DARLENE MCLENNAN: Now I’d like to head over to the team and to Matt who will start us off. Thank you, Matthew.

MATTHEW WILKINSON: Thank you. Hi, I'm Matt and I'm presenting a little bit of background information on our study enhancing self-disclosure equity group membership and a few of the initial results we have already got which look quite positive in terms of identifying trends within the three equity groups we're looking at. First of all, Australia's tertiary sector has grown phenomenally in the last 10, 20, 30 years and along with that, students that are members of equity groups have increased several-fold. This includes students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, women in non-traditional areas such as engineering and STEM fields, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and people living with disabilities and people from rural and isolated areas. This study focuses on three equity groups out of those six. So we're looking at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, also known as Indigenous students, students who are living with a disability or disabilities. And students who are from non-English speaking backgrounds but are domestic students. So that is all students from non-English speaking backgrounds who aren't international students. For a few statistics, at last count in 2015 there were just over a million University students in Australia. Of this, 40,281 were from non-English speaking backgrounds so that’s 3.9% of the population and according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2016, 27% of the total Australian population were from non-English speaking backgrounds. So those figures are not quite representative of the wider population. Students living with disabilities included 60,019 students which is 17.25% of the total population. And the ABS in 2016 found that about 18.5% of the Australian population were living with a disability at any given time. So those figures are pretty representative of wider trends in Australia, which is promising. Finally, 15,585 Indigenous students were enrolled in 2015, which is 1.6% of the total University population. Indigenous peoples represent about 3% of the total Australian population as well. So, within our equity focus group, at last count in 2015, this includes approximately 115,000 students which make up about 22.75% of the total University population. So this is a significant proportion of students we're looking at and the insecurities and issues that they face. Why disclose and importantly, what is disclosure. Well disclosure is telling your institution, or telling people in that institution that make decisions, that you are from an equity group. Usually to meet some sort of need that you have. So if you are a student living with a disability it might be to access accommodations. If you are an Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander student it might be to access particular scholarships or funding opportunities or for sensitivities surrounding your culture. And if you are from a non-English speaking background it might be for English assistance or just for statistical purposes. We have identified four broad reasons why students tend to disclose. So one is to access support and targeted programs. One is to be part of a community which covers a lot of Indigenous students. Meeting peers as well who share your insecurities, your vulnerabilities and who understand what you are facing at University. And a recognition of your identity. We have also got a quote here from a student with a disability, that they’d like to be treated with respect and dignity and they don't want to be questioned, considered as liars or wanting a free ride. So, there are significant hesitations when it comes to disclosure as well but these are the four broad reasons we could identify so far. Despite the benefits of disclosure though, a significant proportion of this population doesn't disclose. So what our research has uncovered so far is about 9.7% or 10% of students living with a disability haven't told their institution about that, haven't made themselves visible to their institution. 13.6% of Indigenous students and 16.5% of students from non-English speaking backgrounds. This population is largely invisible to the University processes and intervention programs don't see these students and we have very little information on the needs of these students and why or why not they disclose. Of course, this causes a lot of confusion for service provision and accommodation as well as funding because there simply are gaps in how many students we know have these issues. We’ve got a few reasons here given by students in our surveys of why this group may or may not disclose though, which identifies differences between these groups. So the first is I don't know how to disclose this information and we see here in the graph a huge proportion of non-English speaking background students don't know how to disclose. Less so for students with disabilities, less so for Indigenous. I'm not going to walk you through all of these graphs, because I think it would be quicker just to read it. But if I flick to the next slide we have got some very interesting results here. What the spider web graph tells us, for example, is that students with disabilities, if you look in the bottom right corner, fear prejudice in their professional life and in their University life the most out of these three equity groups, far more than non-English speaking background students and far more than Indigenous students who appear to fear that very little. However if you look at the bottom left, students with disabilities and non-English speaking background students certainly do fear much more than Indigenous students being labelled. Whether that's a fear of discrimination or whether Indigenous students fear that less because that Indigenous label is how they access a lot of targeted services that’s a room for further study and for further research. If you look at the far left of the graph at about 9o'clock, "I don't know why I should disclose this information? So why disclose, what do I get for it?", well non-English speaking background students see the least reason to disclose in terms of why they should. Indigenous students just after that and students with disabilities seem to have least issues with deciding what they should get for their disclosure, which is possibly because they receive a lot of targeted programs depending on how and when they disclose. Those are just a few examples. Of course “the University does not need to know” is another example, at about 8o'clock on this graph. And disclosing the status at 12o'clock on the graph, to University benefits students, we see students with disabilities or Indigenous students most firmly approve of that. And students from non-English speaking backgrounds see relatively less reason to disclose in terms of benefiting other students.

So taken together the findings so far suggest that the fear of labelling is equally shared by the three focus groups. We’ll just go back to the spider graph for a second and have a look at this “Not wishing to be labelled” although there's a difference with Indigenous students they all do report significantly not wishing to be labelled. There is also some lay assumptions we make about Indigenous people but they did fear prejudice the least in their University and post University life. In terms of Indigenous students as well, just to focus on that group, they saw the least reason to disclose and the highest doubts about the use or the value of disclosing to the University. And students with disabilities and non-English speaking background students place very high importance on the benefits of disclosing their equity status. This all suggests that disclosure doesn't simply happen, that it involves thoughts about the value of disclosure, the effort of disclosure, privacy and confidentiality and what they are going to get for giving out their information. So the question why disclose seems to be a big one weighing on students. We also looked at how disclosure functions across different Universities and there are two broad systems of disclosing equity status at Australian Universities. The first is self-disclosure during enrolment and then being followed up by other University equity services. The second is enrolling and then the student going on and self-disclosing later through a separate channel. So, that might be an equity service, it might be a language skills service or a learning centre. It might be a specific Indigenous centre. I have got here one question emerging from this research is, “which system of self-disclosure is better?” But also what does "better" mean? So part of this research is determining what the students want from disclosure, how they want to disclose as well. Do they want automatic disclosure which of course is easier, or do they want to have a little bit more control at how they disclose? So far our qualitative interviews give us mixed results. Many students from equity backgrounds want their disclosure experience to be easier, they want it to be less involved with them, they just want to disclose once to the University and then have the service take care of that later on. On the other hand students are very wary of the power of the information and the weight of the information they give the University and value some degree of control over that. So there seems to be a challenge with all disclosure services of balancing the ease of disclosure and automating disclosure with the need of the student to have control of their information. So that's a brief introduction to what our study is focusing on and some of our suggested results so far. Rita, do you have anything you might want to add at this point, if you are not muted that is?

RITA KUSEVSKIS-HAYES: Hello, hi, everybody. It's Rita Kusevskis-Hayes here. I was muted, I was wrapped in what you were saying. Yes, so at this point basically the study has been -- we commenced, we were given the funding and we commenced probably seriously was about March this year. So there have been a number of staff have been involved. Of course, we have had lots of interesting discussions just about the whole nature of disclosure, not even the purpose. But unfortunately the funding that we were provided is restricted. So we need to stick to task and follow through to look at the whole process and enhancing self-disclosure across Australian Universities. What we are producing at the end of this study, which will be completed by March next year in the final form and the papers written up, is a set of guidelines for Australian Universities about disclosure. And also recommendations for further research. So, that's in the end what we will be producing. That's why we are strongly encouraging Universities across Australia, staff and students and academics, to get on board and be involved so that we can have worked together towards looking at the best advice that we can provide Australian Universities on processes of disclosure. That is separate though of course behind the whole nature of disclosure. There are many, many great conversations that we have had along the way and I’ve been in the field for about 20 years and it always seems, particularly in disabilities, it always seems to come back to this whole concept and the concern and issue around disclosure. We have services, we have great programs, we have initiatives, but unless we can communicate that to students and meet their needs, then really this is where we are at the point of saying then what is it all about if we're not actually encouraging the right students, students who want to disclose or need to disclose to disclose. So it's providing them the information, communicating with them at the right time; it’s listening to students across Universities and I think it’s being able to somehow bring that into our bureaucratic administrative processes as well. So that's what we have been finding with the two pronged approach, with looking at how Universities encourage and, I guess, support the process of disclosure by students. This is all about students, not about staff at this point. And secondly, then we are also looking at how we can -- for those students who do feel the value and wish to disclose, how we can actually make that experience easier. And also more productive, I guess for students. But, a very interesting process. We are presenting at a couple of conferences through the year and as the year goes on, we have got a web page that has the latest data that we have been collecting. Matt’s got all the latest figures on the numbers of Universities that we have who have been involved in this project up until now. We are still collecting data. So we have got a couple of months still collecting data but we're doing the analysis and what has been really, really interesting is the interviews that have been done with students across Australian Universities. Really, really interesting and across the three cohorts because many common issues arise. We have got a few case studies if anybody is interested as well that we can talk through. Colin, have you got anything else to add?

COLIN CLARK: Good afternoon, everybody. This is Colin Clark. A colleague of Matt and Rita. And happy to be here. I have been going through some of the feedback from the surveys and in addition to the questions that Matt has described, we have also asked students to comment generally on reasons for -- reasons why they might be reluctant to disclose. I will talk about, and this is the one on the screen is actually the students with disabilities. You will see that I have sort of re-coded their comments. This is just the first rough coding. We may combine these a bit or divide them. We have been going through a process of textual analysis. A common one is that the students don't want to be seen as receiving special treatment. You often see that from the Indigenous students and to a lesser extent from a non-English speaking background as well. There is this perception that if you get support then somehow you are not earning your degree or you are getting an unfair advantage. Some of them reject the label of "disability". Like they say they don't really consider it to be a disability, that it's just part of themselves. That's reasonably common. Sometimes people will say they think they perceive academic discrimination. Of course, we don't know if that's real or not. But some people have quoted lecturers as saying unkind things. Perceived general discrimination, just from the student population generally. Few have, in addition to those points, mentioned that it's based on past experience, perhaps at high school. Some don't really, I suppose this is similar to the first one, they don't really want to be seen, to avoid perceptions of disability. If they have a particular disability, other people may not understand what it is or may have misconceptions, such as schizophrenia being seen as kind of a split personality. You can never be quite sure what it is you are disclosing or what the person you are talking to thinks you are disclosing. There is stigma. That's fairly self-explanatory. Shame. Sometimes they feel they have something to be ashamed of. A common one is fearing the implications of disclosure. So once it's out there, will it impact their future careers? And I think there is some support for that in the literature, that it may impact professional development. Simple lack of knowledge of how provisions, adjustments or registration work. Sometimes it's a matter of convenience. Like it may be difficult to obtain documentation and if you don't, especially if you don't think you really need any support from the University or if the student is fine managing their own needs, then they may not think it's worth the bother. Qualification actually meant -- some people are not clear what counts as a disability. They say, "I get migraines but I don't really think of it as a disability". That comes up occasionally. Simple distrust of the University and its disclosure process. They may have particularly students with social, emotional issues. And finally, obviously, some belief that there is no benefit to disclosure. It's less common for the students with disabilities but for Indigenous students we came across the attitude that, why does anyone need to know? This is just so the University can get more funding or tick the diversity box. So that was all quite interesting. They are similar for the other groups. The Indigenous students often mentioned shame. During the interviews we are going to be exploring what exactly that meant, whether they feel there is shame in being Indigenous or in some cases shame in not being Indigenous enough. Like they say that other Indigenous students tell them they’re too light skinned to be truly Indigenous. Or it could be a shame in the idea of special treatment that they are getting, the perception they might be getting a free ride. Otherwise, rather similar, lack of knowledge, discrimination, perceptions, lack of trust, past experience. Again, the convenience thing. Because students do need documentation for Indigenous status. And similar categories would apply to non-English speaking background. It's much more common for them, for the non-English speaking background students to say there is no benefit and 72% of our respondents have said that their English is the same as an educated native speaker of English. So in fact, for them there is no benefit that we can see. Anything you want to add there, Matt?

MATTHEW: No, can you all see the slides here with feedback from students with a disability?

DARLENE: We can, Matt. Thank you.

MATTHEW: Brilliant. These are some of the answers we have had so far. Which highlight that a lot of these students do have real concerns about their privacy, about the confidentiality of their information. And especially these fears that Colin went over with Indigenous students as well of impacting reputations and job opportunities later on. So one of the issues that this research has uncovered so far is that a lot of students aren't aware of how secure their information is, they often feel like they have a lack of control of this information they disclosed to the University. And Universities could do well and could encourage a lot more disclosure by making it very clear how that information is handled, how that information is kept and what can and can't be done with it. A huge boost to disclosure rates could come from simply making our message clearer and making sure students are aware of what disclosure actually involves and what that means for them. Rather than having a mystery surround it or having students not disclosing because they are really unsure.

RITA: Matt, Rita here as well. The other part to that scenario is that also why should they disclose? Apart from the fact of handling that information I think universities are fairly poor probably in communicating. I won't speak for every university. And I think our university I will say, UNSW, still has quite a way to go to actually communicate with students about the benefits of some of the other programs and so forth that they can take part in. But of course we all hope that this is something interesting to see about disclosure rates across Universities. And I think this is something for further research, is also looking at the practice of universal design. Many Universities, for instance, if you have a hearing impairment or other print disability, if you have audio descriptions captioning, in a sense, then there is no reason for somebody to disclose for that purpose to get that access to that accommodation. We are hoping of course that many Universities are having far more universal design principles in their teaching and learning, in their physical environment, where there isn't really in some ways a purpose for students to have to disclose. So it's that concept of disclosure and why disclose. But when there is a reason for it, it's up to students to make the choice and make informed choices and decisions and then we really need to be very acutely aware of how we're presenting that information, as Matt said, particularly about the nature of the confidentiality of the materials. And as he said, it's a bit of a conundrum. Students want the processes streamlined, particularly disabilities, going from school going through to University. I think one of the people actually, somebody we have deployed in the project now as a staff member who was only recently a student, and she has a disability and she was saying to us that in fact disclosure is not a one-off. Disclosure is a continual lifelong process in many instances when you have a disability. For instance having a disability at University you are disclosing every semester. If you need some adjustments, if you need accommodations, you could be disclosing to your tutors again and to your lecturers and so it's something that students are facing on an ongoing, could be, on an ongoing, lifelong basis. There is a lot of discussion that's been unearthed. I think the Universities particularly coming back to the focus of the study and our brief, is really looking at how we can make it as easy a process as possible and also being able to articulate more acutely, carefully and in a much more user friendly way to the students and to also the trusted others, people who are advising and recommending to students about the benefits of disclosure. We have got a fair way to go for that but there are a lot of good role models and there are Universities and there are great strategies and approaches out there that we are finding too that we have been able to pull together and summarise. Yes, so it is a two faces disclosure apart from the actual processes the purpose and the role of disclosure in Australian Universities. Yes. Okay, Matt.

MATTHEW: All right. Well, I think unless Rita or Colin you have anything else to add we might as well open the discussion at the moment.

DARLENE: Okay, wonderful, thank you, Matt. We have had a couple of questions on the chat pod before we get to those questions. Somebody has just written: I work in a workplace diversity team in UNSW and wondering if there are any plans on doing a similar study in the University staff populations.

RITA: Hi, it's Rita here. I have actually talked to a few people about this, and said it would be a wonderful idea and there’s actually, as I said, we’ve even now got a staff member who was recently a student who moved into the staff. So we're finding it a whole new ball game and she is too. We don't know of any. I’d suggest we're working through the HEPP funding authority, higher education participation and partnerships, I suggest having a chat to any other major funding groups for staff research. But, no, not as far as we know, because the focus is definitely for students. But I'm happy to talk about looking at further grants that we could investigate and explore this space, most definitely.

DARLENE: I think it might be a question we could actually put to the equity practitioners peak body, because they actually do have a staff equity side. So it might be something that they can actually take on as an agenda as well. So I will raise that with them.

RITA: That's brilliant. It's interesting too Darlene from the students' perspective, they have actually raised some of those more long term concerns so that would lead on to being a staff member. So I think that would then spill back into looking at the whole process of encouraging disclosure among the student population if they are concerned about long term employment and professional impact of their disclosure. Yeah, great.

DARLENE: Yep, now we might go to the discussions. We're going to trial something, and it could just go totally skewiff on us. If you have a response to a question, you can raise your hand and we can unmute your microphone. That kind of means that you hopefully have a good system that we can hear you. The other option is you can write your questions in the question pod. The first question that the research group have asked is, how do students disclose at your institution and what are the processes? Has anybody got anything they would like to say there if they want to put their hand up and we can unmute or they can respond?

No hands at this stage, no? We have a person that's written in the question pod at a TAFE here, where disability employment services regularly sponsor students to enrol in courses, but students often report that they were discouraged from disclosing on enrolment forms etcetera by staff. That's quite weird isn’t it, if it's coming from the employment services. I don't know if you guys want to make any comment to that?

COLIN: We did see a similar comment by one of our students saying they had been advised by some equity practitioner not to disclose because it might create difficulties in their future employment. So I'm not sure how common that is. Hopefully there are ways to protect student confidentiality so that it doesn't raise professional concerns.

DARLENE: Yes. I noticed that Colin. I was hoping it didn't come from a University staff person, because it's quite a concern. Just the next question, then, is, what are the barriers for disclosure? And I think in your presentation you identified a lot of those that certainly students and from your research you have discovered. I wondered if anybody else online have come up with anything different or have any thoughts on that? You are all being very quiet. This is the first time we have had this kind of discussion. It's not working, oh we’ve got a hand. It's exciting! Yes. So Cathy?

(feedback whine)

That's the trouble, we might get some feedback. Another question is, how has your institution identified and approached these barriers? Anybody want to have some feedback into that?

(pause)

So, we might try you, Michelle. Have you got a response to that?

MICHELLE: Look, yes, I'm fairly new in my role at UniSA in South Australia in managing the access and inclusion services there. So I'm not surprised by any of the findings today. I have worked in the disability field for a long time particularly in employment as well so disclosure has been a big part of what I have done over the years. Look, I think we're looking at ways we can streamline the disclosure process in the future for our University. The barriers are that you are dealing with multiple systems and areas over which you have little control. So I would like to see, I think, two options for people, one is an automated system where people are happy to disclose and it's part of the enrolment process. But then I think we also need to promote that dual pathway for those people who want to wait and see. I think that's valid, a valid reason for people with disabilities, to see how they go. Often people are just accepting their disability so there will be a lot of grief and loss and lack of disclosure related to that, I would imagine. Given the age cohort. So, yes, I think that we need to take a more student centric approach. And look at what works for the students versus what works for the University.

DARLENE: Thank you, Michelle. Anybody want to comment on Michelle's discussion there?

COLIN: Thanks, Michelle. I was interested in the automated response, because we actually have for the last year or two, we actually have had a system at UNSW called Navigate Me.

MICHELLE: Okay.

COLIN: And that's a kind of online tool where students answer a series of questions about their needs and it covers everything from administrative processes to personal life, to academic study. And they answer all of these questions like "yes" or "no" or just responses to statements like, "I have trouble writing essays", for example. And at the end of it, the student clicks a button and they get an action plan of people they can be referred to. It doesn't sort of constitute formal disclosure, they don't go into the system unless they choose to do so, but it does recommend that if you see the service this is what they can do for you. We have compared the formal disclosure rates with those on Navigate Me and it does seem to bring out people who haven't formally disclosed. So I think that may be part of the solution here. I certainly agree that we need to be more student focused. Any comments, Rita?

RITA: Yes, yes, thanks for bringing up Navigate Me and thanks Michelle for that comment. It's very true, I think we do need that flexibility in the system but I’ve always been a Navigate Me’s project and online interactive digital tool, they started about six years ago here and what I was always concerned about was students who felt that they wanted to seek advice but not be judged. We wanted to look at a way that it could be confidential yet supportive and they could get help when they need it. But it's also something if they are sitting there at 2o'clock in the morning and they think ‘wow, I really can't go on anymore with these studies and I don't think there is anyone at the uni who can help me’. Here at UNSW it can be easy to withdraw without any intervention at all and that’s at the end of a university degree. So that's where it all came from. I agree at that point it's really interesting to see where students are just thinking, "Do I have a disability? Is it really? What is a disability? All I know is I have difficulty concentrating. At times I have depression or whatever" but they don't see it as a disability and they don't see that it can help them. That's why I think it’s really important that, one, students are able to make better informed choices with the way we present information, when we’re committed and also hand in hand is that administrative side, how can we then reflect that within the processes of the university to make it easy for students, as Colin said, and make it more student-centred as well?

DARLENE: Great, thank you, thanks, Michelle, for that great question. I will move on to Jacqui Wyman from WA if I can find you to unmute you Jacqui. My systems a bit slow here. So Jacqui, did you have a question to add?

JACQUI: More a comment. It's really hard to really identify a reason for students to disclose on enrolment. I think there are different practices at different institutions. Like at some Universities I know students have to disclose to access disability services. And we don't make them do that. Because students really do have significant concerns about disclosure. Sadly, there are cases where they do face attitudes and discrimination. I guess my concern is about the inconsistency possibly of the statistics across the institutions and when these statistics are linked to funding. That creates some real issues. I guess if there are some guidelines it would be nice to see if that could help to address some of those issues or provide some guidance about what is okay and what is not. Yes. Those are just my thoughts on that.

DARLENE: Ok, thanks Jacqui. Anybody want to respond to Jacqui?

RITA: I think that’s great, because it is interesting what you bring up Jacqui as well is what we have been finding about different practices across Universities and again comparing that to what students have said. Because students have said also they wish it was more streamlined and how many of us know for instance if they are seeking support from a disability service which they do have to register. And my example previously is not in every case because some Universities have far more inclusive practices with their teaching and learning materials and so forth. But those students though at that point are needing, I guess, to know how and if they want to disclose where to disclose to. Those figures that we have, we have actually compared a number of data sets across these cohorts. So when students have the opportunity, if they wish to disclose to disclose. We get a lot of the information from the U.S. The data is sent through to the Universities. So students have disclosed, that comes through to disability services. We also here have, and of course many Universities, the gen stats form when you enrol. Are you Torres Strait Islander, Indigenous, do you have a disability, which type? At that point of course there is no onus for any service support or delivery or medical documentation. And then the third opportunity is when students do disclose and register with a service such as disability services to get a service. We have also done some comparison of those differences in the data sets as well. They're not always exclusive of each other. There is a lot of overlap when people decide to disclose because they need a service at a later time. It's certainly interesting when students are able to choose at enrolment a box to say they belong to one of these equity groups with not necessarily have any commitment to a service provision. That's an interesting group as well, which or course we do get a large number of students who do disclose at that point. No, I agree, it's very much up to the student. You are right, some Universities and some, actually some courses, I know medicine, for instance, the onus and there is pressure on students to disclose up front.

DARLENE: Okay. Merrin McCracken I think has some comment to make as well. I’ve unmuted you Merrin and then we will move on to, I think, Christie.

MARY: I think it's probably been said now. Just to agree, I think there are different practices and certainly at our institution at Deakin when students register with the disability service, with their permission we do tick that box on enrolment. My sense is that the numbers of students with disability has grown significantly as distinct from some of the other equity groups and some of that is because of some of these practices that are happening at some Universities and not others. So where we are actively supporting students to tick that box on enrolment with the misgivings that Jacqui outlined before. And the other couple of reasons are I think that, and this is the dilemma and Rita, you touched on universal design before, you know, the other concern I have is that we’ve got more and more students registering because they need adjustments, because maybe we're not approaching education in as good and inclusive way as we used to. And also I think that understanding over the last probably five years or a little bit more, that people with mental health issues can be assisted with adjustments where they may used to not have thought that disability services were for them has also led to the increase. But it is really interesting to see those figures of how many students, you know, the 17% compared to the 18.5% is really interesting in that disability area.

DARLENE: Excellent. Thank you Merrin, any comments to that from the group?

RITA: I’ll just jump in here quickly and say hear, hear, Merrin, yes, I totally agree with what you are saying. I have also been in the field for quite a while. I have seen for a while there we were seeing that there was a focus and a lot more collaboration with universal design and it was all the go. But now I think with many Universities moving to a range of technologies, and I know our University is struggling with that because we always seem to be one step behind in the area of disabilities. And everyone unfortunately across-the-board I think people still feel it's almost the afterthought. I agree. I feel that technology people think is the way ahead and it’s going to solve a lot of those issues when we know it brings up a whole range more. And also online teaching as well, there’s many more factors that people don't consider. It's not the panacea or fix most definitely. The figures are really interesting. I have been sitting back going, wow, this is quite fascinating. And mental health, particularly psychological mental health, everyone says the numbers are growing. The numbers are growing but I think it's the whole discussion around disclosure and people realising. I know when I started in the field 20 years ago mental health wasn't really considered. It was around sensory and we had mobility but people were saying ‘oh, but if you have a psychological disorder, you know, that's not really a disability’. Yet we know that is taking up a lot of time with arrangements when it comes to flexibility, course adjustments and so. So that is a real area of growth and it has been actually supported in the statistics that we're looking at.

DARLENE: Excellent. Thanks, Rita. We have another question around, from Todd Sullivan, do you have you any insights, trends of disclosure. Is this being driven by increased, oh sorry, I'm not very good at reading, by increased by just disclosure or actual inroads into participation? Do you have any insights/trends of disclosure?

SPEAKER: Could you repeat that, sorry?

DARLENE: I was just wondering, do you have any insight/trends of disclosure. I suppose if there are any trends of has disclosure gone up, so forth, and if it has gone up, is it being increased by the actual inroads into the participation? Because the participation rate of people from equity groups have increased? Or is it more around people are keen to disclose? That's paraphrasing the question.

SPEAKER: Well, although the study is not longitudinal, so this is really providing a snapshot of the situation as it is right now. Our background research has confirmed that students are disclosing equity status at a higher rate. So students that are from equity groups at a greater rate than ever before are letting their institutions know. Which is valuable. It's really important for service provision.

DARLENE: Yes.

SPEAKER: However, there is still a long way to go. The statistics I have got up on the screen right now, 9.7, nearly 10% of students with a disability, nearly 14% of Indigenous students and 16.5% of non-English speaking background students, those are still huge numbers when you consider that these three equity groups make up just under a quarter of the total University population in Australia. There is still a long way to go with students from equity groups making themselves visible to their institutions, if they want to.

DARLENE: Yep, just a question from me and I know we discussed this a little bit prior. I know one of the issues from the disability sector in particular is around the categorisation of disability for the disclosure for the Department of Education and Training, that that category is quite limited and often people don't necessarily, we don't get a true reflection of people with a lived experience of mental illness or on the autism spectrum. In this research have those kind of questions been put to students with disabilities, if the questions were different, if it identified their disability in particular? Would they be more likely to disclose, et cetera?

MATTHEW: Not directly. Sorry, Colin, was that you that I interrupted?

COLIN: I was going to say, we did have a question that asked about the category of disability for each of our respondents. And that was broken down into physical, cognitive, sensory, social, emotional, carer with the option "prefer not to say", or "other". And the most common categories were social/emotional, followed by cognitive and physical. There do seem to be, we are still sort of analysing the data so I can't give you a definitive answer yet. But there do seem to be differences between the disability types and willingness to disclose. People with social/emotional disabilities seem more inclined to distrust Universities. And perhaps because some disabilities are more concealable than others, they have in a sense more choice about whether to disclose.

RITA: It's Rita here. I will just jump in quickly. But, no, we don't actually have a question, though, directly saying do the categories fit your needs or do you understand what the categories are? Different Universities have different categories across-the-board. But at this point, unfortunately, we don't have time, we don't have the scope or the funds to explore those options and questions. But students, it's interesting though Darlene, because students haven’t actually come forward and said it's because of the category types or it’s because of the way the questions are framed. Matt, could you, do you want to add to that out of the interviews particularly we have been doing? Have we have that raised with our students with disabilities?

MATTHEW: It has been raised that with some of the students that are living with disabilities that they've had reservations about the terminology of disability themselves. A lot of these students, although they recognise that there are obstacles they experience that other students don't, they don't identify in their daily lives as living with a disability. Having said that, though, when there's a form in front of these students that says, "Do you identified as having a disability or do you have these disabilities or this disability?" they do know what it's talking about. So whatever their personal identifier is, they are aware that a disability is something that their situation could be considered as. Having said that, though, there are students that we have interviewed as well who have said that they have not disclosed to the University because they don't identify as living with a disability, even where they do have significant obstacles, physical or mental or cognitive.

DARLENE: Yes.

MATTHEW: It does come up. And how representative that is, is something we are still gathering data on.

DARLENE: I'm probably asking for that pure data kind of process too in the sense of the data that is collected by the Department of Education and Training that is often what we go to for research purposes of how many students are disclosing, has there been an increase of students with disability accessing Universities? And anecdotally we are hear from Universities that students on the autism spectrum or with a lived experience of mental illness has increased but we actually can't get that out of the actual data set that goes to the Department of Education and Training because those two groups actually aren’t identified in that data. So it's more you know in that research and for us as a sector to be able to put our case forward, you know often the complexities of somebody with a lived experience of mental illness or autism requires this approach or so forth. Without that data we have not been able to do that. So, hopefully from this the department will relook at that. All right so we haven’t got any more --

RITA: Quickly, Darlene, one more there. Yes, very true. That's a really good point you made. But also the other factor we have looked at and we touched on through this research is of course with disabilities, it could be multiple disabilities and how do Universities cope with managing that level of information, and we’re talking about students with multiple disabilities and how do we capture that data and so forth. So it is a really, really interesting topic but it's just something we have just very briefly touched on as well ourselves and how do students approach that. Do they approach it saying I have multiple disabilities or do they disclose only what they feel is relevant to disclose at the time or is necessary.

DARLENE: Yep, excellent. Now we are just going to keep – uh, I have lost my voice today. We are going to keep the question pod open for a little while. If people want to answer any of those questions in the question pod, that data will be collected and we will give that to the group so they actually have that information. If you wanted to answer any of the questions that we had up about how your institution approaches disclosure, et cetera, that would be fantastic. Cause, the more information they get the better picture they will form. Now, Matt, on the screen you have a couple of links. Did you want to talk to that?

MATTHEW: Well, the first link, I'm not sure whether you can click on it or not. You can follow my mouse.

DARLENE: No.

MATTHEW: It’s like this all the time, this isn’t for your ears it’s for mine. The first link is to the student survey, which is surveymonkey.com/

(pause)

DARLENE: Well we will send it out to everybody that has registered today so that's fine.

MATTHEW: We do have a student survey and a staff survey. For all of the staff members that are listening they can do that survey. What we're really focused on at the moment though is gathering student data and in particular Indigenous student data. We have got far less Indigenous students responding to the surveys and any policy or process outcomes that this study has then will have a limited Indigenous voice if we can't get those figures back up. If you have any students that would be interested in doing the survey, maybe if you are giving a lecture or seminar in the near future you might want to put the link to this survey up at the end of the lecture or seminar, or email it out to any students who might be interested. That would be a huge help to boosting our numbers and to getting a lot more and a lot richer data on the student disclosure experience. If you are interested, we would appreciate that greatly.

RITA: Actually, if we could come out we are happy to run some focus groups, also do it online, via Skype, so there's a multiple range of ways that we are more than happy to engage with you engage with us.

DARLENE: I might suggest also maybe another email out to ???? to say that the group is still lacking in, I suppose, as far as getting the right people to understand. That might be the best group to contact. But, once again as the disability sector we are certainly happy to promote that as well for making sure you get the voice of the Indigenous population for the sector. Just one final thing, in your presentation you identified you actually had a website. Does that exist now or is that coming up?

RITA: Yes, it does, it does exist, Darlene. Have you got that, Matt, as well?

MATTHEW: Yes, I can bring that up right now.

(pause)

This is our website right now. It’s student.unsw.edu.au/enhancing-disclosure. We do have survey links here as well as our email address if you are interested in arranging a focus group at your University, through Skype. We can do phone interviews as well. We're flexible and technology is pretty incredible, so we can work around whatever limitations of time or distance you might have to overcome. There is some information on us as presenters and additional links and some additional information here as well if you’re interested.

DARLENE: That's brilliant. Well thank you, Matt, Colin and Rita. It was fantastic to hear about where the project’s up to now and hopefully from the presentation you will get significant more engagement from us as a sector as well as us encouraging other sectors to join in. Thank you to everybody else for participating today. It was fantastic to trial the talking. And having the questions come in. So thank you for those people who actually had a say and also put their questions up into the question pod. So, at this point -- thank you. We will say goodbye now and thank everybody for participating. Have a great rest of your Tuesday. Take care.

RITA: Thank you, Darlene. Thank you, everybody, bye.

COLIN: Thank you very much.

MATTHEW: Bye, everyone, thank you.