DARLENE MCLENNAN: Thank you for joining us today. My name is Darlene McLennan, for those who have not met me before. I'm the Manager of the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, ADCET for short. Before I do an introduction to our speaker and talk a little bit about the session, we are having this event live captioned. If you haven't used Zoom before and require captions, please click on the CC button in the tool bar that is located either at the top or bottom of your screen. We also have captions available via a browser and we will put the link now into the chat box. I want to start by acknowledging that I'm coming to you from Lutruwita, Aboriginal land, sea and waterways, and I want to acknowledge with deep respect the traditional custodians of this land on which I am, the Palawa people. I stand for a future that proudly respects and recognises Aboriginal perspectives, culture, language and history, and a continued effort to fight for Aboriginal justice and rights, paving a way for a strong future. I would also like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the various lands on which you’re working today and any Aboriginal or Torres Strait people participating in this webinar. This session, we hope to have it fairly interactive through our chat box. If you are aware of the lands on and which you are today, please add that to the chat box. And also, say hello and where you're working. It would be great to see and chat with each other to kind of get some conversation going. Our presenter today is a wonderful friend of ADCET, Brandon Taylor, Brandon has done a number of things for us and has been really supportive of our work. Brandon also spoke at our Pathways Conference which was done in partnership with the Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability and I encourage you all to look up Brandon's presentations on the ATEND website because they were wonderful, interactive and engaging presentations. Brandon is currently the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Manager for TAFE Queensland. And prior to this, he was the Student Support Manager serving the Brisbane region for TAFE Queensland. For today's session, we're looking forward to Brandon guiding us through the successful reasonable adjustments training he has delivered to educators at TAFE Queensland. Brandon also spoke at a meeting we gave for new practitioners in the sector. That's where we heard about Brandon's session around reasonable adjustment and then said could he please present on the topic, because we knew it would be a hot topic. And it was - we had 180 people register to attend or receive the webinar… receive the recording of this presentation afterwards. Sorry if I'm a bit garbled today. I’m very tired. I have had two weeks with my two-year-old granddaughter and I'm feeling my age. She has worn me out. Before we go to Brandon, I just want to provide some more housekeeping details. We are recording this session and the recording will go on ADCET in the coming days. If you have any difficulties technically, please email us at admin@adcet.edu.au. As I said, we want to make this interactive. We will be doing polls. We will be asking questions at the end of this session. If you have any questions while the session is happening, please put them into the chat pod and I will ask them at the end of the session or we can also ask people to raise their hands, turn on their video and ask questions if people are comfortable doing that, being aware that we are recording. Thank you for joining us. Thank you, Brandon, for sharing your wisdom with us today. Thank goodness you can talk, because I can't. Over to you.

BRANDON TAYLOR: Darlene, thank you very much. I really appreciate the welcome. Good afternoon, everybody. Firstly, let me acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands where I'm on today here in South Brisbane and pay my respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. Wow. 180 registrations. That's quite something, isn't it. It clearly shows what a hot topic the reasonable adjustment is. I appreciate that some of you will be well and truly across this. This resource that we will work through, and I will present today, very much came from conversations with teachers and lecturers and industry trainers that we have across TAFE Queensland. And the team that look after professional development for all of those people. We call it ‘educator capability’. I think it's important to remember that while some of us work in this space day-to-day, it's our more comfortable place in comparison to a lot of other teaching staff. Let's get under way. We will have some time for Q&A. I know some questions have been sent through. Let's see what we can cover. Some of you will be looking at this thinking about how you might want to tweak it, develop it or take it into your own organisation. We're going to start with a poll, just to — poll 1, please. Just to give me a little idea of the audience. It's a simple question. I'm interested to know: Have you delivered any training to teaching and lecturing staff at your organisation? Have you delivered any training about reasonable adjustment previously? Your options are, yes, many. Yes, but need more staff to participate. Yes, but not recently. No, but would like to. And no, have not yet planned to do so. If you could use that poll for me, please, just to quickly get an idea of our participants today. And we will let that run for a moment and just get a sense of where we are actually at. I can see the participant numbers are increasing. Guys, if you have just joined, hopefully you can see that poll giving us a sense of whether you have delivered any reasonable adjustment training recently, whether you have just started that journey or you are hoping to do so. Okay. Can I get those poll results as that currently stands? We have just over 100 people in the room now. Wow. Okay. So, we have got 35 per cent and we're just over 100 attendees. 35 per cent, no, have not delivered any training to teaching staff, but would like to do so. And also another 24 per cent, no, have not yet planned to do so. And it's 9 per cent and 11 per cent have done it recently, but would like more to engage. Wow. Okay, all right. Hopefully, this will give you something to work with. I'm always intrigued to find out a little bit more about the audience. So, here is a really important question for you. Could I have poll 2, please? Because poll 2 really gives me a little insight into you as an individual. Guys, this is absolutely critical. If you could have only one type of biscuit, what would that biscuit be? Is it a chocolate chip cookie, is it a custard cream, is it a shortbread, it is a plain rich tea, are you more of a cheese and cracker person? We have over 100 participants. I’m going to make some assumptions about my audience because when I was a teacher, we lived on biscuits between classes. I'm not going to keep you very long with this one. It's just to lighten the mood at what’s been the end of a very busy semester. Let’s jump straight in. What’s the results? Let’s have a look. Let's find out what kind of audience we've got. Wow. Nearly half of our attendees are a cheese and cracker-type person. I didn't give you an option if there was a glass of wine with that, but I’m going to assume, some of you, there will be. A quarter of our audience are chocolate chip cookie people. What I’m going to suggest to you is: get to know your audience. Because in my experience, when you are dealing with teachers, a packet of biscuits is an incredibly powerful negotiating tool. All right. Let's get straight into it, guys. So, this is the reasonable adjustment training that we delivered across TAFE Queensland - a huge amount of interest from educators, some very new to the sector and many who have actually been teaching for many, many years. Because the cohort seems to be changing. There seems to be a lot more students with support needs, a lot more disclosure and it seems to be more complex. So, we start off by simply clarifying for people that very simple definition, that a reasonable adjustment is simply a measure or an action that is taken to assist a student with disability to participate on the same basis as students without the disability. And off the back of that, very important that everybody in the organisation understands - and this does not just belong to disability practitioners and officers - that reasonable adjustment applies to the entire process. It applies to the point of inquiry about what the organisation offers, inquiry about what courses are available. So, it's prior to enrolment. From that point of inquiry, through the enrolment process, reasonable adjustment should be considered in curriculum design and it also extends to all of the other facilities and services that are available on our campuses and through our organisations. And reasonable adjustment must be based on the individual's needs and abilities. So, no assumptions to be taken. But those needs and abilities are also then balanced with the interests of all of the other stakeholders. So, we are talking about balancing the needs and interests of not just the student and their associate or support person; but the interests of the larger university or training provider, the interests and needs of staff, the delivery staff and of other learners. That's very important because that leads into an extended conversation about the context of the training program. So, the DDA, the Disability Discrimination Act, nearly 30 years old, but the underlying principles are absolutely still relevant and of course, it is still absolutely the overarching piece of legislation. Like any piece of legislation, it is incredibly lengthy, full of lots of difficult to understand paragraphs and terminology for the average staff member and student, quite frankly, who do not have the time to look at that. So, that's why we have the Disability Standards for Education which came about in 2005, so nearly 20 years old themselves. I have always found it useful to have copies of that, and there is a link in the presentation to those fact sheets that summarise nice and clearly what our obligations are as education and training providers. So, that's another resource you have got. You should have those available for staff and make sure they're on your intranets. Because it is really about making sure that those obligations are understood. Where we go from there is just to walk our educators and our trainers through some of those. The terminology in there, we will talk about RTOs - they are registered training organisations. That's a VET term, but it can apply equally in the university space. So, those standards, Disability Standards for Education, are really about ensuring that we take action to ensure that people with disability have the opportunity to equal access through our education and training opportunities. It also makes it unlawful for us to refuse permission to a course on the basis that the individual may be unlikely to gain employment because of their disability. Now, as an organisation, TAFE Queensland, employment is very strongly promoted through all of our industry training, as you would expect. But we're not the gatekeepers to industry and employment. And it's not for us to make assumptions about what may happen in the future. We would absolutely take into account what we're training the individual for, but we're not going to assume what employment opportunities there might be. So, we are obligated, all of us, no matter what your organisation is, you are absolutely obligated to make a reasonable adjustment if you know that an adjustment is required. At the same time, we need to be clear and we need to ensure that our students are clear and our educators, that reasonable adjustment - it cannot bridge a gap in that learner's capacity. It's not going to bridge a level that actually requires further study or a pathway that will lead to an end point through levels of learning. The Disability Discrimination Act does not require us as institutions and organisations to deliver services that we're not in the business of providing. A very recent example of that would be a conversation I had with a parent who is adamant that we should be providing transportation for their daughter to get to a TAFE campus. We simply had to explain: We don't provide transport for any students. That's not the nature of our business. Of course, we can give you some helpful information about your transport options and who you can talk to, but that's not for us to provide, it's not in our day-to-day operations. So one of the key questions that we wanted to work through with our staff is really about: When do you apply reasonable adjustment? At the same time -- so we’ll just clarify for our educators, because not everybody is confident in the space and not everybody is going to feel confident to ask, that you actually don’t have to apply reasonable adjustment just because a person has a disability. And it's actually only needed where it's required and where it's in the context of the education or training package. I will touch on that a little bit more shortly. Very important to understand that adjustments are not about giving advantage -- far from it. It's about giving the student the opportunity to access and to participate. It's most definitely not about changing core standards. It says very clearly that it's not about guaranteeing success. So, reasonable adjustment is absolutely about enabling the individual to take part. That leads us then to that we're not required to make unreasonable adjustments and upholding the integrity of the qualification. That absolutely has to be maintained for the benefit of all students and the benefit of the organisation and validity of the actual qualification. It's really important to give educators and lecturers examples, show them what reasonable adjustment is. Many of them will be applying reasonable adjustment in their teaching, in their delivery and in their assessment processes, but won't necessarily consider it as reasonable adjustment. It's as simple as enabling somebody to have some extra time for good reason to read through learning resources, when you the put a piece of software on a computer network or for an individual - that is a reasonable adjustment. It can be very, very straightforward. It does not have to be complicated. Now, in the VET space, in vocational education and training, and I appreciate it's a little different in the university space, we actually have standards for registered training organisations, which are quite separate to the Disability Standards for Education. And what I say to staff is, whether you are talking about the DDA, the standards for disability or standards for registered training organisations or whether you are talking about universal design or inclusive learning frameworks, if you get the basics right for reasonable adjustment, you will cover all of this. Because reasonable adjustment, quite frankly, is just part of inclusive teaching and learning practices. There is a document available on the ADCET website which is the -- it's a Queensland document, but it's called Reasonable Adjustments: A Guide for VET Practitioners. That's been a very useful document just to show people, here are the examples, this is how simple reasonable adjustment can be. It does not mean that you have to do everything for every student that's in this guide -- far from it. Keep it really simple. And again, give them examples. Show them what it actually is. Now, interestingly, you will have staff in your organisations that have actually worked there for many, many years. You may have staff that work right alongside your disability support team, and there might even be in the wider student support area, that actually don't really know what the process is for students in the organisation. And this will extend to the faculty administration staff, it will extend to all of the lecturers and teachers. Don't assume that they know. It's really important that they do understand the basic process of how students can disclose and share relevant information about a disability. Because they're going to have conversations with other people in your organisation. And those other people need to be able to answer confidently and they should know this as well. So, we actually talk all of the staff through what happens. We explain to them that at the point of enrolment, when the student is enrolling in their course and all of their units, they are actually asked the question regardless of how they enrol, face to face, over the phone, online, they are asked the question if they have a disability and whether they'd like to receive information about the services that are available. This is a really good opportunity to make it clear to the teaching staff and the wider organisation that, of course, many students do not disclose their disability at enrolment and they don't have to. It is a personal choice. They are under no obligations to share that at enrolment. There will be lots of different reasons for that. There can be a simple case that it's very personal for the student, they don't know the organisation and they don't want to share that. Maybe they just feel, "I don't want to tell anyone. I just want to give it a go and I want people to treat me as me.” Maybe they have had some very poor experiences either in high school or some other organisation and they just thought, "You know what? I'm not going to do this.” And maybe they're just not sure and they would rather not. So, as much as we encourage people to share information, there is absolutely no obligation to do so. However, the student can disclose their disability support needs at any time during their studies. If that happens to be their last term, their last week of their course, that is the decision that they make. However, you're not responsible for applying any reasonable adjustments retrospectively and nor is your organisation. So, that really sits with the individual. Then we talk staff through what happens. If the student then wants to register with the service, at TAFE Queensland, our disability support services, we call them AccessAbility services. The word "disability" as a term is throughout all of our literature, it's just the title of the service is called AccessAbility. We explain to people that what happens is the student comes in, they can sit down and have a one-to-one conversation with an experienced disability practitioner about themselves as an individual. And that's really simply about whether the disability or learning difficulty is likely to have an impact on that person's ability to participate and take part in the chosen training program or course or study. It's important to remind a lot of staff as well that there are many, many students with disability who enrol who do not need our services, who are perfectly independent, some of them just say, "No, I can advocate for myself, thanks.” That's a really good thing. Again, it's a personal choice. We remind staff who are in our organisation that, of course, the student may bring a support person. That could be the parents. It could be an external support agency. It could be a support worker from the NDIS that they employ themselves directly. And then we just make it clear to the staff that as long as we have that student's consent, and 99.9 per cent of the time we do, the student is happy to send some information out via that disability officer to their teachers and to their industry trainers that simply gives some background, helps bring them up to speed. Those conversations, of course, with the students are as much about -- teachers will have a huge intake of new people. What are you comfortable sharing? What do they need to know so you can get the most out of this relationship? What would you like me to know if I was going to be your teacher and trying to help them use a training package? I find that going through the process that your organisation has to be very useful and I have been amazed at how many people I have known for years and said, "I didn't realise that's what we did.” Don't assume that people know. This next section we cover in the training, I think, is incredibly important. The cohort of students has changed significantly in recent years. For those who have been around for a few years, you will be well aware that in particular over the past four, five, six years, we're seeing an incredible, frightening growth, in mental ill health in the student population. It's really important to recognise that. It's important for educational staff, I think, to see the organisation recognising that it is changing. Because it can be quite challenging as a teacher, as a practitioner delivering the course. We also acknowledge, if it's relevant in your organisation and it has been in ours over the years, we have always had a significant number of students on the autism spectrum. And it does seem to be increasing. We also have acknowledged, I think this has been very much appreciated by the teaching staff that, some years ago, we used to really go out of our way and talk to students about the importance of disclosure and that you must talk to us because we don't have any information. There are days when it feels it's gone completely the other way, where students more than ever are incredibly open in their disclosure and it's often in the classrooms and training facilities, they are incredibly open about sharing very personal and often very challenging and quite confronting information about their backgrounds and about their personal welfare situations and also the complexity and coexisting concerns. When you think about a teacher or trainer who has a huge intake of new students, that suddenly puts you in a position of, "What am I doing here? I used to have two or three or four students in a class with support needs. It now feels that it's actually more than half the class." That's a challenge and it is a challenge for a teacher. We note that a number of students are sharing that information, yet there is not always actually a diagnosis, either of mental health or specific learning difficulties. It's a really important acknowledgment for educators and lecturers. And so is this. What we sometimes see - and it doesn't just belong to disability officers or to student services - is a change in the demands in the expectations. I think this is across the entire student population, but I have certainly been in those conversations. And sometimes with parents, who detail an incredible background, it’s quite challenging, shall we say. And then it's, "Okay, so they're with you now for two semesters and you'll get them through.” You are like, "Hang on a minute. You have just given me all of this and I'm actually just trying to get you through a training package." I myself have had those conversations when somebody has said, “Why doesn't your organisation do A, B, C, why don't you do this?” I have been in those situations where a parent says, “Well, we paid for the course. Why hasn't he passed?” You may well have had those conversations and you will in the future where as soon as you have said hello to someone, they immediately say, "Under the DDA ..." I try not to react to that and I just think, okay, this is what they have come in with. What's their expectation? That really leads us into something else that we should recognise. For many of our students - I also say for their parents - a lot of them, not everybody, but a lot of people - I know it's a generalisation - but a lot of people have had years and years of battles and obstacles to have to fight through just to have a disability or a learning difficulty diagnosed. Quite frankly, each time they go to a new place or when they move from one place to another, they are already starting out, "Here we go again." And it's actually quite understandable when it's been such a difficult journey. It is a transition. Not just for the students, but also for the parents as well. School leavers, guess what, they've not been in our system before. They've not had our experiences. They don't have that knowledge yet. So, they're going to go through those perfectly normal transition stages. Sometimes, I will say, if they're on their L plates, they're learning, so we just have to give them a chance. You will have seen this. The term ‘helicopter parents’ where you have sat in the room with a parent and a brand-new student, you are looking at the student or chatting to them and Mum or Dad is answering every single thing, it can be a little frustrating. But it's a transition and I think that is important to recognise. Coming back to the teachers now, the lecturers, this is really important. I was quite concerned that many of our teachers weren't across this. If you are applying reasonable adjustment, you need to document that as a teacher, as an educator. Do your staff know that? Because in my role currently as a mental health and wellbeing manager, I have actually attended a lot of new teacher orientations just to get a sense of what they cover. Boy, oh boy, do they cover some processes and it feels like hundreds of different templates and procedures and it's quite overwhelming. Show them what they need to do. This can, of course, be led by the faculty. But we can play our part. Where do they actually record reasonable adjustments that they are applying? For us, at TAFE Queensland, it's on the individual assessment tasks; that's where it should be recorded. Quite brief. Quite simple, but acknowledging on the assessment task that an adjustment has been applied and what it is. Was it 30 minutes in an exam? Was it an alternative assessment? Was it a verbal assessment? Whatever it might be. Quite simple. You don't need the student's history, their background on there, their personal welfare situation. That's not required. What is the adjustment that’s going to apply? To continue on from that, of course, it is about making sure that the teachers feel more confident that, yes, the student must still be able to demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge that is absolutely required in that particular unit of study and in the context of that program. So, it's really just confirming with people that, yes, reasonable adjustment, no problem; does it enable the student to demonstrate their skills? If so, great. Does it dilute or take away anything from the integrity of the assessment? If you feel that it does, you need to talk that through. One of the examples we used was for -- we run hundreds of training programs. But we used a simple example where we said, look, we had a student who had very significant dyslexia. Very bright young man. Boy, oh boy, did he study and he had to do all of that extra study, that extra effort. It was incredibly tiring, physically and mentally, for all of this new terminology around anatomy and physiology, working with clients in the gym and coaching clients. When it came to doing a lot of those exams, particularly around the anatomy and physiology, in that particular fitness course, the absolute battle with all of the reading and writing in those assessments, it was a simple case that an agreement with the student and the teachers, we said, why don't you just verbally assess him? Does he actually need to have to write down and spell correctly all of this terminology? Does he have to be able to read it all? It seems such a labourious exercise, yet the teacher is already saying, we know he knows it, verbally assess this guy and he can pass with flying colours, and he did. To make a comparison, if we took one of our nursing students, the contact is different, because the nursing student in their role does actually need to be able to read and write to a satisfactory level anatomy and physiology which would be at a different level, but in the context of nursing. So, there are some differences. That just gives your teachers things to think about. Again, it comes back to the context and what is it we're trying to achieve. The next thing that we touch on - and we are going to have some time for Q&A and I'm sure this will come into the chat - we have never sort of been overly precious about the language. I'm sure we have all had those moments when we have heard somebody say something, whether it's in the workplace or out there in our social lives that make you think, "Oh, that's not good.” And interestingly, when we were putting together this particular training, there was one staff member that kept saying, “Wheelchair bound.” And I thought, didn't we get rid of this 20 years ago? I just weaved this into the training. Because again, if it's not your world and if it's not your space, you know, you can forgive people, but then give them the opportunity to change. Actually, "Why don't you just say Sarah uses a wheelchair, if that's what you need to say?” I remember a colleague of mine 20 or more years ago hearing somebody say, “Wheelchair bound,” and said, "Are they tied to it? Then let's stop using that term.” What I have on the bottom of the slide is about being aware of that health and safety trap. This is something that should have a slide of its own. What we sometimes see is when a teacher or a trainer is presented with a situation that maybe they're not that familiar with, that they've not had a student with a particular support need or a learning support need, particularly in a lot of those physical tasks, you sometimes say, “Ah, we can't do that, it's a health and safety issue.” And it tends to be a bit of a go-to that makes the person saying it feel a bit better, "It's a health and safety issue.” Rarely is that actually the case. What is really being said is, "I actually don't know how that can be done, and you know what? I’m just going to run with health and safety.” And rarely is it the case. What tends to happen is it's thrown out there too easily without the key thing that is required. And that key thing is consultation with the student. Has there been some consultation and some really honest open conversation that is constructive about, okay, so we've got this particular assessment task, and this is the skill and the knowledge of what we need in terms of participation. How are we going to go about that? How can we work with this? It doesn't mean you always have one person who will come up with the answer, because no one person is the expert. You've got to involve the student, because it's about them. You have got to involve them because consultation is absolutely part of the Disability Standards for Education. If you don't involve them, you're missing the key person with all of the skills and knowledge. So, consultation, because it gets thrown around still and rarely is health and safety a reason to stop somebody participating. Yes, there will be occasions when something cannot be achieved, but more often than not, there's a solution. We put this in because huge growth in the number of support workers employed by students and families. And support workers, NDIS funded. I don't know about you guys, but we're seeing a huge increase in the number of support workers attending our campuses. We all expected that would happen. And there were some fairly predictable challenges. It's almost an army of support workers, all very keen, all very enthusiastic. Many of whom are incredibly good at what they do, are incredibly supportive of their clients. Unfortunately, that brings with it many support workers who are incredibly unqualified, have very little experience, and are somewhat blissfully unaware that when they are on our campuses, they are actually in an industry training facility, where the professional standards and expectations don't just apply to the student, they actually apply to the support staff themselves. So, we have a little two-page guide that any staff member can provide to an external support person and say, "Hey, you might find this useful." It encourages them to look at the course guide and information that the student they are supporting is working with just to help them understand, hey, here are the rules, here are the expectations, dress code and behaviour. We have had to have a conversation more than once where we have had support personnel turn up on our classrooms literally dressed like they're going to the beach. We've had to say, "That is not good enough. This is the expectation for our students. So, this is what we require from you.” And we have had conversations with some of those external support staff and had to ask them to be a little less enthusiastic. They are participating in the assessment tasks and are very keen to answer questions that the teacher is asking, blissfully unaware that we actually need you to just sit back, support your client to participate, but you're not actually doing the course. So, you know, and sometimes it's just a lack of experience. On the whole, though, many have been very, very good. We put that guide together because that was very useful. It was also something the teaching staff could refer to. We’re going to talk about some tips to wrap this up. It's quite straightforward, but it's about giving your colleagues confidence. Reassuring people that no one person is an expert. Not every teacher has taught every student with a disability. Don't go it alone. Don't make any assumptions. Absolutely talk to your teaching colleagues. I have a student with this particular support need or I have this information; how would you go about that? That is really important. Ensure that there has been consultation with the student and monitor that adjustment. Talk to them. How is it going? Is it working? And if it isn’t, you need to stop, identify why and then review that. The other thing is, particularly in our organisation, the information that we send out to teachers when a student agrees with us to do so, sending out the background of disability, it’s relevant. That's not actually required in our organisation for a teacher to have a conversation with a student about reasonable adjustment. The teacher is the person who is qualified, who is managing the training and carrying out the assessments. The student does not need to register with disability support, they can just have a conversation, teacher and student. And just reminding people that, you know, reasonable adjustment is very much about enabling the participation stage. Monitor that as it goes. It's absolutely not guaranteeing a person to be successful. It doesn't work like that. We are doing everything we can to ensure that you are participating, you can grow and learn as a student. Look, I know that's a little bit of information. I'm conscious of the time. I think we're going to try and look at a few different questions, maybe, Darlene? I can see something flashing in the corner of my screen. I don't know if we're looking at chat as well.

DARLENE: Great, thank you, Brandon, for that. If people have questions for Brandon, please add them to the chat box and I will ask, or if you are feeling confident, I don't know if I will be able to keep an eye on all of the hands because there are so many people here, but we will put your video on and I can throw to you for questions. Just in the chat box, the NDIS slide got a bit of the discussion going, Brandon, around the intersectionality between education and NDIA. I have added a resource in there, our pre-planning toolkit, which is for students, but it actually breaks down 8 disability types and identifies in there what NDIS should fund and what the training provider should fund. So, if people go to those resources, hopefully that will help you unpack it. We do have some issues. Planners and local area coordinators often think we are mainstream services and then they think, "Oh, we don't need to fund anything,” and that's not correct. People do have a battle on their hands at times. But the NDCO program is working with NDIA to hopefully improve the knowledge and expertise of the planners and the LACs to improve the situation for students with disability. Helen, you put up your hand. I don't know if you want to put on your mic and ask your question? Helen Thomas?

HELEN: Hello?

DARLENE: Hi, Helen. We can.

HELEN: I might be on a bit loud.

DARLENE: That's okay. That's fine.

HELEN: Just the last slide you had up… thanks, Brandon. That information is fantastic. There are a lot of secondary schools that could use your slide set there. Just the last slide -- it was really in reference to students with gaps. So, not formally diagnosed. It was just to clarify… I haven't got the last slide. But it was to do around, as we know, teachers can make reasonable adjustments themselves. So, that one, a teacher does not need a student outline or support letter from AccessAbility services to make a reasonable adjustment. We're finding now the gap, the students with the significant gaps, so they're not diagnosed. Would you encourage teachers to develop that, obviously, in consultation with teachers and students, that mindset, that you actually can go ahead to enable the student?

BRANDON: It's a funny space, isn't it? I think people get a little scared in that area. What I will say to teachers is simply this: Remember that a huge proportion of students who have a disability do not disclose at enrolment. They are going to be in your classes. If through that relationship there's a conversation where that student shares some information, or just as a teacher, you realise something is not gelling with the student, they're not quite getting this and there is a conversation, that's a really good thing because it's about rapport and trust. I would say to that teacher, encourage the student to talk to student support. Let them know that student support is there and it's not going to change anything in their course. That student may still not want to engage with us. Some of those students we're seeing will then present some evidence of their disability directly to the teacher. And you know what? Yes, that's okay. As a former teacher, and there are some very simple reasonable adjustments you can apply in individual tasks that are simply about inclusive learning. We're not making huge changes. If it's a little bit of extra reading time or… there is absolutely no reason why a teacher can't verbally assess all of the students in the class. I think it's just knowing that those options are available.

HELEN: Thanks, Brandon.

DARLENE: Thank you, Brandon. I have been a bit prolific in the chat box and providing lots of links to the information we have around NDIS as well. So, for those who are new to ADCET, please go on ADCET, www.adcet.edu.au. There are lots of resources around reasonable adjustments, around NDIS and the intersectionality and Brandon’s presentation and recording will also be up there. The website has a wealth of information and hopefully the search engine will take you to where you need to be. We had a couple of questions prior to the presentation, Brandon, so I might go through those… actually, there are a couple of questions. I will go to one around inherent requirements or core competency which is what often people within the VET sector use in relation to reasonable adjustments. Kind of unpacking the inherent requirements or core competencies. What are some of the issues or hints or tips you can give us as a sector around that?

BRANDON: I think I have been around long enough to remember Trevor Alan presenting at a Pathways conference some years ago the ORONE program which is about inherent requirements statements for nursing, if I recall that correctly. In the VET sector, what we have is a student will get a qualification guide which essentially is the big picture of the course as a whole. Then within that, you'll have unit study guides. I imagine that's very similar for the higher ed space. Then we go right down to the task assessment sheets which says exactly what it is that you are actually going to be assessed for and the criteria that you will be assessed against. Reasonable adjustment can absolutely be applied that enables the student then to meet the inherent requirements or to meet the competency statements. The question for me is really around, what is the intention of the activity? What is the learning outcome we're looking for here? Is it reasonable in the context of that activity? Of course, we have got to give that information to the students as well to make sure they have got that kind of information, whether it's inherent requirement statements, whether it's the competency statements within their unit guides and assessment tasks. Because only can they then make some informed decisions themselves. So, reasonable adjustment can absolutely support students to meet the inherent requirements.

DARLENE: One question someone asked in the chat was around insurance and relating to support workers, how is TAFE, or as a previous manager… if people ask that question?

BRANDON: In terms of external support people coming on to your premises, it's a question I would encourage you to actually ask your facilities, people who coordinate the site. Because I have heard that for many years; it's an insurance risk, it's an insurance issue. And I was confidently told that, actually, that's nonsense. Our TAFE campuses are open facilities. You can walk into most campuses. You don't need a swipe card to walk through the main gate. As part of your general operating, as with any other business, like any other restaurant, shopping centre, people can come in and should there be an incident, there will be all kinds of public liability insurance and everything that goes with it. I think that insurance response is a little bit of a myth. You should probably talk to your own organisations about that. We have a policy at TAFE Queensland that people who are not enrolled — if you're not enrolled in the course, you cannot sit in the classroom. That is our policy. Because firstly, people who aren't enrolled in the course don't have any business to be in the classroom. The exception is, of course, if that person is a verified support person. And they are more than able to attend. It's also in our policy, because we don't want parents thinking they can rock up to be the support to their son or daughter when in fact they need to start transitioning off; we're not a high school.

DARLENE: That's great. Good advice. If anyone has any more questions, put up your hand or turn your microphone on or ask in the chat box. You certainly talked about reasonable adjustments throughout the presentation. But I think some of the challenges we have is really unpacking — I know you talked about this a little more, but we haven't had any more questions, so I'm filling in a bit of time. One of the questions we did have previously was: Who decides what is reasonable? You talked about the conversation you need to have with your teachers and you as a practitioner and unpack that, but do you just want to have more of a conversation around that?

BRANDON: Absolutely. There is no doubt in my experience that sometimes an individual will come in with a wish list of every conceivable adjustment they would like applied in their learning. Sometimes, I think it's a product of the fact they have gone through a full diagnosis or process, or frankly they had to battle hard to get the diagnosis, that piece of paper listing those accommodations or adjustments is valuable and very personal to the individual. Of course, some people will hold that up front and centre and say, "You will do this because it's been confirmed.” It's simply about having conversations about, okay, what might have applied here will change, will evolve. Because this is where you are now and the context may have changed. Maybe it all applies; it depends on the context. Particularly in our organisation, we're training people to go into either employment or higher education. It's also about informing people. You know what, you have progressed now for high school. You're in a slightly different environment. You are going to transition. A lot of those adjustments will evolve and change over time as well because ultimately, we will want to reduce that personal support and replace it with something more independent, a technology based solution or something that the individual can manage, if that is applicable because, of course, it isn’t always the case. It comes back down to conversations. Ultimately, it's for us as the organisation to make a confirmation of what will actually be reasonable, but do the consultation. If you have not consulted in that process, you are falling short of the disability standards.

DARLENE: Further to that, we have had a question around: How can staff know that an adjustment wouldn't be offered in a workplace, for example? Like oral assessments are required more and more in courses. However, in a workplace, if an employer suddenly lost the ability to communicate orally, adjustments may be made. Some people are often arrogant to understand that you won't be able to get those adjustments in a workplace; whereas you can get them in education.

BRANDON: I think it's an ongoing challenge. I know a few people have asked about industry accreditation saying you must be able to do A, B, C, when in actual fact, a lot of us would say, "We can actually get there, but via a slightly alternative pathway.” I think it's a moving piece, Darlene. There is not one single answer I can give to that.

DARLENE: It's a challenge, isn't it?

BRANDON: What works best is the examples - this is where ADCET and our networks are really powerful, share examples of what worked. We often talk about when things are problematic and we don't know what to do, share what works with each other.

DARLENE: Helen, you have your hand up, so I might throw over to you if you want to unmute, or is that from last time? Helen Thomas?

HELEN: I'm here. Two questions. If I forget it, one of them is about a template. Accessibility rather than disability, that's the term you are using where you are, Brandon, is that correct?

BRANDON: Yes. That's the name of the service.

HELEN: That's fantastic. I love it. Did that take a bit of work to get to a recognition level? We struggle -- we're new on the team and my colleague and I struggle a bit with the term "disability”, not that we're as a team title. Is the AccessAbility working? Are people drawn to it and understand?

BRANDON: I would love to say we were the first people to do that; we weren't. I'm pretty sure, somebody may correct me, I think JCU were one of the first to change the name of its disability services. I caught that out some years ago to a whole host of students who used our services. That was one of the options that we gave, in addition to what would make you a little bit more likely to come and talk to us? And the overwhelming feedback — it wasn't hundreds of students, but I will say across maybe 30-40 students with disability at that time across a range of programs. 9 out of 10 were like, “AccessAbility is so much better.” Again, I think it's part of the transition, it made them feel good. The term “disability” is in all of the literature, it doesn't change anything for how people search for your services on the web and it was very well received.

HELEN: Thank you. Just very quickly, is there a platform we can share templates? You said you have a process that you follow which aligns pretty much with what we do. But I would love to share, for example, we have a personalised success plan for students which is information gathering. Is there an opportunity to share those sorts of really -- just simple things but they make a world of difference?

BRANDON: Good question, Darlene, can that be done through the website or the AustAd list? How does that work?

DARLENE: Yes, definitely, if that's okay .

HELEN: I thought I would put that out there. Thank you very much.

DARLENE: That's great. The question -- we have reached the end. I apologise for going a little bit over time. But the question around accessibility and disability is a really big question. I know we have been grappling with it here at the University of Tasmania. There's a lot of pride in the word “disability” for many in the disability community. I think organisations or institutions have to tread carefully because a lot of people with disability have fought long and hard and that culture is changing. Ableism is something that has certainly been researched quite extensively and the word “accessibility” may be seen with a capital A as quite ableist. It is a challenging thing. I would love to get confident and hopefully I will soon to actually have some of these provocation questions and have some sessions with us all to unpack all these issues. There are some hot topics for us in the sector and that's one. It's great to have had that conversation today. We're well and truly over time. Thank you, Brandon, so much. We didn't get to the two poll questions, but we will talk about it in the survey. A survey will go out to you. Please fill it in. The feedback has been absolutely great on the chat, Brandon, and once again, we could listen to you for many hours with your shared wisdom. So, thank you for giving us your time and sharing your wisdom with us.

BRANDON: My pleasure.

DARLENE: Thank you, everybody, for joining us. It was great having you join us today. Take care.

BRANDON: Have a great day. Thank you, all.