



# News from the NAEAA

Edition 9, 2019

## NAEEA Chairperson's Message

Dear Enabling Colleagues,

As I pen my welcome, I contemplate how quickly the 2019 academic year is passing us by. I am sure as Enabling educators, you have been busy working with your students to complete their studies and gaining a deep satisfaction in witnessing their progress. The past few months have also been busy for the NAEAA Executive as we have addressed the challenges of the proposed redistribution of Enabling places and provided input to the AQF Review, the final decision on both now eagerly awaited. The latest piece of work for the Executive members has been the collaborative effort to create a set of common learning outcomes for our Enabling programs. We are in the final stage of compiling all university responses to the proposed program learning outcomes and will circulate to members upon completion. We are acutely aware of the importance of maintaining the diversity of existing programs so this work was not about creating 'one Enabling program' but more so about what we as Enabling educators feel all of our programs should aspire to as graduate attributes for completing students. The executive is also working with a consultant to revamp the NAEAA website, so watch for a 'new look' by the end of 2019.

Discussions with Professor John Storan, Director, Continuum, Centre for Widening Participation Policy Studies, University of East London in late 2018 culminated in NAEAA signing an agreement with the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE). Alongside a fellow NAEAA member and colleague, Trixie James, I had the pleasure of attending the 26<sup>th</sup> FACE Annual Conference hosted by Sheffield Hallam University on 3-5 July. The conference showcased efforts made by United Kingdom educators in transforming lives through widening participation and improving social mobility by increasing the opportunities to access higher education. This is not unlike the vision held by Australian Enabling and Equity educators working to achieve similar outcomes through NAEAA and EPHEA. The conference provided the opportunity to strengthen NAEAA's collaboration with members of FACE, an association which closely mirrors the values and mission of NAEAA. The next step is for NAEAA and FACE members to establish a plan for further collaborative efforts in the area of research.

It is now only 9 weeks until we gather at the University of Wollongong to participate in our first ever combined NAEAA and EPHEA conference, 'Enabling Excellence through Equity', bringing together practitioners from both organisations. A highlight of the conference will be the awarding of life memberships to three long-standing and highly respected

Educators, Associate Professor Seamus Fagan (University of Newcastle), David Bull (University of Southern Queensland) and Professor Janet Taylor (Southern Cross University) who have all recently retired. It would be wonderful to see as many of our members as possible attend the conference and witness the bestowing of these awards on our colleagues for their substantial contribution to Enabling education. The conference will also see the awarding of prizes for best paper and best showcase in honour of Professor Eleanor Ramsay who sadly passed away in 2017. This will be another opportunity to remember and honour Eleanor for her far-reaching contribution to education nationally and internationally. We wish NAEAA Executive member Dr Pranita Annand and the Conference organising committee all the best as they finalise the planning for this event.

On behalf of the Executive team, I wish you an enjoyable and productive end to the 2019 year.

Karen Seary, 2019 NAEAA Chairperson.

## 2019 EPHEA – NAEAA Conference

### Highlighting the outstanding work of equity practitioners

Held over three days with a focus on "Enabling Excellence through Equity", this professional development forum aims to position equity in a strength based model, whereby institutions recognise the rich knowledge, experiences and skills that diversity can enable. The conference will be held at Innovation Campus, University of Wollongong, beginning with a welcome reception on Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> November. The keynote presentation by Professor Sally Kift, Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, President of the Australian Learning & Teaching Fellows (ALTF), will begin the first full day's program. Professor Sue Webb, known internationally for her research and leadership in the field of adult education and lifelong learning, and Professor Liz Thomas, member of the Teaching Excellence Framework panel, and expert in student retention and success, and learning and teaching will also present at the conference. Professor Steven Larkin, Professor Peter Crampton and Sonja Braidner will also provide their insights around achieving greater equity in education and beyond.

The program includes a wide range of presentations by accomplished equity practitioners and offers a unique opportunity to learn from their achievements. For more details about the conference program, and to register for this important event, see the conference website at <https://enablingequity.com/>

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## Yapug 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

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### Celebrating the University of Newcastle's pathway program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

This year commemorates the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Yapug Program. Contemporary Aboriginal Local Artist and Designer Saretta Fielding designed the artwork to capture the meaning of Yapug, which means 'pathway'. Saretta's works 'aim to capture and evoke emotion, enhance connection to spirit, each other and country and invite the viewer to ponder and experience something new'. Click here to see more of [Saretta's art](#).



*Dr Sharlene Leroy Dyer (Yapug Program Convenor) together with the local artist Saretta Fielding.*

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## New SCU program

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### Transition to Uni at Southern Cross University

*Transition to Uni* is a new six week intensive course for recent Year 12 school leavers who didn't quite get the grades they were hoping for to get into their chosen degree. It will run over January and February, finishing in time for those who pass the course to start their degree in Session 1. Students will study two subjects: Academic Literacies where they will learn key self- management and learning strategies as well as how to write an academic essay, the other - Scientific and Quantitative Concepts where they will learn fundamental biology, chemistry, physics and mathematical concepts as well as how to write a scientific report. The course will be offered on all three campuses at Coffs Harbour, Lismore and the Gold Coast. This new course reflects the diversity of enabling education, a key strength that allows educators to plan and deliver programs carefully tailored for unique cohorts of students.

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## FACE Annual Conference

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### Some reflections

The title for the 2019 FACE conference was "Delivering the Public Good of Higher Education – Widening Participation, Place and Lifelong Learning." The vision was for delegates to share best practice to improve access to higher education. Throughout the conference, it was acknowledged that there is still inequality to accessing Higher Education and this is

a broad social issue throughout the United Kingdom; however, it has been the stimulus for a range of programs, initiatives and research projects designed to better understand the needs students. The conference theme closely aligned to the mission and vision of FACE and resonated with the vision held by NAEAA. The two-day agenda spoke strongly to the ability of widening participation programs and initiatives to transform lives through the offering of opportunity regardless of students' backgrounds.

The conference hosted four keynote speakers: Professor Sir Chris Husbands, Vice-Chancellor, Sheffield Hallam University; Professor Mary Stuart, Vice-Chancellor, University of Lincoln; Jules Donzelot, Sociologist Scientific Director and Researcher of AFEV Demo Campus, CADIS and Damian Allen, Chief Executive, Doncaster Council. Key themes included: Public good of Higher Education: Exploring and understanding the wider benefits of an inclusive Higher Education system; Widening Participation: Challenging and innovative approaches to access and success in HE and beyond; Place: Examining the impact of place and context on HE access and participation; Lifelong Learning: The role of HE institutionally, regionally, nationally and internationally in creating and delivering lifelong learning opportunities.

Papers presented are available at the conference website <http://www.face.ac.uk/conference-2/previous-conferences/face-2019-conference-presentations/>

The FACE annual publication, 'Transformative Higher Education: Access, Inclusion and Lifelong Learning', drawing on papers presented at the 2018 annual conference is now available for purchase. Each chapter provides a insight into transformative education and as a whole, the publication makes an important contribution to the wider literature on access and widening participation to higher education.

### Reflections on the Face Conference – Trixie James (CQUniversity)

There are many universities that offer support programs to assist students to access university and continue on this trajectory of gaining a degree. When first walking into the foyer of the conference, there was a strong sense of openness and genuine collegiality. From my first conversation right through to the final day, there was a sense that the conference attendees have the same heart to see all students succeed no matter their background. It was a privilege to be able to share around my current areas of interest from my Positive Psychology unit to a critical reflection booklet that I developed. The sessions were very well received and I have made connections with some integral members of FACE where hopefully in the future we might be able to collaborate on an international initiative.

One university in particular, who shared a range of initiatives, was Kingston University who offer a program called Kingston Hub. This hub supports students to skill up and make a difference by tackling social challenges, learning valuable skills and connecting with one another. They had a number of delegates who shared initiatives and programs they have in place. Of particular note was a delegate of Kingston Hub, Harry Hodges, who was a past equity/enabling student and has

worked his way from a disengaged youth with no future aspirations to an educated young man whose job title is Kingston Hub Manager.



Karen Seary and Professor John Storan at FACE 2019 (above) and Karen and Trixie James (below).



#### 2020 Date Claimer

The 2020 FACE Conference will be held at the University of East London UEL Stratford campus from 1-3 July with a theme centred on caring and wellbeing.

### Other new publications

#### Publications tackle key enabling education issues

New publications by educators and practitioners who aim to widen participation in higher education demonstrate the

broad range of issues relevant to this area. The following are examples of research emerging in the field:

James, T., & Seary, K. (2019). Why aren't they attending class like they are supposed to? A review into students' perception of the value of class attendance. *Student Success*, 10(1), 115-129.

<https://doi.org/10.5204/ssj.v10i1.1111>

Bennett, A., & Lumb, M. (2019). Policy misrecognitions and paradoxes: Developing more contextually attuned access and equity policies in Australian higher education. *Policy Futures in Education*, 0(0), 1-17.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210319831579>

Bennett, A. (2018). Access and equity programme provision-evaluation in Australian higher education: a what matters approach, *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 24(8), 523-537.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2019.1643740>

### 'You're not smart enough'

#### How one student upended the myth

Jordan Ivey completed the Preparing for Success program at Southern Cross University and went on to complete a Bachelor of Marine Science and Management. His words will resonate with many educators who work in widening participation:

"I remember how hard the words hit me – 'you're not smart enough'. I lost all motivation and started cutting classes. I almost didn't finish high school. I hit rock bottom after school, with no university acceptance, no career trajectory and no plan. I'd heard about Southern Cross' bridging program, Preparing for Success. I was accepted and worked hard, receiving above distinction average grades. For the first time in my life I'd received good grades and it felt so good. I started to believe that I was not only capable of university, but with hard work, I may actually excel at this. I received a scholarship, which enabled me to dedicate to my studies full time. After my first session, the results came in – four distinctions! This made me re-evaluate my goals. I loved the idea of working in a marine related field, but with my grades, I needed to raise the bar. With global problems surrounding marine life, I want to enable real change in the world and research is the best way I can make an impact. I am now living in Fiji conducting practical coral research while I finish my honours degree. Then I plan to complete my PhD."



Jordan Ivey – showing where pathway programs can lead.

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## Publishing Opportunity

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### **New Springer volume on Widening Participation for Under-represented Groups in Higher Education (Eds. Jonathan H. Green, Fernando F. Padró, & David Bull)**

Arriving at a time when the Widening Participation sector in Australia is coming of age, this volume, part of the Springer Reference series in *University Development and Administration* (Series Editor Fernando F. Padró) is an opportunity for NAEAA members to contribute to program development and policy directions that increase the participation of social equity groups in Higher Education. The volume, which will be published in 2020, targets readers who have an interest in establishing programs at their institutions that foster widening participation and aims to draw from current best practice and innovations in the sector. Expressions of interest are invited from those who wish to contribute by submitting a chapter that fits into this scope. Contact Jonathan Green ([Jonathan.Green@usq.edu.au](mailto:Jonathan.Green@usq.edu.au)).

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## NPP Grant 'Success'

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### **'Success from the Perspective of the Successful; Students from LSES Backgrounds, Success and Completion in Higher Education'**

UON Enabling's Kristen Allen and Anna Bennett (along with colleagues from Faculties: Mark Rubin, Penny Jane Burke, Peter Howley and Suzanne Macqueen, as well as Sarah O'Shea from Wollongong, Carmen Mills from UQ, Maria Raciti from USC, Nida Denson from WSU and Ryan Naylor from La Trobe), are collaborating on a multi-institutional team that have been awarded a Department of Education NPP grant to explore 'Success from the Perspective of the Successful: Students from LSES Backgrounds, Success and Completion in Higher Education'. UON is the lead institution. This is a topic closely related to Kristen's current PhD study and is very important because it enables a more inclusive framing of educational success for policymakers, particularly of the pivotal aspects that are not readily visible in routine quantitative data. This work is also critical given an increasing focus on performance based funding. The project includes people from Indigenous and low SES regional and remote backgrounds to determine the factors, including initiatives, to which students attribute their success. Developing better insight into the experiences of students, and how they understand their success to have been achieved, will expand the evidence base, and has the potential to inform more precisely targeted approaches and interventions (including retention and completion strategies) to improve outcomes for these cohorts overall.

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## Transitioning Students into Higher Education: Philosophy, Pedagogy and Practice

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### **New publication with a focus on enabling education**

*Transitioning Students into Higher Education*, edited by Dr Angela Jones, Anita Olds and Dr Joanne Lisciandro, focuses on the relationship between philosophy, pedagogy, and practice when designing programs, units or courses for transitioning

students to new educational spaces in the university environment. The term 'transition' is used to describe the academic as well as social movement and acculturation of students into new higher educational spaces.

This book offers both theoretical perspectives and real-world practical examples that reveal the successes and challenges of implementing philosophically driven pedagogies with diverse transitioning cohorts. Drawing on examples from Australia, New Zealand, US, and Canada, it writes through the relationship between philosophy, pedagogy, and how it can effectively shape the practice of transition and develop the flourishing student. This book is split into three main sub-themes: Flourishing in Transition, Engaging Diverse Cohorts and The Educator's Challenge, and sits at the intersections between philosophy and pedagogy in the practice of effectively engaging and transitioning different enabling groups.

This book will be of great interest to researchers and educators working with culturally diverse cohorts in the fields of enabling or bridging education, higher education and distance learning.



*Dr Joanne Lisciandro, Anita Olds, and Dr Angela Jones.*

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## UniSA Women's Program

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### **A unique program for women who affected by homelessness or domestic violence**

The University of South Australia has just completed its fourth iteration of a program for women who have recently been homeless or impacted by domestic violence. Lecturer and Program Director at UniSA College, Dr Sarah Hattam works closely with Catherine House Women's Shelter and the Zahra Foundation to offer an intensive foundation global sociology course in a supported environment on campus. The sociological emphasis on opportunities for agency has led to increased confidence and feelings of 'empowerment' for a number of the women, who are now pursuing further study at UniSA.

Over the ten weeks we problem-pose a global phenomenon and apply the sociological imagination (Willis, 2011) to make sense of its origins and its current sources by asking the question: 'What is it about the way the society is structured that contributes to the phenomenon of, for example, islamophobia, sweatshops in Bangladesh, inhumane refugee policies, resistance to gender diversity, the global division of wealth. In our in-

class analysis we explore social movements, non-government organisations and inter-governmental organisations to consider their contributions towards these phenomena. The students engage with both the constraints that exist as well as being provided examples of people and groups pushing up against the structures to enact social, political or cultural changes.

The course feedback from the most recent group reveals the positive impact the course has had on this student:

*"Personally, this has been the best step back into the university environment I could have possibly wished for and I hope this course continues to be offered and taken up by as many women as possible. It's a life changer."*

To read more about the women's program and the transformative pedagogies adopted by the enabling educators who teach the course (Dr Sarah Hattam & Dr Snjezana Bilic), check out their article published in the most recent edition of the [Journal of International Studies in Widening Participation](#).



For more information about the National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia, see the Association's website at <http://enablingeducators.org/> . If you wish to contact the Association, please email [secretary@enablingeducators.org](mailto:secretary@enablingeducators.org)