
Five quick questions with Phil
Stevens and Tim Brennan
[PAGES 4-7](#)

CONTENT

[From the President](#)

[Editorial](#)

[AAIR News](#)

[Upcoming AAIR Events](#)

[Institutional researcher's corners:](#)

[Phil Stevens, Altis Consulting](#)

[Tim Brennan, Explorance](#)

[Member contribution](#)

[Sector News and Views](#)

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

[Reports and Resources](#)

[Training and Development](#)

[HE Conferences and Events](#)

[Other Events](#)

[Positions Vacant](#)

[On the Move](#)

[Call for Contributions](#)

[Disclaimer](#)

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello everyone!

As we navigate the constantly changing landscape of higher education in Australasia, it's crucial to reflect on the guiding lights that shape our journey in this part of the world: the [Australian Universities Accord](#) and the New Zealand [Tertiary Education Strategy](#). Both pivotal initiatives aim to enhance the skills and prosperity of our nations, with a shared commitment to improving equity of access to higher education. This goal is not just about opening doors, it's about ensuring those doors are wide enough for everyone to enter, especially those who have been left behind by traditional structures.

In Australia, the Accord is setting out to make higher education more accessible for students from regional, remote, and outer metropolitan areas, as well as for under-represented groups such as First Nations students, individuals living with disabilities, and those from non-English speaking backgrounds. Across the Tasman Sea, Aotearoa/New Zealand's strategy mirrors these aims, focusing on increasing access for Māori, Pasifika, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, first-generation university attendees, and students with disabilities. We know Māori are disproportionately over-represented among those failed by the schooling system. The *Education and Training Act 2020* includes provisions to honour the Māori-Crown partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, ensuring policies and curricula reflect tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori, and te ao Māori. These efforts are not just about fairness; they're about recognising and honouring the unique contributions and potential of every individual.

This brings us to an important distinction: the difference between equality and equity. While equality means giving everyone the same resources or opportunities, equity is about fairness and justice in the distribution of these resources. It's about giving people what they need to achieve the same outcomes. Appreciating this subtle yet significant distinction is crucial in our work at the Australasian Association for Institutional Research (AAIR), and within our institutions.

One image that often comes to mind, illustrating the importance of equity, shows the difference between giving everyone the same support versus giving each person support tailored to their needs. This image serves as a powerful reminder of the principles we strive to embody in our pursuit of educational equity.

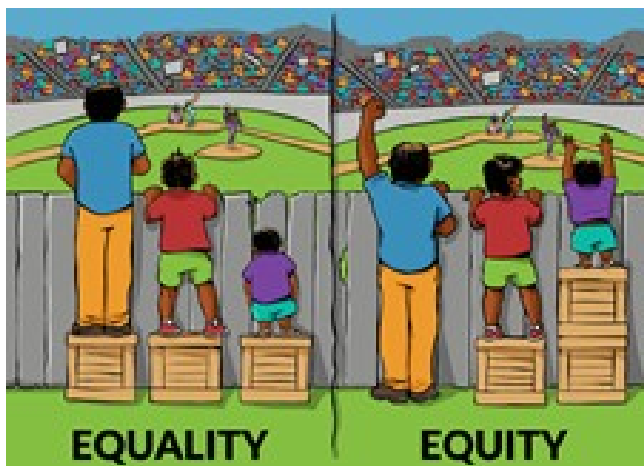


Image source: This image is free to use with attribution as per the [Creative Commons licence](#): "Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire." <https://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/> (interactioninstitute.org and madewithangus.com).

So, how do we support equity? It starts with acknowledging the deep-seated trauma caused by racism and its impact on communities, including Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia. Inspired by a blog from an Occupational Therapy lecturer at my institution, I've been drawn to the concept of being a 'critical friend'. This approach involves using our roles to challenge and support our institutions and higher education decision-makers to focus on equity, inclusion, and tackling racism and bias head-on.

At AAIR, we're uniquely positioned to act as critical friends, offering support and insight to drive meaningful change. This role resonates with me personally, as it encapsulates the balance of challenge and support that is central to our mission. Being a critical friend also means confronting our own unconscious biases through reflexivity, a process I highlighted at the 2023 AAIR Forum in Melbourne. By acknowledging and managing these biases, we can better support equity and inclusion across the board.

As members of AAIR, we have a vital role in supporting the objectives of the Australian Universities Accord and the New Zealand Tertiary Education Strategy. Our commitment to help improve access to higher education for all learners is at the heart of what we do. Let's continue to challenge biases, both within ourselves and within our institutions, and let's be the critical friends our sector needs.

Together, we can make a difference.

Stuart Terry, AAIR President



EDITORIAL

Dear newsletter readers

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2024. I hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful Christmas and celebrated the New Year with their family and friends. Hopefully, everyone has had a chance to enjoy some time to have a holiday and relax with their loved ones.

By the time we publish this newsletter, most higher education providers will be commencing classes for new students, and re-enrolling students on their campuses. AAIR wishes all a positive, and stress-free year ahead.

Following on from our successful AAIR Forum in Melbourne late last year, many will be looking forward to the changes contained in the Australian Universities Accord report in the foreseeable future. As the changes are announced, AAIR will plan information sessions with appropriate people from the Department of Education.

We look forward to sharing all the relevant news across the higher education sector in 2024 via our newsletters, webinars, and forum.

Andrew Bradshaw
Editor, The Institutional Researcher

AAIR NEWS

Upcoming AAIR events



Fresh AAIR (Newbies Networking)

When: 7 March 2024 (12–12:45 pm AEDT / 2–2:45 pm NZDT)

Where: Online

Hosted by AAIR, convened by:

- **Andrew Bradshaw**, AAIR Executive Committee Member
- **Pallavi Khanna**, AAIR Executive Committee Member
- **Liesha Northover**, AAIR Executive Officer

AAIR would like to welcome and get to know our new members and reconnect with returning members.

This casual virtual get-together is an opportunity to learn more about AAIR and to introduce you to our website and events.

It's a great chance for us to all say 'hi' and have a chat about ourselves and our roles and meet other AAIR members.

This event is open to new, returning, and current members who are seeking to broaden their peer network and get more information about the services that AAIR offers to members. Grab a coffee and come along to meet colleagues and make new friends. Non-members are also welcome.

REGISTER FREE



Debunking Power BI Myths

When: 8 April 2024 (12–1pm AEST / 2–3pm NZST)

* **SAVE THE DATE** *

Where: Online

Hosted by **Phil Stevens**, Principal Consultant, Altis Consulting

Power BI is the most widely used data visualisation tool on the market, especially within the higher education sector. This is because of the flexibility of the tool and the 'ease of use' it gives to businesses with any level of ability in creating data visualisations. It also only takes a rudimentary level of data literacy to be able to load data into the tool and create tables and graphs of information. Much like most things in life though, the more popular something becomes, the more it is used in different ways and diverted away from its original design or purpose.

Is Power BI not working for you at the moment? Perhaps it's not you or the tool that is the issue here, it's how it's being implemented or used. In this webinar, I will take you through some Power BI success stories, as well as provide insights into the 'best practice' way to use this powerful, often misunderstood tool.

REGISTER FREE



Institutional Researcher's Corners

Altis Consulting

Five quick questions with Phil Stevens, Principal Consultant



Tell us about what Altis does and the specific assistance it offers its customers.

Altis Consulting is an Australian-owned global data analytics company built on 25 years of data expertise and experience. We guide businesses, institutions, and government agencies to solve their unique data challenges, see their organisations clearly, and make better decisions. With a uniquely customer-focused approach, Altis provides the advice, infrastructure, tools, and processes to deliver actionable insights and extract real value from data. Altis Consulting provides services across Australia, New Zealand, and the UK.

Can you briefly summarise some of your collaborations with universities?

Altis has a very strong history working in the higher education sector, and we have been supporting AAIR since 2009. During this time, we have worked with over 40 universities in Australia and New Zealand, becoming an instrumental partner, particularly with transitioning and migrating to cloud-based operations. We regularly implement strong, proven frameworks for the ingestion and processing of data within universities to assist in keeping ongoing operational costs low whilst maintaining a standardised pattern for the processes.

What do you anticipate the needs of your clients to be in the age of 'disruption' in tertiary education? E.g. What are your thoughts on data and analytics for the future?

At this year's AAIR Forum, the potential impact of the Australian Universities Accord on tertiary education was a hot topic. It was very interesting to hear the level of reliance on quality data from multiple institutions as a tool to which they will try to navigate this disruption. Many presentations focused on the need to increase the drive to data-driven decision-making when it comes to ensuring that the right decisions are made to ensure success at an institutional level. Drawing from my experience across various industries undergoing similar disruptions, I firmly believe that there's an unprecedented need to ensure that the investments made in data and analytics are not just made but utilised effectively. We at Altis see this next phase as the period of 'data literacy' within higher education. This means that investments must be made into ensuring your various departments and teams are competent with discovering insights through data, and in conjunction with this, your systems are increasingly 'user-friendly' to accommodate this. If your institution's data platform is not set up and ready for this influx of insight-hungry business users, then it is time to get some help getting ready for this.

What has Altis learned from its involvement with the higher education sector in Australia and New Zealand?

We at Altis have played a major role in building and developing flexible and stable data platforms for many institutions across Australia and New Zealand, and this has been a rich learning experience! There is not enough time to explain all that we've learned along the way, but I can certainly share a few key takeaways.

I'd have to start by saying that although every institution is of course unique, when it comes to building sustainable data platforms and processes, there are universal truths that must be applied to ensure success. I alluded to one of these earlier when I spoke of data literacy, but

there is also data visualisation best practice and data governance that must be included in this. These 3 pillars, if set up and maintained correctly, can set the foundations for a successful platform that will thrive in a world that is often changing faster than we can budget for or throw resources at.

One other learning I will make note of is that through our work in this industry and other similar industries, we have seen great success when the traditional divide between IT and 'the business' is removed, and the two sides work closer together. As your institution becomes more and more data literate, the interest from the business teams to have more control over their insight generation through data will grow. All too often we have seen business departments implement their own shortcut solutions to get around their reliance on IT. If we can bridge that gap between business expectations and IT solutions and capabilities, then data platforms can be the home for data insights and solutions for the whole institution.



How can people connect with Altis?

There are many ways to reach out to Altis, as well as ways to join in with what we're doing in the data and analytics space industry wide. For all enquiries, you can email us at connect@altis.com.au, or simply visit our website at altisconsulting.com and fill out the contact form on the '[Contact Us](#)' page of the site. You may also be interested in keeping up to date with our [regular blog posts](#) and [free webinars](#) that are available on our website, and our social media pages.



We're always keen to keep in touch with you, so if you have any questions please do reach out!



Calling all Power BI users!

Find out how our latest innovation, the Altis Power BI Framework, helps organisations like yours save time, minimise cost, and increase efficiency by:



Creating functionally rich, high-quality, and consistent-looking reports from templates customised to your organisation's branding



Tracking Power BI usage across your entire estate to better support your adoption strategy



Managing licensing, costs and identify opportunities for saving



Empowering your teams to successfully develop, test and deploy Power BI reports with best practice processes and guidelines

Connect with us today if you would like to hear more about our Power BI Framework or arrange a technical demonstration.



altisconsulting.com



Explorance

Five quick questions with Tim Brennan, General Manager Asia-Pacific



Tell us about what Explorance does and the specific assistance it offers its customers.

Explorance is a provider of People Insight solutions. We empower universities, government agencies and corporations with actionable decision-making by measuring students' and employees' needs, expectations, skills, knowledge, and competencies. Through scalable automation with tools including [Blue](#), and expert-based services, Explorance facilitates continuous improvement and accelerates the insight-to-action cycle.

Founded in 2003, Explorance is headquartered in Montreal with business units in Melbourne, Chicago, Chennai, Amman, and London. Explorance works with 25% of the top higher education institutions in the world, including 8 of the world's top 10 business schools. The company has clients in more than 40 countries.

Can you briefly summarise some of your collaborations with universities?

Explorance has been working with institution partners in Australia and New Zealand since 2003.

Our clients are diverse in their size and focus – be it their commitment to innovation and excellence in teaching, learning and research (IRU); how research intensive they are through the application and interpretation of the latest technologies (ATN); or if they are developing elite international alliances and research partnerships (Go8). In fact, we work with the majority of

higher education institutions in Australia, including 4 Go8 universities.

Our collaborations with institutions range from providing the world-leading course and teaching evaluation tool, Blue, for the administration, collection, analysis and reporting of student feedback data, to providing insights from qualitative feedback using our AI-powered student voice tool called [MLY](#). MLY is a machine learning feedback analytics tool that is purpose-built for higher education. We also offer a service of administering the survey process on behalf of universities.



What do you anticipate the needs of your clients to be in the age of 'disruption' in tertiary education? E.g. What are your thoughts around data and analytics for the future?

In the age of disruption, our institution partners are looking to make sense of the volumes of data at their fingertips; they seek to readily identify relevant sources of data, and further, they are eager to distil the data for informed decision making. We are witnessing, and are part of, the growing use of AI to assist in producing reliable, repeatable, consistent, and timely insights and recommendations for action.

So, what does that look like?

We are working with the higher education community to analyse qualitative feedback at scale to provide recommendations that focus on what an institution can start, stop, or keep doing – today.

What has Explorance learned from its involvement with the higher education sector in Australia and New Zealand?

Explorance has learned greatly from its mutual collaboration with universities in the Asia-Pacific region. It was in this region that our (now) global community was established as a means of connecting institution colleagues for the purpose of sharing and learning all things pertaining to course evaluation, assessment, and student experience feedback. The engagement direct with institutions and via the [Bluenotes group](#)

has been key to shaping our products and services to meet institutional needs. Further, we observe that institutions in Australia and New Zealand are at the forefront in articulating their requirements, which feeds into our product roadmap such that it benefits our partners in other regions.

How can people connect with Explorance?

To learn more, please visit [Explorance.com](https://explorance.com). We also invite you to connect with us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) @explorance or reach out to me direct at tbrennan@explorance.com.



AI-Powered Student Voice

Machine learning feedback analytics purpose-built for higher education.



Meet MLY

MLY is Explorance AI platform that helps academic leaders gain additional insights into their student body by transforming qualitative feedback into data-driven insights that can be leveraged to support important institutional initiatives and decisions.

MLY provides an in-depth analysis of students' unstructured communications by determining a comment's sentiment, identifying feedback patterns, and highlighting when comments are formative forward-looking recommendations.

Deeper Insights with Topic-Specific Categorization and Analysis

Specifically trained with student comments, the Explorance machine learning models efficiently categorize feedback, digging deeper into student sentiment towards academic-specific topics. With self-learning algorithms and continuous data training, the solution easily adapts to changing academic themes.

Student Experience Insights (SEI) Analysis	
Quality & delivery	Instructor
Engagement	Class-participation
Course content	Learning activities
Labs	Training material
Tutorials & workshops	Expectations & objectives
Difficulty	Software

Gather More Insights, Wherever Feedback Comes From

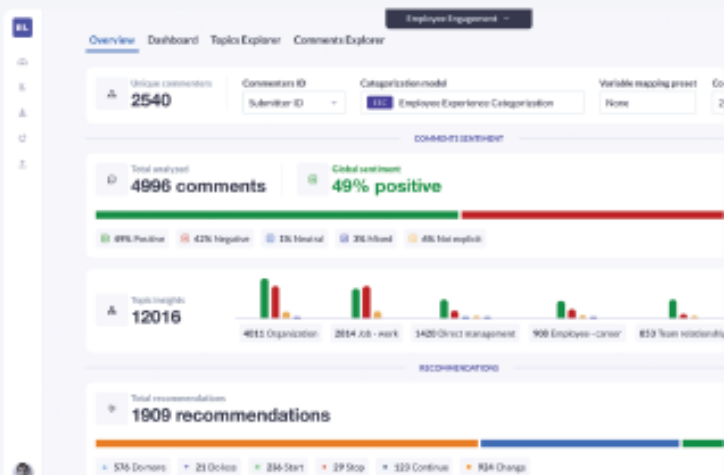
Explorance MLY is a feedback source-agnostic solution that allows you to harness collective intelligence wherever it comes from. It has the capability to integrate into an already existing evaluation process by leveraging its API, or consuming spreadsheets in an online dashboard for ad hoc analysis.

Leverage internal and external data to further understand your student experience, by analyzing feedback from:

- 1 Course evaluations
- 2 Central and major surveys
- 3 External review sites (e.g., Rate My Courses, EDUopinion)
- 4 Social media (e.g., Facebook, Reddit)

Go Beyond Insights with Bottom-Up Recommendations and Alerts

Explorance MLY is a purpose-built student feedback analytics solution that highlights recommendations and alerts on sensitive topics. With its ability to analyze qualitative feedback at scale, it effectively provides higher education leaders with timely and actionable recommendations that focus on what an institution should start or stop doing, do more or less of, or change.



Member contribution



Photo by Andrew Bradshaw: Shark Island, Sydney Harbour

Got something you'd like to share in this section? Email our newsletter editor.

CONTRIBUTE

SECTOR NEWS AND VIEWS

(Note: Future Campus dates are indicative of publication and may differ from their website)

Australian Universities ACCORD Update – January 2024.

The Australian Universities ACCORD Panel presented its final report to the Minister for Education, Hon. Jason Clare MP, on 28 December 2023. The final report contains 47 recommendations for change. Each goes to the Review's vision of a stronger Australia; a nation that is highly skilled, productive, equitable and knowledgeable, underpinned by a vital tertiary education system.

With the Accord at its end, the real work begins. Please check the Accord website for [updates](#). – Mary O'Kane, Chair

Accord Response

Future Campus Webinar: New road? Reaction to the Accord from HE sector leaders.

Which is exactly why Future Campus is hosting a special online webinar at 11am AEDT on Friday 1 March to explore sector's response to the Accord in detail.

The one-hour webinar, hosted by our very own Stephen Matchett, will include insights from a panel of HE sector leaders, including Universities Australia CEO Luke Sheehy, the Australian Industry Group's Megan Lilly, President of the Australian Academy of Science Professor Chennupati Jagadish, an NTEU representative and additional speakers still to be confirmed.

The webinar will provide a response to dive deep into the consequences of the

Accord and a chance to put forward your own questions to sector experts.

Increasing Student Retention Rates Through Personalization

Although higher education institutions are working to integrate the positive aspects of remote learning, such as flexibility and asynchronicity, into education, they would do well to prioritize elements of face-to-face learning that make learning online feel more connected and human. (EvoLLLution – 5 Dec)

Seven arguments against exams by Stephen Matchett.

'Relatively few of the perceived academic benefits of high-stakes examinations have a strong evidence base,' according to a new paper from staff at the University of Melbourne. Given that the cheating potential of AI technologies has driven some institutions back to traditional exams, their effectiveness as an assessment tool needed to be analysed, according to Raoul A. Mulder, Sarah French and Ashton Dickerson. The trio scoped out existing research into exams, finding there were seven key reasons that people advocated for exams and while they were valid in some circumstances, 'the pronounced lack of empirical evidence for the pedagogical benefits of high-stakes examinations suggests that they are employed primarily for reasons related to cost, efficiency, practicality, scalability, and administrative convenience.' 'Designing assessment practices that encourage continuous and high-quality learning while supporting student wellbeing is a challenging but important task that requires creative and innovative approaches.' (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

New Measures Reveals Business School Impact

by Tim Winkler. Macquarie University has quietly ended the year with a market analysis that could transform the pecking order of Business programs in Australia. In an oblique contrast to the many monetized, opaque rankings systems with contorting biases that tend to dominate headlines, the new report on business school performance isn't even billed as a ranking – but instead uses transparent methodology to generate insights into student performance by comparing publicly-available data scraped from graduate accounts on LinkedIn. The ranking, commissioned by MQBS Executive Dean and strategy expert Professor Eric Knight, is an unpaid piece of work by economics research consultancy Mandala, using a database from Revelio Labs, which sources its' information from LinkedIn. The research provides new ways to examine graduate

employability and equity with new datasets. 'We wanted a better understanding of the impact of our business school, using LinkedIn to understand where graduates actually ended up,' Professor Knight said. 'As the higher education conversation moves toward new ways of thinking about quality and reputation, I think it is clear that education and teaching quality needs to be part of the equation. At the same time, QILT and Graduate Outcomes Survey data often has only 35% participation rates and captures point in time responses – which is why a dataset like this is quite powerful. 'It is also relevant as you think about the social mobility ambitions sitting behind policy because the focus will need to be not only on admission into university, but also the graduate outcomes exiting university.' The dataset indicated that while MQBS ranked well in traditional rankings, its impact was significantly better when outcomes were evaluated via LinkedIn. MQBS earned more favourable student ratings and better completion rates than some other universities relative to starting ATAR and had more students from diverse or disadvantaged backgrounds than other universities did. The approach makes use of a 9-year time series of data, providing insights into aggregate results of tens of thousands of student occupational journeys per year. 'We think about quality through the lens of university rankings with a heavy skew to research, there is an interest in education quality as well.' Professor Knight said. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

Bid to reinvigorate Oz Manufacturing through research.

The National Reconstruction Fund Corporation is open for business, unlocking \$15 billion in investment finance with a goal of rebuilding Australia's manufacturing competitiveness – opening loading bay doors of opportunity for universities. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

Trust and Kindness critical to HE success.

Trust and kindness need to be integrated into pedagogical practices, institutional values and relationship building if universities are to effectively engage students and staff, according to a new paper. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

Why (Some) HDR Students want to

Leave by Stephen Matchett. UK not-for-profit analyst Advance HE included four Australian universities in its '23 survey of HDR postgrads and found experiences are much the same the world over. Charlotte Holden reports that 80% of the 37,600 total responders, (almost all from the



UK), were satisfied overall. So were 79% of the 1,500 Australians, also counted in the main group. Among both, there was a 10 per cent premium on in-person contact with university staff and everybody found FT study more satisfying. But money worries were a common concern across the board; with money worries increasing this year compared to 2022. The two samples are as one on research culture; universally reporting that the least satisfying aspect of study, with just 56-57 per cent of responders agreeing that, 'the research community in my areas influences my work.' The best result was for access to seminars, with 65-67% reporting positives. But 40% or so felt no sense of community. As to gutfuls, around a third of both samples report wanting to quit, although how many did is unknown. Money, mental health and competing priorities were the top three reasons. Participating Aus students were at ANU, Uni Newcastle, UNSW and Uni WA. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

Australia shines again in sustainability rankings. QS has launched the second edition of its Sustainability Rankings this week, with 16 Australian universities in the world's top 100. Angel Calderon dissects the data, advising how to do well and how the index should evolve. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

Less than two years into her five-year term, Australian Research Council CEO Judi Zielke, leaves Friday, 'stepping down due a health issue.' The ARC announcement cited, an 'increase in transparency and engagement' under her leadership, which, 'has helped to build the relationship with the research sector' while Education Minister Jason Clare said she was 'a great source of advice and has guided the ARC through a period of positive change.' Ms Zielke moved from COO of CSIRO to acting head of the ARC following the early resignation of Sue Thomas and her appointment was widely welcomed as a safe pair of bureaucratic hands for an agency widely considered to be in disarray. But she went way further than creating calm, commissioning a review that found the agency has 'limited knowledge and capability' to deliver a 'best practise' National Competitive Grants Program. On this, and replacements for research performance measures, it appears she intended not to just identify problems but fix them. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

The Defence Trade Controls Amendment Bill 2023 is before the parliament and a very good thing it is indeed, according to Defence Minister

Richard Marles. He says it 'will unlock billions of dollars in investment and cut red tape.' At least it will with the US and UK submarine partners, but not so much with everybody else. Which worries universities and research lobbies – they have lobbied hard for months against the arrangement, making the case that the new rules make it harder to work with the rest of the world, with sharing research in tech fields requiring an export licence. But Mr Marles was all reassurance in his second reading speech in the Reps last Thursday. 'These reforms are not intended to prevent foreign nationals from working with Australia ... They are not intended to prevent foreign students or academics from engaging with Australian academic institutions. Indeed, much of the existing collaboration and trade between Australia and international partners will be unaffected by these changes.' He's right – research on Aramaic poetry is open to all. But anything on the defence and strategic goods list is for AUKUS eyes only and criminal penalties apply for sharing stuff the Feds want to keep secret. As Universities Australia puts it, 'we are committed to supporting government deliver AUKUS, but it must not come at the expense of other important research projects with existing and future international research partners.' But it's not over yet. The Senate has sent the bill off to committee for a proper inquiry – the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee is not due to report until the end of April. Which pleases the Group of Eight, long and loud in calling for a more measured bill. According to the Eight (via Twitter) the inquiry will ensure we get the balance right between protecting both national security and our broader research and knowledge networks – particularly across the Indo-Pacific. The Government will not be budging on the substance of this Bill and unless the Opposition really wants to make mischief by partnering with the Greens a favourable report is likely. However, the research community still has time to extract concessions. The always across his brief Greens committee member Senator Steele-John, may well be amenable to suggestions. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

The National Tertiary Education Union has made Jason Clare's Accord-sell way easier. The union packaged known cases of universities underpaying staff and issued the information to friends in the media. There was nothing much previously unreported in the coverage but plenty to appal readers new to the story.

This is very bad news for university lobbies and their members, just ahead of the Accord. Their complaints when they don't get everything they want will be easily dismissed as venal whining by managements that appear indifferent to paying staff what they are owed. Following scathing criticism of university responses to gender-based violence on campus, the year ends with the public standing of managements less at rock-bottom than subterranean. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

TEQSA staff are happier in the service, at least some of them are. The 2023 public service census for the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency reports a 12% lift in staff members 'who would recommend my agency as a good place to work.' But that brings it to 43%, 30% under the result for all regulatory agencies. It's not that they don't value the agency's mission; 81% 'believe strongly' in its 'purpose and objectives', but staff rate the agency around 10% below all-regulators on a range of management and performance measures. Compared to previous surveys, this is a could be worse result. This year's overall positive engagement score is 66%, 8% down on the all-regulator score and the same as 2022 (67%). But there is a big improvement, 50% of staff think the SES works as a team, bang on the regulator average and 20% up on last year. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

At ANU, optimism about the brand appears not to abound. Imminently-outgoing VC Brian Schmidt urges staff to tell ranking agency QS about academics who might think well of the university and employers of the university's students who are happy with their hires. 400 of each are needed for the imminent QS reputation survey. Professor Schmidt is no admirer of rankings but realpolitik prevails. 'We routinely perform much worse in these surveys than universities we would see as our peers. So if you know someone who might be prepared to fill in the survey who you think has never done it before and knows about us ... please nominate them,' he writes. Hopes to build fundraising appear forlorn. Back in 2020 ANU announced it aimed to double revenue from philanthropy in five years but now staff cuts are proposed that could involve half the positions in the 80 or so EFT advancement team. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

Charles Darwin U's push for a med school has failed for '24 funding, but the bid is not dead yet. Since arriving in 2021, VC Scott Bowman has organised a



campaign that ticks all the policy and process boxes for a local med school, which would presumably replace the Flinders U program that currently teaches med students in the territory. Alas, there are no places for CDU in the new Commonwealth distribution of 160 new rural med school places, which are spread across Deakin U, Uni Notre Dame (in WA), Uni Queensland, Uni Wollongong, Un Tas and Flinders U. However, the Commonwealth is keeping CDU's hopes on life-support, with \$2.8m for 'preliminary exploratory work' on an NT med school. Education Minister Jason Clare says this will allow the university, 'to apply for Commonwealth support medical places in its own right and not have to rely on other education partners across Australia' - which may not impress people at Western Sydney U's med school, who have been working with CDU on a syllabus for the past two years. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

The Fair Work Ombudsman reminds all of the changes to fixed term employment under the new industrial relations rules, including two exceptions that apply to HE. One helps research institutions, running on fixed term grants. It exempts them from the requirement to offer continuing jobs to people employed for two straight years, if funding is 'unlikely to be renewed.' And there's a six-month exemption to the two-year rule for HE, presumably to give universities and unions time to sort out an agreement. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

Migration Change – First Salvo or Fix? By Tim Winkler. The Albanese Government's new migration policy aims to rein in the number of new international students, with a series of measures which will mostly hit the VET sector hardest. Regional universities, which already struggle to cleave international students from the bright lights of a city study stay, are likely to also suffer some reduced demand, but overall, the University sector has begrudgingly accepted the changes – perhaps recognising that any policy launch with the business council and ACTU standing on stage to jointly applaud is going to be tough to beat. The big question is whether the **Migration Strategy** will effectively stem the tide of incoming students by weeding out visa manipulators with a Genuine Student Test, tougher English language tests and tougher post-study work right regulations, and a handful of other initiatives. This appears to remain a question also for the Government, which has reserved the right to introduce some form of international student caps if

numbers don't drop sufficiently. A record 860,000 international students are enrolled in Australian education this year and while the latest wave of changes will surprise few, the big concern for the sector is whether it will face additional regulation on international student enrolments in the near future, alongside a range of other interventionist approaches forecast in the Accord. (Future Campus – 14 Dec)

The Higher Education Holiday Bookshelf: Top 5 Picks for Christmas. As the holiday season invites us to slow down and reflect, Mark Young provides insights into his top 5 pics for the shutdown period. (Future Campus – 14 Dec)

Spotlight on transformation journey for Indigenous students. Some of the best stories trace a line to an ending we already know. The fact that higher education can be a transformational journey for Indigenous students has long been an article of truth for the sector. (Future Campus – 14 Dec)

Working From Home – Works for Many by Stephen Matchett. As we stood in the depth of the pandemic pit, a NSW staff survey found 3% of them wanted to work a full week on campus after the emergency (Campus Morning Mail July 22 2020). The following month, UNSW researchers surveyed public service managers and 90% reported that staff working from home were as productive, or more, than when in the office. These insights set the tone for the work from home push for professional staff, to give them something approaching the location flexibility that academics have always enjoyed. But three years on, there is a big biz push for people to resume the commute and university managements are following suit, wanting to see more staff and students on campus. The Fair Work Commission has long agreed in-office has productivity plusses. In August '22 the FWC Deputy President Bell ruled that just because work can be done remote does not mean it always should be. In a Uni Tasmania unfair dismissal case he stated, 'the performance of particular tasks is only one aspect. ... There are fewer tangible benefits of having people working physically together,' particularly 'the interactions and the engagements that occur'. The importance of these interactions – also often a facet of teamwork – should not be underestimated.' (Campus Morning Mail 17 August 2022). Good-o, but how does that rack-up for people who have adjusted to working from home? Akshay

Vu (Uni SA) and colleagues **reported results** from surveying 1100 Australian employees in the 17 largest urban areas. They found that just over half their sample would not take a pay cut in return for working from home, people focused on in-person contact for relationships, learning, career advancement. But 20% would, in a pay cut range of 16 per cent – 33 per cent. Overall, women valued working from home rights 28% more than men. And people are not inclined to change – results over the five-month survey period were stable, 'likely indicative of long-term preferences for remote working arrangements.' That's a swag of staff who, to paraphrase Jane Austin, think that for working in real comfort, 'there is nothing like staying at home.' (Future Campus – 14 Dec)

World First Fully Transparent Ranking Prompts HE Status Re-think by Tim Winkler. Australian Catholic University is the nation's top ranked institution in terms of the proportion of its research that is highly cited, ranked 20th in the world, followed by UTS in 36th place, according to the world's first fully-transparent ranking system. The release of what is believed to be the world's first fully-reproducible, transparent ranking system by Leiden University's Centre for Science and Technology Studies sets new benchmarks for Australian universities. A total of 17.4% of ACU publications released between 2018-21 were ranked in the top 10% in terms of number of citations per paper, with 16% of UTS papers achieving the highly cited grade. The metric is just one of several ratings within the new Leiden framework which is destined to generate new discussions about university performance and the use of rankings in university strategies and Vice-Chancellor's performance plans. (Future Campus – 31 Jan)

Australian Results – Leiden Ranking Open Edition. The release of the world's first fully reproducible university rankings offers a fresh opportunity to benchmark performance and consider what universities are trying to achieve, Curtin University Professor Cameron Neylon writes. (Future Campus – 31 Jan)

Unmet demand for grads by 2050. An additional 5.8 million workers will require higher education by 2050, according to modelling released by the Department of Education. However, alternative scenarios could foresee radical changes to hiring practices. (Future Campus – 31 Jan)

Peak Uni Lobby Calls for the Same Deal as TAFE by Stephen Matchett.



Universities Australia wants parity of esteem with TAFE; calling on the Commonwealth to commit \$493m to fund fee-free university study by disadvantaged students in skills-need areas. The peak body's budget submission includes 180,000 UG places, to match some of those the Albanese Government has allocated to TAFE; implicitly suggesting that the market does not consider university study good value. 'Higher education enrolments are declining at a time Australia needs more university-educated workers,' Acting CEO Renee Hindmarsh states. UA also calls for more money for research, arguing that direct government funding (excluding tax concessions) is 0.36 per cent of GDP, 'its' lowest ever share.' It calls for an increase in 'direct investment' specifying research support and grants programmes, 'towards' the OECD member average for government investment, (0.65 per cent). And the lobby renews the common call from HE lobbies for change to the Research and Development Tax Incentive to increase the share going to basic research, 'the basis of any subsequent translation and commercialisation efforts.' This builds on calls for change in the celebrated Ferris, Finkel and Fraser review of the R&D Tax Incentive; perhaps the most enduring and influential tax policy review never implemented. The Review of the Three Fs put more funding for industry-university research and less in the way of corporate tax concessions on the agenda in 2016, but while the Coalition had a couple of goes at change, elections and Senate Committees got in the way. (Future Campus – 31 Jan)

Tertiary Education Commission assumed to be on the cards. Universities appear to have accepted that a new higher education regulator will be established by the Albanese Government. (Future Campus – 31 Jan)

Elite medical colleges force to change qualification titles. Elite medical colleges have had to change the name of courses that they offer after coming to the attention of the HE regulator. (Future Campus – 31 Jan)

The bill enacting recommendations of Margaret Sheil and colleagues' review of the Australian Research Council Act is through the Reps and with a Senate committee, but it could be out of date already. In a submission to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee the Australian Technology Network lobby argues that the (now imminent) Universities Accord, 'ought to engender significant reforms of the

system.' Accordingly, ATN calls on the committee to recommend, 'a 12 month review of this legislation and its implementation and operation ... specifically, how (it) may intersect with the Accord Panel's recommendations and the government's response regarding research funding and the establishment of a tertiary education commission and its remit.' It's a contrast with submissions that assume the objective of the bill is to improve ARC operations in the existing operating environment, specifically which institutions qualify to compete for research funding – which raises the question, what does the ATN suspect is in the Accord that has not occurred to others? Given the research community is pretty pleased with the Sheil Review, the general tenor of most responses is that the Bill is not bad, although operational improvements are suggested. Science and Technology Australia calls for successful applicants to be notified within three weeks. And who would have thought, the ARC needs more money for programmes. Universities Australia suggested adding an indexation factor to the bill. And while there is general acceptance that ministers should not butt out of grant approvals altogether, there is agreement that the less power they have to butt in, the better. (Future Campus – 31 Jan)

While the O'Kane Accord was not released by year end as long expected, there are new indications of what might be among its 47 recommendations, including money in MYEFO for, 'consultation' on degree-level apprenticeships, in priority areas, 'net zero transformation, the care sector and advanced digitalisation.' There is also 'scoping work on approaches to mitigate financial hardship on tertiary students completing mandatory unpaid placements in care and teaching professions.' But why the Accord delay? In November, State ministers were harumphing about universities making UG offers ahead of ATARS, and 'poaching' was mentioned. So, Education Minister Jason Clare lowered the inter-states temperature by asking Professor O'Kane and colleagues to recommend a national approach. Release is expected later in February. (Future Campus – 31 Jan)

Jason Clare talks a big game on support for students but sometimes is more economic in outcomes – the new requirements for universities to assist struggling students are not as tough as they started. In August the Education Minister had legislation abolishing the

coalition policy requiring them to pass 50 per cent of subjects to keep a funded place. It also required universities to provide and report new student support measures (Future Campus August 23). Complex and expensive measures, including an \$18 000 fine, which universities did not like at all – the University of Sydney submission to a Senate inquiry politely makes its contempt plain (Future Campus September 6). All of which will have worked for Minister Clare, winning approval from those who work on the assumption that student assistance measures that universities oppose will be good things. Problem was, what the government proposed would add to universities bureaucratic burden, meddle with academic independence and duplicate existing practises. The learned Andrew Norton was, as ever, across the detail, 'create duplication and confusion' was his judgement. And so, just before Christmas a new policy was introduced – the 50 per cent pass requirement is gone but instead of tough measures to assist struggling undergrads, providers must have a student support policy, which Opposition education shadow Sarah Henderson argues, 'fails to deliver any additional support for students.' This is a win-win for Mr Clare. He gets points with university and student lobbies by abolishing the 50 per cent pass rule, plus pats on the back from university managements by not proceeding with the original onerous requirements, which nobody much else noticed has not happened. (Future Campus – 31 Jan)

Education and VET ministers Jason Clare and Brendan O'Connor announce a 'consultation' to 'inform the business case' for a post-secondary 'skills passport,' which 'could allow individuals to upload and share their skills and qualifications.' The previous government seemed to think the case was made, with development funding in the 2019-2020 budget and promising a \$5m trial by the Australian Technology Network universities just before the last election. The My eQuals consortium of all ANZ universities suggests it is the foundation for a national credentials platform. It has already issued statements of 8 million Australia Qualification Framework credentials and micro-credentials. So, what's to discuss? Perhaps devil is in the cross-sector details - the consultation paper for submissions to the current skills passport discussion makes no mention of My eQuals. And maybe the experience of the group working on the National Credentials Platform. Back in 2020 the



(NSW) Universities Admissions Centre, Higher Education Services (Universities Australia owned and the My eQuals developer) and the Commonwealth Department of Education promised to deliver, 'verifiable credentials ... using an app on a smart phone or other device, you can store, share and manage all your qualifications and accomplishments in one place.' This was supposed to happen in December 2021 but at least UAC does have a product called CredNet, 'a verifiable credentials platform for lifelong learning and employment.' (Future Campus – 31 Jan)

VET Needs To Fix 'wobbly third leg'.

With increasing optimism about the stability of long-term funding and regulation for the VET sector, it's time to hard wire courses to industry need, according to Craig Fowler. (Future Campus – 8 Feb)

What TEQSA Expects on Research Integrity

by Stephen Matchett. TEQSA advises how it expects institutions to deal with academic and research integrity. The former is easier addressed than the latter. The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency released its guidance note Friday, following a feedback draft last year. It's straightforward stuff for academic integrity. The Threshold Standards specify 'provider's responsibility to ensure its staff and students act with honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility as they engage in learning and teaching.' Only an individual or institution in serious strife would want to quibble about what any of that means. Not so much for research integrity, where 'plagiarism, falsifying or fabricating data, omitting data to manipulate a result or misleading attributions of authorship,' in high-stakes research can - and will - be contested. And the existing research misconduct investigation system is such that TEQSA standards could matter in any assessment of how an institution handled allegations. Especially given the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research leaves it to organisations to investigate research integrity allegations about work by their staff. The Australian Research Integrity Committee is empowered to assess process, rather actual allegations. This keeps everything in the research community, what with ARIC being a creature of two of the peak funding agencies – the Australian Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council. A KPMG review of ARIC, quietly filed in October made no mention of TEQSA. And yet the agency cites, 'concerns about academic

integrity' as among its' regulatory responsibilities. Thus, the new guidance note includes TEQSA will look for; 'responsible staff ... trained to identify potential academic and research integrity breaches and take appropriate action.' This may take some finding, as Adrian Barnett (QUT) and colleagues discovered when surveyed Australian institutions on research integrity roles and resources. 'There were multiple institutions where we found it difficult to find anything about research integrity and other institutions where the contact about research integrity was a generic email, (Campus Morning Mail 8 May 2023). TEQSA is also interested in 'policies and procedures for promoting and upholding academic and research integrity and addressing misconduct and allegations of misconduct,' of which there may well be fewer than there should. Last year a team including Kate Christian (QUT) found over half of surveyed Early Career Researchers did not believe complaints of unethical research practise would be acted on. There are continuing calls, which never seem to be heard by ministers, for an independent integrity agency to police research integrity. In its absence, TEQSA seems way better than nothing. (Future Campus – 8 Feb)

Great news for those who believe the government is here to help.

People with a VET system Unique Student Identifier, 'your individual education number for life' can now link it their MyGov account. The sell is not having to log into the USI. A practise run for 'the skills passport' the government is considering? (Future Campus – 8 Feb)

A few weeks back, Industry and Science

Minister Ed Husic announced a blancmange of blather on 'safe and responsible use of AI' including 'development of options for mandatory guardrails.' Fortunately, the Productivity Commission followed with three considered papers on AI as an opportunity and what is needed in productivity, regulation and data access. Buried in the assessment is a model for risk-based assessment; 'it is misleading to measure the risk from a use of AI relative to a fictitious 'perfect world'. Rather, the appropriate benchmark for risk-based regulation is the expected harm from the use of the AI technology relative to the real-world counterfactual level of expected harm that would arise if the technology in question was not used.' The Commission suggests, as example, that in remote Australia health care shortages are best served by practitioners on the ground, but as this is not going to happen

AI can help. As to education the PC concludes AI is already a happening thing, which is good, given low productivity. The Jason Clare-commissioned House of Reps committee inquiry into AI in education has been running since late '23, its brief is PC – style positive. (Future Campus – 8 Feb)

BIG DATA, DATA ANALYTICS, BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

AI: Will you be Law Enforcement or Leader

by Tim Winklet and Nici Sweaney. Last week, an earnest group of Artificial Intelligence fans gathered (online and asynchronously of course) and lit a metaphorical candle to celebrate the creation of the 10,000th AI app. At roughly the same time, TEQSA announced it was preparing to light a fire under Australian institutions by announcing that in June 2024 they will be issuing a 'Request for Information', requiring 'Submission of credible action plans that demonstrate an institutional strategy to mitigate the risks posed by generative AI'. Every institution has a couple of people that know a bit about AI, but these people are typically overwhelmed by a bemused professoriate watching adoption of the new technology at an unprecedented rate. While all institutions will need some form of AI strategy, it is obvious that the stopgap rush to closed book exams, locked down assessment tools and patchy adoption of AI-integrated teaching is serving institutional angst more than student need or, indeed actual learning. That's why, after working with 24 universities and a dozen or so VET providers, I have teamed up with former ANU academic, now AI aficionado Dr Nici Sweaney to introduce a new program bringing a program of strategic AI implementation to the sector. The institutions that embrace AI early (and yes, we're still in the time of early adopters) will stand the chance to reap significant enrolment benefits as well as better QILT scores. This is not just another online learning tool. This is technology which requires the introduction of new approaches to teaching and assessment, with a chance to significantly improve the education experience for students. Secondly, as with all technological change, there needs to be a mix of skills applied in concert to get a good result. Collaboration between highly creative, experienced academic staff who are capable of showing you how to apply AI in a matter of minutes and communication and change management experts who can disperse these



innovations rapidly through your organisation is going to be important. Whether this is something you attempt to do in house, or if you recruit expertise to help shape your approach, let's start the conversation. Law enforcement is no fun without the uniform and the gun. Leadership is a much more attractive destination for 2024, and we're here to champion ideas, innovation, and deliver a strategically valuable plan that moves beyond compliance. Tim Winkler from Twig Marketing and Dr Nici Sweaney from The Clever Classroom have launched a new Strategic AI for HE program. Visit www.twigmarketing.com/ai for more information. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

EU Law on AI Provides Window into our Future by Tim Winkler. The world's first comprehensive AI law, agreed after almost six months of negotiation by the European Union this week, provides a valuable insight into what the Australian digital landscape could soon look like. The EU's Artificial Intelligence Act seeks to regulate Big AI, establish a risk framework for when and how AI is used and prohibit the use of AI in sensitive areas, in changes which have significant implications for Australian universities. With TEQSA requiring universities to establish their own strategies to protect against cheating and other misuses of AI by June 2024, the EU law will undoubtedly help shape local regulation, Higher Education AI expert Dr Nici Sweaney says. 'These regulations have implications for educators and HE leaders globally. If Australia follows the EU regulations, we could see a future where educational AI tools are subject to rigorous controls,' Dr Sweaney said. 'There is particular interest around the EU's stance on sensitive AI systems, which could lead to restrictions and prohibitions on the AI tools used for assessments and monitoring. 'With more than 10,000 AI tools now available, and more coming on stream most days, institutions will have to quickly formulate policies in relation to the tools they allow, which comply with their ethical and privacy requirements, and those that are unacceptable. 'Monitoring new AI apps and updating policies and practices as AI technology evolves is going to be a significant new area of work for university staff. 'The sooner we accept that AI is here to stay and revise learning and assessment policies so that they leverage AI, rather than try to keep it under control, the faster we can move to better student experiences and outcomes. 'The EU Act simply highlights the importance of moving quickly to understand and respond to the opportunities that AI

presents.' 'It's important that HE approach to AI is agnostic, allows flexibility and adaptability, and foster a culture where people are empowered to innovate and create. 'For the institutions that effectively embrace AI, the next couple of years have the potential to be pretty fantastic. In contrast, institutions that instead focus on policing it are going to be rapidly overwhelmed as widespread student use and urgent requirements to implement ever-evolving assessment security standards take their toll.' (Future Campus – 14 Dec)

New AI Tool Could Send Digital Doppelgangers to Class by Nici Sweaney. New AI software could enable avatars to be attending your next class in place of students - raising the stakes in how AI can be used and should be regulated in higher education. The new live-streaming avatars from a platform called Hey Gen (you may know them for being able to produce your AI avatar clone, with voice replication and all) offer the opportunity to send a life-like reproduction of yourself to tutorials, lectures or online meetings, with the potential to take notes or even answer questions on your behalf. These live streaming avatars combine 'innovations in AI, computer vision, and speech synthesis' so that they can respond not only in real time, but to both verbal and non-verbal cues. (Future Campus – 8 Feb)

REPORTS AND RESOURCES

Dear colleagues

Are Australian universities effectively supporting student equity in higher education? How can we enhance their efforts for greater inclusivity?

These questions have become increasingly urgent, particularly in light of Australia's escalating costs of living and housing crisis, digital disparities between urban, and rural areas and the growing number of students from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, among other factors.

While student equity practices have been steadily gaining momentum, with [Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program \(HEPPP\)](#) funding surging from \$42.3 million in 2010 to \$146.2 million in 2023 across all Australian public universities, the higher education sector continues to grapple with several challenges. These challenges are typified by the absence of systematic evaluation within student equity programs,

constrained evaluation capabilities, and a notable lack of benchmarks and standards for the effective implementation of student equity initiatives. As such, there is a pressing demand for comprehensive assessment of both processes and outcomes to attain a deeper understanding of what works in student equity.

At the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), we have a clear vision: to effect real-world, scalable changes in the pursuit of student equity in higher education. We are committed to supporting universities in designing, implementing, and evaluating student equity programs.

As the Director of NCSEHE's Trials and Evaluation Program (T&E), I am excited to share three initiatives that fall within my responsibility to bring this vision of NCSEHE to fruition:

Equity Frontiers: This initiative focuses on translating research outcomes into actionable solutions by rigorously testing and scaling innovative approaches to drive substantial change.

- We will provide a range of grant opportunities tailored to both small- and large-scale trials, followed by funding opportunities for project scaling and adoption.
- Additionally, we facilitate knowledge-sharing forums for trial investigators and implementers, promoting the open exchange of project insights, methodologies, implementation processes, and evaluation outcomes.

Equity Hub: This initiative centres on empowering student equity professionals with the knowledge and skills required to apply effectively the Student Equity in Higher Education Evaluation Framework (SEHEEF) in their equity programs.

- Through collaboration with HEPPP practitioners, managers, and evaluation experts, we are developing a comprehensive SEHEEF resource portal, offering tools, online training modules, and evaluation results.
- Our Community of Practices serves as a dedicated space for evidence-based equity practices, fostering collaboration, sharing of best practices, and engagement with peers, leaders, experts and stakeholders.

What Works in Equity: This initiative embraces a holistic approach to building evaluation capabilities and recognises



that advancing student equity and inclusivity necessitates collective efforts.

- Our training activities extend beyond SEHEF to encompass various evaluation approaches and techniques, with a focus on comprehending the contextual factors that shape equity programs' design, implementation, and evaluation. We prioritise evaluations that embed students' perspectives.
- The Student Equity Leadership Development Program, designed for senior university leaders, aims to cultivate the leadership skills and expertise essential for driving equity and inclusivity within universities.
- Our Student Equity Best Practices Awards Program aims to recognise individuals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication, innovation, and impact in various aspects of student equity.

I believe that together, we can effectively execute these initiatives over the next two and a half years, fostering evidence-based thinking and practices in student equity and truly improving the lives of students from all backgrounds.

Yours faithfully
Associate Professor Lien Pham
Trials and Evaluation Program Director
National Centre for Student Equity in
Higher Education (NCSEHE – 1 Dec)



Workforce Retention. Highlights from our recent conference - Rosalind De Sallily shares her insights on workforce retention. (Future Campus – 7 Dec)

Government-funded students and courses – January to June 2023. The latest NCVER report shows in the first six months to 30 June 2023 there were 911 180 students enrolled in government-funded vocational education and training (VET), an increase of 4.0% compared with January to June 2022. Government-funded students and courses - January to June 2023 provides a summary of data relating to domestic government-funded VET activity delivered in Australia. It contains information on students, programs, subjects and training providers. The largest increases in government-funded nationally recognised qualification enrolments were in Certificate IV and Certificate III which grew by 21 020 and 14 995 respectively

between the January to June 2022 and January to June 2023 periods. Between January and June 2023, there were 1 016 280 government-funded program enrolments, an increase of 2.9% from the same period in 2022. Most government-funded program enrolments were in training package qualifications, which accounted for 80.9% of enrolments. The training package that had the highest number of training package enrolments was Community Services (183 585 or 22.3%). In the six months to June 2023, the most popular field of education was Engineering and related technologies with 173 830 program enrolments, 2.5% higher when compared to the corresponding period in 2022. (NCVER – 7 Dec)

Creating a Student Experience that Captivates Learners. In the modern learning landscape, learners require concise and timely education outside the traditional academic calendar. Creating standout programs and fostering collaboration to leverage microcredentials campus-wide are essential for learner success. (The EvoLLLution – 9 Dec)



Dear colleagues

It is with great pleasure we announce the recipients of 2024 Equity Fellowships and Small Grants Research Program funding.

Equity Fellowships

2024 Equity Fellowships have been awarded to Associate Professor Amani Bell at The University of Sydney, Ms Danielle Keenan at the University of Technology Sydney, and Dr Bret Stephenson at La Trobe University.

Associate Professor Bell's project, addressing placement inequities through participatory action research, will focus on compulsory work-based placements. The research aims to find solutions to combat placement poverty and ensure an equitable experience for all students, regardless of their background.

Ms Keenan's project, Roadmap to success: Decoding the regional university study hubs, will explore the effectiveness of regional university centres and identify the key factors influencing access, participation, retention and success for

students in regional, rural and remote areas.

Dr Stephenson's project, Centring equity in data and AI governance: Informing policy to empower practice, will produce a digital governance framework to support the protection of highly sensitive student data in view of the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence by the Australian Government and higher education sector.

Small Grants Research Program

Our **Small Grants Research Program** received 71 applications for a total funding request of more than AUD3.27 million. Sixty-nine proposals originated from **Table A Providers** and three from non-university organisations. Ten projects from nine different lead organisations were subsequently awarded funding for a total of AUD469,227.

Grant proposals covered a broad range of topics and research methodologies and drew on expertise across the higher education sector. NCSEHE's Grants and Fellowships Committee assessed each grant and fellowship application, and noted the quality of the proposals received boded well for outcomes in this and future rounds of grant and fellowship funding.

On behalf of the entire NCSEHE team, I sincerely thank every applicant and their associated colleagues for your interest in our Research and Policy Program and for submitting an application.

In 2024, we will announce further grants and fellowships funding opportunities, and we encourage those who were unsuccessful this year to apply again.

Yours faithfully
Professor Ian Li
Research and Policy Program Director
National Centre for Student Equity in
Higher Education (NCSEHE – 13 Dec)



International Students. Highlights from our recent conference - Professor Adam Shoemaker shares his insights on the future of international students. (Future Campus – 14 Dec)

VET student outcomes 2023. The latest NCVER report shows that employment outcomes continue to improve for vocational education and training (VET)



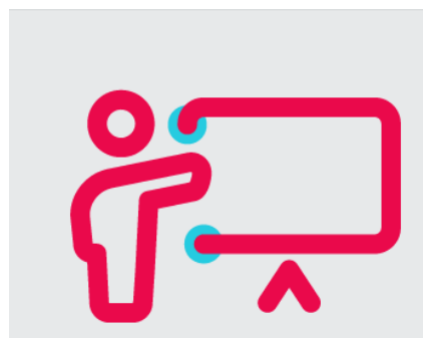
graduates. The VET student outcomes report provides a summary of the outcomes and satisfaction of students who completed nationally recognised VET in the previous calendar year. The results come from National Student Outcomes Survey, Australia's largest survey of VET students in 2023. When compared with 2022, two-thirds of students who completed a vocational qualification at certificate I or above had an improved employment outcome post-training, up 2.6 percentage points. In 2023, 79.5% of graduates were employed after training, the highest level seen since the survey was expanded in 2016 to cover all nationally recognised training. (NCVER – 14 Dec)

HE CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Click '[HE CONFERENCES AND EVENTS](#)' above to see all the events we have listed on our website. Below are just a few.

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](#).



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.

Cole Nussbaumer Knaflig, author of 'Storytelling with You'

Transform data into unforgettable stories with Cole Nussbaumer Knaflig, author of 'Storytelling with You.' She joins host Jon Krohn for our latest podcast episode, offering mesmerizing insights on impactful storytelling. Plus, get a chance to snag her latest book! Watch the full episode here: <https://bit.ly/sds757>

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

See our [Training and Development](#) webpage focused on training for institutional researchers.

ATEM Understanding the Sector.

[Explore the structure, governance and operations of your institution and the broader sector.](#) Designed for newcomers to tertiary education, and for those in specialist or senior roles that require a grounding in policy, regulation, compliance, risk, finance and strategy. The minute-taking and committee programs are perennial favourites.

ATEM Compass. Save the Date – Wellington, New Zealand. Sunday 26 to Wednesday 28 August 2024. Following the success of last year's first-ever gathering in Wellington, ATEM Compass returns to the Aotearoa capital in August 2024. Seated in the central business district, our venue is conveniently close to shops, cafes and restaurants. Wellington's vibrant waterfront is within walking distance. Use the [webform to express your interest](#) in this program.

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.](#)

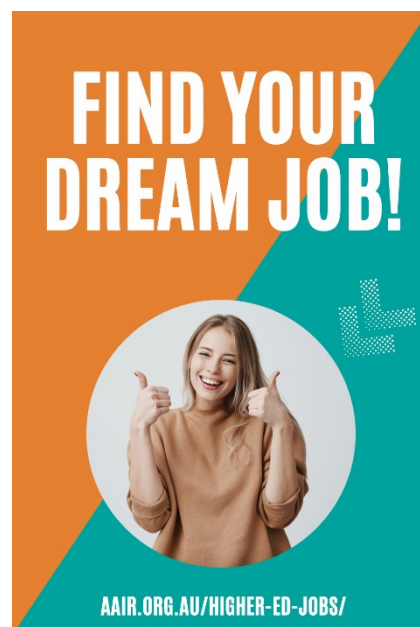
Data Science Melbourne

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.

POSITIONS VACANT



Find a Job

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

Advertise a Job



A decorative background pattern consisting of white lines and dots on a blue background, resembling a circuit or network diagram. The pattern is more dense at the top and bottom edges of the page.

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 aair.org.au/events

ON THE MOVE

Monash U has a new VC. The university's DVC E Sharon Pickering starts end January.

After a decade in the job, Barney Glover announces he will give it away as VC of Western Sydney U next year.

Michael Still has been elected to replace Christine McLoughlin as Chancellor of the University of Wollongong.

Uni of Wollongong VC Patricia Davidson has been appointed to the Research Australia Board.

Uni Canberra VC Paddy Nixon announced January 17 he was out, effective immediately for 'personal reasons' and was taking a 'career break.' DVC R Lucy Johnston is acting. Professor Nixon did not quite make it to four years as VC – like his predecessor, Deep Saini, who resigned to take up a VC appointment in Canada after three-and-a-half.

Mark Cassidy becomes DVC R at Uni Melbourne. He steps up from dean of engineering and IT.

Mark Scott (VC Uni Sydney) becomes Group of Eight chair, replacing former ANU VC Brian Schmidt.

Simon Biggs (VC James Cook U) takes over as chair of the Innovative Research Universities group. He replaces Paddy Nixon, who left Uni Canberra last month, for undisclosed personal reasons.



[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.

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.

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 [@AAIRaustralia](https://twitter.com/AAIRaustralia)

