REBECCA MORRIS: Okay. Hello, welcome, everybody. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Rebecca Morris. I am the Manager of the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, or ADCET for short. My pronouns are she/her. I am a woman in my mid ish 40s. I have long brown and grey hair and today I'm wearing a white shirt and clear framed glasses.

This webinar is being live captioned. To activate the captions click the CC button in the tool bar that is located it will be either on the top or the bottom of your screen. We also have captions available via browser which Kylie will now add to the chat box.

ADCET is hosted on Lutruwita, Tasmania 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 personally am located on the lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people and I acknowledge all other countries and lands from participants in this meeting, and I welcome any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining this webinar today. Please let us know where you're joining us from in the chat.

Today's webinar, the AIS Framework, operationalising accessibility within student support services, presented by Emma Conway, will explore the strategic model designed to enhance the student experience by embedding inclusive practice across student support services.

Before we begin a few more housekeeping details. This webinar is being live captioned by Sharon from Captify Live and will be recorded. The recording will be available on ADCET in the coming days. The presentation will run for around 45 to 50 minutes or so. Then at the end there will be 10 minutes for questions.

Throughout the presentation, feel free to use the chat box with us and each other, but please remember to choose everyone so we can all read what you have to say.

Emma is happy to answer questions at the end. If you have a question you would like asked, please use the Q&A box rather than the chat box. Also, please feel free, and we very much encourage you to use the reaction emojis during the presentation. It's a lovely way to engage with the online content and just let Emma know that you're out there listening and following along. So thank you so much, Emma, over to you.

EMMA CONWAY: Thanks, Rebecca. Good morning, everyone. As you know, I am Emma. My pronouns are she/her and I am a woman clinging on to her mid 40s and I have shoulder length brown hair and glasses. Thank you to ADCET for the opportunity to introduce the AIS Framework. It's wonderful to be here with you and today I'm going to be sharing insights into a journey that began as a summer practicum project and quickly evolved into the development and launch of the Accessibility in Service Framework.

What started as a small initiative has grown into a structured approach to embedding inclusive practice across our support services.

So I'm going to walk you through each of the four pillars of the framework, exploring the thinking behind them, their purpose, how they're being applied, and the progress we've made so far. And you'll notice that some slides contain quite a bit of information. I will look at my notes because I don't want to miss anything for you. And they're designed so you can actually go back and have a look at them.

So before we dive into the webinar I'd like to share a little bit about myself as this provides some relevant context to how the framework was shaped. Alongside the data research and insights from staff and students, my professional and lived experience plays a significant role has played a significant role in its development. I have worked within various roles supporting students within our support services at ECU. Throughout my career I've worked in a range of diverse client facing roles.

I'm also co-chair of the ECU Staff With Disability Network, a leadership team member of the Disability Ally Network, as part of the co design process for those as well, and I'm a psychology student at ECU, a neurodivergent woman and a carer.

In developing the framework, I drew upon the impacts of attitudes and ableism and discrimination that I myself had experienced and that I'd witnessed; my own student experience navigating support systems and processes; insights from ECU's disability networks, particularly the barriers faced by disabled staff; knowledge gained through my psychology studies; professional development, including training in ADHD assessment and adult interventions for ADHD and mental health support training.

So these experiences, combined with research and data, helped shape the four pillars of the framework.

So now you have a little context around the lens that contributed to the development, let's take a step back and talk about why this work really matters, because behind every process and pillar is a real impact on real people and I'd like to share a bit about that now.

So accessibility and service delivery is often given limited thought or completely overlooked. Too often it's about ticking boxes to meet minimum standards without fully understanding the impact of poor accessibility or recognising the benefits of doing it well. And one of the key questions we asked during the project is what does poor accessibility and service delivery look like and what are the consequences?

As a disabled person accessing services, I can attest, and I'm sure many of you are aware, living in a society that's not built for you often requires constant planning and strategy to overcome barriers. Many of us have had to invest extra time and effort physically, mentally and emotionally just to navigate these processes to engage with services. And that additional burden can lead to reduced wellbeing, increased social isolation and often increased financial cost.

I remember the first time I was provided visual directions for an external event. And it was such a small thing but it made a huge difference to me, and in that moment I felt seen, heard and understood. And the power of that should never be underestimated. Because when we feel that, we're more able to step forward and engage with the world around us. So when people feel seen and understood, we can just engage more and relax a little bit and it takes that pressure off.

So how we design our service environments, our processes and how we interact with students matters deeply. Creating accessible services allows us to offer early advice, identify appropriate support and deliver a more student-centred experience. And just as importantly, it helps us foster an inclusive environment that enhances psychological safety for both students and our staff.

So now that we've explored why accessibility and service delivery really matters, let me share how this understanding helped shape the development of the AIS Framework. And I'm going to start with a scale of ECU and the objectives on the initial project.

So our university is a medium sized institution with three campuses across Western Australia. We have approximately 30,000 students enrolled from over a hundred countries with the majority being domestic students attending campuses in the Perth metropolitan area.

And the framework was first piloted in our student hub, which includes 30 student facing staff who support students both online and in person. Their work involves providing complex course advice, general support and facilitating referrals to other areas and services.

As mentioned earlier, the project formed part of my summer practicum. And when I received these objectives outlined on the slide I was genuinely excited. It felt like 20 years of a baby I was just about to birth. The project aligned perfectly with my passions and my interests. And if anyone knows, for me, as a neurodivergent person, it was a dream opportunity, months of hyperfocus, deep dives, connecting the dots and I was really in my happy place.

So project objectives. We were really looking to design and embed accessibility and inclusive processes within the student experience. And to do that we conducted a desktop review of frameworks from other institutions. We had a look at what other people were doing in this space and also best practice standards. And we identified what was missing in our current approach. And then we moved to look at solutions that were practical, informed and drew on multiple influences and insights.

So with the project objectives in place, the next step was understanding what would shape the framework. This slide highlights the key influences that guided our recommendations and today I'm going to focus on three of those.

I'm going to start with those student insights. So we observed an increase in enrolments from disabled and online students in our last student experience survey. And we found that this was actually also accompanied by a decline in our student satisfaction and sense of belonging for online and disabled students. So this highlighted a clear need for more inclusive and connected support services.

Another key influence was the equity. We have an amazing equity team. So we were looking at the projects and initiatives they were developing and delivering and how they could influence. So the Equity Team, they drive inclusive culture through their own initiatives. They established the Disability Ally Network and the Rainbow Ally Network and the Staff with Disability Ally Network within the last couple of years here at ECU, and they also provide guidance on shaping our policies and practice in relation to disability.

Another key influence were the staff insights. So we held staff consultations through workshops and individual conversations and these were incredibly valuable. And what stood out was a genuine desire among staff to do the right thing. These sessions helped identify the needs of our staff, the gaps in knowledge and confidence, which were critical, and these helped shape those elements of the framework.

So when designing the framework, I do an online experience with the networks, volunteering and working with the networks, the insights from the community, their needs and academic research. I considered both the resources available and the opportunities to maximise impact. And key questions that guided my thinking were how can we bring existing elements together to extend reach? Where's the potential? How can we create the greatest impact, even through the smallest changes? It was about being strategic and resourceful. I am a single parent. I know how to stretch resources and extend them and make the most of them, so I was really applying that skill here. And by identifying it, we already had an understanding of how it connects to support services and finding ways to amplify its effect, or as I like to call it the ripple effect.

So efficiency and feasibility were central and inspired by Australian Disability Network conferences that I've attended, I embraced the idea that progress doesn't require perfection or large scale consultancy projects. Sometimes the smaller steps can lead to meaningful impact. An example I also use for this is I think about I'm an Australian citizen but I'm also British, but I'm going to refer to the British track cycling team. They weren't doing so well back along and they brought in a new coach. That coach looked at making marginal gains, really small gains but in so many different areas. And those small changes contributed to actually a massive overall impact. So the philosophy remained at the back of my mind. So small intentional changes that add up to meaningful transformation.

So with the framework influences and guiding principles in mind, maximising impact for strategic, practical resourceful design, the project review helped identify four key areas. And these became the foundation for the framework forming its four core pillars.

So on this slide I'll introduce each pillar by outlining their identified need and solution. And then we'll explore each of them in more detail, including the thought process behind them, their function and current progress. And please note these aren't in any order in any particular order.

First of all, we had to look at our service design and how we deliver our services to students. And there was a clear need to address those and implement procedures to support accessibility. So we developed an accessibility focus design service. That's what we focused on.

And then we looked at staff capability. We identified that we needed to increase staff awareness, confidence and capability in supporting accessibility. So the solution for that was the creation of an accessibility focused training program.

We then thought about how we can empower our staff, embed those inclusive practices and provide ongoing support and create something that was sustainable. So we launched an Accessibility Champions Initiative which is now called the Accessibility Champions Team or ACT. I'm not into acronyms. There are so many of them but I actually quite like this one. It seemed pretty fitting.

And then we were looking about communication and resources and the consistency of those and how we can improve access to that information. So we've created a centralised resource hub that focuses on accessibility and student wellbeing and developed a communication strategy as well.

So we're going to go into the first pillar now and look at the actual service design. So the design, we're currently in development. And the design was really shaped around several key considerations, which were applying the social model of disability, shifting the focus from fixing the individuals or being an individual problem to fixing the environment; defining a good fit environment that supports diverse student needs; embedding accessibility into everyday practices and processes and not treating it like an add on; sending a consistent message across services and touchpoints; promoting a proactive attitude towards accessibility. And while we may not have all the answers, and that's okay, but we can show up with awareness and a really great attitude and professionalism.

The key is attitude there. I hear it from disabled colleagues and within the community that sometimes when you're just trying to access something, we don't expect people to have all the answers, but just to have a positive engaged attitude makes all the difference.

So this pillar is currently in development and we're focusing on both our digital appointment process and also our physical service environments.

So at the moment we're bringing in a new system feature that allows students, when booking online appointments, to request adjustments. And this also doesn't just have to be for students with disability. We service students from all across the world with different cultural backgrounds and sometimes students come in, they're quite nervous about coming in, sometimes students have difficulty asking for help, sometimes they're very emotional, they're going through a lot and may require just a little bit more privacy. So they're able to request that in that appointment. And that also helps us to prepare more fully for them. Also, we're looking at doing online video appointments and not just over the phone. We want to be able to create that human connection. A lot of students now I've observed are feeling quite lonely and separated with studying online. So we want to really keep that human connection. And also those video appointments offers the opportunity for captions, if needed, and so forth. So it gives a little bit more flexibility as well.

Additionally, within the physical environment we're looking at our standard operating procedures. We're looking at how we're set up to support students. So we're bringing in very clear procedures so staff know what to do, where to go, who to speak to when supporting students with adjustments. We're looking at bringing in assistive technology within our student hub to support self-enrolment. Low sensory appointment times. A dedicated meeting room that is equipped to meet diverse student needs.

And not only that, we're redesigning how we interact with our students. We're thinking about how those interactions begin, the different points within those interactions, from the way we greet them when they come in to see us, how we manage the interaction and how we follow up with them afterwards. And the goal is to move away from a transactional interaction towards a holistic student centred experience.

And some of the ways that we're doing this include identifying what and where is appropriate to engage with a student and support. And I remember as a student adviser, I had my colleagues bring me boxes of tissues to my desk, and they said, "You always make your students cry." I just want to preface it not in a bad way, it's being able to find out what's going on underneath, and sometimes what they're coming in for isn't actually the issue. So being able to find out what's going on underneath.

So being able to take a student into a quiet area that's comfortable, where they're going to feel not so exposed and vulnerable, to be able to have conversations with you as well. So having that flexibility. And offering those appointment adjustments for individual needs prior to coming in. Also asking a student how they prefer to communicate. It's such a simple thing but we don't do it. And tailoring follow-up methods. I'm going to give you maybe this is a more relatable example, and it is for me as a student, it is actually a customer when dealing with other organisations. Template emails with heaps of information. Multiple links to a complex website or different platforms. And I don't know about you, but if I receive one of those, I'm going to do a few different things. I'm either going to feel overwhelmed. I'm going to procrastinate. Eventually ignore it, or I'm just literally going to forget about it. Or depending on how the dopamine is flowing on that day, I'm either going to click on one of those links, fall down a rabbit hole for hours, forget why I'm there, don't even know how I got where I got because it's not even relevant, I just found this vortex, and then I just abandon it.

So instead, we're asking how the students prefer to be supported. Offering them options when needed and empowering them, and increasing that likelihood that they're going to engage with services and the information that they need.

So really, this pillar is about creating environments that work with students, not against them, and making accessibility a standard and not a special request.

Now we're going to move into our next pillar and this is around resources, communication and our centralised resource hub. So the development of our centralised resource hub was informed by professional experience and staff consultations. And our student support services have a high level of interaction with our students. So it makes them ideally placed to share information, promote services and support new initiatives and social engagement.

However, there were several consistent pain points that emerged in our review. And that's really around knowing what we have and what's going on. Staff weren't aware of available resources. We're in a moving environment where there are a lot of changes a lot of the time and we don't always hear about what's going on in the wider organisation. And also these resources are scattered across platforms and buried in complex we have a very complex website and they're kind of buried, it's difficult to find. And then staff report spending significant amounts of time trying to locate accurate and up to date information.

Also, that brought up questions around, well, how do we maintain it and update content in a consistent way. And also, if we don't know something is available or going on, we don't know to search for it and provide it to the student. So these insights highlighted the need for a centralised, accessible and regularly updated hub that assist staff in navigating support service resources more efficiently.

Okay. So we've created the AIS Centralised Resource Hub and Communications to address those pain points. And it's designed to improve access to those relevant resources for support staff. And this pillar of the framework includes two components, which I'll go through. And the first is the actual resources hub itself, which is centralised, and what it does is bring together all of our resources and it provides information to support our equity cohorts and student wellbeing. And it's split into three sections. Each section begins with an overview. It explains what you'll find in that section and how those resources can support in delivering a student centred service, and it's before an appointment, during your interaction or conversation with a student, and even after your meeting.

And then it gives a scenario example. I'll give you one that we have here. It says, "You have an upcoming appointment with a student who has stated they are struggling managing uni study and has just been diagnosed with ADHD. You're not sure what ADHD is or how it may affect the student and what support ECU can offer." And then it moves into ways that what information you can find here and ways you can seek information and guidance as well.

So that's how they all begin in each section and I'm just going to provide a brief overview on how we use those. So we have a whole section for Accessibility Champions, and this provides an overview of the initiatives and what they do and how you can join. It has a meet the team page and it has photos of each team member, the support service that they work for or work within and a bio. Now, these aren't like professional what I call the blue steel photographs that we have. These are engaging, human I think mine is on there and I've got my puppy dog. You know, it's about creating human connection and creating a community and human feel. And they're approachable.

So within that, there's further information about becoming a member and what their function is and also we have an auditing section within that, because the ACT team actually audit this resource as well.

So then moving on and I just thought I should preface this is only an internal resource hub. So this is just for staff to access and not students. So the staff resources, within that section you'll find guidance on things like inclusive language, our responsibilities under legislation education standards within the Disability Discrimination Act, how to provide accessible support, how to create an accessible document. It has fact sheets on various neurodivergent conditions. A resource from the Australian Disability Network. So they're readily available and they're very easy to read, valuable, relevant. It's covering things like cluttering, dyscalculia, ADHD, all of those listed in there. So if a staff member is seeing a student and they're aware that they have a certain condition, they can go in and just get a little bit of background about that, and maybe ways on how they can support that interaction with them a little bit more fully and the best way to follow up and communicate.

Also another example and it's an ADCET example it's a helpful hints for students with autism transitioning to university as well. So it's not about, necessarily, creating our own, but also reaching out and finding out through professional organisations, looking at authoritative resources that we can include within that.

And then we have our student resources section. Now, this brings together all of the ECU support resources relevant to our equity cohorts that we have available for students. And even for students, they're not in one place. They're in multiple different areas and on different platforms. So we have pulled them together and put them in one place in a structured way that's easy for staff to find. And in there we have things like study tip sheets, managing wellbeing, balancing study and uni, avoiding burnout. We have information that our service staff didn't even know that we had, which is GradWISE, which supports our disabled students transitioning from university into study. For our WIL students, we've got our strength and diversity a fabulous piece of work which one of our ECU teams developed, and I believe they did a webinar on that for ADCET too, about how to navigate employment and advocate for yourself. These are all things that are valuable, that when a student comes in, they want to start and apply for a WIL program, and they've divulged that they have disability, what a great resource that we can just hand them there and then because we know where it is and we can give it to them.

We also have maps for our pride rooms, multi faith rooms, information on our body doubling sessions, our Student Guild clubs that are relevant for them. And the thing about these resources is we've just literally picked them up. For instance, we have an international cafe for our international students to create that connection and help them transition into university life. I remember being an adviser, I could never find when it was on. They don't put the dates necessarily on because they require updating in different areas. So you know what, we've actually put it in there. We have dates they're available, the times they're on and the location. Then what happens is staff members can literally copy and paste that and email it to a student or provide it to a student and it's all there ready to go. And we also have external links to relevant services and best practice resources in there too.

So early feedback from staff around their resource hub, I actually had a staff member come to me and say that they had never heard of the term they heard of ADHD but they didn't know what it was about, what the condition was and how it might affect a student. So having access to that ADHD fact sheet, on their own, and just went and had a look, and it has provided them with a deeper level of empathy and understanding, which then naturally transfers into interactions with their students as well.

So also staff have expressed how well the resource hub content has been structured making it easy to find things. And it's evolving and it's changing and we've encouraged our staff users and our champions to provide feedback, ideas and suggestions for the content of that. Again, it's a starting point.

Then I'm going to move into the AIS Teams channel. So we have that in MS Teams. And we know that our staff are inundated with lots of messages. So we've set this as a dynamic space and very targeted, timely information is distributed through this channel. And we also have Ask ACT, which I'll go into it in a moment. So what will happen is for the month we schedule resources that will go out that is aligned with key moments in that student's academic journey within the semester. It might be resources to support studying for exams. We've got exams coming up. Or the deadline to be able to request adjustments for your exams is coming up, so we'll distribute resources on how students can seek adjustments for exams. So we will look at the timing for those resources and get that out. And that goes to support sorry, our service support staff.

Also we will put the updates for the student socials for that month, where they're at, the cohorts they're for, what's going on. And, for example, we have what's called the Living Room. It's a fantastic low barrier service that's there to support student wellbeing and they run a breakfast club. So we will be able to disseminate that research through that communications channel to let staff know what's going on where in the university.

Also within that we send out staff resources that we believe help staff develop awareness. Things like links to webinars, such as this one, and professional development materials as well and events that might be coming up.

We also support days of significance. That's another thing, and I will talk about that in a moment, through the champions initiative. So we'll promote that through those channels as well.

And also we have a function on there called Ask ACT. So it's a dedicated space where staff can seek guidance if they're not sure about how to implement something or request something. And as I said, our champions aren't disability experts, they're advocates, and they're passionate about supporting students and staff, but they can certainly direct any queries that are beyond them to the relevant teams and people that can help. So that's a space where staff can drop that in directly as and when needed.

So this pillar of the framework is about embedding accessibility, providing focused support and ensuring that consistent messaging as well and to create that sense of belonging for both staff and students.

So we'll move on to the Accessibility Champions Team now. Before I introduce this, I'll just let you know how that's made up. So the champions are volunteer staff members who contribute within their regular work hours. The only requirement is that they are employed and are a regular staff member and there are no other restrictions. They don't have to be full time. They could be part time. It doesn't matter.

So they submit an expression of interest, providing a brief statement of why they would like to become a champion. And when I go back, I always ask if they have any skills they'd like to develop or contribute that maybe they aren't using in their current role.

Importantly, staff with lived experience are given priority when we select our Accessibility Champions. And this ensures the team reflects a diverse perspective and brings authentic insight to our accessibility efforts. Additionally, it's important to recognise that disabled people have historically faced barriers to career progression and skills development.

I'm going to refer to the champions as AC. The AC role is designed to help address this by offering meaningful opportunities for growth, visibility and leadership to all our volunteers.

So during my own experience as a volunteer and my observations of what I'm hearing as well, it became clear that creating a sustainable volunteer service quickly and effectively required identifying potential barriers early on. This slide outlines the key risks that I found across leadership staff and at volunteer levels.

So by recognising these challenges upfront we were able to design solutions that support long term sustainability and minimise disruption.

So how did we create that engagement? So we were building on the identification of those barriers to sustainable volunteering. This slide explores how we can actively foster engagement and by addressing those changes through thoughtful design and support for both leadership and staff. Some of the most rewarding aspects of volunteering include opportunities for professional development, networking and contributing to meaningful work. However, challenges like needing to repeatedly ask for permission to participate, lack of scheduled time, unclear objectives, the volunteer work you're doing, can create anxiety and reduce engagement.

So to build that sustainability and create engagement, we found it was essential to build in value, ease and flexibility. So we have included tangible skill development opportunities, such as project and event planning, communications, strategising and scheduling, creation of communications, presenting opportunities, facilitating training and additional professional development opportunities.

We schedule our volunteer time around business needs which reduces anxiety for volunteers, the need for ongoing leadership involvement, and ensures that business needs are met. For example, the team will forward plan a communications those resources for distribution within that communication channel for those peak periods because we can schedule those early. And then we cease volunteer activities for that peak period. And the scheduled communications still provides that consistency and messaging during that time.

We have a very clear structure and operations which everything is supported by resources, and the team have trust and autonomy. And additionally, I will mention that research does actually highlight that scheduling dedicated volunteer time is a key factor in the success of champion services. It supports both leadership and volunteers by removing that constant need to negotiate participation. It reduces stress and it streamlines that engagement. And by embedding value, structure and flexibility in our approach, we can create a volunteer experience that is both meaningful and sustainable. With these foundations in place, we now turn to the purpose and function of the Accessibility Champion team, how it operates and the role it plays in driving inclusive practice across our student support services.

So the team plays a vital role in that embedding of inclusive practice. And at its core, the ACT provides community, belonging and support, not just for students but for staff as well. And this is achieved through a strong network that shares resources, promotes awareness and builds confidence in applying accessibility practices. ACT members are available to offer guidance, help others navigate inclusive approaches with clarity and consistency. And ultimately ACT strengthens our collective capability by fostering connection, visibility and purpose making accessibility a shared responsibility.

So the operating structure. The team is able to deliver these outcomes because of the defined operational structure. We have kept everything as simple and streamlined as possible, with all communication, toolkits, documents being housed in one place. A one stop shop for ACT functions. And the main functions include the monthly meeting for networking and planning for the coming month; the team administration, which includes the chairing of those meetings, taking notes and providing leadership feedback; communication, scheduling and planning; ACT and AIS inductions, orientation and training, they will schedule that within that meeting and that's one of their functions; and any additional projects and event planning.

So champions are supported for those processes they have comprehensive toolkits and these include guides, templates and checklists and this ensures that clarity, consistency and confidence in their contributions.

And importantly, the ACT model provides champions with the opportunity to try new things and develop skills outside their usual roles, whether that's facilitating training, planning events, leading communications. The toolkits are designed to support learning and growth, making it easy for anyone to step in to a task and succeed. So, for example, when a champion delivers an AIS orientation, they can access a supporting toolkit which includes a detailed step by step guide, email templates and training packet for the new staff member, a check list to ensure all these things have been covered, and additional tips for those who want to extend their skills further in that area. Responsibilities are rotated monthly to avoid placing undue burden on individuals.

So I know I've only got five minutes and I've got a lot to get through, so I'm going to speed this up. So I'm going to go on to the training now. So the accessibility focused training. We looked at the considerations around what do we need, what do we already have, what's out there and what's missing. And we knew that we needed to build confidence, support ongoing learning and strengthen inclusive practice.

So as part of our commitment to developing meaningful and relevant training, it evolved into four distinct areas, which are on this slide here. And the four solutions ensure that the training is targeted, role relevant and impactful, and I'm going to walk through those in a little bit more detail now.

So the AIS induction is training that is for all new members of staff and it covers legislation, introduce a social model of disability, how it affects a person across the lifespan. It also is given through a service delivery lens and it sets expectations around how we address accessibility and inclusive service delivery. And a key element is the emphasis on human connection using real life de identified experiences from disabled ECU staff to highlight the impacts of poor service. We look at visible and nonvisible disabilities within those scenarios. Demonstrate assumptions and how unconscious bias affect them.

And it's all grounded in service delivery context as well. So it enables thoughtful reflection, key learning moments. We apply it to their roles as well, which is really important.

Then we have these. We have piloted a student hub training program and that orientation forms part of this and it's around increasing awareness and confidence, and we're fortunate to have an equity team that has developed a Disability Ally Network training and that gives additional foundational training of those barriers faced by disabled people. And by completing that it unlocks membership benefits, increases our network and reach within the community too. And to support ongoing development and continuous improvement, we incorporate case studies into regular team workshops, and that gives a safe environment where staff can explore those real scenarios and identify opportunities for improvement and develop skills.

So the ACT, they have a deeper level program, which is again utilising the things that we already have or have access to, and it includes things, mental health, disability, LGBTQIA+ inclusion and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

We've also embedded that within our casual students. We have casual students working for us at different times of the year and we incorporated an AIS component in a group interview. And that helped inform our further training and now we actually embed that for students, so when they're coming in to do their training day. And it prepares students for their current roles, but it also equips them with values and skills that they can carry on into their future careers and that we hope that this will help shape a more inclusive workplace wherever they go.

So how are we going to measure and evaluate the success? So we have got these four key areas and we are looking at pre and post training feedback to assess changes in staff confidence and capability over time. We are looking at all different forms of engagement. Uptake in training. How many volunteers we have. Attendance to professional development and with student satisfaction. We've got proactive methods where we've got students asking for adjustments. We're going to follow up with them and we've got passive feedback as well we'll be looking at.

And in terms of service effectiveness, we're going to be evaluating service delivery through case study reviews and that will feed into our continuous improvement. We're looking at doing mystery shopper activities that provide insight into real time service quality as well. And we're hoping our efforts are going to remain meaningful, responsive and that continuous improvement as well.

We're nearly there, I've got one more to go. So one of the most rewarding parts of the journey has been seeing the enthusiasm from our staff to get involved and the genuine recognition that this work is needed, which you'll see here. It's sparking meaningful conversation with everybody and we're seeing changes now. Our centralised resource hub, it's creating conversations, curiosity which is then helping with those interactions. Since we completed the initial review in January, I came onboard in April, and with the team we've now recruited 15 champions, 10 from the original pilot and we've got five more now from additional support service teams and we're still growing. We've still got more we're waiting for more numbers to come in. Three ACT projects are underway that are driven by our team and that's the ACT team, sorry. So study survival kit for neurodivergent students, which is codesigned with student input and bringing their voices directly into our work. Monthly meetings have started. And their passion and commitment has been really, truly inspiring and it reminds us that inclusive practice isn't just a framework. It is a movement and it's being led by people that care deeply.

As we conclude today's session, I just want to highlight the things that have been successful to our success, and that's leadership, vision, commitment, clear expectations, structured and sustainable model, consistency, tailored training programs, process kits. You name it, it's all there. Don't underestimate the little things. I was a little thing and was making those little changes, and we really are and we've got staff members making little changes and it really does contribute hugely. So I'm so sorry, Bec. You did ask someone with ADHD to do this. I'm bound to run over.

REBECCA: Emma, thank you so much. That was a wonderful presentation and what a wonderful project that you obviously initiated and led and have seen the whole way through, so it's wonderful to have you here. I'm so sorry that I had to rush you.

I have so many questions and there's questions in the Q&A, so I'm disappointed I might not get to mine. But let's start with the questions in the Q&A. Mara Eversons, hello. Mara has asked a couple of questions to do with the service hub specifically, and so this was when you were speaking to the I wrote it down so I wouldn't forget when you were speaking to the accessible service design and the student hub staff. And so Mara is asking are these staff members specifically wellbeing staff, or are your staff in the hub referring to specialised services?

EMMA: So within the hub, the hub staff aren't our wellbeing staff. We do have we have a student success team that sits next to or within our hub we refer to student hub. Those staff are the staff that deal with those walk ins and they do a lot of that complex course planning and advice for students. So when I talk about the student support services that are involved, we have library services, student success, our transnational team, even our comms centre. But within that hub the pilot was those members of staff. So we have 30 across those three campuses.

REBECCA: Wonderful. And Mara did also ask a follow up question about whether they undertake mandatory training, but I believe you then covered that later that they do have that training program. Mandatory training, I'm assuming?

EMMA: And that's the leadership vision and commitment. They have said this is our expectation now. And what we've done is that orientation/induction is given a service delivery focus as well so we're making it relevant to their roles. That initial induction, yes, that's going to be our standard.

REBECCA: It's wonderful. And Mara's third follow up question to that, are they permanent, casual, a mix of all? Are they given built in time to their hours to actually complete these trainings and update resources and all of those aspects?

EMMA: So the training program that is part for all staff. So the ACT team will facilitate those inductions and orientations for new members of staff, so that come onboard. But the training program is to be done in staff time. The ACT training program again, that's done in that scheduled ACT time. And that's a really key thing. For the ACT, that volunteer, that training is scheduling that time. So when they first begin, we have like an hour per week that is scheduled in, reoccurring just not in the peak periods. And that is flexible. So at the beginning when they join the team, that time is dedicated to their trainings that they need to complete. They would have already done the orientation, what we call the area orientation, the standard for all staff, and it's just building on that and deepening that knowledge. And then once that's all completed, that scheduled time then is for activities within the volunteer service.

Now, if they don't have anything, through that leadership feedback that we give the leadership, to keep it smooth and keep that workload off the leadership too, we provide leadership on a very basic feedback report and the team do on who is doing what that month on those standard tasks, so any projects. So then the line manager can see does that make sense?

REBECCA: I'm sorry, I think my internet cut out briefly there. I'm assuming that did make perfect sense. I have one follow up question. So obviously you're administering this and looking at the Teams channel and resources. Is it your responsibility to administer it ongoing and update it and which team do you actually sit in? Who is responsible for this?

EMMA: Okay. So ACT, they own it. It's like their ownership. So part of that scheduled time we have a function in place that comes up, say we need to update this, so it's all in the calendar. And then when we do that monthly meeting and those tasks are allocated out, somebody can go, "Well, I'll do the induction for this month. I'll check this page." So that's how we keep those basic functions just moving along. So those things get done and then that team can add on anything over and above.

REBECCA: Okay. Thank you. Now, change of course. I just want to ask this really interesting question that Emma Hudson posed. I find the more I gave staff disability specific info or advice, the more they expected and perhaps felt incompetent without each student's specific diagnosis. Because of this, Emma is shifting to the training and info that she disseminates to be more characteristic focused, so distracted, looking confused, not joining in class discussions, et cetera. Have you found similar challenges? You said about letting people know about students' particular diagnoses. Have you found any challenges with that and, if so, how do you navigate this? Any tips on finding balance? We've only got one minute left, I'm sorry.

EMMA: So very quickly, if you look at the student voices slide, when we do those real life scenarios and service delivery, you will see that when we look at how somebody presents and we try and move away from like trying to diagnose somebody with something as well if they haven't disclosed. So it's really around having those conversations and then that early training, what that might look like. Does it mean necessarily anything in particular, but this is how you might approach it. So because we're quite early on, it's actually a really good point. I haven't come across that specifically. We've had conversations around doing the right thing and what if I get it wrong, and then reading too much, you know, and trying to diagnose, and so forth. But it is really looking at those like you say, the characteristics and going, well, it could be, maybe I'll approach it this way. That will be something that will evolve and it's a great question. Thank you, Emma. It's got me thinking too in another way.

REBECCA: Thank you. I'm afraid that is all we've got time for. Thank you so much, Emma, and thank you to our Captioner Sharon.

An email will be sent to you when a recording of this webinar when it's available on the ADCET website. Please feel free to share this with your colleagues.

We ask that you complete this short survey and sign up to our newsletter. These links will now be added to the chat box. Please save the date for our upcoming webinars. We have Understanding and Supporting Neurodivergent Students at University on Wednesday, 15th of October. We have Exploring Inclusive Assessment Strategies at RMIT University. A panel discussion which will happen on Thursday, 30 October. And also the Neurodiversity Paradigm 101, Lessons from the Movement for Higher Education on Wednesday, 19 November. Further details are all available in the chat box. Thanks, everyone, and have a wonderful afternoon. Bye.

EMMA: Thank you.