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# Draft Caption Notes by Bradley Reporting and SLC Victoria

SPEAKER: We will make a start. Thank you for those people who have joined us. I suppose just a number of things to remember is that, yes, if you could actually ‑‑ now we have you all on here and worked out your microphones, if possible if people could actually mute their microphones, just because it stops any unusual sounds coming through, because the reality is if you hit a bangle on the desk or so forth we will hear that. So on the top of the page you will see a microphone that's green, if you click on that, that will mute you. If at times we want to give you an opportunity to ask questions of our speaker, you can then unmute that microphone and we can then take your questions from the floor. The other option is also you can actually click the little person with their hand there. That's a good way for us to know you are wanting to ask a question and be able to alert the presenters. So if people are happy to mute their microphone. Also for those other people ‑‑ especially new people who have entered the room and you have issues ‑‑ you could actually type questions down in the chat pod there. So please feel free to ask any questions if you have any issues. So Kylie, I don't know just before we make a start too, there are a couple of people on who I don't know if they are hearing us. I don't know if you can actually ‑‑ that's okay. I'm just making sure everyone can hear us. Linda can hear us. I would like to welcome Jackie Weinman from Curtin University, who is presenting to us today on learning access plans, what we are planning. We do have the expectation of having Merrin McCracken at some stage. Merrin has had computer issues and we hope to have her join us very soon. This is just a trial for amount DSET to trial the use of ‑‑ A document SET to trial the use of webinar technology and more importantly to trial the use of the captioning pod. Just in trying to meet the accessibility needs of all people and all learners, we are working Bradley Reporting to provide us with the captioning pod, you can see at the side here today. All right, so we might make a start. Over to you, Jackie. Thanks.

SPEAKER: Thanks, Darlene. Can you hear me okay. Merrin has just joined as a participant.

SPEAKER: Kylie, can you move her?

JACKIE: We might want to check if she is online. I will make a start any way.

SPEAKER: You make a start. I will talk to her.

JACKIE: So, yes, hi, I'm Jackie Weinman, a disability adviser at Curtin. We're piloting a new way of sharing information across our sector using webinars. We're going to share with you a presentation we have done previously ‑‑ we have done about the Pathways 11 Conference and the AM ZA Conference last year in Wellington New Zealand. Based on a survey we did at the end of 2012 about learning access plans. I guess we had the idea of starting this because I sent a query to the US TED list about learning access plans and asking questions about what people did and how they managed them. Merrin contacted me and we kind of got in touch and thought it would be a great idea to do a survey of our sector. So we're both ATTEND members so we did it under that banner. We were delighted to have so many responses to that.

SPEAKER: Sorry.

JACKIE: And people shared a lot of information with us, and a lot of interest in the outcomes. We started thinking about developing a best practice guide. But having seen the results, it was really hard to make clear recommendations about what works best. So it's more like, you know, what we're doing now is sharing ideas to make use of in our own practice. Today we're going to share the results of our survey and also reflect on how they resonate with our experiences at Deakin and Curtin. Deakin is where Merrin works.

MERRIN: Hello, Jackie, I'm here now.

JACKIE: Would you like to take over? We welcome comments from you too! And I guess you could put your hand up if you want to ask a question. Or type a question, is that right, Darlene? Hello?

SPEAKER: People can type questions down the bottom as well. Sorry, Merrin, I don't know if you and Jackie, who wants to take control of the power point but you will see the next button there.

SPEAKER: And Jackie, I'm suggesting that for our respective parts we take our own respective control, if that makes sense. Thank you to all of our audience forbearing with us as we learn ‑‑ for bearing with us as we learn the new technology.

JACKIE: Is there anything you wanted to add, Merrin?

SPEAKER: Thank you, terrific.

JACKIE: So just moving on to the next PowerPoint ‑‑ we had, in terms of respondents ‑‑ we had mostly disability officers and advisers, 32 of them. 14 managers and three other people. And mostly from universities. With 12 TAFEs and four that were universities and TAFEs. The vast majority were using learning act test plans or the equivalent ‑‑ access plans or the equivalent in their organisation. Then we asked what they're called. We got a real variety of responses. The most popular was Learning Access Plan but that was only 6 out of the 32. Here are some examples of some of the other feedback we got. There were also things such as learning and assessment plans. Academic Integration Plans, Excavated Management Plans, Individual Education Plans. We were hearing the same words all over again so I created this to show which words were the most commonly used. It looks like "learning access plan" is the most popular. So then we asked people if they weren't using learning access plans, why weren't they using them. It's really hard to know what is behind some of these comments. But some of the comments we got were "system problems", different adjustments require different arrangements. So maybe it was difficult to have a one‑size‑fits‑all plan. It may not be in line with the philosophy of trying to embed processes into the mainstream. So we also had a comment that one organisation had stopped using the plans because they believed ‑‑ because the students didn't use them so it didn't make sense to have one for students with a disability. So we got some feedback, I guess that was only from the institutions that didn't use them. So we did ask what the alternative was. And again, difficult to interpret, but we got some feedback, they had a different process and they use a process for alternative arrangement. And also that reasonable adjustments are negotiated individually depending on the type of adjustment and complexity. I must say based on the Curtin experience, that's exactly why we moved to the access plans. Because it was just way too time consuming and difficult to negotiate each adjustment individually. (pause) Which links to the next slide, which was why did they do it, why did they implement it? Some of the feedback being ‑‑ everyone else is doing it. And certainly in my experience people who studied at other institutions are coming to see us and expecting we would provide them with a similar documentment people use them to streamline ‑‑ document. People use them to streamline and increase efficiency, to increase student independence. Because they are more timely, encourage collaboration. More consistency. Less need for contact with the disability liaison office. And also provide education to academic staff and others. I guess, you know, that can depend a lot on what information you put in them. And how much you can actually include in a plan to not make it unwieldy. But, Merrin, from your perspective, what were the reasons you started using them at Deakin?

MERRIN: Look, people may remember Tony Payne, who was in the sector in Australia here for quite a while and particularly at UTAS. The reason we did it was "tony said so" but we were also responding to quite a lot of requests from faculties saying they were feeling they needed more information about students in their classes and it would be useful for them to have that. What they were initially suggesting were lists and we felt that lists were not appropriate, but that where there was documentation that gave the information on reasonable adjustments, that that was appropriate.

JACKIE: Okay. Are there any comments or questions at this point before we move on?

SPEAKER: Darlene here. I was interested that no‑one actually brought up legal requirements. I thought there was some way that actually gives evidence of what the support you are actually offering. But I thought that would be of benefit to TAFEs and universities as well.

SPEAKER: We didn't really ask about it in our survey, did we?

SPEAKER: It's interesting it wasn't a rationale. These were open answers. So people ‑‑ so what we have got here is a summary of the sorts of answers that people gave. You are right, Darlene; it is interesting ‑‑ it obviously didn't come up as one of the strong answers. In another spot and in fact in our next slide, we will start to share what some of the information in learning access plans was and there were some comments about legal obligations then. (pause) I have moved on.

SPEAKER: Over to you, Merrin.

MERRIN: Thank you, Jackie. This is a very cluttered slide. I'm very sorry to put it to you in such small print. But in particular this looked at some of the details around some of the answers to the question: What information do learning access plans contain. The first three here are in relation to disclosure. We will come back and talk about them in a minute. From then on there is information about reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning. Reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning, 92 per cent included it. We did wonder what the 8 per cent ‑‑ how the 8 per cent didn't have it. Reasonable adjustments to assessment, 97 per cent. Disability officer contact details ‑‑ 86 per cent. Reasonable adjustments to placement and work integrated learning, 78 per cent. Timeframes ‑‑ referrals to other services. The legal obligations of staff. Which picks up on your comment there, Darlene. 49 per cent made note of that in their learning access plans. Others talked about inherent requirement and information, a small number there, around 22 ‑‑ 22 per cent. We won't go into inherent requirements today ‑‑ that's a whole other paper. This was a pick list that we gave them. So it left this one large at the end here of "all other responses". If we explore a little bit more about what else learning access plans contained, they also contained student complaint procedures or links to them. Student goals. Indigenous heritage. Scholarship information. Student responsibilities. And that's a really interesting one. And detail there ‑‑ and sharing there on what people are putting for their student responsibilities ‑‑ I think that would be something to explore more. Medical or emergency evacuation plans were often part of the plan, and teaching strategies for particular disabilities. One of the things that people found most interesting about the survey ‑‑ and we had lots of feedback at this section ‑‑ was that people would say, "Oh, no, we don't include that but we will now. It was really nice to see the sorts of options that other people were including in plans."

JACKIE: I think it also raises an interesting point that the idea is being adopted by other equity target groups like ‑‑ to communicate maybe particular needs. And whether that needs to be separated from disability or ‑‑ or whether it can all be linked together in one plan, things like Indigenous her at this stage ‑‑ heritage and scholar ships and that kind of thing.

MERRIN: Thanks, Jackie. The other area we will look into more is the first three questions here which related to do your learning access plans require disclosure or information about the student or optional disclosure or no disclosure. The breakdown for that was ‑‑ and I know it doesn't add up to 100 per cent because we have a bit of duplication here between particularly required broad category and option further information. But 57 per cent of respondents had optional disclosure. So where it was up to the student to make a decision about what they disclosed. 30 per cent required some broad category disclosure. So usually those categories that are used for our reporting to the Department of Education. And 24 per cent had no disclosure and no expectation of disclosure. Again, I think it's an interesting area. I know for us we take the optional disclosure route and we talk it through with students and the pros and cons of what they may wish to disclose in terms of their disability and of course the impacts. Sometimes we just include the impacts. And the response from some staff was to say that, you know, impacts such as poor concentration or difficulty with memory or fatigue ‑‑ they didn't feel was enough information. We had one much loved associate Dean in teaching and learning who has since left Deakin who looked at me and said, "That sounds like me, it's not enough information ." And others are feeling confused sometimes by the mixture of information that is involved in a learning access plan, where some people will give a lot more disclosure and others not. So there is many a time when I thought we might have been better to go down the "absolutely no disclosure path". Jackie, what is the story for you at Curtin?

JACKIE: We do the same thing, it's optional and usually students draft a sentence with our assistance, that they are happy to put on the plan. But for all of the reasons you have described, it certainly has pros and cons. Some students don't want to disclose anything, whereas other students are quite happy to disclose. But we tend to kind of advise students to disclose only information that would be helpful for them. So for example if they have dyslexia, it's quite helpful for lecturers to know that. But if it's something that might create a problem it may be better just to talk about the impact. We also try to educate lecturers or academics that they don't need to know the diagnosis, they need to know the impact. But it does make it difficult when making recommendations for extensions and things like that whether lecturers have no real idea around what is behind the request and how to judge what a reasonable adjustment is. Although it's obviously not their role to do that. So, yeah, there is a bit of a minefield. I can see the advantages of maybe disclosing the broad category and the disadvantages too. So, yeah. A bit like ‑‑ a bit ‑‑ a bit like Deakin, what we do. It's a bit like Deakin.

SPEAKER: My guess is many of our audience would have similar experiences and similar considerations around the pros and cons. Would anyone like to make a quick comment on that? (pause) So can students receive adjustments without a learning access plan. Again a fraught area for some of us. 58 per cent said yes, students can receive adjustments without a plan. 42 per cent noted, no. Again, legal responsibilities come in here, Darlene, and a couple of our previous presentations of this there has been some discussion around the legal responsibilities, and some feeling that it really isn't meeting our legal obligations to insist there be a learning access plan. However that was the response at that time, remembering that was a couple of years ago. For those who receive adjustments without a learning access plan the plan is not required if the adjustment is a one‑off or temporary. If they only require exam arrangements, so maybe a plan is not needed to go to other areas of the university. If they are registered with the service but no reasonable adjustments are recommended ‑‑ in more complex situations a meeting with academic staff may be better than a plan and students are able to choose to negotiate directly with academics. And certainly in our case at Deakin if someone chooses not to have a learning access plan we continue to do an individualised approach from the DLO when an issue arrives. It causes issues for us, because we have, you know, so many plans out there now. I think there are around 700 learning access plans circulating at Deakin. And many staff have had students who have learning access plans now and have an expectation of them. So we find ourselves quite often needing to remind people that these are optional and that adjustments can be made without a learning access plan in place. (pause) Jackie, have you had a similar experience at Curtin.

JACKIE: Yes. We sometimes don't do learning access plans if they're not required. But we have almost made a rod for our own backs because we have a lot of people referring students to us for learning access plans because they want that in the record at school level. Where sometimes it may not be needed. But overall I think it's a positive thing because people recognise our plan and that it's a legitimate kind of document and they prefer that students have them. So, yeah, the word is getting out there. We have done probably about 1,300 of them in the three and a half years we have been using the system. So there are a lot of them out there. Yeah. I take your point. I don't know about the legal requirements. I know when they were redrafting ‑‑ somebody else might know more about this than me ‑‑ but proposing changes to the DVA, there was ‑‑ DDA, there was a mention of having a plan in place, but those changes have not really gone through. So I think ‑‑ remember when they reviewed the D DA a few years ago.

SPEAKER: The education standards.

SPEAKER: There was a requirement for people to have a plan in place. That was one of the recommendations but I don't think it's been formally adopted. So it will be interesting to see what happens in that area.

SPEAKER: Thank you for that, too. Because there is ‑‑ we have been following up with the Department of Education (This is Darlene here) With the federal government in regard to the next year, a sunset clause in regards to the disability standards in education. So, the review, the outcomes of the review and stuff, still have not been finalised. But you have reminded me because we have not raised that issue with the Department of Education around the fact that was one of the key recommendations. So I will take it on notice to actually write to them and actually asked is this a proposal. Because I think the impact for disability practitioners could be quite ‑‑ for those already doing it, it's fine. But for other universities and TAFEs around Australia the impact will be quite dramatic so we need to be starting to get some sense of what it will mean in the review in the new standards.

SPEAKER: The other aspect of that is ‑‑ our findings here ‑‑ and I know there has been more recent work on plans ‑‑ but our findings here, whilst we started thinking perhaps we will come up with a best practice plan, we find it's very hard to have one practice that will suit all institutions. The concerns about bringing it in will be around to what extent there might be standardised approaches, which may or may not work for some people. So, yeah, interesting. The next question ‑‑ and again, another area where there are very different approaches to it ‑‑ do teaching or faculty staff approve the plan? 47 per cent yes. Then sure that is teaching staff know‑‑ ensures that teaching staff know that they are required to I'm implement the plan. And 53 per cent no, the DLU has the authority to make the recommendations. So we have very different approaches. About a fifty‑fifty split. And different processes that work at different institutions. So it's really quite interesting. Here for us, Jackie and I have quite a different approach at Deakin ‑‑ we are approving ‑‑ plans are being approved by faculty teaching staff. For you, Jackie, it's still the case that they're not?

JACKIE: Yeah, they're not. Students distribute them to the relevant academic staff. The unit coordinator and any other tutors each semester for their units. With such a large organisation I cannot imagine an approval system working. That would completely hold up everything. No‑one has actually suggested it to us.

SPEAKER: Keep it that way.

JACKIE: Again there are pros and cons. But at the moment we have the authority to make the recommendations. But often we have to negotiate with academics on some of the specifics of that.

SPEAKER: We will have a look here now on question 11 at what are the pros and cons of faculty staff approving these. The advantage is if we are asked for quite complicated adjustments we would discuss that in detail P with a the lecturer before writing the access plan. Deans say they don't really know enough about disability to make it a ‑‑ make a judgment. I like it any way in case an academic is resistant to the recommendations in the access plan. Another person said it's time consuming, difficult to receive I be put and delay in confirming adjustments to the students. So, yes, there are lots of pros and cons. We now call ‑‑ instead of calling it approval we call it "faculty endorsement". We like that better than "approval" as to infers support of our recommendations. There were some dilemmas around faculties coming back to us and saying, "How are you recommending this?" So I prefer the term of "endorsement". I'm swayed by the arguments that unis have about not seeking approval, because (pause) there is ‑‑ it gives that control back to students. But the dilemma of course is also that the line management endorsement with unit chairs is a very useful thing from time to time. (pause).

JACKIE: One thing we find at Curtin ‑‑ sometimes we make recommendations, for example, for a field work ‑‑ that might be part time or between the hours of 10 and 3 if possible. And academics get quite upset that we have written that into the plan, even though we have just made a recommendation. Because it may not be possible. But students hold on to it maybe more than they should, even though we do have a statement about inherent requirements and reasonable adjustments and that seems to be the most common area where we have disputes with areas. You know, they say, oh, could you please rewrite it. So being a bit more broad about the recommendations. So that can be a bit tricky. Yeah, that's all I have to say there. (pause).

MERRIN: How do we distribute the plan? This links I think with the approval process. But you will see on this diagram that the orange section, the student is provided with the document and file to distribute as needed. The blue area the DLO distributes. The purple area, the faculty or teaching school distributes to staff. The small red area, learning access plans are recorded on a central database and distributed automatically. And a bunch of "other". It's interesting that over half are distributed in ways other than just by the student. Most of the "other", both students and faculties ‑‑ so when we looked into those, that's what they were. (pause) We have recently and continued to have robust discussions about the pros and cons of this distribution. Jackie, we started talking about this already over the last couple of slides. But there certainly are pros and cons I think about whether it is the student who is initiating the distribution of the plan. We had some concerns that the faculty distribution is limiting student independence. And sometimes puts more pressure on staff as the adjustment may not be needed in all units. So people will get learning access plans and feel there are a number of things they need to do but in fact there may not be anything they need to do; they are teaching ‑‑ their teaching approach might be inclusive already. If students distribute they can have the choice. In the end at Deakin we have decided to stick with both student distribution and distribution through faculty. We emphasise the need for students to make contact with teaching staff to trigger the adjustments. We're considering phasing out distribution students' progress or in response to particular individuals. So if we had a way of either automating or a student choosing to do it themselves in response to where they are at and in a very individualised approach I think that would be the perfect approach but we don't have the automation there. Jackie, did you want to add anything around distribution?

JACKIE: No, we have a completely student driven distribution model. It has its pros and cons. I know a lot of students don't do it or they might do it for one semester and they don't do it after that. Or they forget about it or whatever. But we don't have a system in place ‑‑ I don't think us actually distributing it to faculties would work any better because I think the system would fall down too. Also, it would be a much higher workload for us to do that for every student. Again, I think we really need systems to assist us with this. We're limited by the lack of system support.

SPEAKER: Over to you, Jackie.

JACKIE: Do your plans have a review date? 77 per cent said, yes and 23 per cent said no. Some of the comments were ‑‑ it was depending on the disability, but all are reviewed at the beginning of the academic year. Depending on the nature of the disability. And never reviewed for permanent conditions including learning disability. Certainly at Curtin when we first started off we put review dates on every plan, even if it was a permanent disability because we wanted to keep tabs on them all and make sure it was all working and build in a system where the student had to come back to us to review it. But we recently changed that to make people with ongoing disabilities that are not going to change ‑‑ we changed their plans to be valid for the duration of their course. Just because we wanted to link that also to the exam system so that their arrangements are in place for the duration of their course. There are again a couple of concerns that people might turn up in 10 years' time saying, "My plan is still valid because I'm still in the same course" and things might have changed a lot since then. But I guess in the interests of the student who just needs the extra 10 minutes or an hour for every set of exams it doesn't seem fair to make them come back and review their plan for no good reason. So that's what we have done recently. What about you, Merrin? What are you doing at the moment?

MERRIN: Yes, we're similar. We have a one trimester one year and three‑year and ongoing options. We do send annually an automated email out to all students just asking them to check their learning access plans and to get in touch with us if they are in need of review. And we're also really clear to say that they can be reviewed by request at any time by the DLO, by a faculty or by the student. I have to say that I don't think I can recall ‑‑ oh, look, I guess when things arise it is often that a plan is reviewed. And it could be any of those three areas that bring them up. That's how we're managing it.

JACKIE: It seems a good ready to add the statement that they can be reviewed ‑‑ idea to add the statement that they can be reviewed on request, because then you can review them if there are any concerns about adjustments that are recommended moving on ‑‑ what do students say about learning access plans? We got a lot of comments (pause) back in this area. Positives, they don't have to disclose their disability or repeat their story. It makes it easier to approach academic staff. That it's positive and empowering. I do find students seem quite happy when they walk away with their plan. Unfortunately when they start using it, the level of confidence might become a little eroded from the response they might get from some people. Other positives ‑‑ it's a simpler process than repeatedly applying for special consideration. That it helps them to see where they are going. So I think there are certainly a lot of benefits, which is why most of us are using them now. Some of the negatives ‑‑ many are nervous about approaching lecturers, especially with mental health conditions. They have difficulty making sure their arrangements are made for in‑class tests. This is something that we have a problem with ‑‑ academics just don't remember. They mess up and students have to prompt them all the time. And legally, I think that really puts an organisation at risk, especially if the student has advised the lecturer of their requirements at the start of the semester. So other negatives are ‑‑ academics don't always receive, understand or implement the plan. Disputes about what is reasonable. Particularly length of extensions. (pause) That is a really common one for us. And ... on the plan. We find sometimes in our health science, academics kind of get into more of a therapeutic role and want to make their own judgments on what is going to work for people. (pause) In general the health sciences staff are really great. Did you have anything? Oh, there are more. Sorry. Students sometimes don't understand they should still follow faculty processes like applying for extensions. And certainly some students think because they have handed in their plan at the beginning of semester they are automatically entitled to extensions. Any way, you can see the others. And some disturbing occasions where students are identified in front of a class. We had a situation where a hard copy was left floating around in a lecture theatre. All of those things are quite concerning. (pause).

SPEAKER: I think there are a pile of students at Deakin when we did a survey who said not much about their learning access plan, which left us a little uninformed.

JACKIE: So what did teaching staff tell us? Positives were about the messy negotiations were taken out of their hands. That it helped with negotiations. It helps set out the responsibilities of academics and they preach the information. And they have a ‑‑ appreciate the information and they have a way of knowing who is in their class and what adjustments they might need. And Merrin, did you just refer to the survey you were going to talk about?

MERRIN: Oh, yes.

JACKIE: Staff attitudes at Deakin?

MERRIN: We try to do an annual survey of students who are registered with the DRC and a couple of years ago we did one that also surveyed staff. It was after I think our first full 12 months of learning access plans that we sent to staff as well. To just ask people their experience of learning access plans. So, we plan to do it again probably next year. And have another look at learning access plans. Because while so many of us are using them, there are so many pros and cons on it. So we have a way to go to learn how we can improve what we're doing here.

JACKIE: Okay. Some of the negatives ‑‑ just going back, Merrin, that sounds like a good topic for another presentation and the conference. So some of the negative feedback from teaching staff ‑‑ we commonly hear this, they don't have the resources or staffing to accommodate students with disabilities. But that's not specifically about the plan. It's just more general. Because they are allowed an hour a semester at Curtin to spend with individual students. So when ‑‑ in their work flow model. So when you put additional expectations on them ‑‑ and I can understand their concerns. Staff wanting to be more involved in developing the plan and making sure that our recommendations are reasonable or doable. Issues arising where students don't provide them early enough. And this is an issue we face, because the legislation says that the plan has to be provided in a reasonable timeframe for the adjustment to be made. But I often find academics see the student to be playing the disability card if they produce the plan close to ‑‑ just when they need an extension or just when they need a test arrangement. I don't think that's entirely fair. Do you have that issue, Merrin or anyone else?

MERRIN: Probably not because we are distributing through the faculties. So theoretically ‑‑ theoretically ‑‑ the staff will have had access to it. Yeah.

JACKIE: This is I guess one of the cons of the student centred model, which is much more ad hoc ‑‑ student centred distribution model. They miss understand the wording and I think that concept of our recommendations versus inherent requirements and what is reasonable, it does get quite confusing for all parties. Students sort of say it's all in the plan, so it has to happen. The academics sometimes think, well, they think because it's on the plan it has to happen and we're trying to say there is room for negotiation, if this is not appropriate for your area. And staff needing more details, wanting more details about the disability. We often get that issue when people want to know more to help them make a judgment on a request. Are there any comments on that from you, Merrin?

MERRIN: Got a whole other page of negatives.

JACKIE: Okay.

MERRIN: There is another ...

JACKIE: Okay, sorry. (laughter) so more negatives ‑‑ it can be overwhelming when they have a lot of students with a plan. There is lack of information within schools on the process. Now, this is the issue we have in that, you know, there is ‑‑ like if a student provides it to a particular person there is a lack of clarity as to who that can be shared with, where it can be stored. What we really need is a system that's linked to the student system where at least there is a flag or something where this information can be kept centrally. And we do state on our plans that it can be distributed for the purpose of providing a reasonable adjustment. So that's to the relevant staff. But, again, people interpret this differently. So I think process is something we certainly have an issue with, which you might find a little bit clearer at Deakin, Merrin, with your more streamlined process, perhaps. But then the next point is Deans don't like the students distributing the plan; they feel the disability service should be doing that. I have already touched on staff taking the plan too literally. And more complex issues generally require a phone call or a meeting. I certainly would endorse that. You can't rely on the plan to do everything. Sometimes it just raises more issues than it solves if you just send it out with a lot of controversial recommendations on it. Now, is there anything more from you, Merrin, on that?

MERRIN: No, I will make the comment, though, that it is interesting we had two pages of negative and one positive for both students and staff.

JACKIE: Yes, that is interesting.

MERRIN: We asked people what was ... sorry. What was working well. And again some quotes. And just general comments from the respondents. The plans work well generally as a communication tool and a means of staff being prepared to make adjustments. They are also positive evidence that we are meeting our legislative responsibilities. It develops stronger working relationships with academics. And information ‑‑ an information sheet for students, helps them use and distribute the plan in a timely fashion. A student centred method of distribution bypasses confidentiality issues. And huge increases in student numbers can be handled more efficiently. So that's what people told us was working well. (pause) and here is what they felt could be improved. An automated process from our database sending out the plan would be wonderful. Formalising procedures around the circulation of statements to teaching staff may be helpful but I would be cautious about any automatic process for circulation that would take away students' autonomy around disclosure. Include more information on legal obligations of staff and inherent requirements. Possibly to include ideas on how a student will best learn that is what teaching approaches would assist the student. And after we have added all of those wonderful ideas ‑‑ shorter plans would be better. So you can see there is such a diverse range of ideas on learning access plans from automated to not automated, from more to less.

SPEAKER: Longer to shorter.

MERRIN: I suspect that everyone, though, would like the idea of a work flow approach, Jackie. This is the sort of model that you and others, I know, have been developing.

JACKIE: I wouldn't say we have got anywhere with developing it. But we did discuss a model like this with the student services manager. But University of Western Sydney and there are some other organisations that seem to have got something like this off the ground. I know UWS has been a customised system that they have built from scratch. Basically, what would really work well is that somehow, you know, the information is recorded and the student can access the system and then choose who to send the plan to. So it's automated, their units. And coordinators come up. The academic coordinators receive notification and then have to acknowledge it. And if it's not acknowledged, there could be some alert system so the disability adviser is advised or something. And also the system could communicate with other areas of the university apart from the academic areas as needed. I just think it would be so ‑‑ I guess legally too, having that cover and having evidence that the plan has been distributed, it's being acknowledged, it's available to people and released, it would just cover us so much more clearly than a lot of the current systems that are in place. I can comment that being on the Pathways 12 Conference organising committee, we have had a good handful of abstracts about systems for distributing learning access plans. That's fantastic. Probably in the two years between the Pathways, this is an area that has developed over this time. Because there clearly is a need for streamlining the distribution. I'm just interested, is there anyone listening who is ‑‑ has something like this working at their organisation? (pause) any hands up? No. I will take that as a no, then. Okay. So just to conclude ‑‑ so we have come to lots of diverse conclusions as Merrin said but we do know most of us are using them. We do know they work and they don't. And we love them and we hate them. And we are still learning. I guess the first bright idea was to introduce these plans, but now the next stage is actually trying to work out exactly how best to use them and how to make sure we are fulfilling all of our obligations and supporting our students in a streamlined way. Is there anything you would like to add, Merrin, at this point or Darlene? (pause).

MERRIN: Not really. Thank you for starting without me. If we have a little bit of time we're very happy to take some questions and also some comments on how the format has worked for people. (pause).

SPEAKER: It's Kylie here. There was a hand up earlier. There was a question for you.

SPEAKER: Natalie, do you want to speak or type? (pause) Has the typing stopped or started? "I just wanted to add we have had discussions this week about workload but concerns about disclosure".

SPEAKER: That's a good comment. There are lots of those struggles in other aspect of learning access plans. It's hard to decide which is the best way to go. My view is something that has a deal of flexibility around individuals, around different faculties and is not entirely set in process is the way to go but I also understand howdy that can be in terms of ‑‑ how difficult that can be in terms of time. Sometimes that is standard for everyone seems to take less time.

SPEAKER: Can I add, one thing we did discuss ‑‑ I'm not sure if I made this clear ‑‑ was that even though the plan would go into a central system, that does not mean that everybody can see it. There is another level where the student goes in and releases it to take staff. So that ‑‑ to take staff. So that ‑‑ particular. So that might provide a level of protection so it's not out there for the world to see.

SPEAKER: So any final comments from Merrin and Jackie?

SPEAKER: No.

SPEAKER: I did enjoy the "conclusions" slide. That's a great slide. Thank you for that humour. It's been a fantastic opportunity to hear about the topic and also to hear from both of you, because the fact that you both presented in New Zealand during this year and it's been fantastic to have been able to have that captured for us in the sector here in Australia. It's a topic that, yes, will continue to be discussed and especially if the government do decide to put it as a part of ‑‑ take up the recommendations that learning access plans are more formalised in future. Thank you both. I know you are both busy. But thank you for taking the time to allow us to look that the process. I would like to send out a monkey survey to those online today to get your feedback on how this worked for you. And also the presenters. Any comments before we close off? Thank you, Brandon, for your comment. Thank you, and thank you to Bradley Reporting for also doing captioning for us. This was mostly trialling how the captioning pod would go for us in this format as well. So I hope people have also found that quite good following the writing there. So on that note ‑‑ I also want to say thank you to Kylie, who has been the back end person setting this system up. It's been quite confusing but we did it. Well done, everybody. Thank you for your patience at the beginning.

SPEAKER: It will get smoother.

SPEAKER: All right. If people want to close off and we're on time.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Well done. Jackie and Merrin, we will give you a call to debrief with you.

SPEAKER: Terrific, thank you.

SPEAKER: All right, cheers, everybody. Thank you.

(webinar ends)