DARLENE: Hi everybody, thank you for joining us. For those who don't know me I'm Darlene McLennan, the Manager of the Australian Disability Clearhouse on Education and Training, or ADCET for short. Before I begin, I just want to say that we are live captioning this webinar and you can access those captions in your tool bar, or we also have captions available in a browser and the URL has been put in to the chat box. ADCET is based at the University of Tasmania, which is Lutruwita, so we’d like to recognise Lutruwita Tasmanian Aboriginal land and in the spirit of reconciliation, ADCET respectfully acknowledges Lutruwita nations and also recognises the Aboriginal history and culture and land, and I want to pay my respects to Aboriginal Elders past and present, and to all the many Aboriginal people that did not make elder status. I also acknowledge all the countries participating in this meeting or in this webinar, and also acknowledge their elders past, their ancestors and legacy to us, and any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating today. I invite you into the chat to put where you are coming from and to say hello to us all.

Today's webinar, Data in Disability Services in Higher Education, will be presented by Dr Kelly George who works within the Academic Governance and Standards at Deakin University and Merrin McCracken, who was a former manager of Access and Inclusion at Deakin. Today Merrin and Kelly will share their experiences in using the data available to disability services in higher education. It's a hot topic and it's a question we often get asked about. We have a couple of pages on ADCET around data that relates to the VET sector and the higher education sector and they're well frequented pages, so this is just going to add to the suite of information that we provide to the sector.

Before I hand over to our wonderful presenters, just a couple more housekeeping details. As we said, we are being captioned by Bradley Reporting. Michelle is undertaking that job. The webinar will be recorded and the recording will sit on ADCET, so you will be available to access that going forward. Also the slides will be on ADCET. If you have any technical difficulties, you can email us at admin@adcet.edu.au. Presentation will go for about 45 to 50 minutes and then we will have ten minutes or so for questions. As I encourage you to do to introduce yourself in the chat box and have conversations with each other through the chat, but if you would like to ask Merrin and Kelly any questions, at the end of the webinar, please put that in the Q & A box, so we’re able to then manage the questions from there. It makes it a bit easier. You will also be able to upvote the favourite questions, so that will go to the top that it's easier for me to manage the questions that will come in.

This is the first of this series, so we will have another webinar next week, and Merrin and Kelly will speak more about that at the end of the webinar. Now I'm going to throw over to both of you, but I think you are starting Merrin. So thank you, Kelly, thank you, Merrin, and look forward to hearing this chat.

MERRIN MCCRACKEN: Thank you, Darlene. And hi, everybody. It's lovely to join you. Kelly and I are joining you from the lands of the Warrawong people of the Kulin nations, and we pay our deepest respects to their elders past and present. Our topic today is data, and the sad truth of it is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over represented in our data around disability, health and medical conditions, so I just wanted to acknowledge that before we get started.

Now, a few things by way of introduction. So as Darlene mentioned, Kelly and I are drawing on our Deakin experiences, her current ones, my past ones, but not too distant past and I thank all those Deakin people there for allowing me to still do some work under that name. We have worked together, over the years, Kelly and I, and really explored our use of data and how we can help each other in this way. So we want to share some of our experiences today, and also next week, and some from other universities again next week too.

We are also drawing on the information that we got from the survey that a number of managers across universities contributed to a couple of months ago. I want to also note that a lot of what we cover today will be really familiar to a lot of you. And there may be much more that you can add to this story, so whether that happens in the chat, whether it happens afterwards by contacting us, and so on, but we also thought it's just really useful to sort of look at those fundamental sets of data that we use and record it, I guess, as a resource for ADCET for people who may come into the roles into the future and also something that we build on. We are looking today particularly at higher ed data. And in particular we will cover the department’s higher ed statistics, our own service data, and the quality indicators for learning and teaching surveys. We're not going to look at the large societal data like the Australian Bureau of Statistics or Australian Institute of Health and Welfare statistics. There are links to those on ADCET, and in a little while we will spend time with ADCET and just make sure we have the most up‑to‑date areas there on the ADCET website.

So not the big national datasets. And just by way of introduction, I wanted to talk a little bit about data and why we use it and when is data good data. So first up, why we use our data. And there is more we could add to this, I’m sure. But data really helps us to meet our obligations, it helps us to inform policy, and helps us to identify priorities for action and for further research, our own research, or in combination with other researches. We use it to evaluate our work, and we can use it to hold people in areas to account and to provide feedback. And when is data good data? This is where our planning unit colleagues can really help us if we aren't very proficient in data, which I don’t pretend to be at all, but data is good data when it’s collected consistently, when it is a big enough data set for purpose, and that contains depending what the purpose is. And, again, I would often refer to colleagues who are researchers or to the planning unit to say is this data, relevant to what I'm trying to find out, is there enough or is the set too small for us to draw any conclusions from. We need to be careful not to use data purely on its own. We need to consider the context and also apply scrutiny and challenge the data and the things that it's telling us. That's the next one covered.

So we are going to start with higher ed statistics. What are they? So these will be very familiar to you all, I'm sure. The Australian Department of Ed collects and disseminates statistics relating to the provision of higher education at all education institutions. Now we've just gone to the web page, the cover web page on the higher ed statistics. I meant to say to everyone, in the chat we have put the links that are also in this presentation, so at a couple of points you might choose to go in and follow what we are doing on the links, or just watch as we navigate them along. So this is the front page of the higher ed statistics website. It tells us a bit of background about those statistics. It tells us that they're a comprehensive set of statistics managed in the higher ed collection, and the data includes a whole range of things, some of which we take more or less notice of. So it tells us about the courses provided by higher ed institutions, the numbers and characteristics of students undertaking courses, and this is the one that we will look the most at, but it also has information about student load, about completion of units study and courses, student liability status, numbers and characteristics of staff in higher ed institutions - I didn't know that - income and expenditure for higher ed institutions, research activity and undergrad applications offers and acceptances.

So how is this data collected? And I want to talk just a little bit about – we had some feedback from people in the survey about the enrolment data that all of our universities collect, so we know that the statistics are gathered through the enrolment data that every university has, and the department provides a set of questions that must be considered in that data, and particularly around disability, a range of different disability types. Interrupt me if I'm missing anything or get anything wrong here, Kel. We know that that data can be a little problematic. So in talking to the different universities, we find that some of them are using the standard definitions that the department provides for the collection of that data on enrolment where students are asked to indicate themselves. We find that other universities have added some additional categories and then mapping them back to the department ones. And some of those additional categories include students who are carers of people with disabilities, students with ADHD, autism and neurodiversity, and sometimes more breakdown on vision and hearing impairment.

From that survey we had a couple of quotes, and these will resonate for you, some of the problem is that disclosure is voluntary and many choose not to disclose. It only occurs at enrolment stage, which doesn’t capture disabilities acquired by study, international students are particularly concerned about how disclosure will impact their visas. Students are responsible for updating disability details. We include it as a step in our registration process, but some students just don't do it, but we provide a service anyway.

So we know that some of these are problematic. We know that they're not complete or accurate. They’re jolly big sets of data, so the little bits that aren't collected probably aren't affecting the statistics overall, but it's important for us as disability providers we’d like to see them as accurate as they can be. We know they're not complete or accurate. Students choose not to share, they're not often updated. We have a real value dilemma in this area, I think. In so many ways we’d like it to be that students don't need to disclose or share that they have a disability. We would like our environment to be inclusive and there be no need to do that. On the other hand, I think it's really valuable for us, as big institutions, to be aware of how well we are representing the society that we are in and reflecting that broader population. So for that reason, I think that data is really important.

We know that the numbers in the higher ed statistics have increased significantly over the years, and if we just took that data on face value, it might say to us there's so many more students with disability studying at university, but I think we all know it's much more nuanced than that. Yes, I think there are more students with disability studying at university. Maybe there is more students needing assistance and needing to tick that box. There's much greater awareness over the last few years of medical conditions and mental health conditions being part of that cohort for whom we can provide some support, and I think that I would reflect that our experience of the general use of access plans now has really encouraged the identification of students with disability in order to get an access plan to get adjustments, when in the past perhaps those adjustments might have happened within particular units.

Now we are going to look at the higher ed statistics, and Kel will help to drive us through that. If other people would like to log on to that link, you are welcome to, or you can do that later and have a look, or you may well be very familiar with them. So we are going to look at the 2020 statistics today. These are an interesting set because they're a set that we think there might be a few little problems with but, nonetheless, I think it’s useful for us to have a look at them. And where are we going to start, Kel?

KELLY GEORGE: I think we will start with section 11, equity groups, so if I click on this and open that up.

MERRIN: So just before you open it and while it's opening, just to note the different equity groups that are there that are part of this data, and, again, you will all know this, but for the record there's a number of equity groups, and because they're included in this data it allows us at planning unit and institutional level to do some work on looking at intersectionality as well with people from low socio-economic backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, regional and remote locations.

KELLY: Okay, so this is section 11 opening up. So generally I jumped straight in to table 11.1. This has domestic students that are commencing, as well as all domestic students. There's a number of equity groups down the side here, and you've got a bit of a time series across the top. These are whole numbers. So you can see, as Merrin was saying, in 2006 there was roughly 28,000 students with disability, in 2020 that was up to 84,000-ish, so there's been a steep increase.

The next table we will look at is provide a breakdown by university and state. So if you look in column D you can look across to your institution, find your whole numbers of students with disability.

MERRIN: So these are all students domestic ‑ -

KELLY: No, it’s only domestic.

MERRIN: Only domestic, but commencing and continuing students.

KELLY: That's right. So based on the contents, you pick the one you want.

MERRIN: Is there any collection of data around international students?

KELLY: We have the data internally but it's not published. I think there's a legislative requirement from the government to make sure that we track all this information but it’s not for international students. There's the whole numbers there. If you want to learn about the percentages of your students with disability at your institution you need to jump in to a second spreadsheet.

MERRIN: Just to interrupt, please if anyone has any questions about any of these things as we go, if you can put them in the Q&A and we will return to them at the end.

KELLY: So the other section that's really helpful for looking at students with disability is section 16, equity performance data.

MERRIN: I think this is the one I would go to most often, and probably all of our teams and managers use the most. While we are on this contents page, would you do a little recap for us about the definitions around access, participation, retention and success?

KELLY: Yes. So access numbers refer to the number of commencing students with disability or from any equity group. And the access rate is that number expressed as a percentage of all your commencing students. Participation is essentially the same thing but we’re looking at more under commencing, so that would be all your domestic students.

MERRIN: That's the one I think I use the most because that tells me the full numbers, and it’s undergrad and you can get an undergrad, postgrad and together.

KELLY: Yeah, so it looks like here we’ve got all domestic and then a breakdown for just undergrads. Then you have retention which looks at the percentage of students studying in one year that return the next year to continue study. Success is a representation of unit success, so the number of units passed out of all the units taken, rather than successful completion measure.

MERRIN: That one has always confused me a bit. Can we get completion figures as well?

KELLY: There is this course completion number which is table 16.10, but I have a few issues with it because it's not standardised by length of course, or starting date, or a number of things that can affect how long it takes.

MERRIN: If people move from one course to another.

KELLY: Exactly, so there is other areas that you can go to to get to that, but I think that might be too much for today. So if we go to participation rates, that's like the key statistic for comparing yourself to other institutions. It's a huge time series with all equity groups.

MERRIN: For people who love excel data, these are really fun things, but if you are not really proficient at it, a planning unit person can be very handy too, and, Kelly, you've done lots of work with these tables to develop graphs and all sorts of things for us.

KELLY: Yep. So these are your participation rates, so that’s the percentage of students with disability at your institution per year. Do you want to talk about that?

MERRIN: I wanted to touch on the 2020 data briefly just to indicate that we have got a few, there's a few universities - not many - but a few of them, and Deakin is one of them, where we are concerned about the data for 2020, and if you look across this rate it’s saying what the percentage of students with disability are at Deakin, and in 2019 it was nearly 9 percent and in 2020 it dropped back to 4.9 - it actually didn't, and we know that. So we were a bit concerned because this data is used by very many people to make sure it's accurate, I think we are still working - I think Deakin is still working with the department on updating that, but it's one of those things I mentioned earlier about opportunities for us to work as a sector on things.

I think it's really important that we emphasise with the department that this data is very important, not the least because some of our funding is reliant on it as well, but also because it's so useful in so many research ways. What other things ‑ I know you've done graphs, we'll show some of these next week that shows the trajectory of the increase, even if we don't take the full stretch of timeline, but even in the last five to ten years, the trajectory of increase of percentage of students with disability is a really steep curve, and if we compare that curve with a curve for all students we see a very big difference between the growth of students with disability and the growth of numbers of all students. Was there anything else on this one?

KELLY: So I guess because it's got all institutions, there’s the state total and sector total, so you can look at yourself in comparison to those totals. So next we want to go to 16.8.

MERRIN: So we are now looking at table 16.8 which is equity success rates for domestic students.

KELLY: So when it first opens up this domestic national total, that's a success rate of all students, so we need to scroll across for disability. So we will take out this again. Now we can look at all domestic students in this column against students with disabilities in that column.

MERRIN: Probably the success rates are one of the areas where we see the biggest gaps - - -

KELLY: Yeah.

MERRIN: - - - between all domestic students and students with disability.

KELLY: So essentially, we are looking at this column compared to AN column and you can see there's quite a drop between all students and students with disability. Again, you can look by institutions, date, sector total, lots of options for you to look at and there’s also the other equity groups if you wanted to do that.

MERRIN: The difference here of table A providers, which is all our usual public universities of 88.37 compared to 82.35, and that would be a statistically - what's the word - significant difference. And, again, we’re just having a look at this today but more on this next week, but just to flag these are some of the areas where we might talk with faculties or use them in our disability access plans about some of the gaps and what might be some of the things we can do to close that gap and get those success rates up. What next?

KELLY: This one is retention, so a similar process.

MERRIN: Now Kel is just hiding a few more columns so we can have a look at the comparison between the domestic totals.

KELLY: That's all students there and that's students with disability, so you can see the retention is a bit lower for students with disability in most cases. So that's another key measure that we look at, and this data, as its publically available, you can do benchmarking against yourself, but if you get in touch with your planning unit, you can do more rich comparisons at an institution level.

MERRIN: Thank you, Kel.

KELLY: I think we are going to have a quick look at - - -

MERRIN: The visual analytics. So just a little comment on retention, that is probably one of the areas where we see a little closer – we see students with disability a bit closer in terms of their retention rates.

KELLY: So this visual dashboard that the department prepared, it's like a dynamic representation of those spreadsheets that we just saw but there's a few extra complexities because it's a bit more dynamic, so you need to click on a few things.

MERRIN: And we’re just having a really tiny look at this and I think all it will do is show that it's quite complicated, but if you spend time with them and playing around with them, and maybe working with someone who knows how to use them, they can be quite useful.

KELLY: There's also the NCSEHE one.

MERRIN: Yes, so the other data set that is a bit like this visual analytics is the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, the NCSEHE link, which is on the ADCET website. We haven’t included it here, and partly because they haven't updated their numbers for 2020 because they were a bit concerned that they weren't 100 percent accurate as well. We will put that link perhaps in the chat. I’m not seeing the chat but, Gab, maybe you might want to put the link in there. It's quite an easy one to have a look at, so you can see how you are progressing, you can look at some comparisons, and it's a really nice visual that you can take to show what's happening to other people in your university who may not have looked at that site. I find that it looks great and you can really use it to demonstrate the points that you might be making in talking with others in your institution. So that's our higher ed statistics, Kel.

So the only other thing was to mention how planning units can assist, and I guess we’ve covered that quite a bit. I think that what I have found over the years is how useful it is to go to the Kellys of this world and say, “Look, help me understand this” or “can I dive into this a bit more”. There's all those permutations and combinations of all that higher ed data that's there, and as we go on to look at our own service data we will see how much richer we can add to that.

KELLY: One other thing with your institution data, you can look at intersections between equity groups, looking at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that also have a disability. These things you can't pick up in the publically available data. They’re just strictly one equity group.

MERRIN: Thanks, Kel. Now we are going to look at section two, which is our own disability service data. Again, I'm going to draw on some of the results that people gave in the survey. So, what are they? They are the information that we collect from students who use our services and some information about the services that we provide. Some of them include information about what students are studying, and, as we know, they're not a direct overlap with the higher ed statistics. I guess we have touched on already there are perhaps some ways that we can look to bring these figures closer together, updating enrolment data in the surveys, people told us they were doing some different things, so some universities are now asking students to go back in and update that enrolment data, some of them are seeking and getting permission from students to go in and update that enrolment data themselves. I know at Deakin we’ve recently implemented a sort of semi-automatic report that comes from our service data to the general enrolment data and does an update each month of that. So, again, things that would be really good for us to have a think about as a sector and think about whether we can bring our practices closer together in that, and I really welcome people's ideas around that.

So how are they collected? Along with student numbers there's so much more our systems can do now and I think that's a thing that ten or 12 years we have seen enormous advances in what our data systems can do. That’s not to say they're perfect yet but they’re much more than they used to be. Some of them link to other student management systems, and we will look now at a summary of the survey responses about our own systems that we have been using across the sector. I think there were responses from 15 universities in that survey that don't give us the full picture but give us a bit of a sense.

So the systems that we are using to collect information, Simplicity is the most common, and I think there’s a number - I'm not sure yet whether there's a community of practice developed around Simplicity users, but I know that was on the cards. There's a couple of universities using Service Now, Point and Click, and Oracle. Then there are a number that have their own individual systems. So we haven't got commonality of systems across our disability services and I suspect we never will because of the different systems that are used across all the universities.

On the next slide we will look at the sorts of things that we're collecting, and I do feel like this is the thing where we might be able to, and we are becoming more common in what we are collecting, so the ability for us to benchmark and compare and share is much greater.

So of the 15 responses, this information from the survey, all 15 were counting the number of students, most were assessing the disability information in type, including being able to record multiple disability types, 13 had information about the number of access plans delivered, 12 had a bunch of information about the types of accommodations and adjustments that students were receiving. That's a really useful piece of data; researchers love that we have that. All 15 had the number of appointments and the hours of services provided were largely around the hours of services provided through the appointments. Four were recording the costs per students, and most of them, again, were looking at the ratio of students to advisors. Some of them were also collecting things like information about assistive technology and equipment, faculty and unit details and referrals on to other areas.

We also asked people what works and what could be improved. And I guess, in general, people are saying much has improved, but systems can't seem to do all we need of them. Some are not well supported by the university or staff are not well resourced to use them for reporting, and there's none that capture the time spent indirectly on the students. There may be some out there. So there weren't in the 15 respondents, so if anyone has got that, let us know. Here's a couple of quotes of what people said: it’s manual data entry with a high risk of error and as one system is being used for many different purposes, there are data errors due to filtering issues. We work across two systems that don’t talk to each other. One system doesn’t link to the student system. The reporting capability is very limited and require significant IT resourcing to create the level of reporting that’s useful. I can’t create ad hoc reports which I find limiting. What works, they capture data related to type and nature of disability, the ability to monitor interactions with students, monitor trends with units, faculty and types of adjustments, peak times for appointments, year-on-year comparison. What doesn't work is analysis on time spent in an interaction while supporting a student. Reporting is clunky and inconsistent and there's no support within the university on its use and external supports are often not existent.

So they're the themes that came through from our survey around the disability service data, but given all those things that could be improved there’s still an enormous a wealth of data that sits in those systems and, again, we will have quite a big look at that next week when we see some of the things that can be done.

So how can planning units assist? I think this is another area, not just planning units but other people within the university. Deakin, for example, was using Service Now, as a number of other areas of the university are, and there are some people with really developed expertise in that and have helped us to work out how to get really good reports from the systems. Kel, we sent you big export masses of data from our database at times and had you play around with it and interrogate some of the data that we’ve had and come up with some things.

KELLY: And possible to link to student outcomes, so you can look at success rates versus different measures you collect. So there is a way to look into it further.

MERRIN: And also to do that comparison about the higher ed statistics and our statistics and see how many students fall in the overlap, or out of the overlap area, yeah. This data, of course, rides our standard functions like distribution of access plans, or the data and systems disability access plans, consider caseloads, and help us with our reporting to the department. I sense there's so many other uses for this data in research planning policy and telling the story of students with disability. I know it's a little bit dreamworld to think that we might have the time to use that but I guess it's one of the reasons for doing this session, is to sort of encourage us to share where we have used some of those things to tell stories, to help us identify students we want to hear more from and all those sorts of things.

So we are now on to our QILT surveys. So just by way of introduction these are a set of national surveys that are run by the social research centre but they’re contracted by the Federal Government to provide this information. I guess they form another set of data around higher ed. So there's three ‑ I think there are only three in this set. So QILT stands for quality indicators of learning and teaching.

KELLY: So the student experience survey looks at student experiences throughout their study, asks things about student support, teaching quality, development of equipment, that sort of thing, and that is looking at students who are current, whereas the graduate outcome survey is a survey of students after they’ve completed and measures short-term employment, while the graduate outcome longitudinal is similar but a further time point outside of completion. I think three years, so we’re looking at short-term then long‑term employment so you can look at how your students are travelling compared to other students.

MERRIN: And they’re sort of national campaigns but the response rate always surprises me, they’re actually not that bad. They're being sent to students and can you remember the sort of response rates that we would get? If they're going to 60,000 students at Deakin, for example.

KELLY: We usually get around 30 percent.

MERRIN: So they’re big numbers. So Kel is going to show us these reports. The link is there again, and this is a set of reports that I didn't know about for years, and probably found out about them five or six or seven years ago, I'm not sure, and then started to think I wonder if we can look at these through the lens of students with disability as they're such big surveys that are being run. And sure enough, talked to Kel and she said yeah we can.

KELLY: So they’re rather large data sets, but they have all of the equity information, as well as in your own institution you will have course, faculty, a number of different things you can break it down by but if you want to look at students with disabilities overall, jumping into the QILT national report is pretty good.

MERRIN: So these reports didn't used to bring out the information about disability but they have in the last couple of years.

KELLY: The last few years, yeah. So generally, you usually just do a control find to search for mentions of disability, and then you can see these are the scales that students are asked about, skills development, learner engagement, teaching quality, student support and learning resources. So you can see that students with disability report a slightly lower experience than students with no report of disability. Just shows something to be aware of.

MERRIN: Teacher quality is pretty good and student support looks pretty good.

KELLY: Yeah, quite good. then there's overall experiences, 3 percent difference in the sector. That's not too bad.

MERRIN: You can dive into these a little bit more - is it this one? You can dive further to the specific questions.

KELLY: Each of these scales is made up about four or five questions, I think, and they turn that into an overall scale, so you can delve right into the survey questions that make that. You just need to contact your planning unit. Your planning unit will get an institution data set, so it's all your students, and you can link that to success and retention data, that sort of thing, and they’ll also get a national data set so you can look at overall trends in the sector with institutions similar to yours.

MERRIN: And I would come to you and say can you have a look at this, are there areas where there is significant differences between the experiences with students with disability and students without disability. Again, really interesting when you are talking with other areas at the university in teaching and learning considering inclusive ed or developing access plans and action plans and those sort of things. So is that it for the student experience survey? These are annual?

KELLY: Yes.

MERRIN: And you are now back to seeing the QILT headline and we are now looking at the graduate outcomes survey.

KELLY: A similar setup, they have a summary of the results. I don't know that it's interactive. No, there are some things you can look at. I don't think it goes to the level of disability in that particular slide but if you go down to download the report again, you will be able to – and, again, I'd just do a word search on disability or - - -

MERRIN: You are not going to read the 60 pages.

KELLY: That’s right. This report shows overall employment, part-time, full‑time, that sort of thing, further study, so there is a lot of information you can get about students with disability.

MERRIN: We had a look at one page of this yesterday, can you remember which one it was? I think it was employment that was talking about the 11 percent gap in students. Again, these are things that we know but it's very useful to be backed up by stats when we talk to our careers people and look at making the argument for some more work in this area. The last one is the graduate outcomes longitudinal which is - - -

KELLY: Same question set, it’s just asked a further three years out. It’s the people have progressed in their careers so they might be earning more money or have progressed to different jobs.

MERRIN: So we won't look at that today, just for time's sake. So, again, I think you touched on how planning units can assist here, finding out that looking at things through a particular lens. And, again, I guess with cautions around the conclusions we draw from these things, they're more indicating things we might want to investigate more or talk to students about their experience and make sure that we are not just drawing conclusions directly from the data. It's a large data set, it's really useful at a strategic and planning level, I think, and just before we finish - which we are getting close to - I just wanted to comment on, of course individual universities do their own set of overarching data as well, so things like students satisfaction surveys that the university does just for itself. Getting started is one that we do at Deakin, which is just about students’ experience of the first six to eight weeks or trimester of study. Some equity and inclusional equity and diversity units might do specific surveys of students. Again, these are things that it's really useful to ask whoever is running those surveys, (1) to be involved in what some of the questions are but (2) to look at the outcomes through various lenses including a disability lens.

So we’ve just mentioned a few sort of potential opportunities to explore further as a sector. And I think perhaps there's some ways – and, Darlene, I know ADCET is incredibly busy at the moment and I'm not sure if the time is right now, but having a look at perhaps how we might share the way we are collecting enrolment data and sort of make sure that it's apples and apples on those lists, and I think the differences are probably small but they make a difference when that data is being used to allocate disability support program funding, or when we are wanting to draw attention to various things in our own institutions when we're making some strategic points, I guess.

We worked with the department some years ago to improve and include particularly the mental health category that has made a big difference to what we can do with that data but it might be useful to have a look at improving those definitions again, and particularly in those areas of neurodiversity and carers where students at the moment are sometimes not seeing themselves in the questions that are being asked. Improving that correlation of higher ed and disability service user statistics, and one of the areas I think we struggled with a little bit was really making sure we had good consent statements from students if we were going to be updating that information on their behalf, so being clear that students were really clear that that was it, that it was de-identified, and perhaps sharing some practice around that.

And the other thing I thought about was developing a completed wishlist for our systems and maybe a community of practice around reporting, and support into the future. And next week, just to mention next week, we are going to have a little look at more practical examples of how we use data for planning, how some of our research areas at Deakin have worked with us to do some research and use some of the data that we collect at a service level, mental health strategy development, course reviews. I don't know if we will do the estimating disability support program funding, because that's a very tricky thing to do. And now I guess we want to invite some questions, comments, any other ideas that people have. Thank you, Darlene.

DARLENE: Brilliant, thank you so much. I always get excited by data, but then - - -

MERRIN: You either do or you don’t.

DARLENE: But then I get excited by Merrin’s Christmas wishlist and what we can do. It all seems like work. But, no, it will be great work and it will be fabulous for next year to look at a priority and bringing some of those wishes to fruition. I will also add to my santa list and hopefully they will listen to us. Okay, we had a couple of questions coming through. We encourage people to put questio in the Q&A. From Elizabeth, do you know the impact of not having the data for 2020, you know, true and correct for everybody. Are there impacts that you see for us in the sector by not having that data true and correct?

MERRIN: There’s a couple of things. There’s immediate ones because of that disability support program funding, and we know that that’s the data that’s used for them to allocate – I always get this bit wrong – but 55% of the disability support fund money is allocated proportionally to each university based on the numbers of students with disability they have. So if that data is inaccurate, if it’s over or under, it means that the proportion of funding isn't going to be correct. I think when you look at something like the NCSEHE, and timelines of data, they’re just skewed if it's not right, you know, if we see a funny dip or rise – Kelly, you might want to say what you have been discussing with the department.

KELLY: I think that the data will be updated when the 2021 comes out so there won't be that dip, but if we don’t get our way, there will be the drop but then it will go back to what it should be, so there will be a huge increase.

MERRIN: Look, I do think there was some very specific problems. I know at Deakin, it was around the crossover in to the using the TCSI, tertiary collection student information systems that have been introduced over the last couple of years. There were some system problems that made it problematic, and we did wonder whether I think, what do with use, tribal, there might have been particular issues for some universities, so I feel like it's probably not ‑ I think it's had impact on particular institutions but I think for many of them it was probably accurate.

DARLENE: Okay, thank you. Elizabeth also asked about any links to your findings, from the survey that was undertaken, is there anything that we are going to produce from that besides this webinar?

MERRIN: Look, I think what I would like to do is just write that survey report up and perhaps we can add it to the notes for this webinar. So we have got some summaries of it but I think it just needs a little bit more moulding and we can write it up a little bit more.

DARLENE: Brilliant. Charlotte has asked when institutions look at staff/student ratio, are people looking at numbers or registered students with disability services, total institution enrolment or both?

MERRIN: Interesting question, and I don’t know the answer for everyone. And I think that’s a really interesting question because I guess that we have, in the past, and Steve and Nick may well be in this webinar in their role now, but we have looked particularly at students who are registered with our staff ratios but I think there's a strong argument to be made because of our role in working around promoting inclusion and looking at disability awareness and education, and not just the individual work with individual students who register with us, I think the arguments can be made equally for both sets of data, really, and I think if there is a particular difference between the students who are getting individual support compared with the broader cohort, it's a good argument to make for why we need to be looking at working on inclusion and other approaches as well.

DARLENE: Benchmarking is such a huge thing for us in the sector, we are still coming to terms with the infrastructure. Yesterday the University of Tasmania did a staff engagement survey, it’s an international benchmarked survey, and it was fabulous to see the data about how poorly we may do or how good we do and benchmark that against every other university that has undertaken the survey, and I got so excited thinking, you know, imagine in Australia that we had the money to build a tool like that. We can really clearly have that stuff benchmarked, which is on my Christmas wishlist.

MERRIN: I think that's the sort of thing that even if we are using different systems, but we are asking or collecting the same or similar information, and not just nationally but internationally as well. I'm afraid, Norway, I didn't get to the Oslo or universities which I was hoping to do, but I think there's huge opportunity for us to be looking at what's happening internationally as well if we are collecting this data in a consistent way.

DARLENE: What a beautiful person you are, Merrin, going on holidays and trying to break down the doors of the universities to where you go. Just a question in the chat also was that I note section 11 includes non-unis but in section 16 is only Table A and Table B. That was in one of the data sets you showed. Why this would be?

KELLY: Universities Australia has an agreement to get certain types of data that we're allowed to access. I don't think that the Newies are involved in the second one. it's a University Australia agreement and it’s one thing that's missing. That happened well before the new heads came across, so I think there would need to be a new agreement put together if we want to have both.

DARLENE: Thank you. There was a question around long COVID, if it's being considered as a disability but it’s probably outside of the scope, but I didn't know if you wanted to make any comment if long COVID is presenting and people are identifying with that impact, in a way that they would identify as having a disability.

MERRIN: It’s probably not for me to comment, other than to say I have seen a few discussions on AustEd, and clearly it does fit - it would fit into the definition around medical and health conditions and would qualify, in that sense, to the disability. I'm gathering that a number of universities have seen an increase in students presenting with long COVID.

DARLENE: Definitely. Alright, that's all we've got time for, absolutely fabulous. My appetite has been whet to look at more data and cut it up how you guys have done it today, so that's brilliant. We've put a link into the survey. Please fill that in, we love to hear your responses also to get ideas, but the most important thing is we have the webinar on next week which will provide an opportunity for more ways to utilise the longitudinal data.

MERRIN: Darlene,there will be some people I will be in touch with in the next few days, and if anyone has anything they'd like to share next week, some practice you've done or the way you used your data, contact me and let me know in the next few days. That would be fantastic.

DARLENE: That would be great. So that's on 25 October, 1 o'clock AEDT time, so look forward to seeing you all again, and thank you so much, Kelly and Merrin, for a great presentation and we’re seeing all the great feedback in the chat of how much people enjoyed it. Thank you, have a great day. See you all, bye.