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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**September is always a month I eagerly anticipate. In my part of New Zealand, it signals the end of winter's grey, cold, and damp days, replaced by warmer weather, vibrant blossoms, daffodils, and the joyful bleating of newborn lambs.**

For me, it also marks the approach of the annual AAIR Forum, which this year will be held in the beautiful city of Adelaide from 18 to 20 November. Our theme—After the Accord: where festivals and grapevines bring us together—captures the spirit of connection, growth, and celebration that the Forum embodies.

For me, the Forum is a cherished space for collaboration, reflection, and the sharing of ideas. It offers an invaluable opportunity to explore the opportunities and challenges of institutional research in modern tertiary education. Both Australia and New Zealand are undergoing significant reforms, driven by the Australian Universities Accord, the New Zealand Universities Advisory Group, and the New Zealand VET consultation process. These shifts, alongside the ongoing underfunding within tertiary education, create a turbulent environment. As institutional researchers, it is essential that we stay ahead of these developments, equipping ourselves to support our institutions through these challenging times.

At the same time, we are in the midst of a technological revolution that is reshaping how students engage with learning and how we perform our roles. AI is at the forefront of this shift, and recent discussions have highlighted concerns about its misuse, particularly by students in assessments. While some academics suggest returning to pen-and-paper exams, I believe this would be a step backward. Instead, I advocate embracing AI's transformative potential and addressing its challenges head-on. We need to learn how to 'tame the beast' and leverage its power to improve our work, while at the same time being mindful of the unintended consequences that may arise.

Like many of you, I'm beginning to include AI in my daily work. I use it as a personal assistant—bouncing ideas off it, receiving suggestions, and deciding which to accept or discard. The use of AI does however raise a number of questions and important considerations around data security, ethical use, and transparency. As part of my professional practice, I remain vigilant about these issues, particularly around bias—both conscious and unconscious—and work to implement safeguards that mitigate any unintended consequences. The notion of a 'single source of truth' becomes much more

complex in the age of AI. As institutional researchers, we constantly question the validity of data: Why is this considered the truth? Who decided it? What informed their views? These are the critical questions we must ask ourselves to ensure rigour and accuracy in our work.

The reforms currently sweeping through the sector demand that we remain adaptable and forward-thinking. As institutional researchers, we are well-positioned to guide our institutions through these changes. Whether it's automating student feedback analysis, streamlining reporting processes, or supporting predictive modelling, AI enables us to reimagine our roles and professional practice for the better.

I know AI will be a key topic of conversation at the AAIR Forum this year, and I'm particularly looking forward to hearing how Forum presenters use AI in their work. I know the discussions we have in Adelaide will offer us insights to help navigate this ever-changing landscape.

AI may be challenging how we work, but it also presents exciting opportunities to work smarter, not harder. Combined with the changes brought by the Accord, we're at a pivotal moment to reshape our roles and the ways we support our institutions. As always, the AAIR Forum offers an opportunity to reconnect with our tribe, share knowledge, and strengthen our community. Institutional research thrives on collaboration, and now more than ever, we need strong networks to navigate these complex times.

I look forward to seeing you in Adelaide to connect, share ideas, and toast to our shared successes, growing stronger together through collaboration.

**Stuart Terry, AAIR President**



## EDITORIAL

Dear newsletter readers

*I'm writing this newsletter with some sadness. This will be my penultimate newsletter. After retiring in 2022 from Macquarie University, it's difficult to monitor higher education news from home. Without the hands-on knowledge of being present in the higher education sector, it has been increasingly difficult to compose news on what is happening in the sector.*

*I am therefore reaching out to our AAIR audience to see if anyone is interested in taking over the newsletter. We aim to deliver 6–7 issues each year. If you are interested, please email [editor@aaair.org.au](mailto:editor@aaair.org.au) or [info@aaair.org.au](mailto:info@aaair.org.au).*

### [View Newsletter Editor Role](#)

*I have attended over 25 forums across my university lifetime, but unfortunately, I deeply regret that I will not be attending this year's AAIR Forum. The AAIR Forum is a wonderful experience to attend, and I have made many friends, which I truly cherish.*

*I'm also stepping down from the AAIR executive committee after 8 years. It's time to give some fresh blood an opportunity to sit on the committee. I wish the new committee all the very best.*

*My final newsletter will be delivered in November 2024*



**Andrew Bradshaw**  
Editor, The Institutional  
Researcher

## AAIR NEWS

## Updates from 19 September 2024 Executive Committee meeting

### Executive Committee Election Results

At the recent AAIR Executive Committee meeting, the following nominations for the 2025 to 2026 executive committee were ratified. No vote is required at the AAIR Forum AGM as all positions were filled. Their term of office will commence from the 2024 AGM. Congratulations go to the following:

- Eva Seidel – President
- Stuart Terry – Immediate Past President
- Don Johnston – Vice President (co-opted)
- Lizzie Li – Honorary Treasurer
- Ilse Hogendorf – Honorary Secretary
- Sharon Liddell – Ordinary member
- Lisa Bolton – Ordinary member
- Cassandra Saunders – Ordinary member
- Pallavi Khanna – Ordinary member
- Anand Kulkarni – Ordinary member
- David Cawthorne – Ordinary member

I'm sure you will join me in wishing the new AAIR Executive Committee all the very best for the future.

### Membership Fees Update

New membership fees for 2025 have been announced, effective immediately.

For Australian residents and institutions:

- Individual member AUD\$150 + GST
- LITE Institutional membership (up to 5 members) \$550+GST
- FULL Institutional membership (up to 10 members) \$1,100+GST
- Retired membership fee (upon approval by the committee) AUD\$0

For New Zealanders and other non-Australian residents and institutions:

- Individual member AUD\$150
- LITE Institutional membership (up to 5 members) \$550
- FULL Institutional membership (up to 10 members) \$1,100
- Retired membership fee (upon approval by the committee) AUD\$0

Institutional membership for more than 10 members will be FULL membership plus \$110 (ex-GST) per additional person.

## Upcoming AAIR events



### National Results from the International Student Barometer

**9 October 2024**  
12–1pm AEDT / 2–3pm NZDT

#### LIVE WEBINAR

- Facilitator: Cassandra Saunders, AAIR Surveys and Evaluation SIG Chair
- Guest Presenter: Kyla Steenhart, Associate, Edified

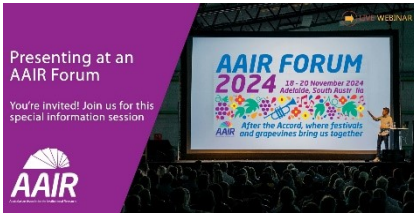
The International Student Barometer (ISB) is the world's largest international student experience survey of enrolled students. It tracks and benchmarks international student opinion across the entire student journey, providing institutions with data and insights to develop a world-class student experience.

In this SIG session, we will be joined by Kyla Steenhart from Edified (who provide localised support for Australian/New Zealand institutions that participate in the ISB), who will be sharing key findings from the 2023 ISB from the Australian/New Zealand perspective.

#### Pricing:

- Members: FREE
- Non-members: \$52.77 (AUD\$45 + GST and booking fee)

**REGISTER**



### Presenting at an AAIR Forum

14 October 2024

1–1:30pm AEDT / 3–3:30pm NZDT

### LIVE WEBINAR

Hosted by AAIR, convened by:

- Don Johnston, Manager, Reporting and Analysis at Southern Cross University, AAIR Vice President, and AAIR Government Reporting SIG Chair
- Eva Seidel, Associate Director, Research Engagement and Success at Flinders University, AAIR Executive Committee member, and AAIR Academic Research Institutional Analytics SIG Chair

### 🌸 You're Invited! Join Us for this Special Information Session 🌸

Are you excited about our upcoming Forum but not quite sure where to start? Or perhaps you're presenting but have a few questions? We've got you covered!

We warmly invite you to our online information session, taking place via Zoom, one month before our Forum opens. This is a fantastic opportunity to get a comprehensive overview of the event, learn how to craft and deliver a compelling presentation, and ask any questions you might have about attending our Forum.

During this session, you'll get insights into the Forum format, tips for successful presentations, and the chance to connect with our Executive Committee members and fellow attendees. Whether you're a first-time attendee or a seasoned participant, this session is designed to ensure you have all the information you need to make the most of your Forum experience.

### Why Attend?

- Gain valuable tips on presenting effectively
- Get answers to any Forum-related questions
- Meet and network with other attendees

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions before this session. We're here to help and look forward to seeing you there!

### Pricing:

- Members: FREE
- Non-members: Also FREE

REGISTER

### Join us in Adelaide for the 2024 AAIR Forum



18–20 November 2024 | Adelaide, SA

The 2024 Annual AAIR Forum: *After the Accord, where festivals and grapevines bring us together* is going to Adelaide for the first time in years!

This year's AAIR Annual Forum program is guaranteed to excite as specialists share their rich experience, and discuss key topics, and strategies in response to an everchanging higher education sector in a rapidly changing world.

Our forum theme, after the Accord, where festivals and grapevines bring us together, will allow us to reflect and provide some thought leadership into how the institutional research community can support higher education in addressing the Australian Government's Australian Universities Accord plan. Whilst there is an Australian flavour to this year's theme, there will also be lots of opportunities to hear, learn and leverage similar experiences from our New Zealand and international counterparts.

Pre-Forum workshops and Special Interest Groups (SIG) will run at

Flinders University City Campus on the day before the main Forum sessions, on 18th November 2023. The main Forum sessions will be held close by at the Intercontinental Hotel Adelaide.

Registration is now open, and we look forward to welcoming you to Adelaide!

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We welcome back our major partners

### PLATINUM PARTNER



### SILVER PARTNER



### UNIVERSITY SUPPORTER



2024 University Supporter

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To see more AAIR events, please visit our events page at <https://aair.org.au/event-location/aair/>.



### Institutional researcher's corner

Five quick questions with Francesca Casal (University of Notre Dame Australia)



#### What is your job title?

Institutional Research and Insight Analyst at The University of Notre Dame Australia.

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

I manage the QILT suite of surveys, overseeing all the quantitative analysis and presentations. I work closely with my colleague, Clare Andreallo, a fellow institutional researcher, on market benchmarking and environmental scans for new and existing programs, and I support the curriculum program review process by providing key analysis and insights. Together, we also conduct qualitative analysis of the QILT SES data. Through all our work, we give recommendations to inform strategy.

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

A significant part of my role as an institutional researcher involves managing and building stakeholder relationships. My colleague Clare and I make it a priority to present our analysis whenever possible to ensure we communicate our insights clearly. We also hold scoping meetings before starting any analysis to tailor our work to the diverse needs of our stakeholders, and to make sure we are top of mind when future analyses are required. In essence, we view ourselves as mini project managers.

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

AI and machine learning are essential for our team's growth and efficiency. How can we leverage these tools to automate repetitive tasks, such as free-text thematic coding of the SES qualitative data? By doing so, we can not only reduce the time spent on manual processes but also improve accuracy and scalability in our work.

#### What does being part of the AAIR community mean to you?

When I joined Notre Dame, I was completely new to the higher education community, having worked exclusively in the private sector. I didn't know what to expect, but now, almost three years later, I feel incredibly fortunate to be part of such a supportive, approachable and collaborative environment. The way different institutions within this community come together to tackle common challenges is something I never experienced in the private sector. I'm excited for more opportunities to connect with the AAIR community in the future.

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

... my team! I've learned so much from them and have seen my skills grow significantly. It's great to be part of such a collaborative and supportive group. They're the best!



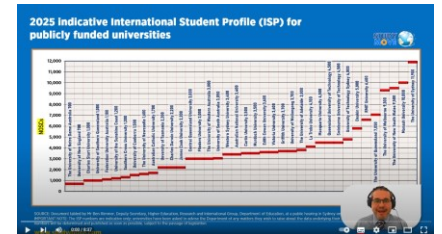
[Connect with Francesca](#)



### AAIR member contributions

Keri Ramirez from STUDYMOVE would like to share with their latest video, which explains the recently announced 2025 indicative limits on international student enrolments for Australian universities.

In this 8-minute video, they cover the key aspects of the methodology to set indicative caps.



Watch the video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmeGqf-s7M&lc=UgwkobLgc8pLMLtDmut4AaABAg>

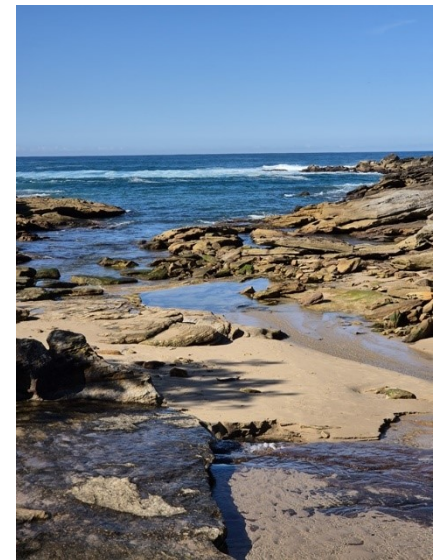


Photo by Andrew Bradshaw, South Coast – Royal National Park, Sydney

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

CONTRIBUTE



## AIR UPDATES

### 2025 AIR Forum 20–23 May at Rosen Shingle Creek Orlando, Florida



The call for proposals is now open for the [2025 AIR Forum May 20–23](#) at the Rosen Shingle Creek Orlando, FL with Pre-Conference Education 19–20 May.

It's a unique opportunity to present at the largest global gathering of higher education professionals working directly in institutional research, institutional effectiveness, assessment, planning, and those who build and support data-informed decision cultures.

I ask for your help in contacting your members, staff, colleagues, and friends with encouragement to submit a presentation proposal for the 2025 AIR Forum. We invite proposals from professionals representing all sectors of higher education and offer a variety of session topics and formats to choose from. Thank you in advance for sharing our message and please reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

H.A. Scott  
Senior Director of Conference Services  
Association for Institutional Research

## QILT UPDATES

### September 2024 Updates

#### Delayed National Report releases

We are aware that the 2023 SES and 2023 GOS International Reports have not yet been publicly released, and we understand that this delay may be causing some concern. The Australian Government Department of Education is working to have the remaining reports from the 2023 QILT suite of surveys released as soon as possible.

#### Privacy Notice Census

We announced in the August newsletter that the Australian Government Department of Education had commissioned the Social Research Centre to undertake a privacy notice census to understand what notification students and graduates have been provided concerning the use of the personal

information for the purposes of QILT. Further, what consent, if any, has been provided by students, graduates and employers participating in the QILT suite of surveys for the use of their personal information and data for future use such as linking to other data sources.

Since the last newsletter, we have engaged with sector stakeholders regarding the scope of the census, data collection methodology and other matters to ensure this process is clear and smooth for everyone involved. This feedback has been invaluable and is being used to reconsider the data collection methodology and the communication provided.

An updated communique will be released in the next month with further information that should answer all of the questions you have asked thus far.

#### Student Experience Survey (SES)

##### 2024 SES

The main online fieldwork period for the August collection has now finished. In total 220,997 surveys were completed in August from 110 participating institutions. Our thanks go out to all participating institutions for their efforts in promoting the survey to students. For institutions participating in post-field reminder calls, the online survey will remain open until Thursday 26 September.

Last week we sent an email inviting institutions who participated in the August collection to complete the Respondent Engagement Survey (RES). This is a short survey that provides us with invaluable feedback regarding our engagement materials, project administration and level of support provided to institutions. In addition, we would also like to take this opportunity to gather your feedback about the alternative contemporary designs that we included in this year's Marketing Pack. It doesn't matter if you used them or not. We'd really love it if you took time out of your day to complete this survey before Monday 16 September as the results are very helpful for our planning and continuous improvement.

Fieldwork for the SES September collection will commence this week. For institutions participating in the September collection, it is important to promote the survey and build awareness of the survey among staff and students. Recommended response maximisation

activities for this stage of the collection are detailed in the engagement activity plan in the Collection and Sample Guide (available on the Provider Portal).

We will be sending quotes in the coming weeks to September institutions who have opted in to fee-for-service response maximisation activities (additional SMS, post-field telephone reminder calls). If you haven't opted in via the participation form but are interested in undertaking these activities, you can still access the original Participation and Additional Services Form (PASF) link to indicate your preferences, or alternatively, please contact us via [qilt@srcentre.com.au](mailto:qilt@srcentre.com.au) as soon as possible.

We will begin invoicing for fee-for-service activities delivered in the August collection in late September, while invoicing for September activities is planned for late October.

#### Course coding queries

There are minor changes to the course coding queries dates previously provided in the Collection and Sample Guide. The below table outlines the revised key dates.

Note that starting from the 2024 SES, the Social Research Centre will be using an updated TCSI extract to validate course information provided by students who indicate that they are enrolled in a different course to that which is in the 2024 SES sample file. For students who cannot be found in the TCSI extract, institutions may provide updated course information through the coding queries file.

#### Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS)

##### 2024 GOS

Institutional data files for the 2024 GOS were distributed on Friday 30 August. If you have not yet downloaded your file via the Secure File Exchange (SFX), please do so before they expire on Friday 20 September. Please ensure you download the latest GOS Tableau User Guide and GOS Data Dictionary from the Provider Portal to accompany your institution's data.

Thank you to the 129 participating institutions in the 2024 GOS.

##### 2025 GOS November

All institutions should now have confirmed participation in the 2025 GOS November collection. Sample templates



are due to be returned no later than Tuesday 24 September. Please refer to the Collection and Sample Guide (available on the QILT Provider Portal) for further information related to sample preparation.

### Graduate Outcomes Survey - Longitudinal (GOS-L)

#### 2025 GOS-L

Just looking ahead, we will send the Participation and Additional Services Form (PASF) to institutions with sample eligible for the 2025 GOS-L in the first week of October.

Additionally, the 2025 Collection and Sample Guide will be available from the first week of October.

### Employer Satisfaction Survey (ESS)

#### 2024 ESS

The 2024 ESS data collection came to close on 18 August. Data processing for the 2024 ESS is already underway, with the institution data files scheduled for delivery on 20 November.

### Staff announcement

This month we have said farewell to Elena Reading and Ben Williams, whom many of you would have worked with and spoken to over the past twelve months. We thank both Elena and Ben for their efforts and wish them all the best for the future. Please continue to send any emails through to [gilt@srcentre.com.au](mailto:gilt@srcentre.com.au) so we can ensure that your enquiry is handled promptly.

### Data sharing agreements (UA and IHEA)

This is a friendly reminder that the UA and IHEA data sharing agreements are agreements between the institution, the peak body (UA or IHEA) and the Department. Only approved users that have signed the data access form and submitted it to the Department can receive the data files. The Social Research Centre is only authorised to release files to approved users as advised by the Department. If you are unsure who at your institution is currently approved to receive the files, or would like to update the list of users, please get in contact with the Department directly at [gilt@education.gov.au](mailto:gilt@education.gov.au).

## CAUDIT UPDATES

### September 2024 Updates

The [CAUDIT Top Ten for 2024](#) has been released, offering essential insights as our Institutions and IT teams work to navigate the rapidly changing higher education and research ICT landscape. Each year the Top Ten aims to spark discussions, guide strategic planning, and highlight current needs and future challenges.

The perspectives of CIOs across the sector have been crucial in shaping the CAUDIT Top Ten since its inception in 2006. In its inaugural year, when YouTube was introduced and the iPhone was just around the corner, the sector's CIOs voted Business Continuity as number one, Identity & Access Management as number two and Funding & Resourcing as number three. Security and Privacy was number five. These topics all remain in the Top Ten today, with security at the forefront, voted the most significant topic for the fifth year in a row and having featured every year since 2013.

This persistent focus on Security and Privacy indicates not a lack of progress but a growing maturity and preparedness in the sector's security landscape. The 2018 decision amongst CAUDIT Members to prioritise cybersecurity, ahead of its eventual rise to the top concern, underscores our proactive and future-ready approach. With evolving threats and emerging technologies like AI and Quantum computing, I anticipate that cybersecurity will remain a central priority for the foreseeable future.

The CAUDIT Top Ten serves as both a reflection on past achievements and a guide for future actions. The collective wisdom of CIOs will continue to direct us as we navigate challenges and seize opportunities in the ever-evolving landscape of Higher Education IT.

We will release additional analysis focused on research-intensive institutions soon.

Greg Sawyer, CEO

## CONNECTIONS

### LinkedIn connections

Many of you will remember Andrew Norton (Prof in the Practice of Higher Education Policy at ANU), for his keynote in 2022, and other occasions. He has a very useful LinkedIn page where you can find lots of updates and opinions on the ACCORD.



Mark Atkins and Terry Smith are the joint Authors of Data Governance Needs Risk Management. If your organisation is struggling with information quality and data definitions, Mark's LinkedIn page is below.



Some of you will remember Angel Calderon from RMIT University, for his keynote a few years ago. He has a very useful LinkedIn page where you can find lots of updates and opinions on Global Rankings.



## SECTOR NEWS AND VIEWS

[How to Share the International Student Spoils by Stephen Matchett](#). There was no warning at the Senate committee hearing on capping international student numbers last week that it would cause a plague outbreak among Vice-Chancellors.

But other than that, the warnings were dire, with nobody talking much about the detail of actual impact. Fortunately, Peter Hurley, Ha Nguyen and colleagues at Victoria U are here to help.

[The VU team](#) starts by pointing out that caps are a means to set a ceiling on numbers and reduce growth, rather than slash numbers now. And they argue, it is not what the government wants, but the way it is done that will get results.

VU propose foundations for caps including,



- Supporting the overall market by focusing on the institutions that deliver the most benefits to economy and community.
- Protecting international students by minimising the impact of policy change.
- Prioritising institutions with significant domestic student enrolments to ensure that Australia's tertiary education system is receiving the most value from international education.

They also suggest setting international numbers by establishing a base number for all institutions, say 500 - only the 20 per cent or so with more would be subject to caps. The allocation for those with more could be flexibly based on a ratio, two locals for every international, five to one, or one to one, all depending on circumstances and criteria – such as available housing. There is no mention of a market, but the VU team suggests that private VET colleges with no domestic students would lose numbers, which could be reallocated. They estimate this could mean moving 60,000 places to institutions with a higher proportion of domestic students.

The VU team also propose aligning student work rights to being enrolled at an institution that meets government criteria.

'Such a change would leave most, if not all, international students with access to the Australian labour market. But it would create an important lever for the Australian government to use if it needed to cap the number of students in labour market, or minimise the likelihood of visa abuse,' they suggest.

While the VU team is silent on the subject, this would be a politically easy sell for the government, which private VET providers would hate but universities with lower international shares love.

But who would do the work? Sounds like a job for ATEC and (shudder) ASQA. (Future Campus – 14 August)



**Measures of Success that Matter to Young Indigenous People by Stephen Matchett.** Stats and studies of young Indigenous people often measure their success in ways other than their own.

'Findings confront institutionalised and hierarchical ideals of Indigenous Australian success premised on dominant neoliberal ideation and the accumulation of White cultural and social capital,' Matilda Harry (Western Sydney U) and colleagues write.

Success is mainly measured across government by 'deficit thinking' – recording what young Indigenous people are assumed to 'lack or need' rather than their aspirations and ideas of post-school success.

The authors used a decolonising qualitative approach to explore aspirational development and ideals of success with 15 young Indigenous Australians who are respected in their communities and participated in on-line yarns 'a form of informal conversation employed as an Indigenous Australian research method.'

Findings include:

- 'mob define success through notions of connections to culture, community and Country'
- 'their most influential motivators of success were kinship responsibilities, regional location and cultural obligations'
- 'reflections confirm Indigenous and critical race scholar criticisms of neoliberal conceptualisations of success founded on Western capitalist constructions and understandings of intellectual imperialism'
- 'while performativity and conformability are often perceived as desirable by tertiary education institutions and workplaces, such pressures are racially biased, marginalising and exclusionary'
- participants also pointed to pressures to succeed from community and family.

A take-out, 'the young Indigenous participants in our study conceptualise Indigenous success as connection and agency, highlighting how Indigenous principles of relationality, respect, reciprocity, nationhood, stewardship and paying it forward impact young mobs' aspirational ideations and trajectories through the post-secondary school transitional phase. (Future Campus – 14 August)



**UA Calls for Funding Plan Rethink by Stephen Matchett.** Higher education peak lobby Universities Australia tells the feds to consult first and then come up with improvements on their present plans for new student funding models.

UA has responded to Department of Education proposals to implement key Accord ideas, to manage student growth and increase participation rates from low SES cohorts.

While the lobby deals in detail with operational specifics, it sets its core position in commenting on the managed growth proposal, which; 'implies a significant degree of central control will be exercised over the sector and assumes an ability to influence student choices and predict student behaviour in ways that are unlikely to be borne out in practice.'

And UA illuminates the elephant still in the funding room, the still-in-place Job Ready Graduates model, under which Commonwealth contributes next to nothing to the costs of humanities, business and law degrees. 'It is time for a new approach to accurately measure university costs and to map the path to more appropriate funding settings, including an affordable contribution system for students,' the lobby urges.

The DoE's proposed growth formula replaces the existing allocation of places by campus location, which it states does not reflect student demand. The replacement model will include government negotiating with individual institutions but, and is quiet a big but; targets, 'would be informed by national objectives set by the Government, for example, to promote a productive economy and society and equitable opportunity for all Australians.'

And once set, that is it - apart from an exception for First Nations Students in demand-driven courses. Otherwise, over-enrolments would be banned, as in no Commonwealth funding and no money from students. But providers would be allowed to move places between courses and levels of study to meet 'the demand from students and industry,' – as assessed by officials - 'this flexibility ... would be monitored through negotiation to manage significant shifts in courses that do not align with national priorities and university missions.'

DoE has the same model in mind for changed equity funding, announcing existing programs 'are complex and no longer for purpose.'





The core of the equity approach is funding equity cohorts as a whole, not individual students. Regional universities would also qualify, 'recognising the higher costs regional providers face to deliver courses.' Funding would not be allocated from a system-wide total but distributed according to an institution's numbers of students in equity groups. (Future Campus – 14 August)



**Limited Options for Further Gains in Global Rankings by Angel Calderon.** The 2024 edition of the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) is coming out later this week. Once the results are out, it will highlight how the global landscape of higher education is changing. It will also highlight the continued progress of Chinese universities and the decrease in knowledge production among institutions from high income economies, particularly from the UK and the USA. It is clear that we are evolving from a bipolar world to a tripolar world.

There are also indications that the performance of Australian universities is declining. This decline should be a concern to us all.

In the first edition of ARWU in 2003, nine universities were from mainland China, with Tsinghua University ranked in the 201-250 band and Peking University in the 251-300 band. In the 2023 edition, 89 universities from mainland China were among the top 500, with four among the top 50 and another six ranked in the 51-100 band.

Last year, Tsinghua ranked 22 and Peking 29, followed by Zhejiang University at 33, and Shanghai Jiao Tong University at 46, acting as China's highest ranked institutions. Back in 2003, Zhejiang ranked in the 351-400 band and Jiao Tong ranked in the 401-450 band.

What drove this growth?

One of the key metrics used by ARWU is the number of articles indexed in Science Citation Index-Expanded and Social Sciences Citation Index.

Using Clarivate's InCites, we can see that 14 of the top 20 institutions with the greatest number of articles published in 2023 were from China. Back in 2003, Tsinghua was China's top article producer and ranked 54 overall, with four

institutions in the top 200 for the number of articles published.

The University of Chinese Academy (CAS) has published more articles than Harvard University for the past two years. In 2023, CAS published 27,259 articles, 20% more than Harvard (22,690). Back in 2003, the volume of articles published by CAS represented only 3% of the articles published by Harvard.

Additionally, Zhejiang has been the world's third top producer of articles for the past two years. In 2023, Zhejiang published 19,292 articles – 15% lower than Harvard. In 2003, Zhejiang published 1,850 articles representing only 18% of those from Harvard. So much has changed in the past twenty years.

*What about Australia?*

Between 2003 and 2023, the number of Australian universities included in the world's top 100 in ARWU increased from two to five. Furthermore, the number of universities ranked in the top 500 increased from 13 to 24.

These gains are largely attributed to the growth in research outputs between 2003 and 2019, resulting from the strong increase in the number of international students in Australian universities.

In 2003, there were 10 Australian universities with a volume of articles that placed them in the world's top 500 article producers. By 2019 this had increased to 19 universities but decreased to 17 in 2023.

During the pandemic year of 2020, the volume of articles published by researchers from Australian universities increased by 7% and 2021 saw an increase of 8%. However, over the past two years, the volume of articles published decreased by 10% per year.

The decrease in the volume of articles published is not unique to Australia; it is also occurring in other higher income economies. By comparison, we see continued increases for China, India and various other middle-income economies.

While China continues to increase rapidly in volume of articles published, it is lagging on impact. By impact, I am referring to Clarivate's Category Normalized Citation Impact (CNCI). The CNCI measure is calculated by dividing the actual count of citing items by the expected citation rate for documents with the same document type, year of publication, and subject area. A CNCI

value of 2 is considered twice the world average.

Over the 2003 to 2023 period, Australia has had a higher CNCI than China, and since 2012, Australia has had a higher CNCI than the USA. In 2023, Australia had a CNCI of 1.54 compared to 1.24 for the USA. Australia has also had a higher CNCI than the UK since 2019, except in 2022.

A key factor that has contributed to the uplift of Australian universities in ARWU is the number of highly cited researchers (i.e., those who are in the world's top 1% of researchers based on citations). Australia's share of highly cited researchers has increased from 3.3% in 2015 to 4.7% in 2023, although Australia's share peaked in 2021 at 5.0%. In 2023, Australia was fifth globally in the number of highly cited researchers (321), behind the USA, China, the UK, and Germany.

Given the current uncertainty pertaining to government policy and funding, we need to take immediate action to counter declining performance.

*Forging ahead*

In the absence of increased investment in research endeavors in Australia, the possibility for our universities to rank higher in ARWU and all other global rankings is limited.

Australian universities are a base for researchers who have immigrated here. Those researchers in our diaspora are an invaluable resource for their homeland and are likely to be part of emigrant research networks.

On these bases, our attention needs to be focused on:

- increasing both the volume and share of international collaboration – particularly bolstering and deepening collaboration with researchers and institutions across world regions,
- boosting article publication in top journals (1%, 10% and quartile 1) with breadth and depth of international collaboration,
- strengthening multidisciplinary research, and
- creating more incentives for women to progress their academic careers.

In doing so, our university leaders need to make it easier for our researchers to publish in open access journals, create and foster incentives for early career researchers to meaningfully participate in research endeavors, and be part of



university's decision-making process. (Future Campus – 14 August)



**Caps Bill Postponed Again by Tim Winkler.** The Bill proposing the introduction of student caps from 1 January 2025 has been deferred another 3 weeks, while it is examined by a Senate Committee, prolonging confusion for thousands of international students hoping to enrol in Australian institutions.

The legislation, if passed in its current form, would give the Federal Government power to regulate how many international students were allowed to be enrolled in higher education courses across Australia. The Senate Committee examining the legislation yesterday secured a later deadline for reporting on its deliberations, [pushing the report out to 6 September 2024.](#)

While the majority of universities have campaigned strongly against the caps, with a particularly vigorous campaign from the Go8, the Government's moves to slow visa processing, increase processing costs and remove the welcome mat for international students is already reportedly dampening demand – potentially making the caps irrelevant for the Semester One intake next year anyway. More in TWTW below. (Future Campus – 16 August)



**The Coalition waived the international student caps Bill through the Reps** Tuesday night, but with only single Liberal and National members in the chamber. Neatly done. It stops the Government claiming the Opposition is soft on immigration rorts but allows it point to problems with the Bill as it stands. Paul Fletcher, who looks after education in the Reps made a critical and constructive second reading speech the other week. Arguments about the Bill now have a ways longer to go. On Tuesday, the Senate extended the committee reporting on it to September 6. If the Committee recommends the Bill pass as is and the Coalition supports it, the Government has the following two weeks to get it through the Senate in the current sitting weeks. But if the Committee proposes amendments which

the government will not wear, time gets tighter. Both houses sit October 9-10, the Reps then meets for the week commencing November 4 and is joined by the Senate for the weeks of November 18 and 25. Despite all the furious furies around the traps on what caps will be and how they will apply for the next academic year, time is getting tight. (Future Campus – 16 August)

**Brace for breathless blather this morning as media people announce whatever good news they can find in the new edition of the Academic Ranking of World Universities.** And for Australia it's all relative, innit. The batting order is as usual, with the big five in the global top 100, Uni Melbourne (37), Uni Queensland (63, down 12 places), Uni Sydney (74), Uni NSW (77) and Monash U (82). The rest of the Group of Eight follow, ANU and Uni WA in the 101-150 band and Uni Adelaide 151-200. It's not great for ANU, which was in the first century last year but is outside this, dropping from 85 to 104 (on Angel Calderon from RMIT's calculation). Overall Mr Calderon (RMIT) warns 'the boom years concluded in 2019.' 'As university finance continues to decline, it is not beneficial for us in terms of attracting and retaining talent. The weakened economic position of our universities will continue to influence research productivity, staff satisfaction and it will also impact on the overall level of student satisfaction.' Next week in FC, Mr Calderon explains all the ARWU detail. (Future Campus – 16 August)

**Jason Clare started the parliamentary week with a big bang about lots of bucks,** 'this week I will introduce legislation to wipe \$3 billion of student debt for more than 3 million Australians,' he announced on the platform formally known as Twitter. And he ended it announcing a modest revival of demand driven funding, in the same bill. It's for fee-free university bridging courses 'focussing on students from underrepresented backgrounds.' Funding is \$18,000 per head, with \$450m budgeted over five years. The enrolment target is 30,000 participants a year by 2030. DoE will allocate places next year, with ATEC taking over in '26. Sadly, the debt forgiveness is not a new give-away but legislation honouring the Budget promise to backdate lowering indexing higher education loans to whichever of the CPI and the Wage Price Index was lowest at June 1 2023. The relevant WPI increase was 3.2%, compared to 7.1% for the CPI. Given the money involved, it is

entirely understandable that the Education Minister wanted to announce it more than once. But what he should have included, says Opposition education shadow minister Sarah Henderson, is when people will receive their money. He can hardly just say 'the cheque is in the mail,' – nobody under 30 would have a clue what it meant. (Future Campus – 16 August)

**Deakin U's patience in India was celebrated vice-regally last week.** Governor of Victoria Margaret Gardner hosted a reception to mark the University's 30-year presence there. The decades of work culminated in July when DU was the first ever (as in globally) foreign university to open a campus of its own in India. Which achievement Universities Australia is intent on ensuring is not stuffed up by public servants. DFAT wants a new 'roadmap' for economic engagement with India – just six years after Peter Varghese's strategy which was supposed to run to 2035. It's an update on the update published in 2022. To set the context for submissions, there's a discussion paper, which includes all the splendid things officials are up to. To which Universities Australia politely responds that DFAT should butt-out for now, what with the visa policy changes, 'have resulted in too many Indian students having their dreams of acquiring a world-class Australian education vanish. 'These policy changes are not only having a detrimental impact on our reputation as a welcoming country ... but also significantly impacting on our universities' reputations and ability to continue to invest in this market.' How 'detrimental'? People from the (to-be) Adelaide University might get an idea on a promo visit to New Delhi next week. UA suggests DFAT 'reconsider the timing' and have a look at what worked, and didn't, so that 'future efforts are better aligned with current and emerging opportunities'. (Future Campus – 16 August)

**The National Tertiary Education Union demands the Government guarantee no university job losses** if it goes ahead with its cap on international student numbers. The comrades aren't alone in worrying about caps, although the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association has a different take. It argues new industrial laws limiting fixed term contracts and the union push to convert casuals increases employment cost and that caps would reduce revenue universities need to pay for them. According to AHEIA 7,000 jobs could go. (Future Campus – 16 August)



### Arguments over the spoils of the Accord assume EFTS are eternal – perhaps not.

The [Australian Youth Barometer](#), which reports a survey of 620 18-24 year olds, reports they rate the importance of education. But that does not dictate how and where they learn. The survey team found, 24% of those in study are solely in face-to-face classes, 17% are all online and 56% do a bit of both. As to formats, while the survey states 'less than half' have participated in a micro-certificate (or higher) it's not much less (47%). And they find their own ways to learn; 69% had taken informal classes, 40% with online providers, such as Coursera, 36% on social media and 27 % through a training platform. It adds to [research](#) by Victor Callan and Margaret Johnston back in 2017, who reported that VET students in teamwork-based subjects favour Facebook and Twitter, while apprentices use YouTube to learn practical skills. (Future Campus – 16 August)

**There was no word when FC filed of hearings by the Senate Committee inquiring into the private members bill** for a commission of inquiry into antisemitism on campus (from education shadow minister Sarah Henderson). But the Senate Scrutiny of Bills Committee has [suggested](#) a few issues – notably clauses that may 'trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties' with regard to privacy, burden of proof, privacy and procedural fairness. (Future Campus – 16 August)

**[Aussie Unis in Rankings Decline by Angel Calderon.](#)** For a second consecutive year, Australian universities experienced a decline in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) for the second successive year - 17 went down in standing and seven went up.

The 2024 edition of the ARWU continues to list Harvard as the number one university in the world, awarding eight of the top 10 places to US institutions, with the remaining two coming from the UK.

A total of 24 Australian universities continue to be included in the top 500, with scores moderately increasing. Melbourne, Queensland, Sydney and the other Go8 unis remain Australia's leading universities followed by a group of ATN universities.

#### Why Australia went down?

There are a combination of factors that influenced the downward movement; in part attributed to lower scores in the highly cited researcher indicator,

published articles and per capita measures.

This year's results for Australian universities do not bode well for the future. Our universities did not experience a decline between 2020 and 2022, but we are now seeing an acceleration of declining scores in the volume of published scholarly articles, including the share of articles in Nature and Science.

We are also seeing a decrease in the ability to retain and attract highly cited researchers. The combination of these factors is also influencing per capita measures.

#### Which institutions went up?

The ARWU publishes individual ranks for the top 100 institutions and the remainder are published in bands (e.g. 101-150, 151-200, 201-300 and so forth).

This means that most analysts go through the methodology and work out the estimated rank for all 1000 institutions included in the rank, establishing whether our institutions are in the top or bottom of a band.

The seven institutions which moved up in estimated rank are: Adelaide (151-200 band), Macquarie (201-300 band), Griffith and QUT (both moved up from 301-400 to 201-300 band), RMIT (301-400 band), Newcastle (401-500 band), and UniSA breaking into the top 500.

#### Muted allegory is the new norm

In previous years, there has been great excitement when the ARWU is released. This year, we have observed that media coverage is not present, because there is nothing to brag about, and university comms are quietly celebrating that our universities are maintaining relative performance.

A key reason there is not much excitement about these results is because most universities are only meaningfully assessed on two to three measures, and the ranking uses the same methodology as when it first started in 2003. The only amendment made was in 2016, when ARWU adopted a yearly update to the Highly Cited Researcher list compiled by Clarivate.

There is also the rankings fatigue factor at play here. There are so many global rankings issued throughout the year that we keep losing perspective on what we are measuring, reporting, and what purposes they all fit. There is no

indication that there will be methodological changes made to this ranking, so we are likely to see diminished public interest.

#### Parting thoughts

ARWU has served its purpose, which was to measure the relative progress of Chinese universities towards world-class status. In this context, universities are seen through the role they play internationally, and it has entrenched the marketisation of higher education.

Out of the universities included in the top 500, 91 are from China - compared to nine in 2003. By comparison, the number of universities from the United States has declined from 161 in 2003 to 114 in 2023, and there are also fewer universities from the United Kingdom; 42 in 2003 compared to 35 in 2024.

In my commentary last week, I said that the boom years for Australia are over, and I offered some views in strategies to mitigate the relative decline in standing. One additional strategy that our leaders could adopt is to bolster mentoring efforts so that early career researchers can benefit from the experience of established researchers. (Future Campus – 19 August)



#### **[What it Takes to Keep Equity Group Students Happy by Stephen Matchett.](#)**

The Government's big university objective is increasing graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds – it will help if they are happy campers on campus

Ian W Li and colleagues used Student Experience Survey data 2016-20 and student records to explore how straight-from-school undergraduates judge their university experiences, to understand the experience of students who already are accessing university from under-represented groups.

Their findings include:

Secondary school and university experience:

- differences between people from public and private schools are 'muted' although those from non-government schools were slightly more satisfied with learner engagement and resources and teaching spaces at their university



- socio-economic status of school had a negative correlation (but not by much) on student's sense of belonging at university plus their take on support, skills development and risk of leaving.

Personal characteristics and experience:

- women were more satisfied overall
- age negatively correlates with a sense of belonging and learning experience
- Indigenous students had more support but also reported an increased risk of discontinuing
- students with disability had a lower overall probability of satisfaction.

Study factors and experience:

- part-time students were less likely to be satisfied on all measures
- some online study increased overall satisfaction but studying entirely online had no overall impact and a 4 per cent increase for risk of discontinuing.

*The take-out*

'The findings highlight the need for better support and targeted strategies to achieve greater parity in the experiences and outcomes of equity group and other disadvantaged student groups in HE.

'The findings signal the value of investigating how to balance on- and off-campus study to optimize satisfaction and experience, as well as the interaction of equity group status and propensity or reasons for off-campus study. (Future Campus – 21 August)



**[Husic Maps Out Science Focus by Stephen Matchett.](#)** The new National Science Statement also doubles as an industry policy, subtitled 'a future made in Australia.'

According to Industry and Science Minister Ed Husic, 'we want science to drive industry growth, creating stronger businesses and more secure, well-paid jobs for Australians.'

The priorities might also make talking points at the next election;

- 'next generation technologies,' clean energy and storage, advanced materials, artificial intelligence, quantum and robotics are nominated

- 'healthy and thriving communities,' 'so more Australians can enjoy healthier lives from birth well into old age'
- 'elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems ... particularly to have more of a say in advancing research that affects them.'
- 'protecting and restoring Australia's environment'
- 'building a secure and resilient nation,' 'to strengthen our democratic institutions while addressing economic, social, geopolitical, defence and national security challenges.'

When Mr Husic classed this as a science priority perhaps he means political science.

There is certainly a pitch to voters who like Labor's science as nation-building approach in the accompanying five imperatives:

- 'Australian scientists, science institutions, and infrastructure shaping Australia's science future'
- science at the centre of Australian industry
- diverse, skilled workforce to underpin the translation of science into new industry
- embracing science to drive Australia's regional and global interest
- science system prepared for future challenges.

'It's been nearly ten years since the Abbott Government handed down the last National Science Priorities,' Mr Husic says, describing them as 'no longer fit for purpose.'

Depends on the purpose, because the 2015 list was longer and a touch more sciencey, including:

- research on 'soil and water' which are 'national strategic assets' and environmental change
- cyber security, 'including quantum technologies'
- 'reliable low-cost sustainable energy supplies'
- 'sustainable extraction of our resources' and advanced manufacturing

Health, which 'is not simply the absence of disease or infirmity:' was also there.

Whatever the differences over nine years, research lobbies were quick to support

the new list. The Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, called the priorities, 'an authoritative vision for research and evidence driving Australia's future.'

Although the Australian Academy of Science did point out that it had to be more than a list;

- 'previous science and research priorities were ineffective because they lacked implementation, monitoring and evaluation and therefore did little to focus and scale up science and research in the identified areas.'

And so the Academy called for, 'a robust implementation plan that clarifies how ministers across governments, and the industry and research sectors can use the levers available to them to turn words into action.'

If Mr Husic's staff get moving they could have one ready for the next election. (Future Campus – 21 August)



**[How Do You Say 'Dead Duck' in Indonesian by Stephen Matchett.](#)** There are only a few hundred Mandarin speakers in Australia who do not have Chinese origins, Foreign Minister Penny Wong warns, And there are fewer people studying Indonesian than 50 years ago – twice as many high school students take German and five times as many, French.

'Yet we know Australia's interests demand we engage in the region more consistently and more deeply,' Senator Wong said in a speech this week to the Centre for Asian-Australian Leadership. And that means more Australians engaging with Asia, in Asian languages

To help this happen, she announced changes to the New Colombo Plan, created by the Abbott Coalition government in 2012 and named for the original 1950s multi-nation program to connect Asian nations. The plan was best known in Australia for bringing thousands of Asian students to study here. Its successor sends Australians to Asia.

Senator Wong said the NCP will now have:

- double the long-term scholarships for student at Australian universities



to study in Asia 'and introduce a stronger focus on language learning'

- intensive short language courses and longer immersive programs
- short-term mobility grants doubled to a month.

'These changes won't solve our Asia literacy challenge on their own - they are just one piece of the puzzle, one step in the process, and one signal to the education sector,' the Foreign Minister said.

But universities may not hear the signal – with no apparent commitment to defending, let alone extending Asian language study by dropping Euro languages in declining demand .

La Trobe dropped Indonesian in 2021, keeping Greek and Hindi after community protest. Flinders U similarly kept Italian – and in June the SA Government kicked in \$1m to keep courses going.

Making Senator Wong's point, Louisa Field and colleagues found 111 enrolments in NSW HSC Indonesian courses in 2021 and predict, on current trends its 'extinction' in Australian universities by 2021. It's the worst, but study of other major Asian languages in Japanese, Chinese, and Korean is stable, on tiny bases, at best.

'Australia is a fiercely English-speaking nation and notions of English exceptionalism have shaped attitudes towards language learning, allowing it to become a dispensable part of students' education,' they write. (Future Campus – 23 August)



**Education Minister Jason Clare is not waiting on Parliamentary approval to cap international student numbers,** saying Wednesday that providers will get the detail 'in the coming week,' FC suspects this will be after Tuesday, when the Senate Committee inquiring into the caps Bill hears evidence. A flat-out no from the Senate is a risk, but not one that appears to worry the Minister. Certainly, the Committee could recommend amendments but on the principle of caps, Mr Clare must think he has the numbers in the Upper House. He is more than likely right. However, crossbenchers and Greens vote, the Coalition will likely point to flaws in the bill but back its intent. If they don't, the Government will

announce, loud and long, that the Opposition is soft on immigration rorts. New skills minister Andrew Giles tested lines the other day when announcing 'ghost colleges' in VET, were being shut down. 'The Albanese Government is calling time on the rorts and loopholes that have plagued the VET sector for far too long under the former Liberal and National Government,' he said. That this has nothing to do with universities is a point the government guesses voters worried about immigrants pretending to be students will not notice. Especially if they are told about YTD May international commencements, up 30 per cent on '23. And for all the deploreagrams from university lobbies, it looks like the realists know it. On Wednesday, Mr Clare argued that caps are a better way to regulate international numbers than the present Ministerial Directive 107 which restricts numbers through visa delays and denials. Peak lobby Universities Australia was quick to announce that the end of 107 is 'non-negotiable' but made no mention of caps, which looked to FC like a white flag. The campaign against caps appears to have failed. (Future Campus – 23 August)

**Industry and Science Minister Ed Husic promotes STEM with small additional sums,** at least compared to his \$1bn investment on a quantum computer for Australia. Women in STEM and Entrepreneurship Grants gets \$8.5m, 'to fund long-term projects.' Science in Australia Gender Equity has \$7.1m for an expanded accreditation framework. Superstars of STEM scores \$3.8m 'to continue making diverse role models visible in the media.' And there is \$2m more for The Girls in STEM Toolkit, 'to inspire more diverse young people of all ages in school to study STEM and choose STEM careers.' For anybody wondering why there is no new dosh for the Women in STEM Ambassador, the office was abolished in June following a review which called for 'targeted changes to the government's suite of women in STEM programs.' (Future Campus – 23 August)

**The Senate has sent Jason Clare's latest Accord Bill to the Standing Committee on Education and Employment.** The Bill caps student loan indexation at the lower of the CPI or the Wage Price Index, honours the Budget commitment to provide prac placement support for nursing, teaching and social work students and funds no-fee university prep courses. So, what will the Coalition do, other than harrumph (the KPI for all Oppositions)? One practical question

Shadow Education Minister Sarah Henderson will undoubtedly ask is when will people get paid back for indexation tied to CPI. 'After months of delays, Education Minister Jason Clare has sold out 3 million Australians by failing to provide any certainty as to when refunds will be delivered,' she says. The government's FAQs state that when the legislation passes, the Australian Tax Office will automatically apply the indexation credit. (Future Campus – 23 August)

**Peak voiced body Jobs and Skills Australia wants a new national skills taxonomy and sets out the issues in a complex discussion paper.** Universities Australia responds in kind, demonstrating that both policy teams should never collaborate on Ikea instructions, they would need 1000 pages on how to assemble a chair. But UA does make a point worth stating simply – the need to fix the Australian Qualifications Framework to underpin skills. It remains as it was when the late Peter Noonan and colleagues drafted a restructure in 2019. There is widespread agreement it needs fixing, but that is as far as change gets. (Future Campus – 23 August)

**TEQSA wants it known it has long been on to bodgy international enrolments.**

Its submission to the Senate inquiry into the government's bill to cap numbers sets out how it warned providers in November '22 that they had to ensure international students are genuine. In March '23 it warned other agencies that there was 'poaching' between providers. Plus it is already imposing caps of its own, 'limiting the number of overseas students certain providers are allowed to recruit and admit.' Perhaps Jason Clare could outsource his new caps, although given the Department of Education is grasping any jobs going, probably not. The agency adds that while it is 'committed' to supporting the Government in protecting the integrity of HE, 'any additions to TEQSA's regulatory function will require commensurate resources.' (Future Campus – 23 August)

**Newish Monash U VC Sharon Pickering announces a new student services structure.**

'To ensure we remain modern in our student experience, and robust in our compliance we need to move in line with our students' expectations,' she says DVC E Allie Clements gets a 'centre of expertise' handling student conduct and complaints and 'regulatory activities.' Plus, there will be a Registrar, 'to lead and strengthen compliance-driven student functions in line with increasing



obligations.' FC thinks she means the Student Ombudsman announced by Education Minister Jason Clare and the proposed Department of Education unit to monitor gender violence on campus. Sarah McDonald is promoted to DVC Student Experience, consolidating functions now across the administration. The Indigenous portfolio is expanded, led by another new DVC, Tristan Kennedy. The university also appears to respond to Mr Clare's push to increase low SES student numbers, announcing it is expanding/extending five access programs. (Future Campus – 23 August)

**The High Court has dismissed an appeal by a voced provider which used the former VET FEE-HELP scheme.** Captain Cook College appealed the Federal Court ruling that it engaged in systemic unconscionable conduct by ending consumer safeguards in its enrolments and withdrawal systems. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission brought the case, alleging the College enrolled people in courses they were unlikely to complete but would incur study debt. Another outcome from the now distant VET FEE-HELP policy disaster. (Future Campus – 23 August)

**Submissions close today to the Senate Committee of inquiry into a Liberal Party Bill for an inquiry into antisemitism** on university campuses but as of yesterday Deakin U was the only university with a listed submission. 'We condemn antisemitism, islamophobia and all other forms of racism and bigotry, whether in a university setting or beyond,' is the message in a straight-bat statement that sets out policies. As to antisemitic behaviour this year, there have been 'a small number of allegations in 2024 of student misconduct and/or student complaints relating to perceived antisemitism. All complainants receive information on support services; where the respondent is a student, appropriate action has been taken under Deakin's Student Misconduct procedure.' But where are the submissions from universities, the unis of Melbourne and Sydney, for example where there is way more campus tension over Gaza? Perhaps they will turn up today. (Future Campus – 23 August)

**Barney Glover Shouts Out for VET by Stephen Matchett.** The Chair of Jobs and Skills Australia wants to 'rebalance' tertiary education 'because skills are the lingua franca of prospective employers not qualifications, not credentials.'

Professor Glover, a former VC of Western Sydney U, expanded on the Universities Accord case for a 'more connected' post school system in a National Press Club speech last week calling for change 'to reduce the discrepancy between where students are studying now and the job requirements of the future.'

And the discrepancy has long weighed against training. In 2021, Professor Glover said, there were 5.5 million Australians with a Bachelor degree (a 31% increase on 2016) compared to 4 million with Certificate I through IV (11% up).

Professor Glover, a member of Mary O'Kane's Accord team, set out present and future needs for more voc-ed skilled workers, suggesting the present target of 80% of the working age population with tertiary skills by 2050 may be an understatement. 'We certainly need to better understand the spread and blend of skills and qualifications across the VET and HE spectrum.'

But the challenge to accomplish it, he particularly pointed to, is a culture-shift in communities.

'We must uplift the aspirations of young people to consider career options across the full tertiary spectrum. I'll be blunt, we need to raise enthusiasm - in numbers too big to ignore - for vocational education and training from deep within our school system.' (Future Campus – 26 August)



**New Network for HE Marcomms Leaders by Tim Winkler.** A new network is being established for marketing and communications leaders from across the HE sector – recognising a significant gap in the way the sector recognises and values the expertise of professional staff.

Justin Laing from University of the Sunshine Coast is collaborating with marketing heads from across the country to establish the Australian Universities Marketing and Communications Leaders Network, and will hold preliminary discussions with delegates to the HE FEST conference in September.

'Unlike many of our colleagues, marketing and communications leaders working in the Australian higher education sector do not currently have a forum, network, peak body or official group for sharing best practice, networking, lobbying and discussing

critical common issues and approaches,' Mr Laing said.

Chief Marketing Officers and Marketing/Communications/Recruitment Directors can sign up for the group [here](#). (Future Campus – 26 August)



**International Enrolments: Out with the Sledgehammer in with Quotas by Stephen Matchett.** Australia will admit 270,000 new international higher education students next year, with universities allocated 145,000 places under a new 'National Planning Level.' The Government's overall target is commencements back at pre-pandemic levels.

With one big difference, which is what this is all about. As Education Minister Jason Clare told media yesterday, 'What this means is, next year, that there will be about the same number of international students starting a course here as there were before the pandemic. There will be more in our universities and there will be fewer in our private vocational providers.'

Mr Clare and Ministerial colleagues announced the quotas yesterday, defying months of protest at the prospect of caps, including scathing criticisms of the strategy and expected allocation of places at a Senate Committee hearing on Monday.

Despite exposure over a lack of costings, the Government dug in, saying yesterday quotas were based on new international student commencements and the 'concentration of international enrolments.'

Winners under the new model are 'universities who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and uneven patterns of student returns,' which would cover small regional providers. Like Charles Sturt U, where VC Renée Leon said the university welcomed the new system adding, 'we look forward to working with the Department of Education to ensure that Charles Sturt's unique circumstances are reflected in the ongoing allocation.'

The more than likely losers include Group of Eight universities, with rapid growth in international arrivals post pandemic – notably some, or all of the big five, Uni Queensland, Uni Sydney, Uni NSW, Monash U and Uni Melbourne. Early



analysis yesterday indicated the total quota for regional universities in 2025 would be up by over 50 per cent on this year while the Go8 would take a hit on 2024 starts, down as much as 30 per cent next year on this, a return to their 2023 collective commencements.

While public universities alone had their 'indicative' allowances yesterday, the Government states other HE providers will be allocated around 30,000 places next year. Elicos is exempt under the still-to-be-legislated quotas. But voced providers will wear a dressing-down, with 95,000 starts, down from 103,000 already in the YTD to May. In a pointed message to the rarely named but oft-cited 'shonky' private voced providers that Mr Clare has repeatedly singled out to prosecute the case for quotas, the Government states that those, 'with a higher ratio of international students will receive a lower allocation, encouraging them to diversify their student base.'

The closest thing to good news for all in the international education business is that quotas will replace Ministerial Direction 107, which delayed and denied student visas for not very, or no good reasons at all, as an ad hoc attempt to reduce arrivals. Recognising reality yesterday, Universities Australia lamented quotas as a 'handbrake on the nation's ambition' but welcomed the demise of the direction as stopping a 'sledgehammer' hit to international education.

And for all the predictions that quotas will bring plague, pestilence and quite possibly locusts, political realists accepted the announcement as a policy they will have to learn to live with. Former La Trobe U VC John Dewar, now minding Uni Wollongong, said caps deliver 'greater certainty, clarity and transparency on Government measures to manage migration.' His successor at LTU, Theo Farrell, also embraced the moment, 'La Trobe supports transparent and proportionate measures to ensure the managed and sustainable growth of international students in Australia. We recognise that there is broad political and community support to reduce net migration levels.' (Future Campus – 28 August)



[Quotas Reaction: From Getting-Along to Gotterdammerung by Stephen](#)

**Matchett.** Having harrumphed at the announcement of the Government's National Planning Level for international students at universities, HE and voced provider lobbies mostly set about seeking concessions on the quota policy.

Yesterday, Opposition education shadow Sarah Henderson emphasised bipartisan support for slashing international student numbers, saying that while cap concerns were currently being interrogated, 'the Coalition supports capping international student numbers.'

But the Group of Eight is in no mood for giving up gracefully, calling quotas 'reckless' stating its 'implacable opposition' and urging the Senate 'to not allow the Government to bully it.' And just in case that did not work, the Eight got all götterdämmerung, announcing on what used to be Twitter, 'international student caps will reduce support for commitments in areas like medical and health research, teaching for domestic students and support for low SES students, which are currently supported by international student revenue.' To which Senator Henderson responded, 'It is disappointing the Group of Eight ... is threatening to cut domestic student numbers. If our top universities are going to reduce domestic students to protect their rivers of gold - billions of dollars in foreign student fees - the Coalition will consider further measures to put Australian students first.'

In contrast, peak body Universities Australia was carefully calibrated, doing the best it could, given it had to be seen to condemn quotas without getting in the way of smaller unis which hope to gain from caps at the expense of the Go8. Thus UA warned quotas 'will apply a handbrake to Australia's second biggest export industry,' and chair David Lloyd (Uni SA VC) added, 'we acknowledge the Government's right to control migration numbers, but this should not be done at the expense of any one sector, particularly one as economically important as education.'

Having got that out of the way, UA repeated its call for a quick end to the capricious visa processing policy Ministerial Direction 107, which played havoc with universities by delaying or denying student visas. Given quotas are sold as a replacement and the Government has been backed into a corner by the Opposition, the only question is when this will happen, Senate permitting.

And then UA got back to business as usual, 'we will be working closely with our members on the details of what has been announced today and the impact on their individual institutions as we push for the certainty, stability and growth our sector and the nation needs'

The Innovative Research Universities decided to try to salvage something out of the carnage, proposing concessions that it would accept if the Senate committee considering the Bill asked nicely. They include abolishing the ambit claim that gives a minister power to cancel individual courses in universities and transferring the quota scheme to the Australian Tertiary Education Commission as soon as it is in place.

The Australian Technology Network also asked for changes that the Government will surely give. While the 'unfair and fickle approach to visa processing' in Ministerial Direction 107 may not go immediately, as asked, it will go. The ATN also wants clarity on how quotas were set and for Government to consider university circumstances.

And while the Regional Universities Network wants the earliest end to MD 107, it all but endorsed the quotas as good for its members, welcoming 'the Government's returned focus on regional universities' and looking forward to 'working with the Government to make sensible changes to Australia's broader migration settings that will encourage international students to study at Australia's world-class regional universities.'

All up, the lobbies will get enough operational concessions from the government to save some face, and the only certainty is that tens of thousands of students will now be prevented from enrolling in an Australian degree. Generosity in victory has a whole chapter in Jason Clare's political playbook and he has signalled he will talk to universities. (Future Campus – 29 August)



[Uni Adelaide announces an achievement in telecoms research in a media statement yesterday.](#) 'The team has developed the first ultra-wideband integrated terahertz polarisation (de)multiplexer implemented on a substrateless silicon base which they have successfully tested in the sub-terahertz J-



band (220-330 GHz) for 6G communications and beyond.' As Buzz Lightyear nearly said 'too incomprehensibility and beyond!' (Future Campus – 30 August)

**The National Tertiary Education Union is no friend to government, not, perhaps, until the comrade Greens take power.** But the union leadership did not especially slam Education Jason Clare over international student quotas. Perhaps because they want the Government to guarantee the jobs they fear universities will use caps as an excuse to cut. Unless it is because they distrust vice-chancellors more than any Minister. As National President Alison Barnes put it, 'it's clear now that some of the numbers thrown around by university leaders in recent months were simply part of an unfair scare campaign with no regard for staff welfare.' 'The Federal Government must ensure university bosses don't use these changes as an excuse to cut jobs from an already stretched workforce.' (Future Campus – 30 August)

**Western Sydney U announces a bunch of student services will be off-line for six days from 10 October but it is 'an important step ... to keep your information secure.' It would be an improvement on the situation announced in July this year when records, from bank accounts to tax file numbers of 7,500 staff and students were accessed by e-intruders. (Future Campus – 30 August)**

**The University of Sydney invites everybody interested to make a submission to the external review of 'policies and processes,' by barrister Bruce Hodgkinson,** 'to help ensure they are appropriate and accord with applicable standards going forward.' It's a response to the controversy over management's handling of campus protests against Israel. And it will give university reps something to point to if, more likely when, senators questions them at the Senate committee hearing on a Liberal Party bill for a commission of inquiry into antisemitism on university campuses.

The university's submission to the inquiry sets out the strategy, expresses sympathy, details everything done right and commits to doing even better. Which may not impress some senators. Mehreen Faruqi is listed to represent the Green and Liberal education shadow Sarah Henderson will surely be there. This would put any Uni Sydney witness (more than likely VC Mark Scott) in the

challenging position of being asked critical questions from senators with diametrically opposite positions on the bill. Regulator TEQSA also wants it known that it did everything it could during the protests. Its submission states that that it has no authority to 'make a legal determination' on HE providers adherence to anti-vilification laws. But TEQSA does detail what it can do, and did, during the protests. And it states that across HE as a whole, it knows of 122 student or staff misconduct processes completed or underway, Now there's a question for senators on the committee – at which universities or colleges? Monash U has a solid example of action to present if called by the committee – it has \$1m, for two research programme on 'the nature and experience of antisemitism, islamophobia and related prejudice and develop and test programmes and initiatives that support social cohesion on campus.' And it is not a reflexive response with the Senate in mind, Senator Henderson introduced the bill on June 25– Vice Chancellor Sharon Pickering announced the program in May.' (Future Campus – 30 August)

**Nihon University of Japan is about to be in business with its own campus in Newcastle.** It is in the refurbished colonial era courthouse, original photos of which are on the new Nihon site – hopefully not suggesting to prospective Japanese students that Newcastle is still in the 19th century. It's been a while coming, Nihon U started work on the project in 2017. (Future Campus – 30 August)

**The Government announces the second round of its micro-credentials pilot.** With \$10.7m for 48 m-cs on-line and/or in-person at 25 providers. All up, there are now 76 courses. Providers of the new round are universities, a couple of private viced providers and TAFEs, wearing their HE hats. Subject areas are, education, health, psych, engineering and IT, pretty much all focused to meet a specific skill need, Griffith U offers an m-c on 'surgical nursing, ' Uni Queensland is the go for those who need to know about the principles of waste-water treatment. But where do completers include m-cs on their CVs? Most are billed as micro-credentials but some are 'professional certificates' which sounds impressive, but FC can't find it on the AQF. (Future Campus – 30 August)



### **Ability and Grit Deliver ATAR Achievement by Stephen Matchett.**

Among private schools endlessly upping their fees with the promise of ATAR excellence, the estimable National Centre for Vocational Education Research [reports](#) that on the path to university entry character and commitment really matter. But for students without supportive homes, schools have to step-up.

Ronnie Semo and NCVER colleagues used data sets including NAPLAN and the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth to identify what delivers university entry scores. They found that controlling for socioeconomic and language backgrounds, gender and indigeneity, students with strong NAPLAN results are almost twice as likely to score 90-plus ATARs.

And schools don't have the biggest bunch to do with it, 'most of the variation in a student's tertiary entrance score can be attributed to their demographic profile or academic ability rather than the school they attend,' they write.

The good news for Australia is that academic ability and diligence can trump class, that the school people go to does not dictate their ATAR outcome, 'meaning that students should not be impeded or discouraged by their individual backgrounds.'

The bad news for Education Ministers mindful of budgets is that expanding university access will require more resources for schools to assist who are not such self-starters.

'Schools must ensure that support and opportunities are provided for all students, such that the potential of all young Australians is maximised, with a particular focus on male students and those who fall behind. The unique educational and occupational aspirations of each student must also be recognised, with schools encouraged to identify optimal pathways for each individual.'

And it will take an end to schools shunting students who need support into dead-end options. Andrew Harvey (Griffith U) with colleagues Lucy McDermid and Rebecca Wren reported last year that in Queensland, 'the tracking of Indigenous and low SES students into non-ATAR pathways is particularly glaring.' (Future Campus August 30 2023).

'There are merits to diversifying curriculum, increasing VET provision in





schools, and reducing reliance on ATARs. However, much of the current streaming appears to be reducing rather than increasing choice, particularly for students already under-represented in higher education,' he previously warned. (Future Campus – 2 September)



**Hybrid Learning – Friend or FOE by Samantha Hall.** As the dust settles from COVID, some universities have returned to face-to-face teaching, whilst others remained devoted to online learning. A grey area in the middle is some courses offering hybrid learning – where students can choose to join online.

We've all been there; you intend to join a meeting in person but something comes up and you join online. The experience is OK but with half the attendees in a room, and half online, it just doesn't quite work.

Students tell us they have the same experience with hybrid classes.

Since COVID, we have asked students what their first preference for teaching is – face to face, hybrid or online. We have continually heard that students prefer face to face classes, but we all know that on some campuses this doesn't equate to seats being filled. Students say they want it, but aren't necessarily showing up.

'I now feel much more like I belong, which is due to the switch from online to face-to-face teaching after Covid'.

Having the option to have everything online, including joining in hybrid, removes an important nudge to come to campus. We argue that education is therefore diluting itself, and the value of the physical campus is not fully realised. (Future Campus – 30 August)



**25 Year Milestone for ATN by Angel Calderon.** This year, the Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN) celebrates a significant milestone: 25 years of trusted sectoral leadership and sustained, impactful advocacy.

Strategic alliances such as the ATN have long been instrumental in the development of Australia's world-class higher education system. The ATN was

formed to pursue common goals and achieve strategic objectives such as influencing government policy.

#### *Founding vision and objectives*

The ATN group was formally established in February 1999 in Melbourne when the then five vice-chancellors of Australia's leading technology universities (Curtin, QUT, RMIT, UniSA and UTS) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

The MOU outlined two key objectives: each institution within the ATN seeks to compete effectively in a globally based education market while continuing to meet the needs of its local community.

Today, Deakin University and The University of Newcastle are part of the ATN group along with founding members Curtin, RMIT, UniSA and UTS. These universities are bound by an unwavering commitment to equity, excellence, student experience, successful outcomes and applied research - in which they tackle some of the biggest global challenges with bold, innovative solutions. (Future Campus – 4 September)



#### **Let's improve higher education student equity data and reporting in Australia.**

Now is an exciting time for equity data in Australian higher education. Equity data is at the core of many of the [Universities Accord Review's](#) recent recommendations, including needs-based funding, establishment of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission, and expansion of the Regional University Study Hub program. And central to this is that for data to be useful, it must be fit for purpose - consistent, reliable, accurate, and timely.

Last week, ACSES Equity Fellow Bret Stephenson wrote about the need for ['Better equity data through better \(more equitable\) data governance'](#).

At ACSES, we are working on several initiatives to increase the availability and quality of higher education student equity data and reporting in Australia. Today I'm pleased to share some of our recent updates with you.

#### *Updated Interactive Data Tool*

We have updated our [Interactive Data Tool](#) with 2022 data, now including data on students who are First in Family. We

have also introduced aggregated groupings 'All Equity Students' and 'Non-Equity Students', which encompass the five major groupings of Low SES Students, First Nations Australian Students, Students from Remote and Regional Australia, and Students with Disability. Please note that we are awaiting confirmation of the 2022 Low SES student data, therefore, these data are not yet shown (this also affects the equity and non-equity groupings).

#### *Student Equity Data Guides*

We are also releasing two Student Equity Data Guides - ['Higher Education Institutions in Australia'](#) and ['Defining Equity Groups'](#). We hope these guides, and the next to follow ('Equity Performance Measures' and 'Selecting and Using Equity Reference Values') will help demystify equity data and provide clarity and practical guidance for stakeholders across the sector. You will be able to find the Student Equity Data Guides and other upcoming data related resources in the [Data Resources Hub](#) on our website. (ACSES – 4 September)



#### **Housing Chair: Blaming International Students for Housing Strains is a Lie by Tim Winkler.**

Caps on international students would be likely to have very little effect on housing supply, the Chair of the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council, Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz told the National Press Club this week.

International students represented just four per cent of renters and many live in designated student housing, or rent spare bedrooms of existing dwellings, Ms Lloyd Hurwitz said.

'It is not the case that international students are crowding out renters in our cities,' Ms Lloyd Hurwitz said.

'That's just simply not true.'

The comments come at the same time as the Government has tried out new arguments to justify the imposition of international caps. Earlier this week Assistant Immigration Minister Matt Thistlethwaite told the AFR that the caps were about quality.

'The caps are really about ensuring quality and integrity in the system moving forward,' he said.



'We heard anecdotal evidence of providers who, particularly in the vocational space, weren't providing the quality of education that Australians would expect of the system.'

Given the caps are expected to have an intense impact on Australia's highest-ranked universities, the one certainty in the sector right now is that the Albanese Government is a long way from providing a coherent or credible justification for their rush to jerk away the welcome mat for international students hoping to study here.

How this fits with the ALP's DNA, given Bob Hawke's blueprint for Australia to become The Clever Country may also be a question asked by party members, although contemporary polling may trump Labour's 1980s dream. (Future Campus – 6 September)



**Uni Sydney VC Mark Scott and Provost AnnaMarie Jagose appeared Wednesday at NSW Legislative Council budget estimates**, being closely questioned by Liberal MLC Susan Close, who was demonstratively disappointed in the university's assistance for Jewish staff and students during Gaza protests. Labor MLC Stephen Lawrence proposed plenty of points of order on Ms Close's questions and Professor Scott stuck to his script, that the University did the best it could. He even displayed his faith in his brothers and sisters of the Gown, mentioning that he was the only one of 11 New South Wales VCs to be at the hearing, 'but they are heard in spirit I am sure.' It was good practise for what Professors Scott and Jagose will face if called to the Senate Committee inquiry into a Liberal Party Bill for a Commission of Inquiry into Antisemitism on University Campuses. (Future Campus – 6 September)

**The Senate Committee inquiring into the international student caps legislation** will take more evidence this afternoon, which is when it was supposed to report. Universities and lobby groups (some likely to be in favour, some not) will appear, but the big attraction will be well-briefed Opposition and Independent Senators asking public servants difficult questions. There are multiple member teams from Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Home Affairs and Treasury. Assuming the Opposition wants to demonstrate that the legislation is

mess and then pass it the government will have one joint sitting week in October and two in November to get an amended bill up (the House also sits November 4-7). Looks tight? Not, observers suggest, to the ever-optimistic Jason Clare. (Future Campus – 6 September)

**Interim Uni Wollongong VC John Dewar is a partner at consultants Korda Mentha**, which is doing some work for the university. This has not escaped the Illawarra Mercury and so the university states, 'the Interim Vice-Chancellor was not employed by the university during the tender process and was not a member of the tender evaluation committee. He was not consulted in any of the deliberations undertaken by the tender evaluation committee, all of which took place before his employment began.' The project KM is working on, 'is driven by and reports to UoW Council.' Back in March, Professor Dewar stood aside as the new chair of the Higher Education Standards Panel, before his first meeting, to avoid any misperception of conflict of interest with his KM partnership. (Future Campus – 6 September)

**Ratings agency S&P sticks with its AA+ long term credit rating for Uni Melbourne** – this may not be on-song with the chorus of international student quota created doom. But it is way better for the university's credibility with lenders than a downgrade. (Future Campus – 6 September)

**Uni Southampton will be the first international university to open a campus in India under the local rules**, offering UK degrees from July at Gurgaon, near Delhi. Yes, Deakin U and Uni Wollongong are already open, but in a free-trade zone, outside the ambit of the at times impenetrable University Grants Commission. The national government announced in 2020 that foreign universities were allowed, but the Commission's rules did not change until last November. (Future Campus – 6 September)

**The Australian Research Council has finally got around to recruiting a new CEO, to replace Judi Zielke**, who left in December due to 'a health issue', (no, it wasn't a euphemism). The pitch to candidates leads with the new CEO being, 'the first to operate under the significant changes that occurred to the ARC Act in 2024.' Which may mean that when it comes to KPIs, nobody has a clue what to list. (Future Campus – 6 September)

**Jobs and Skills Australia reports international data showing labour productivity in Australia**, Canada New Zealand and the UK was negative last year. Useful evidence for those who argue more education and training is needed to grow the economy and also for those who contend existing levels don't work. (Future Campus – 6 September)

**International education giant Navitas reports that first mentions of caps on international arrivals numbers back in May** had an impact on potential students and influencers, who were quick to pick up policies in Canada and proposals here that presented both as less welcoming. 'Australia has dropped and Canada has plunged in terms of preferred study destinations for international students,' a June survey found. Imagine the next results, after months of lobbyists' laments that caps will turn Australian universities into wastelands. (Future Campus – 6 September)

**Charles Darwin U's medical school will admit its first students next year**. Not many mind, just 20, but it's a start. Well done VC Scott Bowman who made a compelling political case for the school and kept making it. (Future Campus – 6 September)

**Macquarie U admits to underpaying people, again**. This time it reports 3,191 former and continuing professional staff were underpaid \$1.9m between 2017 and 2023. Reasons given are similar to those used across the country in what are now common cases – problems in applying the right rates for overtime and penalty rates. MU promises to pay people back and sort out its systems. Which is what it did last time it reported stuffing up people's pay, then 1100 current and former casual academics who were owed \$687,000 for work between January 2016 and November 222. While MU is silent on the causes of mistakes, a common explanation in cases around the country is that the generality of terms and conditions in enterprise agreements are way too complicated. It is true, but then again having signed agreements university managements should make sure staff understand them. (Future Campus – 6 September)

**International Caps Won't Fit Uni Sydney by Stephen Matchett**. The University of Sydney made more last year from fees and charges 'principally from overseas students' than the Feds kicked in, according to a new analysis by Frank Larkins, a go-to guy on university governance.



Professor Larkins (Uni Melbourne) reports Uni Sydney received 30 per cent of 2023 income from the federal government, compared to 47.2 % from fees. It is in an addition to his long-running look at the books of the Big (as in \$billions) Five, Monash U and the universities of Melbourne, New South Wales, Queensland and Sydney.

Overall, the Five were still in recovery from Covid's impact on income last year, with Sydney and Melbourne in surplus, just, and the others reporting small deficits.

The high impact outlay was increased spending on staff, up \$1bn, across the Five on 2021, to \$7.44bn. However, as a proportion of total outlays, staff costs were generally marginally up or down. Professor Larkins attributes this to the impact of pandemic-response staff cuts.

Uni Sydney delivered on its' reputation as the national pay leader, spending 58.6 % of revenue on staff in 2022 and 58.3 % last year, at the top end of the public university range.

Uni Sydney is especially exposed to a loss of fee income, notably compared to Uni Queensland, which earns 30.9 % of income from this stream. Even Uni Melbourne, Sydney's traditional comparator, is more balanced -with 35.7 % from fees and charges and 36 % from government assistance.

However, all-up the Five are increasingly reliant on internationals. In 2021 government assistance was 41 per cent of income, dropping to 38 per cent last year. Fees and charges increased from 34 per cent to 37 per cent.

'Policies to reduce the intake of international student will impact adversely on the cashflow position of all these universities and several other institutions in the higher education system,' the ever-understated Larkins warns. (Future Campus – 6 September)



**Caps Reveal Prompts Anger by Stephen Matchett.** The Friday hearing of the Senate committee inquiry into proposed international student caps met way past beer o'clock Friday. But the big news the government wanted to run in weekend media was already out, with the Department of Education releasing

proposed public university numbers for 2025.

Overall, the reduction in international student starts for 2025 appear to be in line with an unspoken game plan orchestrated by the Government, for the nation's most highest-ranked universities to take a significant hit on their 2023 commencements. The University of Sydney will drop 7% to 11,900 starts. The University of Melbourne will be down 700 to 9,300. UNSW is hit hard, enrolling nearly 1600 fewer commencing internationals in 2025 than in 2023. These will translate to significant income losses over the three, often more, years international enrol for.

Other universities are hammered, where circumstances and strategies meant fewer international enrolments in 2023, the base year for the new scheme. Some are collateral damage of the crackdown on immigration rorts, having enrolled apparently legitimate students who then transferred to sham colleges as cover for their being in Australia to work, not study.

Some big unis did ok, including ones who counted their likely numbers and kept quiet as the Group of Eight's lobbyists got stuck into Mr Clare. University of Queensland is untouched, at 7,050 new places. Monash U has nearly 10,000, a 20 per cent hike. And as South Australian premier Peter Malinauskas's fears for the merger of Uni Adelaide and Uni SA were unfounded. Uni Adelaide is allowed 17% more new students, Uni SA is also 12% up. The Premier pushed for the merger to expand international education in the state – the challenge next year will be for the new Adelaide U to fill its quota.

Outside the Group of Eight there are more marginal winners than substantial losers, but some of the losses are thumping. Federation U is down more than 50 per cent, to 1,100. Murdoch U loses 30 per cent of its 2023 starting number.

What happens next depends on the Senate committee, now due to report today week. Whatever it recommends will not be a ringing endorsement of the Bill and the government will likely negotiate amendments with the Opposition and Crossbench. If it succeeds, there are enough sitting days, just, for the Bill to return to the Reps and then pass the Senate this year.

As to what the Opposition will want, Shadow Education Minister Sarah Henderson has hammered officials on

details in the legislation and on Friday she stuck up for the innocent victims in the immigration mess that created the caps plan – legitimate private providers.

But the Coalition cannot afford to appear soft on immigration rorts, which is what the government will allege if the Coalition votes the Bill down. On the other hand, Mr Dutton has already flagged that he doesn't think the cuts go far enough.

Mr Clare told Sky News on Sunday, 'the Federal Government is responsible for migration.'

'We need to make sure we protect this sector from the crooks and the shonks who are trying to exploit it ... and we have to protect community support for it and that is what these reforms are about.'

'This argument that we are forcing students from the city to the bush isn't right. Students do want to come to regional universities ... and this is a better and a fairer way to do it.'

Vice-Chancellor of Federation University Professor Duncan Bentley voiced his frustration with the Minister's take.

'It is deeply disappointing for regional universities which have borne the brunt of Ministerial Direction 107 to be treated as though they should be grateful for these deep cuts. It directly contradicts the findings of the Universities Accord and the recommendations to support regional universities to continue to serve their regions.'

Managing Director of Asset College Mark Costello said he had been seeking to attract up to 200 international students, amounting to 2% of enrolments, but had instead been told that they could take only three in 2025.

He pointed out in 2015 the then Coalition had set a target of 1,000,000 international students by 2025 and growth had been in line with Government policy – only to be abruptly curtailed by the current Federal Government.

'This will be an economic disaster that will take a decade to recover from. It will cost Australians jobs and it will drive up the cost of education for Australians which in many cases is subsidised by the higher fees paid by international students,' he said.

'Suffice to say we will not be employing the additional 8x FTE positions that I had forecast in 2025 based on the additional revenue.' (Future Campus – 9 September)





### Getting Back to What Really Matters in Tertiary Education by Alec Cameron

(Vice Chancellor of RMIT University). While tertiary education has again emerged as a subject of political contention, we continue to lose sight of the real issues at play. Worse still, we risk robbing many thousands of the young – and not so young – of the education they deserve to achieve their life and career ambitions, and the opportunity to contribute to our nation's future. It's time to re-centre the conversation about tertiary education in Australia around people.

Hundreds of thousands of skilled, knowledgeable workers will be needed in the next two decades to support Australia's economy and provide care in our community. This is why the Australian Universities Accord Final Report sets an ambitious target for the Higher Education system to reach 55% participation, and 80% tertiary attainment, by 2050.

It's a bold and noble aim, but it will not be met by increasing participation of the present pipeline of school leavers at our projected population growth. This means that the bulk of skills shortages, already being experienced by employers, will not be met exclusively by future school leavers, and the long-term need will not be solved by simply attracting more of them to tertiary education.

Further, more of the same will fail substantial groups of Australians from backgrounds not traditionally associated with tertiary education, and we need to address these equity groups if we are to level the playing field of opportunity. More of the same will also fail our mid-career population, who need a wider range of education options to reskill themselves in the face of rapid workforce disruption.

So, the requirement for tertiary education in Australia lies in improving accessibility for a wider range of learners, from under-represented equity cohorts to the working adults exposed to changing labour market demands. For different reasons, both face high barriers to entry and success, which is where our focus is urgently required.

The Federal Government has responded with proposals regarding Needs-based Funding and Managed Growth Funding,

to address these issues. These proposals focus on the stated 'growth through equity' objective and continue to prioritise the individuals at the centre of a more diverse cohort of students. Over time, we must move to a tertiary education system that is more inclusive by design, where we pre-empt the support required to bridge the gap for those with additional needs, and think differently for working-age learners with a range of life commitments and financial constraints.

We need to address barriers to entry, including study confidence to digital literacy, and the necessary funding for costs that will support these students to succeed once enrolled. We need innovative models of learning and teaching support, and new forms of program delivery for non-traditional cohorts. These are not insurmountable challenges – at RMIT we know from experience that coalitions of employers, government, community, and educators, can create innovative solutions to address skills shortages, while supporting non-traditional cohorts of learners.

RMIT was founded on the educational needs of the working person and we will continue to challenge the status quo with a clear voice in the reform of traditional education models. Distinctions between knowledge and skills are out-dated in today's post-school education structures, where both are essential. Higher education and vocational education can work together to support the myriad of journeys through learning and work, giving people flexible options to meet their evolving life goals.

Lifelong learning means welcoming learners into tertiary education at the stage in life they choose – making it an accessible and positive experience. For Australia, to meet the 2050 target participation rates for post-school education identified by the Accord required for our future workforce needs, tertiary education must be within the ambition of everyone. It must be inclusive and represent the true diversity of our community. This is why RMIT has put forward sector-leading approaches to tackle skills shortages and is advocating for a tertiary sector fit for the times.

Choices in relation to education are life-changing and must be treated with respect. Proposed changes to tertiary entry requirements or related costs must be communicated well ahead of time, mindful that students of all ages make major life decisions based on their

expectations of costs and commitments. It stands to reason that we should expect prospective students to not be unduly impacted by system changes.

If we move beyond politicising Australia's largest service sector export, we can focus on what universities have always been about – civic contribution and education for employment. In doing so and getting the instruments right, a collective focus on providing far broader access to the tertiary education system will change the prospects of the nation, one life at a time. (Future Campus – 9 September)



### Unis Australia for Labor-Led Bipartisan Policy for Higher Ed by Stephen Matchett

Universities must be 'a policy priority instead of a political pawn,' David Lloyd chair of the peak university lobby announces in a speech for the National Press Club to be delivered today.

Professor Lloyd calls on Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Opposition Leader Peter Dutton to 'follow the lead and examples of leaders like Menzies and Hawke in their support of, and investment in, universities for the greater good of the Australian nation.'

And they will have a choice at the next election, 'between providing bipartisan support and encouragement for higher education or treating universities as political footballs in the electoral game.'

Professor Lloyd points to this week's announcement of international student quotas from next year as bad for universities and bad for the economy, calling it an 'extraordinary intervention,' an attempt to 'neutralise the perceived political damage it is suffering from high migration rates.'

'In wilfully weakening our economy by capping international student numbers, the government needs to consider how many businesses it is wilfully putting at risk and how much damage to the economy it is knowingly prepared to do at the very time when our economy is stalling,' he says.

However, Professor Lloyd attributes bipartisan blame for the caps, stating, the government is acting 'under pressure from the Opposition.'

And in making the case for a unity ticket on university teaching and research, he



focuses on past and present Labor policies as setting directions the coalition should continue.

He points to HECS, the Demand Driven Funding system, which the Coalition cancelled, as Labor past Labor achievements and cites conservative failures, ministerial vetoes of research grants and the cost of the Job Ready Graduates packages, which the Coalition created to penalise arts, business and law students with high study fees.

Above all, Professor Lloyd looks to the future, calling the government commissioned Universities Accord, a 'solid policy blueprint to build from' and calling on the Opposition to support 'pro-student' support measures in the Accord, now before Parliament. And he urges the Opposition to follow Labor's commitment to 'growing investment' in research and development.'

And lest anyone miss the point, he adds, 'the last seven years, the majority under a Coalition Government, have been particularly difficult.'

International student caps aside, Professor Lloyd's plan for bipartisan policy on higher education focuses on the Coalition following Labor's lead, in past times and Accord present. But as he says as the start of his text, 'hope is not really a strategy.' (Future Campus – 11 September)



### **Making the ACCORD Happen: The Hard Stuff Starts Now by Stephen Matchett.**

There's a Senate Inquiry into the first Bill to make the Accord happen – Universities Australia is signed up to the bits that won't bother members.

The peak lobby is okay with the changes to indexing student loan debt when the measure that is used is the lower of CPI or the Wage Price Index. And it is fine with the legislative changes to combine Uni Adelaide and Uni South Australia into Adelaide U.

But it has issues with the other three:

- Requiring 40 % of the services fee students pay go to 'student led organisations.' UA warns there aren't 'appropriate' student organisations at all or ones that are 'to scale' everywhere while some organisations, 'lack the

professionalism and stability required to appropriately manage the quantum of funds involved, and to effectively provide the required services.' Plus, student groups have different needs, notably on-campus and on-line. 'There are cases where consulted students requested funds not be given to central student-led organisations for fear this would result in service loss.' And, jobs will go! 'there are cases where consulted students requested funds not be given to central student-led organisations for fear this would result in service loss.' UA calls for more consultation

- Funding for fee-free 'uni-ready' courses. This needs to wait until the Job Ready Graduate funding model is replaced, which UA assumes will happen. The problem with enabling place funding now is that is tied to the JRG discipline rate, which is good for some disciplines, bad for others and the proposed new flat rate for enabling courses creates will compound anomalies and inequities.
- The prac payment. 'UA notes that this is another example of the Government asking universities to provide a service delivery function for government.'

As examples, it includes means testing, eligibility and appeals, as admin functions members will manage.

Plus, there will be pressure to extend it to other occupations with professional accreditation requirements.

In case its' cases against the prac payment and enabling course funding proposals is distorted while JRG stays; UA tells the Senate committee it can live with them as is.

But not the student services fee – which they argue should be deferred until universities are involved in more development. (Future Campus – 11 September)



**Forget Growth: Embrace Relevance: UTAS VC by Tim Winkler.** Universities need to come to grips that international student enrolments are a component of Australia's migration system and the Government should be expected to regulate levels, UTAS VC Professor Rufus

Black told Future Campus at the HE FEST 24 conference yesterday.

While not specifically endorsing caps, Professor Black said that universities had to accept that past models built around measurement of success based on domestic and international enrolment growth had reached their use-by date.

Universities needed to find new ways to engage with the community, he said.

'We built universities for a growth-driven world. I think most universities have not come to grips with the fact that we can't grow our way out of trouble any more,' Professor Black said.

'The only way we are going to grow is through pathways. We have reached saturation with students who are ready to go to university and end up poaching each other's students.

'We spend very little on bringing people to pathways. Universities Australia has to rattle the tin and get together money for the Universities Matter campaign and it's a tiny fraction of the money we spend on stealing students from each other's unis.

'We need to deeply pursue solutions to the climate crisis ... and pursue an outside-in approach to engaging with what communities care about.

'We pursue our own questions, not the questions the world is asking us. As the people with the knowledge and the skills to work to make these transitions (to net zero) we should be leading.' (Future Campus – 13 September)



**Griffith U's long-discussed move to the CBD is happening,** with the purchase of what was the Treasury Casino – that's the building name, not a government strategy to reduce the State debt. The university is silent on what it paid, but building owner Star Entertainment states it sold for \$60.7m net. It's a big part of a long-in-place plan. In 2019, Griffith U announced it wanted a 'major new campus,' 'where engagement with key players in the CBD will enhance the student experience and research partnerships.' IT and law will also move in. (Future Campus – 13 September)

**Jason Clare's second reading speech on the Student Ombudsman Bill** explained why university's management of sexual



harassment and assault made it necessary. There had been 'a protracted failure of the higher education sector, and of government, to do anything,' he said. And he added that it would address a range of other issues, where a student is subjected to homophobia, antisemitism, Islamophobia or other forms of racism or discrimination on campus.' The Ombudsman's purpose is to 'make sure that student welfare is at the centre.' The clear message is that while universities have been left to their own devices, it hasn't. The Ombudsman will not be an office to ignore. The Bill empowers it with 'information-gathering and investigatory powers to ensure it can effectively deal with student complaints and investigate actions of higher education providers, including powers to make inquiries to determine how to deal with a complaint or whether a matter should be investigated; require a person to provide relevant information, documents or other records; and enter the premises of a higher education provider for the purposes of an investigation.' Plus, Mr Clare proposes a new unit of the Department of Education will 'regulate the standards and support for universities to achieve better outcomes for students.' This sits outside the bill and is still at consultation stage. But as envisaged by DoE, it would be the second of a double whammy for institutions that irritate the Ombudsman. The Department proposes it will have powers for 'monitoring, assessment and enforcement for compliance when a serious issue is identified.' Mr Clare told Sky News it would 'have the same sort of coercive powers that a royal commission has to go into universities to get documents.' Which will be the government's explanation why there won't be the commission of inquiry into antisemitism on campus Liberal education shadow Sarah Henderson wants. Universities Australia responded to the Ombudsman Bill Wednesday, saying 'we can and must do better to improve the whole university experience for our students and that means delivering in the classroom and across campus – this is what our students deserve.' The lobby may not like the new oversight of its members, but this week was not the time to mention autonomy. (Future Campus – 13 September)

**The international sell for Adelaide U is underway**, with a Kuala Lumpur event hosted by Uni Adelaide DVC Jessica Gallagher and Uni SA chancellor John Hill. Apparently, Adel U will 'will offer a transformative learning experience to students around the world in an idyllic

Australian setting.' Ah, North Terrace in the Spring. (Future Campus – 13 September)

**Universities used to present marching-band parades when rankings came out**, playing up results that signified sod all, but this year not so much, for which FC cannot account. For example, the as-methodologically-coherent-as-many National Taiwan University discipline rankings by citation are largely ignored. As far as FC can hear, the only blowing of its own trumpet is by Uni Queensland, which is number four in Australia, but other than that, crickets. Maybe it's because the Group of Eight don't want to be boastful, lest they attract extra ire from Jason Clare. Or perhaps the Eight's bands are practising for the Times Higher awards next month. Whatever the reason, this year's Australian top ten from Taiwan is much the same as any others, Uni Melbourne, Uni Sydney, Monash U, Uni Queensland, UNSW, UWA, Uni Adelaide, ANU, UTS and Curtin U. (Future Campus – 13 September)

**Jobs and Skills Australia adds evidence to the Accord argument that education and skills expand the economy but they don't have to be in HE**. JSA's June Labour Market Update reports employment in occupations commensurate with Certificates II or III grew 5 per cent. Jobs associated with an undergraduate degree or higher were up 3.1 per cent. The overall message is clear, 'the shift towards higher skill levels in recent years is a continuation of a long-term trend, as the workforce has become more highly educated and employment has transitioned towards services-based industries.' (Future Campus – 13 September)

**The Campaigns you Won't See this Week by Tim Winkler**. There were fine speeches made to a Senate Committee last week, but reasoned arguments, announcements of hiring freezes or the NTEU landing on Mr Clare's doorstep have not deterred Education Minister from pressing ahead with his plan to slash international student enrolments.

Is that because the 26 million + Australians who missed the Senate Committee's deliberations are still telling Labour and Coalition pollsters that they blame international students for their cost-of-living ills?

Possibly. I am not privy to polling, but that's what some have argued. Others in the sector have welcomed the cuts, hoping for a recalibration in favour of

institutions that have received fewer international enrolments in the past.

Setting aside the arguments for and against for a moment, let's suspend belief and imagine that the sector can agree on a position on this. We will assume for the sake of this discussion that the sector decides that caps are, at least in aggregate, a problem. If that was the case, then we would ideally be planning to do more than despatch a few noted speakers to one of Parliament's lesser-known rooms for a chinwag if we wanted to change public behaviour. We might actually look beyond the fancy scones and LinkedInnable speaking opportunities and set up a campaign to communicate with the world beyond the obvious bubble of power.

The discussion over caps led me wondering what sort of campaign would change the hearts of middle Australia – and put pressure on both major parties to ditch their position on caps (or move the dial on any other policy position). It has become accepted wisdom without any definitive proof that higher education institutions are on the nose with the public. The past approach have focused on winning them back with saccharine prose. But the reality – and the cut through – is more 'Grim Reaper' than 'Aeroplane Jelly'.

I came up with a genius campaign idea on a Sunday while failing to install a sprinkler system which owed more to a grim reaper-style focus, and released it to the audience at HE FEST.

It was 15 minutes with an AI picture and a quick set of lines – just to give a flavour. A discussion starter, absolutely not a finished ad. Just enough to get some discussions, going and providing a foil to an alternative tagline presented to the conference by Rory McLean, a multi-award-winning advertising leader who is Creative Director at Sydney agency Adrian William.

Rory provided the conference with a rationale and tagline that owed more to 'the business of hope' as Macquarie's Professor Eric Knight described higher education. The alternative direction also built on inspiration from University of Western Sydney Vice-Chancellor Professor George Williams, who told the conference it was time to rekindle trust and connection with community by talking about what matters to them, not what matters to us.



After a forensic survey of university marketing campaigns, Rory walked the conference through the opportunity to develop a new campaign to connect the tertiary sector with Australia. Moving beyond the 'Universities matter' message, Rory discussed how a change in emphasis to 'Australians matter', emphasising the impact of the sector on Australians, could lay a foundation for cut-through, with lines such as 'Don't cap our impact.'

These, then is the campaign that you won't see this week - but which could make an impact to change hearts and minds in ways that current messages are not. (Future Campus – 16 September)



**Opposition Raises Stakes on Caps by Stephen Matchett.** The Opposition is piling on the pressure as the Senate goes slow on the Government's international student quotas legislation.

'Every day generates more questions than answers about the Albanese Government's flawed methodology used to allocate foreign student caps across the higher education and vocational sector, Susan Ley (Deputy Opposition Leader) and Sarah Henderson (education shadow) said in a joint statement yesterday.

After meetings with private VET providers the Opposition is backing complaints that the viability of legitimate colleges is being threatened by proposed cuts to their student numbers next year. 'The fact that the vast majority of Australia's vocational and higher education providers are responsibly run and deliver world-leading high-quality services has been ignored by Labor,' Ms Ley and Senator Henderson said.

'The Albanese Government's scheme is riddled with incompetence, secrecy, uncertainty and unfairness.'

However their statement yesterday was silent on universities, who have led the charge against quotas.

And they were careful to make clear that it is process not politics they oppose. 'The coalition supports capping international students, but we will continue to scrutinise this process and will do so until we get the answers we are seeking.'

The Opposition and constructive crossbench is doing its best to make the

Government account for the construction of the quotas. The Senate committee inquiry into the bill has been extended twice, with submissions reopened until September 26 and a fourth hearing scheduled on October 2. It was originally scheduled to report on August 15, the final report is now expected on October 8.

While the Opposition is focusing on the treatment of private training providers university lobbies have long signalled that their immediate need is the end of Ministerial Direction 107 which delays and derails student visa processing. The timing of a cancellation may give the Opposition the win it needs to pass the quotas.

Whatever the timing and tactics capping international student numbers has not been the focus-group driven win the government may have expected. If the Senate wants amendments that Education Minister Jason Clare will wear there are 14 more sitting days in the Reps this year after October 8 and ten in the Senate. (Future Campus – 18 September)



**Libraries Shut Out Chief Scientist on Open Access by Stephen Matchett.** The university libraries lobby has rejected Chief Scientist Cathy Foley's plan for government-led research access.

Dr Foley calls for the Australian Government to negotiate with publishers to make pay-walled research free to read for all Australians. She presented her long in-development plan to an industry webinar last week.

However, the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) says this approach will 'reinforce the problematic academic publishing business models.'

'We are advocating for a broader strategy – preferably, an open science or research statement which would situate open access in the broader open science context. In the long term, this broader approach would provide open access to Australia's research for the world, not just Australia,' CAUL's Jane Angel states.

The core of Dr Foley's model is for the Commonwealth to negotiate a national deal with research publishers to make all their content free to read by all, as in every, Australian. The cost benchmark is what university and research institutes

spend now on subscriptions and publishing fees, up to \$500m.

Dr Foley argues, 'broad open access to science and research could help industry understand the latest developments. Open access can accelerate the uptake of medical methods that are more effective, more accurate and safe.' And she suggests the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme demonstrates how a single national purchaser model can work.

However, CAUL states the Chief Scientist's model 'will entrench the existing issues, which see enormous profit margins derived from free academic labour.'

'A national strategy must aim higher, adopting multiple approaches to truly advance open access. It must not be based on the principle of ensuring the sustainability of publisher business practices that are designed to advance commercial rather than community interests,' it states.

Dr Foley's model would also undo years of work by CAUL which has negotiated OA agreements with 20 plus publishers, including all the big-five for-profit houses, that make Australian created content free to read. Access charges are bundled with subscription costs paid by individual libraries.

Ms Angel says last year these deals 'facilitated' open access for 22 900 research articles, 'representing a cost avoidance for universities of over \$113m.'

CAUL also argues that these read and publish agreements, 'are not the end goal.'

'They were always intended to be an interim measure to drive the transformation of publishing models. Internationally, there is recognition that read and publish agreements are not accelerating the transformational change needed and that a broader strategy is required.'

CAUL's case is that multiple measures are necessary to end the existing commercial publishing model, including OA repositories, 'essential infrastructure for making non-traditional research outputs, including creative works and software, open access, for maintaining complete records of institutions' research outputs, and for bridging the gaps in universal open access to Australian research.'

With the library establishment opposed, it is hard to see government backing Dr



Foley's plan which has been with Industry and Science Minister Ed Husic since last year. (Future Campus – 18 September)

**WA Premier Roger Cook launched Murdoch U's 50th anniversary celebrations on Wednesday** – and made no mention of predecessor Mark McGowan's interest in a merger among the State's public universities. When Premier, Mr McGowan commissioned a review of the idea, chaired by former James Cook U VC Sandra Harding, which filed a discussion paper for 'targeted stakeholders' in May last year. But since then, crickets. (Future Campus – 20 September)

**And the prize for cost-effective opportunism goes to the Victorian Government which is 'saying no to caps and yes to international students.'** Just not very loudly; announcing \$5m to help the state' universities and TAFEs 'Take their education offering to the world.' Gosh, now why hasn't anybody thought of that before? Every university in the state has and knows it takes years to build the relationships needed to negotiate deals, which then take years more. Just ask Deakin U, which is newly the first university in the world with its own, as in owned, not-twinning, campus in India. Policy-wise, the \$5m won't go far, but it is a great way to win over education-focused voters and it won't do any harm in bolstering the enthusiasm of Indian students wavering in enrolment resolve after publicity of the Federal Government's enthusiasm for caps making waves worldwide. (Future Campus – 20 September)

**The Education empire strikes back on the accommodation impact of international students.** It isn't exactly a barrage (a fact sheet on the DoE site is not the newsiest of news) but it will give Ministers and MPs something to quote in the unlikely event of voters asking why the government wants to impose quotas on international students. While 400 local government areas have no or next to zero international student renters, there are 13 where they are 10 per cent and plus of renters, in Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide and Perth LGAs. DoE says its numbers 'suggest' there are at least 343,900 international students in the private rental market, a 'potential increase' of 180,000 since '21. (Future Campus – 20 September)

**The Senate Committee Inquiry into a Liberal Party Bill establishing an inquiry into antisemitism on campus takes evidence today.** And a big day it will be –

hearing from six Jewish and two Muslim organisations, plus groups likely to support their respective positions. There is safety in numbers for vice chancellors attending - Genevieve Bell (ANU), Attila Brungs (UNSW), Iain Martin (Deakin U), Mark Scott (Sydney) and Nicola Phillips (acting, Uni Melbourne) – they share just 45 minutes. Although Professor Bell may get more than an equal share – on Wednesday a new pro-Palestine encampment appeared at ANU, which Coalition Education Shadow Senator Sarah Henderson said made the case for her Bill. As to how who witnesses were picked – the inquiry homepage now includes, in prominent bold type, 'the hearing programme is decided by the committee. It is, therefore, a decision for the committee which witnesses are invited to appear at the hearing.' (Future Campus – 20 September)

**The learned Andrew Norton nails what the student ombudsman's Bill means for universities,** 'another major increase in higher education regulation. While the Ombudsman cannot order higher education providers to do things, negative reports will inflict reputational damage and may trigger regulatory action by other agencies.' (Future Campus – 20 September)

**There was some good news for universities worried where the next intakes of local undergraduates will come from** – the job market is looking less of an alternative to study. At least there was until Thursday. Jobs and Skills Australia reports for August a continuing gradual decline in job advertisements since the mid 2022 peak. 'Recruitment difficulty' was marginally up in August, reported by 50 % of employers who wanted to hire, but was 11 per cent lower than last year and 25 % down on July 2022. But on Friday the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate last month was steady at 4.2 % and the participation rate remained at a record high, 67%. 'There are still large numbers of people entering the labour force and finding work, as employers continue to look to fill a more than usual number of job vacancies,' the ABS announced. (Future Campus – 20 September)

**Australia has a new defence science strategy, ('accelerating asymmetric advantage delivering more together').** It includes defence research centres, 'to deliver next generation capabilities for the Australian warfighter.' They will each be based at a single university with a hub and spokes model involving government,

industry and other research organisations. As to budgets, who knows, but Defence makes it clear that this will be no ballistic gravy missile. 'Each DRC will also explore the potential to deliver dual-use outcomes for sectors beyond Defence as a mechanism to support their sustainability.' They will have five year first lives, with extensions considered in the fourth. Which leads FC to wonder, whatever happened to the previous government's Defence Cooperative Research Centres? These new ones sound a bit like them. (Future Campus – 20 September)

**Just in at the Forlorn Hopes desk, news that 40 HE quality agencies around the world have called on social media providers to stop advertising academic cheating services.** The Global Academic Integrity Network wants them 'to join the fight against academic dishonesty' and 'significantly reduce the visibility and impact of contract cheating services.' (Future Campus – 20 September)

**The Queensland Government is funding CSIRO** to run a programme for SMEs to develop partnerships with regional universities. Eligible industry categories include, manufacturing, robotics, energy and lest anyone miss out with an election imminent, 'other.' (Future Campus – 20 September)

**Should Work-Integrated Learning be its Own Discipline by Rachael Hains-Wesson, Patricia Lucas, Dino Willox and Anna Richards.** In recent years, the term Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) has gained significant traction in educational circles, including whether it should be recognized as a new discipline or not. Arguing for the recognition of a new discipline requires a strategic approach emphasizing the discipline's distinctiveness, relevance, and potential contributions to academia, and society.

It requires one to prove the discipline's uniqueness with clear boundaries and interdisciplinary gaps the new discipline can help meet. The argument needs to highlight emerging needs and practical impact, citing scholarly work, case studies and pilot programs while engaging in discourse, workshops, and conferences.

Further, proposing curriculum developments such as creating new courses focused solely on the practical, theoretical and relationships within the new discipline. Identify potential funding and resourcing to support growth and sustainability via a distinct focus and methodology while justifying its position





and why, is also key (Abbott, 2001) to being recognized as a new discipline.

We believe WIL is a new discipline because at its core it bridges the gap between theoretical learning and practical application while encompassing a variety of educational activities integrating academic studies with practical workplace experiences. These activities include internships, co-operative education, fieldwork, practicums, clinical placements and industry projects. WIL's goal is to purposely provide students with real-world experience to complement, augment and/or integrate their academic learning, enhancing their skills, knowledge, and employability. From a pedagogical standpoint, WIL can represent an innovative teaching method designed to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. (Future Campus – 20 September)



**Caps Hit Big Unis Harder by Stephen Matchett.** The Government has upped the pressure on universities complaining about quotas, by meeting a Senate demand for data, including this year's new overseas student commencements.

The information shows spectacular growth at some of the most vocal quota critics. And it signalled to the Opposition that if Coalition Senators vote against quotas, Ministers will blame them for housing shortages, with the release of a Department of Education report making a case for international student pressure on capital city rental markets.

With the Parliamentary year running short, the Government is tight for time to pass the quotas bill as is, or negotiate amendments with the Opposition. And with a handful of months before Semester 1 begins, it risks chaos and accusations of mishandling if it does not achieve a solution rapidly.

However, the release of this year's commencements also gives some Group of Eight institutions ammunition to argue that the Government is capriciously cutting core funding.

The Government presented proposed 2025 enrolments in comparison to 2023 numbers when it released quotas, but information on the increase in starts last year signals a harder hit for some.

The planned 2025 quota for the University of Melbourne is 9,300, down from 10,000 in 2023. However, the cut is deeper than that. On the Department of Education estimate, there are 11,800 starters at Uni Melbourne this year. UNSW is allowed 9,500 for 2025, significantly down on 11,000 in 2023 and way worse on this year's 17,300 starts. Similarly, the University of Sydney quota for 2025 is 11,900, a trim on nearly 12,800 in 2023 but a slash of this year's 17,250.

Across other areas of the public system, the losses are generally less severe and there are enough wins and neutral results to ensure the sector will not unite in a universal campaign against the cuts. If the big losers complain, the government will respond by pointing to the rapid increase in enrolments this year as demonstrating some universities are growing rich without regard to the community.

Education Minister Jason Clare argues he is helping international education, by acting to 'protect the integrity of this system and its social licence to operate.' And on Friday, he kept at Deputy Opposition Leader Sussan Ley on Channel Seven's Sunrise program to state whether the Coalition would back the caps or not.

'We are working through that. It's important to do that. It's important to do that in a consultative way. Let's see where it lands. Right now, we've got data that tells us these migration numbers are way too high,' she responded.

But if the quotas Bill doesn't pass, Mr Clare makes it plain that hated Ministerial Direction 107 – which leads to officials continuing slow and capricious in deciding on student visa applications – will stay.

And he will keep making a case for cuts, regardless of the impact on the sector or international students. As he reiterated in letters to Vice-Chancellors over recent months, the Government is committed to reducing migrant numbers, and 'a part of returning to pre-pandemic migration levels is reducing the number of international students that come to Australia.' (Future Campus – 23 September)



**Discipline-Specific Tutors Improve Student Outcomes by Tim Winkler.** Tutors with expertise in disciplines that

students study are critical to improving student support in Australian universities, according to a new study.

One-on-one draft assessment feedback to students provided using 'a pedagogy of kindness' was critical to transforming learning outcomes, according to a [paper](#) by Sarah Teakel, Kelly Linden and Debbie Clatworthy from Charles Sturt University.

The team assessed the results of embedding tutors in 24 first-year units and proactively discussed assessments with students. Of the 704 drafts reviewed, 51 students needed guidance on academic integrity and at-risk students who met with a tutor were 10% more likely to pass their subject and achieve a higher than average mark.

Tutors were trained in the pedagogy of kindness, which involves showing concern, compassion and empathy when raising academic misconduct issues. (Future Campus – 23 September)



**What 2023 Statistics Reveal by Stephen Matchett.** Undergrad starts at all HE institutions were up in 2023, according to new stats released by the Commonwealth Government – a rise of 4.3% to 378,000.

Blokes were back; up nearly 15% in enrolments compared to 2022; although there are still way more women, making up 56%. But total undergrad numbers dropped 1% – to 1.39m.

The news is not great for beginners: enabling courses were down 8.3%; or for big finishers: research PG starts declined by 0.2%, to 13,900 – all students was also down 0.9%.

But there is growth in new products: new non award/micro-credential starts were up 34%, just off a less low than subterranean base, to 14,750.

New UGs are keen on campus: internal-attendance starts were up 21%, to 58%. Veterans were also keen to get back: all student internal numbers were up 10%.

There's a way to go for First Nations numbers: commencers grew nearly 5%, but that was to just 10,000. Overall enrolments were effectively unchanged, at 2.2% of total students.

Jason Clare won't be encouraged: low SES starters were unchanged at 64,000.



Total low SES students went back 2% to 162,000.

And yes there were more internationals: overseas students in Australia were up 25 per cent to 409,000. A bunch will be around for a while: there were 50% more commencing internationals than in 2022.

It seems some students got the Coalition's JRG message on fees: Local 'Society and Culture' commencers were down 6% at public universities and management starts fell 4%.

But others got one the LNP did not send: Australian students starting education degrees were 4.6% down and there were only 3% more first-years in health. Natural and physical sciences starts fell 7%.

The people's choice: public universities with 20%+ commencing enrolment increases include, Swinburne U (27%), UTS (22%), Uni Wollongong (25%), Victoria U (23%). (Future Campus – 23 September)

**Students with Disability in Australian Higher Education: An Overview.** ACSES are pleased to announce the release of the first report in our new ACSES Data Insights Series—'[Students with Disability in Australian Higher Education: An Overview](#)'. This comprehensive report examines the experiences of students with disability across the sector, revealing that in 2022, 11.6% of undergraduate students reported having a disability.

These numbers vary across institutions, ranging from 5.2% to 20.3%. Of those who disclosed a disability, 47% reported mental health conditions, 27.3% cited medical conditions, and 18.2% identified other forms of disability.

In addition, the [2023 higher education equity statistics](#) from the Department of Education have now been released, which, for the first time, include cohort completion rates for students with disability. This development marks an important step in understanding and addressing equity within higher education. (ACSES – 24 September)



**[The Case for Cheaper Arts Degrees by Stephen Matchett](#)**. A new case pushing for an end to the high cost of humanities courses has been put forward by the

Innovative Research Universities (IRU) lobby group.

After setting out how a government could cancel price discrimination in 2022, the IRU is doing it again, with a new paper on what an end to the \$50,000 arts degree would cost and why other students should pay the same while arts pay less.

In the paper, the IRU proposes:

- A cut in course costs for students in HASS, law and business by abolishing the present top band (\$16,000 HECS a year) and reducing what they pay to the now second level (\$13,000/yr). However, the IRU also mentions that leaving law and business paying top whack would reduce the cost to government by \$445m overall. Plus, increasing payments by students in JRG national priority fields from the lowest of the present four bands to the one above 'would more than offset the cost to government of helping HASS.'
- An increase government funding for STEM courses, to help offset the reduction in the government contribution under the Job Ready Graduates (JRG) pricing formula.

The IRU proposes phasing in funding changes, presumably to mollify the mood of the Treasurer. Changing payments in one go would add 25% to the present \$6.59bn the government now kicks in to Commonwealth Supported Places.

The lobby presents its arguments as enacting the Accord, however the case includes special pleading for the HASS community.

The IRU argues the Accord calls for student contributions 'aligned' with lifelong earnings. 'There is no credible evidence to suggest humanities and related fields should be in the top-charging band.'

And it says JRG is socially regressive, 'disproportionately increasing the costs of education for Low SES, female and Indigenous students, due to the course choices they make,' presumably referring to the preferences for humanities courses amongst each group.

Plus, there is a message that will appeal to the HASS establishment: 'a \$50,000 debt for a three-year Arts degree is negatively impacting the public perception of the cost and value of university degrees, particularly for the

debt-averse and disadvantaged cohorts required to meet the Accord targets.'

As to paying for it, IRU states that this update on previous work has no student worse off, with the costs borne by the Feds. (Future Campus – 25 September)



**[Probe into Decline in Foot Fans by Tim Winkler](#)**. Podiatry enrolments have plummeted by 17.3% since 2015 in Australia and New Zealand, threatening the sustainability of the profession.

In response, Michelle Kaminski and fellow podiatry academics from nine Australian and one NZ university banded together to ask 278 podiatry and 553 non-podiatry students why they did or did not want to devote themselves to a lifetime of foot healthcare.

The results, published in a [new paper](#), are quite interesting, in particular because none of the 13 authors are from a marketing department, and are wading in to see what can be done to solve the problem, presumably in lieu of professional staff at their respective institutions.

The paper found that students chose podiatry not because they were interested in feet or feet care per se, but they wanted a health-related career, to make a difference to the lives and health of others and an opportunity to care for others of different backgrounds and age groups. So far, sounds like every other health course.

So, what were the barriers to choosing podiatry? 28% of podiatry students said issues included awareness of the profession, negative perceptions of podiatrists, awareness of career pathways, job prospects and earning potential.

The student concluded that further work is required to reverse the negative stereotypes faced by the profession and build knowledge of the profession's scope of practice, job prospects and earning potential.

The paper also found that Podiatry was often a backup plan – the course you choose when you don't get into another health profession you really want.

It will be interesting to see where this research goes. Clearly, to develop an



effective campaign, the podiatrists need to move beyond the idea that students all make up their own mind independently and commission independent research with secondary influencers, prospective students, members of the public who could be prospective students but haven't thought about it yet (the million yet to be wooed into training by the Accord) and practicing podiatrists, as well as looking at comparative market analysis, effectiveness of marketing campaigns and potential solutions beyond profession makeovers to start to build a clearer picture of the way forward. But this is a great start – asking questions and sharing outcomes is an important beginning, as long as it's not presumed to be a complete answer. (Future Campus – September)

## BIG DATA, DATA ANALYTICS, BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

### AI Adoption Changes Story by Tim

Winkler. AI has really shaken up perceptions of what a good education looks like and what course a student should choose in 2025.

Sure there are far more factors than AI involved, but because of the pace of change and the implications for cheating and conversely, for learning, AI has really accelerated course differentiation.

How many prospective students and parents will be duped shopping for an institutional brand rather than taking a hard look at course experience? My guess is that for 2025, the majority of undergraduates will still shop by institutional brand, perceived employer preferences and maximisation of ATAR spend.

Looking at the submissions to the Future Campus 2024 awards, it's immediately clear that there are profound, transformative education experiences being introduced by AI enthusiasts who are improvising and leading through their own passion and initiative.

A small bunch of teaching pioneers are offering innovative learning methods, a complete re-think of assessment – essentially a reimagination of their course – but it is also painfully obvious that the majority of courses haven't changed. Sure there is some fiddling around the edges, institutional initiatives to dip a collective toe in the water, but the education experience is really not that different to

when chalk and dusters were key tools of trade for lecturers several decades ago.

University brand managers aren't geared for this. We sell the institution as a whole, and individual courses when they need the support. But how do you sell an AI-resuscitated program in say business when you know your economics delivery is crusty and unchanged – and far more vulnerable to AI cheats? Promoting innovation in one will draw attention to the inadequacies of the other, potentially.

In the past, this hasn't been a problem because students don't buy pedagogy, or QILT scores or assessment security. But employers, many of whom are already experimenting with AI far more quickly than the sector, will start to ask which grads really know their stuff and which have just been trained to regurgitate a range of content less efficiently and slower than tools like ChatGPT.

This is not a case of man/woman vs machine, but rather graduate trained to use their human strengths alongside the machine vs graduate trained with capabilities that can already be delivered better by machines.

AI adoption across the HE sector is slow, but offers a range of brand advantages – and a new narrative that could cut through to value-conscious parents and students anxious about what jobs await graduates in a few years' time.

This year's AI awards are a start of that – recognising excellence in AI and working with researchers to build a narrative about what great innovation looks like, and what it means. We will be showcasing shortlisted applicants over the next few weeks to give you a taste of some of the great work that is underway right now. (Future Campus – 21 August)

### **Universities made a big contribution to the House of Reqs committee inquiry into AI in education**

– it shows in the report, tabled this week. While the emphasis was on schools, HE specific recommendations include,

- the national government 'encourage consistent guidance and uptake of GenAI, in higher ed by updating the HE threshold standards and recognising TEQSA's 'leadership role and effort'
- universities and TAFEs 'embed GenAI competencies and skills across all courses and degrees'
- 'universities provide pre-service teachers with training in AI literacy in

their degrees, including built-in industry-practice'

- providers work with TEQSA to create research and academic integrity standards for AI
- the feds fund research and development on applying GenAI in education plus create a CRC-style Centre for Digital Educational Excellence, to be a thought-leader across all education. (Future Campus – 13 September)

**Google is trialling Illuminate – audio clips abstracting research papers, created and voiced by AI.** Explaining actually, Illuminate translates article text into conversational English. The format is an interview with a generic American-accent bot-bloke asking a woman-voice to report what's in a paper - likely making plain what the original text written in academic language doesn't. Good for researchers without time to read everything they need to, although citing article content on the basis of Illuminate would be another issue. Great for social media comms people who want to expand research-promotion content, especially if Illuminate improves and they can create their own AI identities to do the interviewing and build their own platforms. And brilliant for journal publishers who could add an AI interview to the increased cost of an article processing charge. (Future Campus – 21 August)

### The Employability Paradox: Australian Universities in the AI Era by Alejandra Gaitan Barrera and Govand Khalid Azeez

While enhancing graduates' employment prospects is undoubtedly a significant contribution of higher education to society, Australian universities should exercise caution. There are risks associated with overemphasising job-placement, graduate earnings, the 'graduate premium', and the notion of 'career-readiness' as core tenets and measures of the value of educational pursuit and attainment.

Historically, higher education institutions have served as powerful engines of social mobility, particularly in the wake of the First and Second Industrial Revolutions. As such, enabled by government schemes, universities have long embodied an ambitious 'equality of opportunity' ethos through their educational agendas.

*The Employability Paradox*



In the fiercely competitive pursuit of the highest employability rate, Australian universities have tailored their programs to industry demands, often inviting industry partners to ideate, co-design, co-develop, and co-deliver new market-driven educational offerings.

It is at this juncture that the core of the employability paradox emerges: what does it mean for university curricula to be 'market-driven' or 'industry-focused' when industries themselves are grappling with unprecedented uncertainty in the face of seismic economic shifts and market upheaval? Or, importantly, when their aims are in juxtaposition to the core mission of universities and the communities they serve?

Even if universities could produce graduates with the exact skillsets required by industry today, there is no guarantee that these jobs will not be offshored later. Automation in the 4IR has accelerated the mobility of work, allowing companies to shift operations globally with unprecedented ease.

The scale of the impending disruption is staggering. In 2024, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), predicted that almost 40% of global employment is exposed to Artificial Intelligence (AI). In industrialised economies like Australia, the impact is expected to be even more pronounced due to the prevalence of knowledge-based labour and cognitive-oriented tasks, with an estimated 60% of jobs deemed vulnerable to AI disruption. Looking ahead, McKinsey predicts GenAI could rapidly become ubiquitous in Australia, with the potential to automate 62% of tasks today and a staggering 79% by 2030, assuming full realisation of its potential.

This rapid transformation of skills demand in Australia presents unprecedented challenges to industry—challenges which they openly acknowledge. PwC's 2024 AI Jobs Barometer reports that 69% of CEOs anticipate that GenAI will require most of their workforce to develop new skills, underscoring a dramatic shift where many of the fastest-growing jobs were scarcely imaginable just a decade ago. This acknowledgment from industry leaders highlights the paradox facing Australian universities: the constant pressure to align and re-align their curricula and operations with industry needs and gaps that are, paradoxically themselves, in perpetual flux.

We argue this synchronic approach—attempting to match educational offerings with what industry deems valuable and relevant at any given moment—reveals the inherent tension and contradiction between higher education's intensified pursuit of employment outcomes and the evolving demands of an increasingly unpredictable and volatile job market. (Future Campus – 16 September)



**Long-time AI Group training policy expert Megan Lilly calls on the Commonwealth to renovate the Australian Qualifications Framework,** rather than just tack new bits on, such as proposed new voced qualification and 'uni ready' courses. As it stands, she argues, the AQF, 'takes an hierarchical approach, placing skills below knowledge, in a linear ladder-like structure. 'The reality is that skills and knowledge are intertwined, with all jobs requiring both, but in different combinations.' To act on this she calls on the national government to 'get serious' about implementing the 2019 review of the AQF by the late Peter Noonan and colleagues. She might be able to encourage action. Ms Lilly has just moved from AIG to become a deputy commissioner at Jobs and Skills Australia. Her boss, Barney Glover wants to 'rebalance' tertiary education, 'because skills are the lingua franca of prospective employers.' (Future Campus – 20 September)

## REPORTS AND RESOURCES

**[The Role of Connectivity and Belonging in Student Success.](#)** Paul Shepherd | Interim Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrolment Management, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Students tend to do better and persist with their education when they feel connected to their school, so institutions must harness student feedback to foster a sense of belonging and connectivity on and off campus. (The EvoLLLution – 12 August)

**[The Power of a Student-Centric Model in Higher Ed](#)** by Tonya Perry Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Miles College. A big part of offering a student-centric model is giving learners opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning that teaches them practical,

actionable skills they can use today. (The EvoLLLution – 19 August)

**[Prior academic achievement influences ATAR success.](#)** A new report released today by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) explores the relationship between National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), receiving an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR), and achieving a high ATAR (90 or above).

Is the die cast? Investigating the relationship between prior academic achievement and tertiary entrance performance found the combination of a student's socioeconomic status and their NAPLAN scores was the strongest predictor of achieving an ATAR. As their NAPLAN scores increased, individuals from a high socioeconomic background were almost one and a half times more likely to receive an ATAR than individuals from a low socioeconomic background with the same increase in their NAPLAN score.

Just two characteristics were found to contribute towards a student's likelihood of achieving a high ATAR: prior academic achievement, as measured by Year 9 NAPLAN scores, and being female. Students with higher NAPLAN scores were almost twice as likely to achieve an ATAR score of 90 or above; and females were also almost twice as likely as males to achieve ATAR scores of 90 or above.

The research also found about 13% of the variation in a student's tertiary entrance score was attributable to the school they attended. This supports previous research that shows schools play a relatively small role in influencing tertiary entrance performance when compared with the individual characteristics of the student.

### *Background:*

This study uses integrated data from the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth (LSAY), NAPLAN and MySchool to consider the contextual factors that affect a student's academic trajectory. The study aims to better understand the association between students' early academic performance at school and their schooling outcomes using ATAR scores as a measure of tertiary entrance performance while accounting for a range of factors, such as a student's individual characteristics, their socioeconomic status and the school attended. (NCVER – 20 August)





### **Enhancing Retention Through Effective Orientation**

by Gregory Wilcott, Associate Vice President of Student Success, San Jose State University. Orientation programs have become more than just a one-day introduction. It's critical to keep students engaged and retained for their whole journey. (The EvoLLLution – 3 September)

### **More Students in Vocational Education and Training in 2023**

The latest NCVER report shows 5.1 million students undertook nationally recognised vocational education and training (VET) in 2023, a 10.8% increase from 2022.

Report highlights:

- Most students (3.5 million) studied stand-alone subjects, over 2.1 million studied full qualifications, and 230 000 studied short courses
- Stand-alone subjects accounted for most of the growth in student numbers in 2023 and increased by 14.0% from 2022 and 46.6% from 2020
- The number of students studying full qualifications increased by 6.7% from 2022
- The most popular qualifications for domestic government-funded students were in early childhood education and care, and individual support.



### **Navigating Enrolment Trends and Student Engagement in Higher Ed**

by Gary Brown, Vice President of Student Success, Well-being and Belonging, Hollins University. Amid growing competition and changing student demographics, institutions must prioritize creating environments that promote a sense of belonging and accessibility. (The EvoLLLution – 9 September)

### **Completion and attrition rates for apprentices and trainees 2023**

The latest NCVER report shows overall completion rates for apprentices and trainees decreased in 2023. As reported in Completion and attrition rates for apprentices and trainees 2023, individual completion rates for apprentices and trainees who commenced training in 2019

decreased by 1.0 percentage point to 54.8%, when compared with those who commenced in 2018. Individual trade completion rates increased by 0.7 percentage points to 54.1%. Electrotechnology and Telecommunications Trade Workers had the highest individual completion rate for trade occupations (61.8%), followed by Automotive and Engineering Trades Workers (57.6%) and ICT and Science Technicians (55.3%). Individual non-trade completion rates declined by 2.5 percentage points to 55.7%. The highest individual completion rate for non-trade occupations was seen in Managers (64.9%), Sales Workers (57.2%) and Clerical and Administrative Workers (56.7%). (NCVER – 12 September)

**Updated Interactive Data Tool.** ACSES have updated their [Interactive Data Tool](#) with 2022 data, now including data on students who are First in Family. We have also introduced aggregated groupings 'All Equity Students' and 'Non-Equity Students', which encompass the five major groupings of Low SES Students, First Nations Australian Students, Students from Remote and Regional Australia, and Students with Disability. Please note that we are awaiting confirmation of the 2022 Low SES student data, therefore, these data are not yet shown (this also affects the equity and non-equity groupings). (ACSES – 24 September)

**Student Equity Data Guides.** ACSES have also released two Student Equity Data Guides - '[Higher Education Institutions in Australia](#)' and '[Defining Equity Groups](#)'. We hope these guides, and the next to follow ('Equity Performance Measures' and 'Selecting and Using Equity Reference Values') can help demystify equity data and provide clarity and practical guidance for stakeholders across the sector. You can find the Student Equity Data Guides and other upcoming data related resources in the [Data Resources Hub](#) on our website. (ACSES – 24 September)

## **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.

### **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 Knaflic, author of 'Storytelling with You'**

Transform data into unforgettable stories with Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic, 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>

### **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](#).

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **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.

### **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](#).





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## ON THE MOVE

### Courtesy of Future Campus

Stephen Weller is incoming COO at QIMR Berghofer MRI. He finished an 11-year term as Australian Catholic U Chief Operating Officer in March.

Eric Knight has been appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People and Operations) at Macquarie University. He moves from a highly successful stint as Executive Dean of Macquarie Business School, where he doubled research income in four years.

Nina Fotinatos becomes Deputy PVC Learning and Teaching at Federation U. She was previously dean of learning and teaching at the university and advisor to the VC.

Janet Yeo becomes policy director at the Australian Technology Network she joins from Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research.

Just in at the 'Who would have thought it!' desk. NDIS Minister Bill Shorten will leave parliament in February, to become vice chancellor of the University of Canberra. After the \$44bn NDIS budget, his first culture shock will be realising the university's \$400m or so income is not a rounding error. But at least there will be familiar faces to explain things. The university's chancellor is Lisa Paul, co-chair of the NDIS Review.

Bill Shorten is named incoming Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canberra, to commence 'at the start of the academic year' in 2025.

In January Rebecca Hazell will become PVC Advancement and Alumni at UTS. She will move from ED Advancement at Uni Newcastle.

Patrick Woods becomes Australian Catholic U COO. He moves from chief operating officer at TAFE NSW.

Charles Darwin U is in the market for a new chancellor. Incumbent Paul Henderson will step down in March.

UTS creates two new PVC roles. Rebecca Hazell relocates from Uni Newcastle to take on advancement and alumni. Michael Blumenstein moves up from UTS deputy dean in engineering to become PVC for business creation and major facilities.

The NSW and ACT Universities Admission Centre are short an MD. David Christie steps down October 1.

Kim Paino will again be Acting Managing Director of UAC from 1 October, following the departure of David Christie.

## POSITIONS VACANT

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## 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.



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