DARLENE MCLENNAN: Hi, welcome, everybody. Thank you for joining us today. I'm Darlene McLennan and I’m the manager of the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, ADCET for short. This webinar is being live captioned. To activate these captions please click on the CC button located in the tool bar that is located either on the top or the bottom of your screen. We also have the captions available in a browser and we’ll put that link into the chat now for everybody. I'm on Lutruwita, Tasmanian Aboriginal land. And in the spirit of reconciliation, ADCET respectfully acknowledges the Lutruwita nations and also recognises the Aboriginal history and culture of the land, and I pay my respects to Elders past and present, and to the many Aboriginal people that did not make elder status. I also acknowledge all the countries participating in this meeting and also acknowledge the Elders and ancestors and their legacy to us, and any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders participating in this webinar today. Feel free to add what country you are on today in the chat. ADCET is really excited to be offering another webinar, this one, Realising Disability Inclusion – and we're doing this in partnership with the Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability. Before I hand over to the President of ATEND, I will go through some housekeeping. If you have any technical difficulties, you can email us at admin@adcet.edu.au. Our presenter, Carol, will talk for around 45 minutes and then we will actually go to questions. We're also playing along in the -- in Twitter and the hashtag for those are #disabilityinclusion and #edutwitter. They are the two hashtags or @ADCET.

At the end of the presentation, as I said, we will have 10 or 15 minutes for questions. If you have a question you would like to ask Carol, you can add those to the Q&A pod. This is where we will take the questions. There will be the up voting button, which is the clicking on the thumbs up. That means that the most -- the best question or the question people want answered will be sitting at the top which makes it easier for me to find that and to ask. But we also encourage you to chat with each other throughout the presentation. Please use the chat box instead of the Q&A box. That just enables you to understand who is here, maybe get a few questions happening with some of the things that Carol presents to us today which will be great. Well, now I’m going to hand over to, as I said, the President, Cathy Easte, the President of the Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability, to introduce the session and Carol. Thank you, Cathy.

CATHY EASTE: Thank you, Darlene. As President of ATEND I'm very pleased to introduce you to Prof Carol Evans, a senior leader who has worked across sectors and professions. Carol is currently an honorary visiting Professor at Cardiff University and visiting Professional Fellow at the University of Southhampton, more importantly she is a person who cares passionately about inclusion for all and pushes for this at all times. Carol is also a non-executive board member at the University of Bournemouth UK. Her previous roles have included PVC learning and teaching at Griffith University Australia. Strategic leadership roles in education and research at the university of Birmingham, Southhampton, UCL Institute of Education, KSS Deanery London Durham in the UK. Carol has produced world leading research in assessment and individual differences and has scaled up inclusive practices across institutions as acknowledged in her receipt of a national teaching fellow and principal fellowship and a collaborative and spotlight award from Advance HE. I first met Carol early in the COVID journey here in Oz when she started as a PVC learning and teaching, and while it was initially inspiring to meet a senior leader in higher education who has so passionately shared their lived experience of disability, I am pleased we have maintained the connection and I have, in some small way, had a hand in sharing her latest research with you here today. Research that has recently been highlighted in the Times Higher Education Pages. Carol and her colleagues have developed a research-backed framework for increasing disability inclusion for staff and students. A checklist, framework, risk assessment, a guide, toolkit -- all for making disability inclusion a reality in higher education settings. I do believe the framework lends much to other institutions and workplaces also. The disability institutional inclusion framework is all research based and provides a very useful guide to addressing the gaps for staff and students with disabilities. And I welcome Professor Carol Evans to share this with you.

CAROL EVANS: Thank you very much, Cathy. I would like to thank my colleague, Xiaotong Zhu, who has been doing a lot of this work with me. And also I’d like to, from the bottom of my heart, like to thank Cathy. It's been wonderful to maintain contact with her. And also, she has had significant input into the work we've been doing. I respect and value her opinions and cannot praise you enough. So I’m going to get going. I want to say thank you to everybody for coming today and for giving up your time. I will try and take you through some of the thinking behind the work we've been doing. Hopefully the slide has moved on for everybody. Hopefully. I wanted to talk about -- we looked at a lot of research on disability inclusion and we wanted to say "so what". How does this make a difference to the lived experience of people in higher education? And although our work was focused on students, the reality is the situation for staff in higher education is significant, so we wanted to look at that as well. We wanted to look at the extent to which higher education is embracing for those with disabilities from staff and student perspectives and does it allow everybody to succeed? If I looked – basically, I have just gone to your ADCET pages and looked at your data compared to data across the world. I thought I would start with a context, brief introduction to that.

So, access to higher education for students with disabilities around the globe is highly varied. I have put there the Netherlands, 30 per cent of students with disabilities attend university. In the UK it's 17 per cent on average, but there is massive variation. If you go to Zambia, 0.1 per cent. China it's 0.3. Russia it's 0.34, if I wanted to be pedantic. So you sit, I would say, towards the lower end of that table but there are places where it's far more extreme. Student success in higher education, your data suggests it's 5 per cent to 10 per cent lower than those without reported disabilities. In the UK it's 1.1 per cent. But I am going to come back to that because I am going to question some of these statistics with you in a second.

In Tasmania your retention rates are actually higher for students with disabilities according to your data. Around the globe students with disabilities tend to be less satisfied with their course. I know this is a generalisation but the data would suggest that. And there are big issues in terms of employment opportunities. I am going to raise a couple of issues about that without actually going into too much detail because it will come in later. I don't want to duplicate. I thought this was quite interesting. This was a uGov quote, a uGov poll where they look at 501 middle managers. Half of Australian managers have never hired a person with a disability. You probably know this more than me. One in 10 admit that they wouldn't want to do so in the future. It's quite interesting looking at the work of colleagues in Queensland University who also were looking last year at senior leaders in higher education in universities and how many of those acknowledge or reported disability. They couldn't find any in terms of the web pages of senior leaders in higher education. So to me, that's a striking statistic and I will also talk a little bit more about that. I am going to mention – I’m just going to pause on this slide here in terms of what does the data look like really? Okay. In all of our research, 45 per cent of papers do not disaggregate disability. But I gave you a figure -- I could test you on this -- that 1.1 per cent in England is -- in terms of attainment, students with disabilities do worse -- is it really 1.1 per cent?

If you look at students with social or communicative problems, and if you look at part-time students, that figure goes up to, like, 10 per cent. If you then factor in, in some countries, gender. If you factor in socioeconomic class/status, and if you factor in ethnicity, just think what happens to that data. Our generalisations give us very little of what the real picture is. And also, we analysed data across different universities just in the UK. And the figures are incredibly varied from one institution to another. And also for students with different types of disability. And even type of disability, as we know it, that's just one facet. It's really interesting that only 4 per cent of research actually looks at what I would call intersectionality, which is how disability intersects with other characteristics of an individual. So we get a very biased perspective on -- from disability statistics. So are disability statistics good enough? When I was at Griffith, I was very concerned about students during COVID. And one of the thing I did do was to disaggregate in terms of looking at the experience of students with different types of disabilities as they went through COVID and online learning and what was the journey was like. Even that is at a too generalized level but it was better than bunching everybody into a bracket that's not possible to bunch into a bracket. If I wanted to move on quite swiftly and then talk about what we were trying to do, we looked at a lot of papers, and I put there we actually initially looked at 11,000, we got down to 600 articles. We wanted to see what the state of disability inclusion was.

One of the key things that comes out from all the work we do is the fact that -- I have put disability is the poor relation of the inclusion gender. It seems to take a bottom rung compared to other underrepresented groups and especially so from the position of both staff and students. I put my hands up to the fact that, obviously, I come from an insider perspective. I'm a disabled person, but I can't compare my experiences with someone else. They are obviously very different and my experiences change in the course of a day, across time, as I will talk about disability being incredibly fluid and variable across context. So we wanted to look at all of the data and say, okay, how could we move this forward and what are the things that we really need to be thinking about?
The first thing we came up against was how we define "disability".

Again, across different countries there are different emphasis. In England, we tend to follow the social model of disability in most universities and talk about "disabled students". If we do a big sample of what students and staff think about labeling, they don't like "disabled students", they don't particularly like "students with disabilities". I think the latter is preferable to the former for lots of reasons, but other people will have a different perspective. Where I do have an issue is I would go with Shakespeare on this, is that the social model that I find limited, and a good quote from Shakespeare is “we're disabled by our bodies and by society”; I can't do many things because my body won't let me do it irrespective of what other potential barriers there might be in social systems, and in structures and in institutions. And there is a real battle to be had in trying to advocate in my space but also in everybody else's spaces to actually get things to work for you. It's very individual and it's also societal. But to say it's societal and it's a societal issue is limiting at best. And so I would come out from my perspective and say that I look at disability from an international perspective and this work was taken from that perspective, but we did look at lots of different perspectives through the research lens. But it’s important to really think about that. Lots of universities claim to use a social perspective. But actually, they're using a medical model.

So there’s a lot of contradictions in the space which need honest dialogue about how we're defining it. It leads to this. This is a long list and I'm sorry, it might give you a bit of snow blindness on this one. We were trying to come down to how particular principles that we wanted to discuss as a team. I was working with four students and another colleague. We were trying to look at the things that we were thinking about. This was quite important for us before we started doing anything, about that notion that disability is personal, experience is not universal, that disability brings advantage as well as disadvantage. There are certain gifts associated with it but there are also certain limitations. That it is multifaceted and fluid. And that's particularly problematic and also many people would not be defined by a particular disability. I have mentioned there, again, in terms of the notion that disability is intersectional, that in organisations we really need to think about anticipatory approaches to disability. What is the extent to which we are using the knowledge across the sector from research to inform the way in which we frame disability and how we support it. A lot of research will argue that we ignore the social and practical dimensions of disability in the higher education landscape. And that notion of partnership between students and staff, often the whole notion of disability support seems to be separated from staff and students and my question would be, why, why do we do that?

If I move on -- this is kind of like I'm taking you to the end. This is a spoiler alert, in a way. I apologise. I should get to this at the end but I'm reversing it. When we looked at disability we tried to aggregate up. Many studies were about individuals or small groups of individuals from very ethnographic stands, and I value that research as equally as metanalysis my control tiles and one of my friends in China, Kit Morrison, he will argue the point that we afford randomised control trials and meta analysis too much space and maybe we don't privilege research from other perspectives as much as we possibly -- and disability is an area where that is certainly true. I'm presenting to you a model where we try to look at all of the different factors that impacted inclusion within a university. We came up with these 12. Initially they were a list. We thought, this doesn't work. They are all so intertwined, even described as I have there. We have in this diagram -- you've got 12 circles. You have got basically four circles, three lots of four circles, all intertwined. At the top I have got this notion of disability inclusion needs to be owned by a community, not by a leadership team, not by somebody who has the assigned role of disability coordinator. It needs to be owned by everybody. I put there about that leadership capacity. And about the evidence and about evaluation, how are we using data to look at who is being advantage and disadvantaged? And how are we integrating across the whole of this rather expanded rugby ball I have got this all situated within. And then I have talked about communications, students and staff voice, training.

Enabling access through supports and accommodations. And then I move on to this notion of how do we support people to be independent, through the particular approaches we use in teaching and learning, through assistive technologies, through transition support, and in promoting self-advocacy. These were the areas that people felt were incredibly important. But there was very little evidence from the research about the effectiveness of these. Again, another spoiler alert. I will pick up and talk you through some of the areas where we have more evidence and some of the areas where we have far less evidence. And also I want to move on to then talk about if you could do one thing that would actually change the situation in an institution, what would the one thing be that would cause the whole university to pivot? And how could we enable that to happen?

And that's what I'm excited about. Because I do believe there are those one big ticket items that can cause a domino effect and can lead to change. But at the moment it's quite fragmented. So, what does the data tell us? I will give you a snapshot in the time we have. There will be a report coming out in September. A very big literature review on this area. So I'm not going to go through all of that. But I will just give you some of the headlines. I am going to come to this slide first in terms of talking about self-advocacy and also looking at the data. I want to frame this in another way, the data also belies the truth. When I talked about that 1.1 per cent difference in attainment and said it could get to 10-20 per cent difference if you factored in all of the other factors -- but also, many students don't declare, and staff. You also have the fact that many disabled students and staff do incredibly well. But I would like to say that's often at a cost, a massive cost. Because the amount of peddling beneath the surface is humungous and also not sustainable. I want to come back to that in my last slide in terms of that balance between how the institution supports somebody and also what the individual can do, but if that imbalance is too skewed to the individual to have to manage everything then it might work on a surface level that they achieve and they are successful but actually underneath there is only so long that one can sustain that. I think that's really important for us to think about. If I look at some of the areas -- I just spend a few minutes on this -- okay, so if I look at that leadership area, if I look at different country reports on effective approaches to disability inclusion, all of them will talk about the importance of leadership without fail. Yet if you look at the research, there is very little on it. So there's a massive discrepancy between what experts will say is important and what you see covered in the research. We know about underrepresentation of staff with disabilities. I have given you a couple of facts there. I have put only 3.6 per cent of UK senior leaders in academia disclose a disability. I also looked recently at success in funding bids in the UK across the 7 research councils. I again would like to give you a quiz, but we won't, about how many of those bids were won by colleagues who disclosed as disabled across the whole sector for all research bids with UK funding councils. Only about 2 per cent of disabled -- disclosed as disabled bid in that area. So I think that tells quite a big picture. And in England we have just had the research excellence framework exercise. The biggest area that was underrepresented and most disadvantaged was again not gender, not ethnicity, it was staff with disabilities that came through in reports. If I talk with a lot of organisations that work with universities, their argument would be that senior leadership is too removed from the immediacy of managing disability inclusion on the ground. It's delegated down. And that overview of how all of the moving parts come together is somewhat missing. If I now move on and look at some of the other areas. Again, there's a massive driver to look at what works. In fact, the report that we've got coming out is looking at what is the evidence of interventions to support disability inclusion. But they are few and far between. Only 4 per cent of research looks at intersectionality in disability. 4 per cent. I have put there, I won't read out everything on here, but I have put there in terms of only 2 per cent of work actually looks at the postgraduate experience of students with disabilities in higher education. And to what extent are staff and students with disabilities actually engaged in that research as active participants and as partners within the research that's happening in the space. There have been a lot of reports about what counts as quality in the research space. Again, there are areas of research that are incredibly strong in this space but one needs to look at how we aggregate up those different findings from a vast number of narrative research studies that there are. But they are quite consistent in their findings about facilitators and barriers to inclusion within universities.

I have already mentioned about limited inferences can be made from aggregated disability data. It is incredibly limiting in terms of one needs to go beneath the surface. In looking across the sector, students and staff with hidden disabilities, with neurodiverse conditions, social and communicative disabilities are renound to experience significant issues compared to students with other disabilities in terms of perceived bias and actual bias. I'm careful there because it's very different according to which part of the world you're in, which is also linked to levels of development, so one needs to be cautious. Gender and disability may play a very big role in some countries and less so in others. You will need to be mindful of the context in which we're talking. Also the context – say, for example, disability and nursing is particularly problematic in terms of disabled -- students, staff moving into that area, and also medicine and science disciplines, particular barriers there might be in terms of inclusion within those fields. Again, it's interesting. However, having said that, there is very little research from arts and humanities around students with disabilities, which is also interesting. That notion of an integrated approach, one of the key findings was around the networks that students and staff have in terms of enabling people to get on. The argument would be, to what extent is the support that's given to students with disabilities actually joined up to include the practical, the accommodation, the transport, the social networking side, the access to social interaction as well as academic support?

The other argument would be about to what extent is ownership of disability inclusion at the course or unit level? And by staff and students rather than centrally directed, or the responsibility of a central unit. It cannot work like that. And again how do things join up from one part of an organisation to another and across organisations? Obviously, COVID has made the whole notion of disability inclusion particularly problematic in terms of accessing services across different areas in a timely fashion. The language of disability is absolutely fundamental in terms of the valuing of diversity, how disability is framed. There are some really amazing studies that make me cry every time I read them around the cumulative damage of what not being able to access spaces, not being able to get into a learning environment and the impact that has on an individual's interaction with the context in which they are in. I called it cumulative damage in terms of that constant not being able to access basics. And I'm not even talking about the highest level of provision. And the psychological impacts that that, therefore, has on how that individual engages and is enabled to engage. That is a pretty colossal issue that comes through. That is true for staff as much as it is for students. I've mentioned on this slide the extent to which students and staff with disabilities are engaged in the design of services from the get-go. Again we see a lot of work that's asking students and staff after the event, but it's too late for that group. So, how are students and staff with disabilities involved in design in an anticipatory way and how is their voice captured in a representative way, in a rich way, so the lived experience, what do we know about that lived experience, what are the rate limiting steps that impact you every single day that actually make it really difficult and add to load? Training was an interesting one. We found very little work across the sector that evaluated the quality of training. A lot of training on disability inclusion is online. It's a module that you take. And being concrete for the sake of it. But does that change behaviours? And does that change the way that people act in the daily discourse of things?

What is the quality of that training? And how are resources available for staff? Do staff even know where an accessibility checker is? Do they know what technologies are available to support? All the basics. Are staff given training in the different types of supports that there are available?

It's absolutely fascinating that there is so little on evaluating the impact of what training there is. And the quality bit. Often large sections of the university population are not included in that training. They found a lot of like technology support staff are not involved in training in this way. So, how is everybody involved in that? This is a biggie. I’m going to make a couple of things here. Accommodations make a big difference. The supports that students get make a massive difference. That's probably not rocket science to most of you. It really isn't. But it's interesting. Students who use the supports available in a university often do better. Whether they have disabilities or not. Not all supports are of equal use. And some are of less use than others; we know that. But there's a real issue here around the notion of disclosure. Many students undisclose, if there is such a term -- they disclose year 1 and by the time they get to their second year they realise, actually not a good move. That's quite an interesting thing to look at. But also students disclose in many different ways. I put that it's layered. They might disclose unofficially, they might disclose in one unit, in one course, one program but not officially. The whole notion of the burden of disclosure and the impact of hav ing to disclose and there is a big question, if we created an inclusive environment, we reduce the need for disclosure. And I have loads of really poignant quotes from students who talk about -- and they're quite raw, the quotes I have from students who talk to me and also explain to me -- one of them said this is very blunt. It's like having my guts hung up on a line and people bashing me because I have to go into a room and prove what I can't do. I said, “How is that like to start a course like that?” The emotional damage of that, for some, is massive. I never would underestimate that one. That notion of disclosure is a nasty word is an understatement but it permeates for a lot of students. What is successful is where students and staff owned the disclosure process and also are given the responsibility to advocate for what are the supports they need and are they of the right quality? I have already mentioned bias before, that it is much harder for certain students than for others. And equally with their peers, some feel the need to have to justify particular supports, et cetera. Okay. If I move on and look at -- here is an interesting one for you. I have spent a career talking about inclusive learning and teaching.

It's interesting. We found very little evidence of the efficacy of universal design for learning; that doesn't mean to say that it doesn't make a difference, at all. It may be the way interventions have been designed that they're so broad, what you are picking up in the space so I would be cautious about that one. We do know that embedding reasonable adjustments from the get-go makes a big difference. But I actually would want to ask people, what do you mean by inclusive learning and teaching? What is it?

In actual fact, what is deemed to be inclusive could also be seen to be exclusive. And I would say, can we simplify it down to what it that we're really talking about here. Is it about reducing cognitive load? Talk to me. What is it about? Is it making things transparent? Is it about different accessible formats? What are we talking about in this space? Can we be explicit about it? At the moment it's a fuzzy umbrella type word and I'm not sure we're pivoting in the right space in a way that everybody can move forward with it equally. Assistive technologies -- again, make a big difference. The biggest issue there was, for example in some universities during COVID was the quality of captioning. Sorry, anybody today. But the quality of captioning was absolutely fundamental in all of this. The other one is also training in the use of assistive technologies. And a massive one is that balancing act, going back to what I said at the very beginning was around the notion of how much effort an individual has to put in and how much support an institution gives. And if I am a student with certain types of disabilities and that support comes too late I have to make a decision as to have I got time to learn how to use this or do I just cope without it? And there are instances where students have done a whole year's worth of their courses without the fundamental supports that they needed. So we've lost them for a year. And I think that is unacceptable. And so that speed at which support comes is massively impactful. But it also means that staff and students need to know how to use those, and also not -- not also treat them like a sweety shop in terms of what is the best approach for a specific issue and not duplicate or have hundreds of different types of technologies you are using on an online course that makes it insurmountable and impossible for us all. So what are the best tools in this best situation or the range of tools that are best for students in X, Y and Z. They may be different. But to be actually quite judicious in the use of the equipment, tools and technologies we use and do they translate across different systems equally well?

So if I'm a student walking into a work integrated learning, if I'm a student using a tablet, will it work as easily on that or not or will I be undone and unraveled by the technology? I will mention a couple more. We know that pre-university support is massively important. Quite an interesting one here is around that notion that often students are externally regulated in schools and given those supports and then when we come into university we’re expecting them to manage it for themselves. How do they know what is available to support them? How do they know how to advocate? How do we start the journey with them when they are young enough? An orientation course is too late. It's good but it's still too late. What comes through loud and clear is the importance of the first semester or trimester, that very first experience, that first term in, what is happening in that space is absolutely critical to how students will do at graduation in many examples that we looked at. Again, that opportunity -- and it comes into looking at transitions -- is early internships. So early experiences of work environments. Early experiences of research. But many students from disadvantaged backgrounds or with disabilities may put that off or feel it's too difficult because of all of the other supports that are needed to enable that to happen. But by putting that off, they delay those opportunities. And, again, those internships do not need to be long, they can be online. But how do they get real experiences that are valuable experiences?

I'm going to finish off today and just talk a little bit about the things that we know in terms of the factors that enable any student or adult to do well -- I would argue they hinge around notions of self-determination. The capacity to be able to make decisions for yourself. Also self-efficacy, belief in your ability to do well. To be able to advocate for what you need. Agentic engagement is can I change the environment to get it to work better for me and my peers and do I believe I can do that. Self-regulation is, am I able to utilise the skills I have in the best way to realise the goals that I have? And how can I spend my time on developing those skill sets and not losing 80 per cent of my time just trying to stay above water. So how do we make sure that students with disabilities and staff with disabilities' time is being used to help them develop and develop those skill sets rather than being utilised on things that they shouldn't have to spend so much time on. I have another session around this whole notion of self-advocacy and I haven't got time to go into it with you in too much detail now. But I tried to represent this notion of advocacy in sharing it in two different ways. This is one way where the top fan is looking at the individual, how do we support an individual to understand their needs, the context they're in, their roles, their rights to help them realise their goals. And what is the role of the organisation in facilitating that. And what is the role of the discipline that they're working in? How are those all working in tune? So how do I, as a lecturer, map out the journey of a student on my course, and work out what those barriers are going to be before they get there so that we can attend to them and start to remove those prior to, in an anticipatory way? And what are those things that are going to make a difference to supporting students to do that?

And that's one area that I'm currently looking in, which I think has massive promise in terms of -- I once, in a job was working with failing doctors in hospitals. And why was it in a rotation of maybe three they had that they were falling off, what was causing them to fail? Again, sometimes it was the environment, it was very, very difficult. Other times it was because they couldn't read the differences in the nature of the environment. What we could do is teach them the skills to get around those barriers. We shouldn't have to, so that's why I talk about shared advocacy. This one to look at at your leisure is really around this whole notion around the responsibility of the self, on the left-hand side of the diagram, and developing those skill sets in self-advocacy and self-regulation. On the right-hand side it's, okay, so how does an organisation do that. Then moving on, I wanted to finish off by looking at, if we were trying to think about big ticket items that we could use to move forward, what would they be? And if I was being blunt, and talked about some of these things and took those 12 areas, then disability inclusion I would put in the performance review of everybody. It's everybody's responsibility and it's everybody's responsibility to help get everybody over the line. I don't think it's the responsibility of a team. I know there are brilliant teams and I want to hug them all the time. Probably not allowed to do that anymore! But there are brilliant individuals but they are also being burdened and worn out because they can't advocate on behalf of lots and lots of people.

They need to be supported too. How do we support those that self-advocate? In an institution, we cannot complain about people being selfish if we reward individual selfishness and don't reward team effort. We need to think about that. I do think a route map that lets everybody know where all of the different supports are and brings them together in a holistic whole is a no brainer because many students do not know the supports are available. When I walked into Griffith and there was an orientation survey and in one of the surveys, over 40 per cent of students at one particular point were saying that they didn't feel confident about their ability to do well. It was a small snapshot and it was a small number of students. But you want to catch those students at that point eventually because low self-efficacy is a big factor. It's important those students are supported. Staff did a brilliant job in supporting orientation for students by picking up these early signs at a very good point. I do think I would want module course leads to be able to look at data, to mine that data to look at the journey of students. And I think the comms strategy about being explicit and also making sure the communications strategy is joined up is really important. Because there's a lot of gap between what web pages say and the experience of those on the ground. I do think we need to make sure programs are developed with staff and students with disabilities and checked with what those rate limiting steps are. I would like to have students far more involved in that space from the get-go. I have mentioned a few other things there about the clear road maps and also about simplifying what inclusive learning and teaching is. Let's get down to basics here about what it is and what it's not. Mainstream assistive technologies -- they shouldn't be an add-on. We should all be using them and then we would all become better at using them, and we would create a better environment. I would advocate for earlier and shorter internships and more opportunities for doing that. I would certainly want to embed self-advocacy training for all, actually, in the space. I will finish there. I'm conscious of allowing time for your questions. But there is a thing about how as a sector can we move things together, how can we move things together to effect meaningful change? How can we leverage this? I was looking to work with a group of organisations -- we developed a checklist. Really important to say, actually, how would this work with teams? How could we move this forward? And where should we focus our efforts? I have mentioned that there. I will stop at that point and say thank you so much for spending that time, having to listen to me. I appreciate your attention and your listening. But I would like to ask you now if you have any questions and, if I can't follow them all up now, if you email me I will promise to follow those up with you. Over you to.

DARLENE: Excellent. Thank you so much, Carol. It's been wonderful to see the chat and the level of engagement from people. It's been very powerful for many people. So, yes. It's great. I'm getting a bit teary even thinking about it. Thank you so much. There are a number of questions. I have been fielding them from the chat box and the Q&A. There are a couple in the Q&A box that I might go to first. One is, can you speak to the role of mentoring for students with disability and helping to implement the DIF.

CAROL: Very much. Mentoring was one of the things that came up solidly. And I think there is lots of different types. There is reverse mentoring in terms of how can students with disabilities support other students? But again, the key issue there was the burden of self-advocacy for others that some do that very well but who is protecting them?

But also, there's a lot of issues around how -- with many students their peers do not necessarily have a grounding or understanding. We're trying to live in a more inclusive society. Also, how do we engage their peers in training, which is for society and their futures, in terms of upskilling students across institutions, in that, and also we know that academic mentoring -- another thing that was very powerful is students with disabilities joining a research group, even if it was nothing to do with their subject, which I thought was fascinating because it was about the cultural capital and then having academics to advocate for you and also professional mentors were really important from the workplace perspective in helping to leverage change in workplaces.

And so, yes, again, I believe everybody should be a mentor of everybody else. But I do think that requires training. And also there is a mistake, just because I have a particular issue or not, that that makes me able to mentor somebody else. Well, not always the case. I may be too close to somebody. There is lots of interesting areas in that space. But definitely it's one of the areas that has a lot of promise. But particularly in terms of the academic research side of things as well.

DARLENE: Okay. Thank you for that. We're getting quite a few questions in. It's great that you are actually happy to answer those. What we will do, if we don't get to all of the questions today, we will ask Carol to answer those and we will put them on the web page where the recording and her slides will be so you can come back and find those answers each time. So, just one of the ones that have got the up vote the most is -- someone said Carol, I hang off every word you’ve said today. But as a question I find the word support inescapable but quite challenging as it's so often ill defined and rarely do people translate this into concrete or specific behavioural interventions. This may be topical but do you have any data around what are the most effective and needed supports, noted this can be a difficult balancing act between resourcing and other requirements or ensuring this is provided consistently by different staff. I thought my paraphrasing wouldn't do it justice so I have just read it out.

CAROL: Again, I think to me it's a mapping exercise. I do think there is a big staff upskilling in this one. I talk about I know a lot about lots of things, but every day I learn new things and I'm humbled by colleagues and other students who have different issues to what I have. One of the things is that for many students with disabilities and staff, you have to juggle many wider networks to enable to keep you afloat. Anything that gets changed late in a program you can't pivot, it kind of makes you crash. This is about late changes to programs and not having complete information about a course or unit prior to you taking it. So if you're not aware of the potential barriers that there are going to be, you can't arm yourself and get around those. I remember for me one year I had to learn how to walk to a certain place and had to practise it 100 times before the event because otherwise I couldn't do it, at one point in my life. If they suddenly changed the room at late notice I was undone big-time. But I get that certain things have to change at late notice but I do think there should be an understanding of what that knock-on effect is. And how is that mediated for the individual. But a lot of it is not high powered stuff that people need, it is basic access to resources, understanding that for some people a screen is -- I had several years where I couldn't read a screen at all. It doesn't matter what it was. And people didn't seem to understand I couldn't actually read a word on a screen at one point. But it's having that very basic thing about, what is it you need. Rather than talking to someone about what they can't do, what is it you need in order to be able to have access? What are those basics?

A lot of it is basic equipment, basic tools, but time. Time to learn how to use them. And knowing that there is somebody that you can access if it goes wrong. So it's not even the high powered things. But it is around logistics. A lot of it is around logistics. So, I used to get students to do GANTT charts to look at their schedule. Then draw underneath it. They could draw or do anything with it to say this is a block or blockage for me. We used to then look at those as teams to say how do we undo those blockages? That shouldn’t happen. But it's also getting the lived experience of those students across different things to actually share that. When I was a teacher in a school, an Acting head teacher, I used to get the students to talk about the trigger points and the things that were the barriers to access. It was very powerful but it changed a whole environment because we learnt to work out all of those triggers. There are always going to be new ones. But the more open you are to looking at that I think the better. The other one was -- really a clever scheme -- is where you get students to produce modified outputs, which benefits the world and that's their assessment. So I think that's really cool. So I would be going down those lines too.

DARLENE: That's great. Thank you. There are so many questions. One was just around supporting the best strategies because you suggested some best strategies to support safe disclosure. Is there anything you would like to cover more on that?

CAROL: Again, I think this also goes back to training for staff in terms of I think disclosure is -- (pause) It is being very honest. I think a lot of the issues around disclosure that we discovered is where students are promised privacy, et cetera, but then it goes through a comms strategy and through to X, Y and Z. Who does the information go to? Who will have access to the information? How will they use the information? What bits of this can you control? For me it's about agency at every step of the way. What can I not share and what can I share and who has access to it and why, and taking a student through those steps in terms of that. But it's also training for all of those colleagues. What I'm saying is often the training doesn't include everybody within a student or member of staff's sphere and that's where it can breakdown collossaly. So I do think that needs to be fronted in training but also the implications of poor management of disclosure and the long term effect it has on students. I think it's a massive one.

DARLENE: That’s great. As I said, we will get the questions out of the chat and the Q&A and put them up on our website. But just the final question, I suppose, somebody has asked for the big ticket items, would you see that these need to be created or replicated at each institution or is there a more coordinated way to achieve these goals, do you feel?

CAROL: I'm a strategist. So, for example, there are things often with government policies that you need to advocate for change across the sector if you really want something to change. But I also do think, if institutions actually worked together on this, because also look at the flow of students across different universities as well moving from one place to other. But I think there is ground to collectively say – and, again, one of my colleagues said to me, why do we have to pay extra for everything? Blackboard Ally is very good but why is everything more money? If I set up a website I have to pay thousands of dollars more for this bit of accessibility? Why do we always have to pay so much more? There is something about leveraging the tech companies actually. There is something in that space. But I do think institutionally it's about, really, as I said, you're not going to win with a charter with about 500 items on it. But I think nobody can question the need is to put the changes now. So it’s where do you start with the change and how do you advocate it across the sector and move a particular area forward? I think that's also lobbying with governments and regional governments as well in terms of their backing behind that and also how can they ease the transition of children through schools into university, et cetera, and into employment? How can they make the journey from university into employment easier in terms of the supports that one gets when one transfers from one area to another? I do think -- I think there is greater weight in acting collectively. I think too many institutions are trying to do everything on their own. I think we should be working together. Again I'm working internationally, but I see it as one family and I think we should be leveraging and we should be demanding much more. I think institutions, it is the time. And I think what are universities for if they're not for creating more inclusive societies. Let's look at how many people with long COVID, let's look at the ageing population, let's look at how many people there will be that unfortunately will have to cope with lots of additional barriers they may not have expected to.

DARLENE: I think you have encapsulated that -- it is time. It's come to the end but also it is time for change. I think there is a lot of great work happening internationally and in Australia around ensuring inclusive education for everybody and also employment. Thank you, Carol. I think you have started a bit of a movement here. I'm excited if we, as a sector, can connect to work better to improve the access and participation of staff and students with disability. Just a quick heads up, we will be sending a survey, I think someone will put a link into the chat now. You will get sent a survey. Really encourage you to provide feedback on the session today. We will feed that back to Carol but it also helps us with our ongoing funding. We have a new webinar coming up, I think on 6 September, which is around for staff in the university sector with disability. And the whole of tertiary sector including the VET sector, that will provide advice to universities, HR managers, faculty managers, facility managers also just to make sure universities and VET providers are inclusive in their employment practices and that there is a government project called Job Access that supports that. I encourage you to share that with everybody within your organisation. We really want to target that webinar to the right people. Thank you. Thank you for ATEND and to Cathy for bringing us altogether and for doing this webinar. Absolutely fabulous. Thank you, Carol, for your time. It's 4.30 probably there now in the morning but it's been absolutely fantastic.

CAROL: Partying on down time.

DARLENE: Wonderful. Well, we hope you get some sleep. Thank you so much for giving your time and knowledge to us. It's been absolutely brilliant. Thank you everybody for joining us. Take care, have a great day.