



**National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) Program
2020-2021 Strategic Project**

FINAL REPORT

30 June 2021

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1. PROJECT SUMMARY

Objectives

Identified objective
To facilitate an effective, nationally cohesive response to address the unique challenges of <i>COVID-19</i> for disability practitioners in tertiary education.
Extent to which the objective has been met to date
<p>ADCET successfully facilitated an effective and nationally cohesive response to the challenges that <i>COVID-19</i> presented to disability practitioners in tertiary education.</p> <p>We are proud that this support made possible by the Department has not only enabled us to make a positive difference to the experiences within the sector during this time and helped set priorities for the future.</p> <p><i>I wanted to let you know how valuable we found the work that ADCET has done for the COVID-19 response. ADCET is always a place of reference, advice and information for our teams, but last year it felt as though there was an extra woolly blanket of support thrown around the sector! We are a unique sector, and to have information, responses and resources that are specific was fantastic.</i></p> <p>– University Disability Services Manager, Victoria</p> <p>Our response was guided by an initial scoping survey which provided a comprehensive and insightful picture of the impact on the sector. We found that many students with disability faced difficulties adapting to or accessing and engaging with online learning environments. This increased the workload of many disability practitioners, their managers and support workers as they dealt with added complexities and the need for additional advocacy, adjustments and supports. At the same they were also coping with change, uncertainties and adjusting their own work and daily routines. This took a toll on wellbeing for students and staff.</p> <p>However, the survey also highlighted some silver linings emerging from <i>COVID-19</i> circumstances. One of the biggest silver lining to emerge was the notable shifting of many practices, attitudes and mindsets towards more inclusive teaching and universal design.</p> <p>The survey report made 18 recommendations that included sustaining and enhancing the silver linings and critical success factors that emerged, progressing the moves towards more universal design, responding to the needs of Deaf and hard of hearing students, providing smaller ‘bite-size’ training and information sessions for staff, addressing the compassion fatigue, and investigating options for further research on the impacts on student retention.</p> <p><i>“At the start of COVID, I was relatively new to working in accessibility in higher education and managed to learn so much about better supporting accessibility at our university through the work of ADCET. It has helped my wellbeing and understanding of the sector to have an avenue to talk to other people working in this field at different institutions. The webinars involving students and investigating the silver linings of COVID have made a huge impact on my thoughts for continuing the conversation in 2021.” - University Inclusive Practice Coordinator, NSW</i></p> <p>We responded to the compassion fatigue and request for resources to bolster wellbeing by developing bite-sized self-care sessions we called 12@12. These sessions delivered 12 minutes of evidence based and practical ways for people to care for their own and others wellbeing.</p> <p><i>“The 12@12 sessions were amazing and really important to help us get through some difficult times. Our team looked forward to them each week, and even shared some of the learnings with their families. Thank you so much” – University Disability Practitioner, NSW</i></p>

As well as guiding our responses and priorities to the sector the survey findings and subsequent recommendations underpinned our collaboration with the NDCO network to develop a nationally cohesive response. Our engagement with NDCOs comprised gaining feedback on the draft survey in July, seeking input into prioritisations, and recommendations for potential topics for webinars and podcast series. We also worked with several NDCOs across Australia to develop a clear and transparent process for the presentation, consideration, and determination of potential projects for this funding agreement.

Our collaborations with the NDCO program and broader sector included developing guidelines that not only responded to the COVID situation but will also be invaluable into the future. For example, the *Supporting Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students Online* guidelines were co-designed by people with lived experience and guided by an advisory committee made up of people with lived experience. And the *Return to Campus Planning* guidelines drew on expertise and input from across Australia.

I was particularly appreciative of the Return to Campus Planning documents as these were able to be tailored for individual institutions and here at our institution, we distributed the information widely and it was used to ensure that planning for the return to campus was safe and inclusive for all. It was full of practical tips as well as principles of working inclusively with people with disability and for this the university is most grateful. The development of central resources is always appreciated as we know we are hearing the most up to date and current practice - and this includes the webinars which were relevant and thought provoking. – University Director, Diversity and Inclusion, NSW

Additionally, we have explored how we might sustain some of the silver linings that emerged from COVID restrictions through two on-line forums, one for students with disability, and one for disability practitioners. These interactive forums used an Appreciative Inquiry approach to discover the enabling factors, articulate hopes for the future, and co-design the emerging ideas into prototypes. We are hoping that these outputs can be incorporated into existing or new work priorities within the sector.

We are therefore confident that our work to date in addressing the unique challenges presented by COVID-19 has been effective in responding to both the difficulties and emerging hopes of the sector. We have developed a broad and comprehensive range of resources, content, and innovative programs so far that have been received exceptionally well in the sector as accessible, valuable and useful in a ‘just in time’ way, and we are in the process of developing further initiatives that will continue to inform and support the Tertiary sector with the ongoing impact of COVID.

We will offer the last word to a University Manager of Access and Inclusion, South Australia
“Once again, ADCET has done a stellar job in supporting the sector through a very turbulent time for both students and practitioners. The resources they have developed in a very short space of time have been of excellent quality, on point & always include and/or reflect the views and experiences of people/students with lived experience. Myself and my team are frequent users of their materials and highly value the collaborative and supportive culture that exists among HE disability practitioners across the country.”

Project Activities, Milestones and Key Performance Indicators

Timeframe	30 November 2020
Planned Activity	Conduct a survey which gathers information from tertiary disability practitioners across Australia to identify the key issues facing them and

	students with disability in relation to COVID-19 . This will identify the key needs of the sector during this time.	
Activities/Milestones Completed	Identified Key Performance Indicators	Key Performance Indicators Outcome
Survey developed, put on ADCET and distributed to the AUSTED List in the beginning of July	Survey designed, issued to sector and completed by participants within four weeks of the grant agreement's execution. Number of survey participants – up to 500 approached. At least 20 per cent of surveys completed	Survey released on 23 rd June and remained open for 3 weeks Distribution number for Aust-ed email list: 632 Number of people who completed survey: 110

Timeframe	30 November 2020	
Planned Activity and Milestones	As part of this survey, capture and collate the opportunities and learning of the sector arising from COVID-19 to position ADCET to share knowledge and guide the sector nationally post-COVID-19 towards improved inclusive practice informed by the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).	
Activities/Milestones Completed	Identified Key Performance Indicators	Key Performance Indicators Outcome
Survey collated and report written	Survey responses analysed. Results reported in Progress Report and Final Report by 30 November 2020 and 30 June 2021.	Survey Report: Beyond COVID-19 written Report added to ADCET and distributed in the newsletter Downloads of report: 18 Recommendations from the survey results

Timeframe	31 December 2020	
Planned Activities and Milestones	Develop and deliver webinars that inform the changing practice across the sector to meet the needs of students with disability in online learning and support.	
Activities/Milestones Completed	Identified Key Performance Indicators	Key Performance Indicators Outcome
Delivered Eight Webinars on a range of topics that informed the changing practice across the sector	At least eight webinars held by 31 December 2020. - At least 70 attendees on average per webinar. - Positive feedback from webinars via a feedback survey. - Survey distributed to all registrants following on from each webinar - Around 10 to 15 per cent of participant surveys completed.	ADCET Webinar: Microsoft Teams Assistive Technology Attended: 38 Viewed recording: 328 Survey (10 responses): <i>"This was a brilliant presentation. I thoroughly enjoyed this (at the end of another shocking workday with fire, flood, cyclone activity, and lockdown in my state). Came away eager to try and share with colleagues and students. Many thanks. My biggest takeaway was learning about all of the accessibility options."</i>

		<p>COVID-19 & Beyond: Perspectives from University Students. Attended: 70 Viewed recording: 323 Survey (9 responses): <i>"it really reinforced some of the student experiences we are seeing and that online learning has worked well for some students but not for others - and thinking about where we go from here."</i></p> <p>COVID-19 & Beyond: Perspectives from TAFE Students. Attended: 81 Viewed recording: 298 Survey (9 responses): <i>"I really would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for yesterday's webinar. It truly showcased the customers we work with on a daily basis. I love my job and to see students grow and given the opportunity to have a voice and be heard is ground-breaking."</i></p> <p>Online learning for Deaf and hard of hearing students, learnings from COVID-19. Attended: 160 Viewed recording: 1167 Survey (24 responses): <i>"All the information was very valuable, I am excited now to learn more from the information presented. It is a shame that every teacher at the university and nation wide did not attend, because I think they need too. This information needs to be Nationally used"</i></p> <p>Mentoring during the Time of COVID-19. Attended: 60 Viewed recording: 196 Survey (4 responses): <i>"My biggest takeaway is to treat individual</i></p>
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Timeframe	31 October 2020	
Planned Activities and Milestones	Facilitate Communities of Practice, drawing on NDCO expertise as appropriate, to support the sector on key issues.	
Activities/Milestones Completed	Identified Key Performance Indicators	Key Performance Indicators Outcome
<p>From the feed-back received from the staff survey we decided not to establish four Community of Practices. Practitioners identified that they were time poor and under enormous stress. This prompted us to have a difference approach to the idea of Facilitating Community of Practices. So, we pivoted into the idea of short sharp sessions that connected and supported the sector at this difficult time. Which we named at 12@12.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · At least four communities of practice established by 1 August 2020 · 10-20 participants involved in each community of practice. · Each community of practice to provide a report on key issues and actions developed to address these by October 2020. 	<p>The Autism Mentoring Community of Practice met in June, August and October 2020 . This CoP has an email interest list of 90 people from tertiary education across Australia. It has a minimum of 10 at each meeting.</p> <p>A standing item in each meeting was discussion of the impact of COVID on students with autism. Resounding agreement that the impact on students with autism was as diverse and varied as the nature of the spectrum itself. Priority set to explore and develop ways to build Autism confidence in teaching and professional staff at tertiary institutions.</p> <p>12@12 sessions These were small action focused sessions based around a communities of practice approach for those who wanted to learn, share and try some evidence-based wellbeing practices.</p> <p>This new initiative emerged from the Scoping Survey where disability practitioners indicated low emotional and psychological wellbeing but felt they lacked the time and energy to invest much in learning and applying new strategies.</p> <p>Over a ten-week period we facilitated fifteen-minute wellbeing sessions twice a week. On average each session was attended by between 10 – 20 people. The community of practice was supported by</p>

		<p>interactive chat in the session and a Facebook page.</p> <p>Feedback included:</p> <p><i>“These sessions have all been fantastic. Very much appreciated!”</i></p> <p><i>“A huge thanks again. You have got us through a challenging time.”</i></p> <p><i>“This has had such a positive impact on my wellbeing. Thank you for making this strange year more bearable.”</i></p> <p>Recordings viewed up to 30 April: 838</p>
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Timeframe	30 June 2021	
Planned Activities and Milestones	Create podcasts on topics of importance with the aim to raise knowledge and awareness	
Activities/Milestones Completed	Identified Key Performance Indicators	Key Performance Indicators Outcome
We developed five long podcast and have also started to transfer our 12@12 sessions into a Podcast format for easy access. We currently have three available on our website.	At least six podcasts developed.	<p>ADCET crosses the ocean: Access & inclusion in Tertiary Education, Post-COVID-19 , Part 1 Downloads: 189</p> <p>ADCET crosses the ocean: Access & inclusion in Tertiary Education, Post-COVID-19 Part 2 Downloads: 231</p> <p>ADCET crosses the ocean: Access & inclusion in Tertiary Education, Post-COVID-19 Part 3 Downloads: 322</p> <p>The global project: breaking down barriers to higher education pre- and post-COVID-19 Downloads: 237</p> <p>Mentoring during the Time of COVID-19 Downloads: 53</p> <p>12@12 Podcasts Jolts of Joy, Balancing Bias and Create an Inner Ally.</p>

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Timeframe	30 June 2021	
Planned Activities and Milestones	Produce relevant content such as online assessment and exam good practice guides.	
Activities/Milestones Completed	Identified Key Performance Indicators	Key Performance Indicators Outcome
Three guidelines, three reports and 20 content pages developed. We have only just released the staff COVID silver linings report so no date available for downloads.	10 guides produced, or content pages developed.	<p>Guidelines: Responding to the needs of staff and students with disability in COVID-19 return-to-campus planning for Australia’s tertiary institutions: Page Views 1006 Downloads 1450 Supporting Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students Online: Page Views 241 Downloads 1286 Working from Home Good Practice: Page Views 32 Downloads 218</p> <p>Reports Survey report: Downloads 828 Staff COVID silver linings report: page view NA Students thriving through COVID: Page Views 141 Downloads 218</p> <p>Content pages Staff support: Page Views 704 12@12: Page Views 170 Staff wellbeing: Page Views 183 Managing change for staff: Page Views 71 Fostering High Quality Connections Staying Connected: Page Views 215 Zoom Fatigue: Page Views 170 Zoom top tips: Page Views 24 Online learning: Page Views 137 Online Exams :Page Views 234 Lingering impact of COVID-19: Page Views 60 Student Support: Page Views 644 Student Wellbeing: Page Views 215 On-line Mentoring :Page Views 321 On-line Learning: Page Views 112 Coping with Change: Page Views 114 Engaging online students who experience high anxiety: Page Views 137 Motivating online students who experience high anxiety: Page Views 90</p>

Timeframe	30 June 2021
Planned Activities and Milestones	Promote project Activity as appropriate through NDCO network, ADCET’s website and other media.

Activities/Milestones Completed	Identified Key Performance Indicators	Key Performance Indicators Outcome
<p>Advertising of developed content</p> <p>Posting of content on social media channels</p> <p>Newsletter Mailouts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Six forms of media/ advertising tools used. · On average 66,000 hits a month on website. 	<p>Advertising on Velg eNews Advertising in the Velg eZine*</p> <p>Our articles, events and Guidelines were picked up and promoted by the following:</p> <p>TEQSA - https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-regulatory-advice Hard of Hearing Guidelines - https://www.teqsa.gov.au/getting-started-best-practice-establishing-online-learning</p> <p>NCSEHE (and in their newsletters) – https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/adcet-forum-covid-19-tertiary-students-disability/ https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/event/adcet-student-forum-thriving-covid/ https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/event/adcet-webinar-covid-19-tafe-students/ https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/event/adcet-webinar-covid-19-university-students/ https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/event/adcet-webinar-online-learning-deaf-hard-of-hearing-students-covid-19/ https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/event/adcet-webinar-mentoring-during-the-time-of-covid/ https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/event/adcet-ncsehe-webinar-supporting-students-wellbeing-during-covid-19/</p> <p>Department Education Skills and Employment - https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/higher-education</p> <p>Universities Australia included our Return to Campus Guidelines in an edition of their Members Update, which goes to every university vice-chancellor and senior university management.</p> <p>University of Tasmania showcased our Return to Campus Guidelines - https://www.media.utas.edu.au/general-news/all-news/people-with-disability-supported-to-return-to-tertiary-campuses</p> <p>They were also promoted through the NDCO e-newsletters.</p> <p>LinkedIn</p> <p>Working from Home: 4 shares 109 Impressions Hard of Hearing: 5 Shares, 307 Impressions 12@12 sessions: 1633 impressions in total Lingering Impact: 68 impressions 1 share Zoom Top Tips: 974 impressions and 4 shares High quality connections: 659 Impressions Managing Zoom Fatigue: 279 Impressions, 3 shares COVID-19 and Beyond Tafe: 195 Impressions, 4 shares COVID-19 and Beyond Uni: 89 Impressions Webinar Deaf and Hard of Hearing: 106 Impressions, 1 share Mentoring during the time of COVID-19: 151 Impressions, 1 share</p>

		<p>Return to Campus: 365 Impressions, 3 shares</p> <p>Facebook Engaging and motivating online learners: 52 reach Working from home guidelines: 134 reach, 2 shares Lingering Impacts: 62 reach Zoom Top Tips: 80 reach High Quality Connections: 70 reach Zoom Fatigue: 1402 reach, 10 shares, 98 post clicks Guidelines: 326 reach, 6 shares</p> <p>Twitter Return to campus guidelines: 1,987 impressions Zoom Fatigue: 1303 Impressions Working from Home: 1463 Impressions</p> <p>Newsletters We published 12 newsletters in the reporting period and have 1629 subscribers Hits to the website: On average there were 84,713 hits per month for the reporting period. Over 212,841 new users to the ADCET during the reporting period.</p>

Highlights

This project enabled us to develop several nationally significant Guidelines that supported the Tertiary sector to respond effectively to the needs of students with disability. Highlights included.

Development of Guidelines:

- Responding to the needs of staff and students with disability in COVID-19 return-to-campus planning for Australia’s tertiary institutions.
- Supporting Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students online

Connecting and supporting the sector through

- 12@12 sessions
- Hosting eight webinars
- Developing content that provided advice and guidance on the issues affecting staff and students.

Working with staff and students on the challenges and silver linings of COVID and how to make ongoing positive changes to support the successful participation of students with disability in tertiary education.

Issues:

We are still developing guidelines to support online learning for students who are blind or have vision impairment in partnership with Blind Citizens Australia. The project developer left mid-project. We are currently working with a committee to finalise the guidelines.

We also facilitated the staff silver lining session in the final stages of the project. This meant we have been unable to implement any of the prototypes developed in this session. We aim to work with several NDCOs to establish one or two prototypes from the staff and student session next financial year.

*Image of advertisement in Velg eZine

ADCET AUSTRALIAN DISABILITY CLEARINGHOUSE
ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

RESOURCES FOR COPING THROUGH COVID AND BEYOND

The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET) have been developing a whole range of exciting new resources and initiatives to help you in your essential work during COVID and beyond.

They are freely available from ADCET's COVID-19 webpage and include:

Supporting Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Wellbeing- Working Online- Managing Change- Developing Quality Connections Learn useful self-care tips	Supporting Students <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Wellbeing- Mentoring during COVID- Learning Online- Coping with Change Increase your toolkit	Returning to Campus <ul style="list-style-type: none">- For Staff with Disability- For Students with Disability- Practical Planning Tool- Easy-to-use Checklist Download our guidelines
Learn from others <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Student Perspectives- Online Teaching- Using Technology- Making Adjustments View webinars/podcasts	Working Online <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Zoom Fatigue- Zoom Top Tips- Connecting with Others- Hear from Others Get tips and advice	Participating in VET <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Disability Specific- Deal and Hard of Hearing Guidelines- Lingering Effects of COVID Get information and advice

www.adcet.edu.au