Frank Coletta (00:02:49):

And thank you for joining us for the ATN25 National Symposium on Curriculum Innovation. This is our annual summit, and of course, one of our major events in 2024 as ATN Universities celebrates 25 great years of groundbreaking policy, advocacy, and innovation in higher education. I'm Frank Coletta. I'm the Executive Director of the Australian Technology Network of Universities and it's absolutely my pleasure to be your host this afternoon, and I am joining you from the capital city of our beautiful country. I wish to acknowledge at this point in time the Ngunawal people as the traditional custodians of the land I am on today and recognise any other people or families with connections to the ACT and the regions around us. I wish to also take a moment to acknowledge elders past and present and respect their continuing culture and the contributions that they make to the life of this city and this region.

(00:03:46):

I acknowledge too the traditional custodians of the lands from which you are joining this symposium and welcome Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are attending today's event with us. Welcome also to our vice-chancellors past and present who've joined us online this afternoon including our ATN Universities' Chair, Professor Harlene Hayne, who is of course Vice-Chancellor of Curtin University. Well ladies and gentlemen, it has certainly been a very busy year and an exciting one in tertiary education and we're not even halfway through yet. We've had the Universities Accord Final Report. We've also had the Future Made in Australia policy announcement very recently, and we've also seen crucial government commitments being announced in the lead up to the Federal Budget. Now this symposium is an opportunity for all of us to come together to discuss the key recommendations set out in the Universities Accord regarding the essential role of partnerships in improving our collective capability and our capacity to meet the high-impact needs, skills needs in fact, of Australia now and into the future. In the Prime Minister's Future Made in Australia announcement,

(00:04:58):

Anthony Albanese asked us to think differently, breaking with the old orthodoxies and for us to pull the new levers. To that end, this is a space for a solutions-focused conversation and one that is open in discussing barriers which exist and identifying those opportunities for us to overcome these as a connected sector and a connected system. We are very privileged to have an esteemed keynote speaker with us and that's coming up very shortly, followed by a panel of equally highly regarded colleagues from across tertiary education, industry, and government. And we know there is expertise in

our audience too. So, we will close out the symposium with an interactive session and it will be an ideation segment and that will explore how we might better collaborate across sectors to meet current and future skills for a thriving Australia. Now ladies and gentlemen, we have designed this symposium to be totally interactive and we welcome, indeed,

(00:05:58):

we encourage those of you who are joining us online today and are here representing those many different sectors to share your perspectives and to share those probing questions. We have Slido as a place for questions during our keynote and panel Q&A, you should be able to see the QR code on screen, which will take you straight to the dedicated Slido and Q&A page for this event. So, I ask that you get on there and you add your questions for our keynote speaker via Slido and like any questions from others that you think, yep, you know what, that's a great question. Now without any further ado, and to get us started, I'm thrilled to welcome the new Commissioner for Jobs and Skills Australia as our keynote speaker, Professor Barney Glover AO to share with us in his opening address to formally begin proceedings for our ATN25 National Symposium on Curriculum Innovation.

(00:06:47):

Professor Glover needs no introduction, but I will nonetheless, for he is a distinguished academic leader, an accomplished mathematician, and a mathematics educator with great experience in developing strong ongoing relationships with the vocational education sector. Most recently, he was of course Vice-Chancellor and President of Western Sydney University, for 10 years in fact, and in 2019 was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to tertiary education, professional associations, and cultural organisations. Thank you, Professor Glover, for joining us less than one month into your new role as commissioner. We are honoured to have you with us today and I've been very much looking forward to your keynote speech. So, over to you.

Prof Barney Glover (00:07:35):

Thanks very much. It is great to be here. I'm very, very pleased to have had the opportunity so early in my term as JSA Commissioner to come along to a meeting of the ATN, so thank you very much for the invitation. I'd also like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we are meeting, and I know there are many people participating in this webinar from all over Australia, so on the lands of many First

Nations people to acknowledge their Elders past and present. And as we are talking about the Universities Accord, one of the very important themes of the Accord was to place First Nations people at the heart of our higher education system and between the interim report and the final report, I hope people saw the change in the report when it came to the depth and the breadth of recommendations and discussion around the role higher education needs to play to support First Nations people in higher education, but importantly, to support the concept of self-determination in higher education.

(00:08:45):

So, I'm very pleased to acknowledge I'm on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation here in Sydney today. What I'd like to do is to begin, if we can slip to the next slide for me. Now before I jump into the presentation, I wanted to note that of course this is your 25th anniversary celebration of the ATN and I do want to congratulate the ATN on its 25th anniversary and I wanted to reflect a little on the fact that very early on, and I acknowledge my former vice-chancellor colleagues who are in the room, my former colleagues, current vice-chancellors, who are involved in today's webinar, I look forward to your Q&A, and Harlene of course is here from Curtin. So, I acknowledge Harlene because my first interaction with the ATN was almost 25 years ago at Curtin University in my career when I was Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Development.

(00:09:49):

As I recall, Lance Twomey was my Vice-Chancellor at Curtin. We had the great, the wonderful Denise Bradley at the University of South Australia, Margaret Gardner at RMIT, Ross Milbourne at UTS, Peter Coaldrake at QUT. I know some of the membership has changed over 25 years, but I did want to acknowledge those who were there in the pioneering early days of the ATN. I also want to acknowledge the ATN'S great work over the 25 years and I've certainly admired it as a vice-chancellor in the sector, but now looking back over the 25 years, to see some of the innovations and contributions to policy made by the ATN during that period are very noteworthy, and I have great memories of that period when I was at Curtin participating in the ATN discussions in those early years. I went on to have periods of time with the IIU as well, after I left Curtin and went to Newcastle and Charles Darwin, and ultimately, Western Sydney.

(00:10:56):

And I know the value, in my view at least, the value of our mission groups to the sector and I think the ATN in particular is a very coherent mission group with I think a great deal to offer to the sector, and I think a great deal to contribute as we move through the post-

Accord announcements next week, whatever they may be. I think the Government's been making some announcements, Minister Clare has made some already. So, I think the ATN is well-placed to contribute to what comes next for higher education in Australia and in fact for tertiary education, which will be a theme of this presentation. So, if we could move to the next slide, what I want to begin with is some reflections on the Accord Final Report. Now given my new role, I will be taking a particular lens to this and it's a JSA lens for those who don't know a lot about Jobs and Skills Australia.

(00:11:56):

I hope by the end of my presentation you'll know a little bit more about the contribution that we will hopefully be making if we make some assumptions about what might come out of the budget next week. And I must say from the outset, I don't have inside knowledge of that, so I'm not giving anything away. I'm basing my comments on the Accord recommendations and what I'm hopeful we might see next week in the budget, which is continuing from some of the announcements made to date. So, if we just move to the next slide, you'll get a sense from this about the two aspects I wanted to pick up on around the system shifts that particularly align closely to the work of Jobs and Skills Australia, both from a policy perspective but also the infrastructure that we're going to need to achieve these policy directions. And that's going to come, I hope, into play when we talk a little bit about the relationship that JSA might have and the potential, should the Government endorse it in the budget process, the establishment of an Australian Tertiary Education Commission and what that will do to steward the sector through the next phase of development and particularly the implementation of those recommendations accepted by government.

(00:13:19):

So, I want to look at how JSA can play a role in ensuring we have the right infrastructure, particularly data infrastructure, to support some of the decision-making about the shape of tertiary education into the future, and particularly, higher education. Now JSA's work around data harmonisation, for example, is one element of that to touch on, pathways analysis and the development of a national skills taxonomy; all things referred to in the Accord report I think are vital to the future and the stewardship of the sector when it comes to data harmonisation. JSA has commenced work on integrating data sets across VET and higher education to identify student movements and student outcomes. I'm going to come back to this with some data from the VET sector a little later in this presentation to give you a sense of the depth of reporting and analysis that's now possible as we tap into the administrative data sets of the Commonwealth to

provide an understanding of how existing students move through the tertiary education system and the outcomes they achieve,

(00:14:30):

so, linking those pathways to outcomes. In addition, scoping work will be undertaken to integrate other higher education data sets like the data sets we have in QILT and I'm very pleased that I chaired QILT, the QILT working group for a number of years and to determine the feasibility of aligning VET and higher ed data sets into a future more systematic system for reporting if we have an ATEC, vitally important. You're going to hear a lot of this from me about the importance of harmonising our tertiary education system and integrating our tertiary education system in a variety of ways. Now, when it comes to pathway analysis, equally important, how do people move across and through our system, through the sectors, the VET sector and higher education sector? JSA is commencing a project to evaluate pathway effectiveness in relation to skill shortages. This project will provide empirical analysis of education to work pathways and which ones have been successful at facilitating workers into occupations to meet specific skill shortages.

(00:15:39):

So, we need to understand better those education to work pathways. And in relation to the national skills taxonomy, we have already commenced that work. It commenced at the JSA before the Accord process, but JSA is working on a skills mapping model to test how skills taxonomy can connect to education units in VET as well as in higher education, and this is beginning to give us a common language, a skills-based language across that VET/higher education interface. I know that UTS, a member of the ATN, has been involved in some of the pilot work around the national skills taxonomy, the Australian skills classification, and the mapping of that into some of those high-level VET and AQF 5 higher education programs. I think that's exciting and important work and it gives us a very deep understanding of how to improve the interface. If we talk about a more reflexive and responsive system, lifelong learning is mentioned right through the Accord report, and I know it's been something the ATN has championed in a number of your submissions, along with the importance of expanding access to tertiary education.

(00:16:58):

I'm not going to go into the detail of the projections that are in the Accord report, but I will just mention the fact that when I speak now as the JSA Commissioner, I use two

important pieces of data: Post-Secondary qualifications over the next decade in the adult workforce will need to grow to 92% of the workforce with post-secondary qualifications, tertiary level qualifications, where at the moment it's 70%. So, in a decade we've got to move from 70% to 92% and that's split about 48%, 44% in terms of VET versus higher education as the primary pathway qualification. A lot of overlap as well. So, you can see the importance of both systems and the overlap between them. Now JSA of course is supporting the development of a business case for a National Skills Passport. We believe it's extraordinarily important to students. It's very, very important in fact, in my view, at a personal level, to students with an educationally disadvantaged background to many of our equity students that will have a National Skills Passport and hopefully a broad context to that passport that will enable us to present the skills and capabilities and the experiences of our students to prospective employers in a much more transparent and robust way.

(00:18:22):

So, I'm a great believer in the value of the National Skills Passport, so we have a more flexible and responsive system and skill system as a major objective. It's probably worth emphasising the importance of the relationship as I see it between the Tertiary Education Commission, if it's established, and the JSA. A lot of what I've been talking about is going to feed very, very valuable information into the ATEC for discussion with the sector and consultation with the sector as well as importantly involving our VET providers and particularly TAFE, the importance of good data and metrics is crucial to good decision-making and good policy-making. So, there is a great deal of alignment in my view between the work of the JSA and the Accord recommendations. I'm going to go to the next slide because I want to pick up one element in particular that's emphasised in the Accord and is already taking shape. And I wanted to emphasise the importance of partnership models emerging between vocational education and training providers, particularly TAFE and universities and industry, which I think is going to be one of the game-changing initiatives to emerge as we begin to reform the tertiary education system in Australia.

(00:19:56):

Now we have some great dual sectors, and the ATN has a great dual sector with RMIT as an example of, I think, one of our powerhouse universities when it comes to its relationship with the VET sector through its own TAFE division. We haven't seen a new dual sector university in Australia for some time. CQU was most recently merged or there was a merger between Central Queensland TAFE and CQU to form a dual sector. So that model may not necessarily be the model that expands in the future, but there

are already some really interesting partnership models, and those in New South Wales at UTS will understand the IATs (Institutes of Applied Technology) that came out of the Gonski-Shergold review of tertiary education in New South Wales. Well worth revisiting that review because it's very pertinent, I think, to what will happen as we move from this very important set of announcements around the Accord next week forward around tertiary education more broadly in Australia.

(00:21:01):

But the IAT model, I think, is a very valuable model. The IAT digital, which is a UTS, Macquarie, TAFE New South Wales, Microsoft, and other industry partners model, I think it's already seeing thousands of people doing micro skills, microcredentials under development. It highlights to us both the opportunity here for a new model of collaboration but also some of the challenges as the two sectors grapple with issues like accreditation. In New South Wales, the New South Wales Labour Government when it came in announced it would establish Centres of Excellence, but of course Minister O'Connor, my minister responsible for the JSA, has already announced Commonwealth Centres of Excellence. In fact, there's $325 million over five years to establish and operate up to 20 TAFE Centres of Excellence and states and territories will make a matching contribution to that. So, this is a major opportunity for universities around Australia to work closely with TAFE to establish these Centres of Excellence in priority areas.

(00:22:06):

The first one has been announced, it was in EVs (in electric vehicles) at Canberra Institute of TAFE, and I know that CIT is still working with its university partners in the ACT, but that was the first one announced I think, around $19 million for that one. Six of the TAFE Centres of Excellence will be turbocharged for rapid establishment in the areas of net zero, the care and support sector, the digital skills area with around 32 million committed through the working future white paper and in addition to the National Skills Agreement, so TAFES, employers, unions working together to design and deliver courses that rapidly upskill people in their areas of industry need. Keep an eye on the jobs and skills councils of Australia, which are doing a great job as tripartite organisations in various industry sectors to bring together the future of jobs and skills at that industry level, and they'll connect up with TAFE and they'll certainly connect up with the TAFE Centres of Excellence.

(00:23:13):

This is to me one of the great opportunities for the ATN. It's a wonderful example of new models of collaboration. It brings together the integration of tertiary education in a very, very focused way and it's an at scale major program, but TAFE is at the heart of this program, and this is something I think for the ATN to grasp when it comes to the emerging reform of tertiary education, TAFE is going to play a crucial role; the Government has made that abundantly clear in announcing the first Centre of Excellence this week. Earlier this week, Minister O'Connor also went on to announce the move towards self-accreditation for TAFE involved in a pilot way in Centres of Excellence for selected TAFEs with a lot of detail to be worked out between ASQA and TEQSA, but that's an important recommendation from the Accord. The Minister's given a direction to ASQA to commence that movement of the delegated authority for accreditation.

(00:24:19):

The process of selecting the TAFES, the Centres of Excellence, is going to be a crucial part of that. The Accord went further to recommend Commonwealth Supported Places. I think this is another really important part of driving collaboration in the sector, within the system I should say, with TAFE at the heart of the system. I wanted to also mention the Regional University Study Hubs and the Metropolitan Study Hubs that were recommended in the Accord and have been picked up by the Government already. And again, these are opportunities for universities. They're deliberately not university study hubs. These are regional study hubs now in the context of the Commonwealth, and there's a real expectation that universities will reach out to engage with TAFE and VET providers and with local industry in those regional settings and great opportunities for upskilling and addressing equity challenges in some metropolitan areas as well.

(00:25:23):

The point here is new models are emerging. It is at scale, it is going to be very focused, and universities have a role to play but they're not at the heart of it, but they're a major contributor to it. So, I'd encourage the ATN particularly, I think you're well placed to be a major player in the context of the Centres of Excellence that Minister O'Connor is going to deliver. Let's move to the next slide. This slide, a little bit busy, not the greatest slide in the world, but it's meant to give you a sense of something that the JSA is very strongly promoting and that is we need to understand the architecture of the national skill system in Australia and we need to encourage a more joined up system, and JSA is going to play a particularly important role in relation to that.

(00:26:12):

There are three pillars of a national skills system: the vocational education and training, the higher education sector, and of course, skilled migration. And JSA, you might be aware, and I'll come back briefly to touch on it, is at the moment mandated to provide guidance to government on skilled migration in this country through what's called the core skilled occupation list. But this diagram gives you a sense of how we see the system, and the importance of jobs and skills in the workplace at the heart of it, the interplay of course with our tripartite mandate, which is to bring business together with unions as well as governments and with education and training providers to support the context of this national skills system. But the key message here is it needs to be a joined-up system, and we're going to put some detail around what a joined-up system might look like.

(00:27:13):

But it comes back to tertiary harmonisation. It comes back to this concept of integration. It comes back to concepts of partnership. It comes back to the way we measure and describe pathways through and from education into the workforce, the lifelong learning components, and of course, upskilling and re-skilling. So, keep an eye on the national skill system and the role you play in it is the key message. It's going to be a key part of the narrative I think around skills in Australia going forward. Let's move to the next slide. The question when you have a national skills system of course is well, how do we decide on the skills we need? And that's something else JSA is doing. I want to quickly look at our skilled priority list. If you move to the next slide, you'll get a sense of the skill shortages in the system.

(00:28:11):

Now these resonate both for higher education and for vocational education and training in various ways, but these graphs here, without going through the detail of them, show you the change between 2022 and 2023 in the skill priority list. And it shows you the percentage of occupations by these sectors that are defined to be in shortage. And you'll see we've seen a movement up across all of these areas virtually from 2022 to 2023, and in some cases, technicians and trades workers, we're now at 50% of occupations in shortage, professionals have moved from 39% to 48% in shortage. So, you get a real sense that we've seen very substantial increases in the proportion of occupations in shortage, particularly in areas like community and personal services as well as in a range of other areas of the economy. So, the role of JSA is to shine a light on skill shortages and to produce the skilled priority list.

(00:29:20):

The next point I want to make, if we go to the next slide, is a very important feature of what's happening with skill shortages and that is the gender imbalance in occupations, which is accentuating and amplifying the skill shortage. So, this graph basically tells us that if you have a feminised workforce, so more than 80% of the workers in an occupation are female, you're seeing 40%. Now looking back over the last three years, you're seeing 40% of occupations that are feminised in shortage. If you look at male dominated occupations, 54% are in shortage. If you look at balanced workforce occupations, 25% – it's growing, but it's 25%. Not surprisingly, the message is, if you are accessing the full potential of the workforce, you're less likely to have a shortage. Shortages are not just about volume alone. There are many reasons we have to address skill shortages and the role that universities and vocational education and training providers play is crucial to that, but there's a very important gender component to that.

(00:30:32):

The next slide, very quickly, and I won't have time to go through this in detail, it's a busy slide, but it's showing you that cyclic trends in the economy that lead to shortages in some occupations is not the sole – it's not just a supply and demand issue when it comes to skill shortages, and this is important for universities to appreciate, there are a variety of reasons. Some is a training gap, long or short-term training gap. Very importantly here, you can identify occupations where you're seeing we just need more volume, more training volume. We need new models of training, potentially new models of education, new fast tracking, new RPL, whatever we might do. But we have a volume versus supply, a demand supply issue here. But there's two other reasons that we have shortages. One is a suitability gap, very important to the tertiary system. This is where there seems to be sufficient qualified applicants for positions, but they're not being picked up, which means there's a gap in capability and we need to address the gap in capability.

(00:31:38):

It could be work readiness, it could be we're not working closely enough with industry to ensure our qualifications are fit for purpose. We need to make sure their currency is adequate. The final reason is a retention challenge, and this is something JSA works on with our capacity studies. We look at how are we looking at how we keep people. It's not always about more volume. It could be keeping people in the workforce and a lot of our aged care, early childhood, a lot of our caring professions are experiencing a retention gap. A lot to do with the quality of the workplace, with remuneration and also with

training and education. Again, a message here, it's also to do with education and training challenges for those workforces. So, we do a lot of work about, if you like the taxonomy of skill shortages. I know I'm running short of time.

(00:32:28):

We're going to jump to the next slide. I want to look a little bit at employment projections, but very, very, very quickly. Next slide please. This will just give you a sense of projected employment growth over the next decade by major occupational group and skill level. You can see professionals in aggregate numbers growing dramatically, community and personal care workers, managers, and you go down the list, technical and trade workers. We're seeing significant growth across all of those occupations. The major occupation group being professionals increasing dramatically over the next decade. And if you understand the colour coding, it's to do with the skill level of those people and the higher-level skills are becoming more important. We go quickly to the next slide. This gives you a sense of the share of employment by industry and those industry sectors that are actually growing the most. For example, construction, a lot to do with net zero, clean energy, electrifying the grid, all of those aspects of net zero are driving big construction over the next decade.

(00:33:40):

And even though its share of the workforce is not great, it's growing faster than other groups in the other occupation classifications in the economy. But the big growth areas of healthcare and social assistance, professional, scientific, and technical services, retail trade, education and training, the big growth in those service areas. Quickly jump to the next slide and the next one, I just want to give you a glimpse of what we're doing at JSA to support, and I would encourage you to look at the work we're producing from a university perspective. The clean energy report is being widely recognised as an extraordinarily valuable capacity study last year about what we need to do to address the 38 occupations and skill shortage. Think it through, that will impact on skilled migration as well as other aspects of the tertiary system. And that's very much where the focus will be in growth over the next decade.

(00:34:40):

We're doing a food supply chain study at the moment that will be released in the next month, early childhood capacity study underway at the moment, soon to be released. We're doing a big study of the VET workforce, and this is a challenge too. We need the trainers in VET to train us for the future, something that the ATN should be very

interested in, and work on international student pathways and outcomes and we'll publish that shortly. One worth looking at, and we're commencing an extraordinarily important foundation skills study over the next 12 months. First time in almost a decade, a national study of adult literacy and numeracy digital skills. That is a very important precursor to Australia re-entering PIACC in 2026. The international measurement survey for foundation skills. Last slide, well last almost, this one – busy slide but it tells you something of what we're going to be doing.

(00:35:42):

This is in the VET space we'll be doing in the higher ed space in the future. This is our VET National Data Asset (VNDA) information. And this was a study 2018 - 19 data, top 100 VET qualifications and it was looking by various categories and what difference a VET qualification completion made. And I won't highlight all of this. It's certainly made a difference to employment outcomes. It's certainly made a difference to median income and the uplift in median income. But to give you one particularly important piece of data, for people with a disability, over 50% of those who entered these VET qualifications were on income support, and once they completed into employment, half of those people were out of income support. And these are the sort of data we need about the effectiveness of our tertiary education system. And you'll see soon we'll be picking up higher education data and, I'm sure the ATN will be particularly interested in that.

(00:36:49):

My last quick slide, we jumped forward. Next slide. I wanted to emphasise skilled migration because at the moment this is very important to the sector, and already as JSA Commissioner, I'm having vice-chancellors and others approach me about the work we're doing. I would ask you to pay attention to the consultation process that's underway for the draft core skills occupation list. This gives you a sense of the process that we're going through before I provide advice to Ministers Giles and O'Neil in relation to the skilled migration list for short term migration. We take into account not just shortage, we take into account employment outcomes and other aspects in determining whether an occupation should be on the skilled migration list. And I encourage you to be involved in that process because it has obvious implications for your sector. I have no doubt taken up too much time. But thank you very much and I'm very happy if there is time for any questions, particularly from my former vice-chancellor colleagues. I'm sure they have some.

Frank Coletta (00:38:02):

Professor Glover, thank you very much and I love the challenge that you've set to the vice-chancellors as well. Great insights from you and plenty of ground covered as we try to answer that question, of course, how we do we work better together and in real-world partnerships to improve our collective capabilities and capacities to fill those high impact skills that Australia will need. Love the fact that you touched on where the gaps are, the shortages and how we can potentially get there, and particularly looking forward to seeing and reading the International Student Pathways and Outcomes paper that JSA has underway. As you said, a fair few questions have come through so we will be taking up more of your time. So, thank you for sticking with us Professor Glover. I will remind you before I do read out the first question, ladies and gentlemen, please use Slido.

(00:38:47):

I do see a few hands in the air on Zoom. We are going through Slido, of course, for this particular forum and we're using Padlet as well as we move along. So please log into Slido and ask your question there. We are not taking the questions from Zoom. So, we do have one, Professor Glover, from Heather and it focuses on the establishment of the ATEC, which you spoke to earlier on in your presentation. And Heather asks, what might we learn from other techs which have been developed, of course, and put in play internationally regarding the intervention and the consultation role that they might play?

Prof Barney Glover (00:39:28):

It is a good question and I know it's been front of mind for a lot of us in the sector since the Accord first suggested in the interim report that some form of tertiary education commission might be in our thinking. And as I said, I don't know if they are going to support it, that's a matter for next week. However, let's assume it was the case, the key things in the Accord, which I would be very confident that Jason Clare will pick up on, should he decide to proceed with an ATEC, is one, it should be a steward for the system, not a director of the system, but a steward for the system and particularly around managed growth in higher education as a key component of that. So, it's very much about stewardship and it's very much about consultation and mission-based agreements with individual institutions to recognise the context of individual institutions rather than, as many people fear, intervention.

(00:40:28):

Many people fear direction, many people fear that the autonomy of Australia's universities will be at risk by virtue of having a Tertiary Education Commission. And I appreciate those things and I'm sure the implementation committee, if it's established, to begin to implement the ATEC, we'll need to take that into account in the context of guiding us towards legislation to establish an ATEC. I would encourage the sector, if it's announced, as I'm sure they would be very actively engaged. I'm sure David Lloyd as Chair of Universities Australia would be very actively engaged with the Commonwealth on this to ensure that we get the right cultural dimension to the role of a Tertiary Education Commission. In terms of, I'm not going to go through international examples, New Zealand comes up occasionally. New Zealand's tech is pretty interventionist and certainly I wouldn't use that as a model. It may be fit for purpose in New Zealand, and I don't criticise the role they play, but I know universities there do feel it's interventionist. There are other models around the world that you could use, and you could look at even to the UK with their office for students and other models. I think we can do it better in Australia. I think the architecture has been put in place in the Accord report. It's up to the Government to implement it appropriately and for them to be held accountable by the sector, but I have confidence in that.

Frank Coletta (00:41:54):

Professor Glover, just on that same theme, the challenge has been accepted by our chair, Harlene Hayne and in regard to the ATEC, I guess we've touched on what the challenges are and not replicating perhaps what's happened in other countries, more about the opportunities. If an ATEC was to come into play, looking further afield, what are those opportunities potentially for Australia?

Prof Barney Glover (00:42:20):

Well, I think there are many opportunities for Australia, number one. And I think the report itself provides a pretty detailed sense of the responsibilities that might be given to a tertiary education commission and stewarding the system is an important part of its stabilisation and its growth and its ability to meet the skill needs and the educational needs of Australia, and to ensure, to a certain extent, that it's buffered from some of the political challenges that arise from time to time in our political cycle. It will be, I hope, a Tertiary Education Commission that will provide sector-level information to the Commonwealth about the performance of the sector. And it will provide a mechanism, I think, to ensure those universities and there are some at the moment, who are under considerable pressure, that will have a long-term opportunity to reset their strategic direction in consultation with a Tertiary Education Commission.

(00:43:20):

So, I think there's a very, very important way of stabilising and growing what is already a very high-quality university system in this country. So that's number one. Number two is it's the first step towards harmonising our tertiary education system. TEQSA will be within the umbrella of the ATEC if it's established, if in fact that model is accepted by the Commonwealth, the Australian Research Council could be involved. We'll start to see, I hope, JSA providing input from a data and performance perspective on the sector to help in decision-making and advice, we'll have First Nations commissioners and regional commissioners to help guide very, very specific work that needs to be done, particularly around closing the gap, and self-determination for First Nations people, and to address the very clear challenges faced by regional universities in Australia. So, I think that's a unique opportunity to take away some of the challenges we operate in now and to place, I hope, a policy frame that the ATEC can operate in.

(00:44:27):

So I think that's a very, very important opportunity for us and to advocate for the resources that we need because if the ATEC is there to implement the Accord, and the Accord has made it very clear we need to grow higher education in Australia, then it will be a matter of ensuring that the Government provides the resources necessary in their budgets and forward estimates to fund the load. The final piece of the puzzle I think is that we need to lift aspiration at the moment into tertiary education in this country. And I know Craig Robinson's on this panel a little later from the Victorian Skills Authority, we need to have young people into vocational education and training in very significant numbers. We need to acknowledge the parody of esteem between our two sectors, and we need to ensure that we offer an uplifting opportunity for all Australians to achieve their potential. This is core to the work of JSA and again, universities have to work with vocational education and training with governments, with the TAFE sector to uplift aspiration, there are recommendations in the Accord. I hope the Government picks up in that regard and that the tech can help to implement.

Frank Coletta (00:45:38):

Thanks, Professor Glover. Now I know we're well over time and the producers are telling me to move on, but I'm going to invoke the MC clause here and I'm going to ask one more question now. We actually have, it's two-pronged, both Lizzie and James have gone down this path about the tertiary education system and what it looks like moving forward. James asked about what actually the mechanics of vocational education, higher ed being bedfellows in Centres of Excellence, whereas Lizzie also asks, if you

imagine the tertiary education system in future, once we've implemented the Accord, what would a closer seamless VET/HE sector look like in practice? So, kind of combining the two questions, I think it's a great question in terms of universality. So, I'm going to end this part by asking that question, posing it to you.

Prof Barney Glover (00:46:23):

And look, I think it'd be great to hear from the panel in a minute. I'm pretty sure Craig's chomping at the bit to get at that one as well. I think we need to look, even though RMIT is a great example, I use it a lot. I think it's a great dual sector university, as are the other dual sectors, but it's at scale. We can find ways even with the complexities that operate at the moment between VET and higher ed, actually to get more seamless movement between the two sectors. We need to do a great deal to harmonise – harmonisation means let's understand the value of the national skills taxonomy. Let's ensure that we have a commonality of language between the two sectors. Let's ensure that we, for parents who are thinking about how to advise their children about where to go to study, and post-secondary study is the thing, right?

(00:47:13):

You've got to go on. There are no ifs or buts about it. So, in that case, how do we ensure that young people have an opportunity to explore TAFE and VET pathways, higher education pathways, and how the two sectors can more effectively work together? I can imagine a much more harmonious tertiary education system and one that's much easier to navigate for young people in particular. We need to get something like an ATEC working with state and territory governments to actually achieve that and we've got people able to do it. VET reform, the national skills agreement. Just to finish, there are a number of pieces of the architecture of this already in place, at least at a policy level. The employment white paper spoke to this, the migration strategy speaks to this, the national skills agreement for the first time in a decade, a new national skills agreement with states and territories around TAFE and vocational education and training reform, and the Accord. There's a big obligation on government here to respond to that architecture and say, what does that mean over the next five years, over the next 10 years to bring about harmonisation? I think it's eminently possible.

Frank Coletta (00:48:26):

We're looking forward to it playing that way. Thank you very much, Professor Glover. You've obviously put a lot of, well let's say, put a lot on the table and it's food for thought as we move into, well, what is the next segment here on our national symposium and it

is our panel discussion on the role of partnerships in meeting skills needs. And it's my pleasure indeed, ladies and gentlemen, to introduce our panel chair, Professor Kylie Readman from the Deputy Vice-chancellor, of course, of Education and Students from one of our own ATN Universities, of course, University of Technology Sydney. In her role, Kylie focuses on creating the institutional conditions for building staff and student capacity in learning, teaching, and the student experience centred around academic engagement, belonging, wellbeing, and partnerships. Now, Kylie has had many years experiences of leading innovation at the whole of institution level, including strategy resourcing, curriculum integration, and product design and campus master planning. Now just like for our keynote address with Professor Glover, feel free to submit your questions for the panel via Slido. The QR code is on your screen. And Kylie, it's over to you.

Prof Kylie Readman (00:49:35):

Thank you so much, Frank, and thank you, Barney, for that fantastic introduction. And I know I can tell from the questions that so many people are keen to continue the themes that you raised and hopefully we'll be able to pick up some of those in the panel session that we've got today. I'd like to introduce my esteemed colleagues joining me on the panel. You will have met some or all of them before if you are working across the sectors that they represent. First of all, Kate Pounder. Kate was most recently the CEO of the Tech Council of Australia, where she championed raising awareness of tech jobs, creating training pathways into them. Before that, she was a partner in a startups analytics firm, Alpha Beta, that was later sold on to Accenture working on projects related to labour market and training reform. She was also a consultant at McKinsey & Company, worked in Techcom before policy for 15 years with the Federal Government, Network 10, and Australian Industry Group.

(00:50:39):

You can see why we're delighted to have Kate as part of our panel today because she represents such a great intersection of all the things that we're all interested in. Thanks, Kate. My esteemed DVC (Education), my colleague at RMIT, Professor Sherman Young, is the next member of the panel. He's responsible for the strategic leadership of RMIT student learning and experience from enrolment to graduation. And Barney has spoken a little bit about the particular challenges faced by RMIT and bridging this really important, what may be previously might've been seen as a divide, but I guess what we are going to be looking forward to as has been signalled, is much more seamless integration and connection across all of our sectors and with industry. And that's the

work of the panel today to reflect on some of that. So welcome, Sherman. Craig Robertson's already also been foreshadowed as a member of our panel.

(00:51:36):

Craig, thanks so much, as the CEO of the Victorian Skills Authority tasked by the Victorian Government to plan for post-school education and training to prepare the state for a growing economy, good jobs for Victorians. Previously you've been the CEO of TAFE Directors Australia and worked for over 30 years with the Commonwealth Government. So, thank you very much for joining us. Lastly, just physically across the road from me, Dr Suneeti Rekhari. Suneeti is the Director of Education Quality at TAFE New South Wales. So, her role is about ensuring quality educational outcomes for nearly half a million New South Wales learners. No small feat. She has extensive experience in the Australian tertiary education sector in leading quality contemporary approaches to learning and teaching, curriculum transformation, building teacher capability. And again, I'll make that connection between the jobs and skills report around the capabilities needed for TAFE teaching and the work that Suneeti's been leading in New South Wales.

(00:52:42):

So, each member of the panel brings an important and different perspective from industry, state government, TAFE, higher ed, and the dual sector. As I mentioned, I'm going to keep my eye on Slido as we go through. We've tried to anticipate some of the questions you might be likely to ask, but I'm sure as I can see already, that there's a lot of interest in really mining this. So, it's great that we're all so interested in this. And I will say I think a ATN Universities have a particular focus and purpose and have shown leadership in the sector collectively in this particular area. So, it's really great that we've all come together to learn from one another. Kate, I'm going to start with you, if that's okay. How can industry, universities, and vocational institutions collaborate effectively, particularly in the area of high impact skills gap? So, you've worked in digital most recently, but there are others emerging. Can you give us a bit of insight?

Kate Pounder (00:53:47):

Yeah, it's a great question and I thought about it a lot when I was in my role as the CEO and I think about it a lot when I hear presentations like Professor Glover's and just appreciate the level of structural change that is going on across the tertiary and the VET sector and the migration sector, as well as those changes that we see in our economy, whether that's the energy transition or digitisation transition. And I think sometimes it's

easiest in that situation to think about the change you want to call and others to make. But I think all of us, our leaders have a responsibility to work out the role that we will play in affecting change ourselves. And when you get enough people who are prepared to make a change, that's really when you can see change at a systems level, and you get those very powerful collaborations and partnerships working between educational institutes and employers and unions and others.

(00:54:43):

And my experience was that there were four factors that made a really big difference about whether a group of people could work together and affect that change effectively. And one was, did you have a shared outcome and sense of purpose and a really clear story about why you needed to make that change and what it would take to do it? And had you all signed up to that outcome and that story and that commitment? Were all the people involved role modelling the change they were asking people to make, and particularly at a leadership level? Because I think when people see leaders actually changing, it really does inspire people to believe they can invest in the change themselves. When they don't see that change at leadership level, it makes people think this isn't really going to happen, it might be safer to sit back and wait.

(00:55:26):

I think you need to invest in capabilities to make sure both that people have the skills and the direction to know what is expected of them and a change and how to go about doing it. And then I think, fourthly, you need to put those reinforcing processes and regulations and other kind of procedural changes in place to basically both enable and reinforce the change. And I know that sounds kind of theoretical, but I've often found in practice when you think about do you have all those elements in place, it can really help you make sure that you're on the right path. And to give a kind of concrete example, and I think that's important. I don't think there's one single change or one single type of collaboration, whether that's determining what workforce needs are and thinking about how's the system you'll collaborate to meet a shortage or a skills need.

(00:56:17):

Whether that's fixing the design of training, whether at the curriculum level or through the practice that's put in place, whether it's making sure that pathways are working more effectively from training into the workforce. They're all kind of meaty problems in their own right and they often need collaboration on each of them to see change happen. But as a very practical example, when I was at the Tech Council, we had a

problem about that there was a shortage of people with tech skills right across the economy, but there wasn't perhaps the level of change underway to address it. And so, if I took that framework, the first thing we did was set a goal to have 1.2 million people in tech jobs in Australia by 2030. That was a goal ultimately the Federal Government adopted and then other sectors sort of signed onto as part of that.

(00:57:11):

So that gave us that overarching sense of purpose and pay off, and then we would work with other partners to try and flesh out what it would take to achieve it. We thought it was really important as a sector to start showing we were prepared to do things differently. So, one of the first things we did was make a commitment with the ACTU at the Jobs and Skills Summit early in the new Federal Government's term to digital apprenticeships model because we knew that most people coming into tech roles were doing it by tertiary pathways. But in fact, that was a really important facet in trying to address skill shortages, particularly for trades and technician style roles. But we knew in a way if it wasn't the industry suggesting it, then people wouldn't have faith that the jobs would be there at the end of any changes to the training model.

(00:57:56):

So that was an example, I think, of role modelling a change and making a commitment to employing people if those new forms of training models could be put in place. We tried to think about the skills and capabilities, so we put together a cross sectoral group involving ATN, which we're really pleased to do, but also what was then the digital skills organisation and our major employers as well as our members in software companies and tech firms to come up with a collective workforce planning strategy. And that gave everyone a shared fact base of what we agreed the workforce needs would be and what we thought it would take to meet them. And I think that was important from a capability perspective of both having the data but also helping everyone input into how we got to the data and the answers. So, the answer was owned by everyone involved in the process and then the reinforcing mechanisms where things like making sure that we published what we promised to do.

(00:58:53):

And so, there was always a level of accountability and whether as a group we were delivering on it. And I think that gave us a sort of rhythm and momentum to action, both in terms of releasing things like a workforce strategy and making commitments to new training models like digital apprenticeships, but also practical things such as launching

a new virtual experience, virtual work experience program for school kids to help people get a better handle on what these jobs actually were. So that's sort of my personal experience but I'd love to hear from the rest of the panel.

Prof Kylie Readman (00:59:27):

Thanks, Kate. And I think that really exemplifies the principles that you described at the beginning of your answer and then show how we could put it into practice. And then also that sense of innovation around how can we do things like work integrated learning really differently. Any other panel members want to make a comment on that one?

Craig Robertson (00:59:50):

I'm happy to come in. In addition to exactly what Kate was talking about, I do want to emphasise the criticality, centrality of the proposed skills taxonomy. And we all sort of need to get behind that because not only will it underpin the Skills Passport, of course, and therefore people's recognition and mobility through the labour market, but it'll give us a common language because often we have VET and higher education both in the education game but with a different currency and a different language. And that's going to be difficult to overcome by on its own. We need to eventually, and that's the centrality of the Tertiary Education Commission, which we hope is going to be announced, or some aspect of will be announced, on Tuesday. But in the intervening time, the skills taxonomy is critical too. And not only for domestic purposes of course, but other countries around the world are moving to skills taxonomies.

(01:00:58):

And as a country that has prided itself on exposing itself to the rigors of global trade, including the trade of talent and intellect, we've got to grab hold of that. It's almost like the time when we reduced trade barriers and we decided to open ourselves up to the rest of the world. And we've done remarkably well in that process. We need to sort of do the same again. And so, sorry to put you on the spot, Barney, but I do think that taxonomy, even though it could be a tough road to get to, is a real key facilitator and enabler.

Prof Kylie Readman (01:01:39):

Thanks, Craig. And if you think about the link then to the passport and being able to articulate that shared language and actually know even at UTS a number of academics

are working on both researching the way that the Skills Passport might be used for lifelong learning, Kirsty Kitto is one, there's others, but also trying to practically apply the skills taxonomy to our own learning modules, whether it's units or subjects or whole courses. And it's proving a really interesting exercise for us to try and speak in someone else's language. So, I think even that component of trying to bridge that divide is a really important step forward. So, I support you on that. Sherman, one of the challenges you have, I guess, is operating, and even maybe we should stop talking about dual sector in a way, shouldn't we? And I know one of the questions in Slido was about, is that distinction becoming antiquated? So, I'm going to ask you, Sherman, if anything was possible, what would it look like?

Prof Sherman Young (01:02:42):

I'm trying not to be glib in my answer here, Kylie, because it's a very open-ended question. But I think where we've got the advantage in this one is we know where we want to get to. We know the intended destination. It's unlike some other projects where you kind of heading in a direction but without an actual outcome. We know we have skill shortages in particular areas. We know what they should be. So, I think that gives us the ability to start at an intended destination. And we don't do that. All too often, universities go off and create their own programs without enough consultation with our partners. And then industry tells us that we've taught the wrong stuff. And it's like, well that's kind of ridiculous to start with. Why haven't we had that conversation? So, for me, I think there's a very key starting point, which is co-creation.

(01:03:34):

We really need to have that communication from the get-go to understand what the intended destination is, what the outcomes need to be. And then the education sector needs to very clearly co-create the products in order to meet that destination. When we do that, and this is probably speaking to your question around is dual sector even the term we want to use anymore, we should just build on the strengths of the different stakeholders. I don't really care what they're called. I know that there'll be arguments from some around the teachers' skills as well. It's not just the teachers' skills and those conversations continue to be part of the milieu and academic discourse if you like, but ultimately, we have different strengths and we have different weaknesses. And, at the risk of oversimplifying, part of the tertiary education sector teaches how, part of it teaches why, the why helps us think about how we might improve things, which is important for whole lots of other reasons.

(01:04:39):

There's a whole range of strengths that we have across the sector. We need to build on those strengths to ensure that we have the right skills at the right time to meet the needs of the workforce. But then importantly, and we can't forget this one, is we need to keep a focus on the student. All of these conversations about sectors and skills, passports, et cetera, to your average learner, it probably doesn't really matter. They want to get a job, they want to get the skills for a job, they want a career pathway. They want to figure out how they can progress in their career pathway. So, whatever we build, we need to focus and continue to focus on their journey and their aspirations and really downplay that separation between the various sectors and the stakeholders as much as we possibly can. So, I guess I don't have simple answers for that, but if you were to ask me if anything possible, what would it look like?

(01:05:39):

I do think there's a few levers we have to play with. The first one, I hate to say because we all know what it is, is funding. We've got some challenges around funding models and whether they're State versus Commonwealth for the different sectors, whether they're the fact that universities need to deal with research funding and academic workloads, all of those things are part of the levers that we have to play with. There are policy things that we need to think about, and it's not just government policy. There's also how our various regulators work, and importantly and perhaps not discussed enough, are the accrediting bodies. We have situations where, I won't name any of them, but our professional bodies have particular expectations. And without being too provocative, sometimes the regulator and our accrediting bodies are used as an excuse by some of our colleagues to not do things when in fact the reality is we can actually work with our regulator and our crediting bodies to get things done.

(01:06:41):

Which leads to the third and probably toughest leader is around culture. And I know I've been to enough open days and enough school visits to understand that in parts of the community there is a very interesting cultural divide between the different sectors and dare I say it, but a bit of snobbery around where students and learners need to go to. Now, if we are genuinely serious about getting the skills gap filled and building that seamless journey for students and co-creating a solution for the workforce, we need to find a way to address that cultural divide. I might pause there and leave it and people can arm-wrestle with me.

Prof Kylie Readman (01:07:31):

Thanks, Sherman. I think that, that challenge of if it's not made here (as in our institution), it can't be right. We've got to let that go. I agree with you totally. That's a cultural norm. That's not helpful for us going forward. Any other comments from the panel? Otherwise, I'm going to turn my attention to Suneeti, and I note there's a couple of questions that are pushing up the Slido links, which I think will partly be answered as we go forward. So, I'll try and weave some of them to this. So, Suneeti, there are models currently in play. Professor Glover identified some of those at the beginning. There are some that might emerge or might become more possible through the Accord to bridge the skills gap, enhance workforce readiness. I guess the skills taxonomy will be a north star for us as we start to bridge that. In higher ed, we've also used the AQF framing for a long time to really help us understand what it is we're trying to achieve. In all of that mix, how are the models that are starting to emerge or what's your view on how all of these models will come together in an increasingly coherent, and to pick up Sherman's point, permeable way?

Dr Suneeti Rekhari (01:09:07):

Yeah, thanks, Kylie. And it's interesting. I know that Professor Glover talked about the two models that I'm interested in talking to you about today as well. And those are the institutes of Applied Technology and the nationally networked Centres of Excellence. And I know Barney started off with referencing the publication of the Gonski-Shergold review, and I think that was quite seminal in setting up the institutes of Applied Technology, particularly in New South Wales. We've developed the institutes of Applied Technology Digital; it opened last year and it's a really good example of that collaboration that we've been talking about in this discussion today. But particularly collaboration across sectors and industry because it's a collaboration between TAFE New South Wales, Microsoft as our industry partner, Macquarie University, and the University of Technology Sydney. So here are cross sectoral collaboration and partnerships really bringing to life a model that's going to provide real growth that employers are seeking skilled graduates to employ.

(01:10:19):

and quickly. Because if you think about something like the Institutes of Technology Digital, the areas we're focusing on are cyber security, artificial intelligence, data, cloud computing, software development. We know these are all really important skills areas and we're really experiencing exponential growth in them. The Productivity Commission, the most recent report of the Productivity Commission talks about the positive

response that the institutes of applied technology programs have received, and it recommends further support towards such models. And that's really important because what it's telling us is that we need to continue to work quickly. We've got a national skills agreement that's driving us to be more innovative than ever. Plus, the advice to skills ministers from the Federal Qualifications Reform Group is really encouraging us to be brave in how we reimagine courses and shift them from that sort of one-size-fits-all mentality to really be more flexible and responsive to change.

(01:11:31):

So, all of the things that I know the panel is talking about today and really in response to that quickening and sort of flexibility that we need to see, another model that's being developed in response to this is through the Centres of Excellence. Now, again, similar to the IATs, the Centres of Excellence will co-design and co-deliver with industry, universities, and other partners. And as Sherman mentioned earlier, that co-design and co-development is really critical to support high-growth priority industry areas. And interestingly, Sherman mentioned this earlier too, working with regulators at TAFE New South Wales, we are working with our regulators, both TEQSA and ASQA on self-accrediting authority. It was something that Minister O'Connor announced earlier this week as Professor Glover mentioned in his talk earlier, where we are designing innovative new types of qualifications and piloting self-accreditation through things like the Centres of Excellence.

(01:12:40):

So, an example I can give you is the higher degree apprenticeship course that we are really co-designing with our industry partner BlueScope. So, it has mechanical engineering and electro units of competency from vocational education and units on leadership and digital skills from our higher education courses. And they're both combined to form an Associate Degree in Manufacturing and Digital Technologies. So, if you think about all of these conversations that's really speaking to the outcomes that we can achieve through a tertiary, a unified tertiary education sector. And we know more and more that graduates will need this type of different combination of skills. So, we need to design that into the future of our qualifications. And I'd really like to also be provocative here and say that this is not an environment where if we say, oh, we'll build it, they will come. Our prospective learners are increasingly astute.

(01:13:49):

They are increasingly time poor. So, we need to design flexibility so they can choose to add or shift components and stack the skill sets that they need to so that we can bolster things like really important foundational skills such as LLND, which we know are really critical for if you think about largely disadvantaged groups of learners. And interestingly going back to the conversation around the regulators, when we presented this model of higher apprenticeships to both our regulators, they really complimented us on the comprehensive industry inputs in co-design that we are seeking through the work such as the Centres of Excellence. And this is a really important component of success because if employers don't engage in these new types of qualifications, then we are doomed from the start even before we begin. But I don't really want to end on that note of doom and gloom. I'd really like to reiterate this is an exciting time for us to work across in a collaborative way across the tertiary education sector. Let's genuinely support our learners, whether they're in vocational education or higher education. Let's address skill shortages through innovative curriculum models such as this and really collaborate to achieve national outcomes because, ultimately, we have this moment in time, so let's not waste it. But I'll leave it at that for now, Kylie.

Prof Kylie Readman (01:15:27):

That's great. Thanks so much, Suneeti. And I am interested that I hear a real call for a focus on industry co-design, understanding what employers want. We heard that from Kate as well. We heard a, 'don't forget the students and what they want', because we can design, as you said, build it and they'll come, well, we need to make sure they're on the journey with us as well, I think that's so important. So, thank you for calling that out. I will try and weave that into some of the questions that are being asked at the end as well. Any other panel members want to make a comment on that before we move on?

Kate Pounder (01:16:06):

I had the pleasure of visiting the IAT Centre at Meadowbank a couple of times. And I have to say, it is the coolest learning environment that I have probably walked into. It has a cyber security situation room and then a model of Sydney with all the infrastructure in place. And you can simulate a cyber-attack in the control room working as teams to work out how you'll navigate it and then actually see in real time how that is playing out across the city. And it really hit me that how powerful it is when you have those partners collaborating to create a wholly different experience, but also the job we have in helping prospective students and learners and employers understand how truly different this is. Because I think sometimes if you just describe it as a different model, people, they still have their inherent assumptions about learning and they don't realise how transformationally different that experience is. So, I would congratulate TAFE New

South Wales for the work they've done there. I thought it was a truly, truly exceptional reform.

Prof Kylie Readman (01:17:13):

Thanks, Kate. And you've reminded me that it's one of the case studies that's in the pre-reading, so if people wanted to go and have a look at that, that would be a really good opportunity to learn a bit more about it. I also think that the employment rate or the changes to people's employment out of that has been quite strong. So that's probably another indicator, which is a good segue to what I'm just about to ask Craig in a way because my final question for the panel is about impact. How do we measure the impact and the outcomes that are achieved through collaborative partnerships? How do we know that we're just evaluating the right metrics and that we understand ourselves not just now but into the future in terms of what learners need, what industry needs and what the country needs as well. Craig, it's a small question so I'm sure you'd be able to answer it really easily.

Craig Robertson (01:18:11):

That's right. If I could just echo Kate's comment about the Broadmeadows IAT, it is quite spectacular. What is interesting though is well, at this point in time, it hasn't got accredited learning around that micro learning, which is where the decision around self-accreditation and all that sort of stuff. So, in some ways it's an indication of the future, but a reflection that our current structures or policies act against it. And so that's where we've got to try to move. In terms of the broader question, I go back to the night when Anthony Albanese was elected as Prime Minister, and he said the way forward is actually collaboration. And if there's one thing to be able to think about, and we go through the turbulent times of political cycles and all of that sort of stuff, but if you think around all of the structures that are being put in place, JSA, the National Skills Agreement collaboration between Commonwealth and State, the soon to be potentially ATEC, this is all built around collaboration, building off the strengths of each other's sort of skills and the like.

(01:19:29):

So, I think that A) that's a big one in terms of that's the cultural piece that we've got to start approaching this to. The question is also around, how can we measure our success? So, I do think there are good examples of collaboration in place now, right? And there will be more given the Centres of Excellence and the like. My measure of success looking back in five years' time is, we've got a slight challenge in this country

where we've got to rebuild our energy systems. We've got a huge demand for care services that primarily have the demand for vocationally prepared workers. Slight problem is that our households have now got themselves hooked on this thing that university's the only way, and I don't quite know how we change that community sentiment. The way I do reckon that we could change it is, it's an interesting educational collaboration between universities and vocational education and training.

(01:20:45):

One of the challenges of vocational education and training is we aim for the needs of the occupation, and we target everything around that. You might get to that occupation and go, geez, the thing's moved on, I'm marooned. And so often what we say is we produce almost operators, practitioners, but we often fail in giving them the, for want of a better term, the underpinning knowledge, the rationale, et cetera. And our new jobs and skills councils that are sort of looking at how we frame vocational education and training, they're around job roles and functions in the labour market. They're not educators. And what we need to be able to do is actually for the future of tertiary is we need that strong educator experience from the university sector to help inform vocational education and training. My aspiration is that we have this notion of knowledgeable practitioners.

(01:21:57):

That's sort of the work of the future. The second measure will be, is we do have a run a risk of particularly with digitisation and the like of further disaggregating, the labour market, the haves and the have nots. And I can't emphasise enough the centrality of the Centres of Excellence that are attached to a TAFE primarily. Well, this is my view, so it's a view according to Craig, they are there to be able to make sure that the benefit from digitisation is fairly distributed across the labour market because in the past it hasn't been fairly distributed. That's why we've got a country thinking about our productivity deficit as well as our wage stagnation. These are important things to be able to say. We need to bring those skills for digital engagement in the workplace and career and therefore an opportunity to grow, really, career for those people.

(01:22:59):

Now there has been a couple of questions online about, we've got ourselves hooked in a little bit maybe to employment forecasting and my organisation does the same, right? It produces forecast of growth in occupations and then often what can happen of course is when you get to the five-year point or the three-year point, the world has moved on. I

still think the graph that Barney showed, well here are the growing industries, not necessarily the growing occupations, but those growing industries show you where the trends are. So, we know that professions are growing, we know that care is growing, but science and technician, I always forget that industry category, is probably a strong indication of the growth of digital firms that are supporting more and more of the economy. And so that gives us a good sense of where those trends are going. And so, whilst we've got to try to avoid targeting a specific occupation and running the risk of that moving on, we've got to aim more at what I would call the underpinning skills and knowledge that enables people to be adaptable and move their way through the labour market.

(01:24:23):

Therefore, I do come back to the skills taxonomy again, it's going to be a really interesting piece about how we can tell people this is actually what's going on in the labour market and then give them some good information about these are the areas that you should be skilling in. And that's what I think can help us out. So, I think that's some of the impact that we could aim for, but it does need collaboration. It's a different perspective about how we look to the future around skilling and the like. And I understand, Kate, you've got some reflections on that aspect as well.

Kate Pounder (01:25:06):

Oh yeah. And I mean I'm an optimist and I actually think it's got easier in some ways to do good workforce planning rather than getting harder. And the reason for that is we just as, again, as Professor Glover outlined in his presentation, we just have so many more tools at our disposal now in order to analyse that market. We have huge innovation in the types of data sets available. Those data sets are being updated more frequently. They're having more and more types of data. And I think we're figuring out better ways to label and use the data. And I think the example of the skill technology is a great one. And so, if we use those assets well, I think we can actually find that we are getting more insights, better insights and more incisive insights. But I would emphasise using them well, because often it's as much about whether you're asking the right questions as whether you had the right data to answer them.

(01:26:09):

And I thought the workforce work, for example, that Professor Glover was talking about was really interesting to start to say, let's not just give big numbers about the demand for workers in particular occupational industries, but let's actually get to the heart of

what is driving those shortages and recognise they can be very different factors. And those different factors have quite different solutions and even different parties responsible. So, for example, if you have occupations that have long timeframes to train, then that's going to require collaboration between your educators and your regulators and your industry to fix. If your problem is fundamentally retention, in some ways, employers and arguably perhaps unions, other bodies who've got the most agency to solve it. So, I think getting that kind of insight starts letting you have a much richer conversation about what can you do about it, who's responsible for it?

(01:26:54):

And so yeah, I'm very optimistic actually that we're going to see even more improvements in that area. I think we'll have to make sure though that we keep ahead of the right questions. And one on my mind a lot at the moment is AI and the role of different technological changes. And I think there's a huge role for an organisation like JSA as well as the relevant jobs and skills councils in providing a really objective, useful evidence base because we've seen in the past very spurious, frankly, forms of workplace predictions and forecasts which have either terrified people or made people probably more complacent than they need to be about the change. And I think there's a very important middle ground in realistically forecasting what some of these broader structural changes will bring and therefore how we all can contribute to navigating them well.

Prof Kylie Readman (01:27:53):

Thanks, Kate. Craig, did you want to respond to that?

Craig Robertson (01:27:57):

Yes. So, I just wanted to add on, I completely agree. We've done some similar work to what Barney was referring to about actually looking at the actual movement of people through jobs and the labour market. And of course, it was quite interesting during covid all of that transfer that occurred. And so, some of our deeply held assumptions, particularly in the VET space, that this qualification leads to that outcome are proved to be sort of incorrect. And this big data, this is the power of the data that Kate's referring to through JSA can actually say, actually there should be another way that we can approach this. I did want to mention that one of the jobs I have on behalf of national skills ministers is in view of all of that data, and alongside these jobs and skills councils that Kate has been mentioned, how do we reorganise, reshape vocational education qualifications? And so, when you think about the things that are in play, the white paper,

the Accord, the skills agreement, Skills Passport, and the like, we are trying to take into account all of those elements to say maybe we need to look at a complete refresh of how we structure our qualifications. We can't do that overnight, but what we do need to be able to do is to say, let's make sure what's the best way to educate and train people that gives them maximum chances of success and mobility through the labour market?

Prof Kylie Readman (01:29:36):

Thanks, Craig. And it really speaks to that idea that Suneeti was calling on before around timescale, that a lifetime of learning, it's not just one dip in education of one kind and then it's all over. And I also think it speaks to that idea that only climbing up to more complex skills in one cognate discipline, which is probably the way the various things that we use, including the AQF, and I'm going to come to a question about it, have been we need to think differently and allow that horizontal mobility across different skill sets to come to the fore much more so that people can move through different jobs and different broad skill sets. So, the question was, I want to ask it, and we've only got a couple of minutes left, because it's got seven votes. The Accord recommends prioritising the AQF review and how important does the panel think AQF reform is to delivering the vision for a connected harmonised tertiary system in view? I guess of all the other things that are in play that you've just mentioned, Craig and Kate, who wants to have a go at that?

Prof Sherman Young (01:30:54):

I'll have a first crack, Kylie, because my regulator has called, and I need to jump out.

Prof Kylie Readman (01:30:59):

Oh, you do. Sorry, Sherman.

Prof Sherman Young (01:31:01):

But I guess from my perspective, it's really interesting because very consciously the AQF review happened years ago and we've been struggling for quite some time to try and implement the recommendations of the AQF review and it almost feels like it's, let's be provocative here, it's the wrong place to start. Is that too provocative? And maybe in the context of this conversation, thinking about lifelong learning, thinking about the horizontality of qualifications, thinking about the National Skills Passport, thinking about how that's a living document and how your own lifelong learning will be a living

document. Maybe it needs to be reframed into something more progressive and future proof. There's my provocation and I'll let others pick it up.

Prof Kylie Readman (01:31:48):

Great, I guess more recently we've got the review of the AQF, which is actually an interesting kind of potential for reframing others.

Craig Robertson (01:32:00):

I'll come in. I've got a pretty strong view on this. The current AQF that we're operating under basically creates divides effectively between schooling, vocational education, and higher education. We've tried in the past or we're trying to mash these things together, but really if we think about it, it doesn't, the proposed new AQF says, let's try to get some of that sectoral peculiarness out of this system. And now let's think through about the progression of knowledge, the skills that are required and then how to apply it. I think it's front and centre, albeit it's one of those interesting things that sort of needs to be the mental model at the back of all of our minds about how we try to frame all of these things because in the end, we need to have these things need to have currency and value both to employers, to families and to individuals.

(01:33:01):

So, we can't afford to go down this plethora of things where you can get a diploma of tiddlywinks and that because we will end up with a market of credentials that the consumer won't know the relative importance of or whatever. And we're at a little bit of a risk of that potentially that could be a little bit controversial. So, I think it's one of those, I view it as sort of the lattice that's holding up the grapevine or whatever that can let a thousand flowers bloom. Jeepers, I've really mucked that up. And in fact, that was the logic behind the proposed AQF. Let's think about knowledge skills application, but let's not have that drive the response, use that as sort of the frame to then drive the appropriate response. And dare I say it again, Barney, I've got to really push you here, that really does allow skills taxonomy really to really work. So that's my view.

Prof Kylie Readman (01:34:04):

Thanks, Craig. We are out of time. I want to thank all of the panel members for their contributions. I would like to take one thought, one question we didn't get to ask, but I hope that we could take this into the final section. Matt Brett asks, how might we learn

from each other when we are thinking about crediting prior learning? We've touched on it a little bit, but I think it's a really important element if we're going to think about the, not worrying so much about who's doing the learning, but how the learning has happened and being applied in the context of the learner's life. So, there's some great stuff to think about. I'm going to hand back to Frank, thanking everybody for a really rich start to a conversation. Now we've got some opportunity to ideate a little bit further. Thanks so much to everybody involved and to all the people who ask questions as well. Frank, back to you.

Frank Coletta (01:35:01):

Wonderful, thank you very much, Kylie, and thank you to the panel. When you bring the best and brightest minds together, you get that sort of spirited discussion and a little bit in terms of open-ended discussions because as Kylie was pointing out, we're going to have an ideation segment very shortly. Now the questions that have been asked and haven't been responded to, fear not – Slido will remain open for the next seven days. And in our next segment we'll try and get to some of those as well. So, thank you very much. Continue doing that. We have Padlet going as well, and I've noticed a few popping up as well there. And again, on behalf of the ATN Universities team, thank you again to all our panellists and a big thank you to the audience for playing your part. This has been great. There are so many issues, that last point that Kylie brought up in terms of how do we better recognise that leads into questions about the National Skills Passport.

(01:35:49):

So, as I say, we've got the best and brightest minds. We'll be unpacking it further as we move into the final segment of our symposium. Ladies and gentlemen, today it's being facilitated by esteemed colleagues from higher education, TAFE and the ATN team as well. I'm pleased to say now Dr Suneeti Rekhari from TAFE New South Wales, who you've just seen on the panel will be staying with us from that discussion and co-facilitating along with Professor Liz Johnson. Thank you, Liz, and our very own Dr Dee Halil. Now Liz, I can tell you is the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor academic at Deakin University. Again, one of the ATN universities and is a Deakin distinguished professor, the highest honour that the university can bestow on a member of the academic staff. So, something to be proud of. She's very humble, but I will point that out.

(01:36:35):

Recognising outstanding and sustained contribution to that university. Liz leads Deakin's ambitious education and employability strategy, and it's including the drive to premium digital learning and student experience, which is all important. She taught university biochemistry for more than 30 years and now researchers and publishers in the curriculum renewal, which is kind of what we're all about here today. Work integrated learning and also digital credentialing. Liz and Suneeti are joined by Dee, Dee is our Program's Director at ATN, I'm proud to say. Dee has been a leader in the provision of design services for the development of postgraduate programs, short courses, and massive open online courses as well. She has worked within both the higher education and commercial sector, including being part of the Microsoft Future Skills team. Now ladies and gentlemen, again, this session is absolutely meant to be interactive. We have the interactive whiteboard, I'm pleased to say, called Padlet, where you were invited to share your thoughts and ideas about how we might best or better collaborate and partner. So, ladies and gentlemen, over to the panel and, Liz, I think you are first.

Prof Liz Johnson (01:37:47):

Thanks, Frank. It is such a pleasure to be here with everybody and I'm delighted to be helping out. This is the bit where we're drawing on the smarts in the room and we've got several hundred people here. So rather than asking you all to speak, we've set up a Padlet board so that we can collect your thoughts. So please get your thoughts ready and I'm going to show you how to use, or rather Dee is going to show you how to use that in just a minute. What we've really been listening to from Professor Glover and the panel is thinking about how we can approach this both at a sectoral level and then down at institutional level. And I really want you to think now about what your contribution is going to be. So, we've been talking a lot about partnerships. We've been thinking about emerging and current skill needs and how we might tackle this better and faster.

(01:38:39):

But I think it's pertinent to go back and think about our role in this. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in his recent policy announcement, a Future Made in Australia, that if we don't act to shape the future, the future will shape us. And I think that's pertinent. When we think about what we're going to do, there's no point sitting back waiting. We need to bring our intelligence, our experience to the table. So, on the Padlet board, when it comes up for you, you'll see that we've asked you a series of questions about what's currently working in your space, the blockers that are in your way, and how you could expand your imagination of what potential future cross-sector partnerships might look like. And then there's the classic question, and what are we going to do about it on Monday? What are you going to do next week to pursue your thoughts and your

interest in this area, and more importantly, build an exciting future for the sector. Dee, I think our colleagues need to get scribbling. Can you tell us a little bit about how we're going to run the Padlet?

Dr Dee Halil (01:39:41):

Thank you. I'd love to, Liz. Thanks. Now everyone should be able to see Padlet on screen as well as the QR code to join Padlet. So, we are all going to be actively contributing to this conversation, as Liz mentioned through thoughts and reflections and ideas through this dedicated board. Now, this board as well will stay open for a week after this today, but this is the time where everything is really fresh in your mind. So please do contribute openly in this safe space. Now, as I mentioned, everyone should see a QR code on screen. And if you don't have that to hand, the screen that you can see is the Padlet board and you can see the URL for that. So, you see here that it's padlet.com/ATNUNIS/nationalsymposium. So that should be – or symposium more accurately – that is, trust me, what it does go to. And for anyone new to Padlet, it's an interactive whiteboard that enables a sharing of ideas without the limitation of where we are. So, we can all do it from our seats that we're joining this session. Now to add ideas, you can simply click on the add button here as you can hopefully see me navigate and you can add your post here. You can add via text or add media and then click publish to share those ideas with us. So, for example, if I start writing, 'a great idea',

(01:41:17):

whoops, it's really great. And then add that, publish, you'll see that pop up. So just like that you can add your ideas there. Now you'll see also on the left-hand side, there's semi structures on how to Padlet. So, if you'd like to navigate and look at that in your own time, and as I'm speaking, you can contribute to other people's posts and you can like them. So, the more you like or heart icon somebody's posts that will go up in the order in terms of how they're ordered in each section. And similarly, if you've accidentally posted anything, you can edit that pressing the three dots on the side on the right-hand side of your post. Now, what's going to happen after this session, just to let you know so that you are free to share, is that these ideas will be collated and analysed by us at the ATN team.

(01:42:18):

And a report will be generated and shared with you. So, you can see a collation of ideas that have come from both the keynote and the panel and this session. And it'll also be shared more broadly on the ATN website. So, if you can't see the QR code on screen

here, it is for you on the board. So, you can take a picture of that on your – or use your camera on your phone to use that to navigate to the board. As I said, go through the URL and that's how you get there. So yes, really excited to see what everyone's got to share.

Prof Liz Johnson (01:42:53):

Fantastic, Dee, that's terrific. I know lots of my colleagues are Padlet aficionados, so I'm expecting to see lots coming up there. While people are gathering their thoughts though, I thought I'd go back to Suneeti. First of all, thank you for staying on, Suneeti. It's really good of you to bring the TAFE lens to this ideation session, but I happen to know that you've spent this week in a conference already looking at with TAFE Directors Australia Association. I'd really like to hear what they were thinking about and what insights you can bring to share with us from that experience this week.

Dr Suneeti Rekhari (01:43:31):

Thank you, Liz. It has been a very big week at the TDA convention, and I was saying earlier, I think I'm operating on caffeine now because it's towards the end of the week and we're nearly there. So, this is a really exciting end to the week because I get to share some of my thoughts and insights from those very timely and discussions that we've had at the TDA convention. We had close to 700 delegates, that's no mean feat. That's sort of a lot of people interested in what is happening across the vocational education sector, but really making sure that TAFE is at the heart. That was the theme of the TDA convention this year and we had a very lively debate at the end of the convention, which Craig Robertson can attest to, and I was very interested to hear from some really heartfelt rallying cries for the vocational education sector in that session.

(01:44:32):

But we may hand over to Craig if he wants to talk a little bit about what happened in that session, but sort of reflecting on other parts of the convention and picking up on some of the conversations that we've had today with Professor Glover's presentation, he did a similar presentation at the TAFE at the TDA convention as well. And it really sparked those conversations around co-designing with industry partners, universities from Professor Glover's presentation. There was a really interesting panel discussion with each of the jobs and skills councils and there were some really robust discussions around how we can effectively collaborate to enable innovative curriculum. So, I think curriculum innovation is on the minds of everyone across the sector, and it was really heartening to hear that coming out from those discussions with the JSCs as well. We also had sessions that spoke about the nationally networked Centres of Excellence, and

as Professor Glover spoke about earlier in his talk today, the establishment of the first Centre of Excellence is with the Canberra Institute of Technology, and it really focuses on, I mean the focus of that Centre of Excellence will be on electric vehicles, which we know is an area of national skills priority.

(01:46:01):

So, it really, again, once again, reinforcing the importance of that nationally networked national partnership approach, which is so important at this time of change. Very excitingly, and I know it's been said before, but it's in my title, so I am a quality nerd. So, I was extremely excited to hear from Minister Brendan O'Connor when he announced at the convention that the Australian Government will support the University Accord recommendation to support and test delegation of accreditation for selected TAFEs. TAFE New South Wales is hoping to be one of those. In fact, I'm going to say it's going to be one of the TAFEs that's going to pilot this delegation of accreditation. And this is really important because it'll make it easier for us to respond to those emergent industry changes and start to make our curriculum more flexible and responsive. Other insights from the convention were that we talked about other transformative forces that are operating in the sector at the moment, such as artificial intelligence.

(01:47:12):

We heard from some amazing superstar apprentices that are competing at the world's skills competition in France later this year. And as I said earlier, we ended with a very great debate asking if TAFE is still at the heart 50 years after the Kangan review. So, all in all, it was a very timely and exciting discussion, and I think there's some real opportunities. There are some challenges of course, that we're facing as a sector, but I think some really important opportunities as well. And I hope that in this session we can continue these discussions and share ideas. And hopefully that's a good segue back into some of the conversations and sort of things that are happening in the Padlet at the moment.

Prof Liz Johnson (01:48:01):

Yeah, thanks, Sunni. That's fantastic. I probably will come to you, Craig, because I can't resist the rallying call, but before we do, I noticed there's a couple of things coming to appear in the Padlet now, and one of them is this idea of TAFE and HE partnerships both as enablers and as blockers. That's the avenue for action, but it's also a place where we trip over each other and I come back to some topics from the panel talking about sharing languages, sharing ideas, and getting rid of the artificial barriers that have

created and accreted over time. Actually, Craig, I might draw on you to sort of respond to that idea and also tell us a little bit about what the rallying cries were.

Craig Robertson (01:48:46):

Okay, this is a really interesting topic at this point in time because Australian VET has been a competency-based qualifications framework for over 30 years. Part of the challenge that we've ended up with competency is not only its alignment with the expectations of a particular job, but the notion of competency as Australia has implemented it as opposed to the European version of competency. Educationists will call it reductionist. You train to just what you need to perform that particular competency. And in some ways what we're doing is, whilst that was right for the times when Australia was an adjusting economy and we had people at risk of losing jobs out of closing industries, it's not quite ready for the future. And I think that's the core of the, often I describe it as all in water between VET and higher ed when we come to talk about credit and pathways and the like.

(01:49:53):

So, I think somewhere in there, there is some curriculum education, design reform that can facilitate somebody starting at a particular point but not being disadvantaged because they've chosen a particular point that doesn't give them options for the future. And so, I think that's sort of where we need to be able to get to, and I think it has to be an educationally driven solution and with the reality of the skills taxonomy and the like about how we try to do it. So, I do think there's an immediate time for the connection between TAFEs and higher education. So, there was a rallying dialogue at the debate at the end of the conference. Were we testing in fact that TAFE is at the heart, which was the theme of the conference. I do want to pick up on one thing that was through the debate. Christine Nixon, ex-police commissioner from Victoria here was part of the debate.

(01:50:57):

And of course, she's done the report on the exploitation in the international student market and really some shocking practices that are going on there. I think the point that comes out of that is that the spirit of public education, the spirit of public institutions is the best guard against integrity. And as the world disaggregates in some particular way and fragments in some particular way, there's not a more important time really to have the stability of public education in my mind. So that was the strong sense around sort of TAFE at the heart and the rallying cry really was let's have tape sitting there as sort of

equal institutions in the tertiary education space serving a particular need, trusted by governments, trusted by and connected with industry. The real question is where we really at this point of juncture at this point in time, is a fair bit of this has been statement of intent, but we've still got a lot of regulatory instruments, funding instruments that can count against that.

(01:52:17):

And so now what we've got to be able to do is we've got the right aspiration. We've actually put some building blocks in place as Barney has indicated, but we now need to do the follow through. And sometimes that's the hard yards that we've got to try to get to. The real change is, I'm looking at Suneeti, there is, it's going to be somebody like TAFE New South Wales who 400,000 students impact across all of New South Wales that will say, we can do this and demonstrate and lead the way. And it's a bit of chagrin of me to say it's potentially New South Wales will lead the way rather than Victoria, but nevertheless, maybe together we can do it. So, I do think there's a bit of a sense of momentum and change that we need to really sort of grab hold of and create that change.

Prof Liz Johnson (01:53:05):

The funding and regulatory challenges have come up in the Padlet already, Craig, as people start putting up their blockers. And there's no doubt that, I mean, I'm harking back here to Sherman's comments earlier about sharing a language, your comments about the skills taxonomy. As we build familiarity with each other's spaces and each other's well perceived or real constraints, then we can start breaking them down and tackling them. I think was it was Sherman as well who also said sometimes we're a bit complacent and we think that the world has to be the way it is at the moment without testing the boundaries and making sure that, well, just because the regulator said that last year, does that really have to be that way? And going back and having a co-design a dialogue about where we're going to go with it. I'm going to pick up on a point that was earlier on and, Suneeti, I'm going to throw this one to you in a minute.

(01:54:00):

There's a suggestion there of if anything was possible about an office for tertiary teaching and learning, this is a topic that's particularly dear to my heart as a curriculum development person, but it comes back to that idea, I think, Craig, you were talking about how learners need to be able to take their learning forward into any future learning, and it comes back to the idea of lifelong learning. The skill of learning itself is a

really important enabler for future growth and future career development. And I just wanted to, Suneeti your thoughts around, can we really join up our thinking around curriculum development? Could we start that journey quickly? Do we have to wait for other people to do that?

Dr Suneeti Rekhari (01:54:43):

Can I answer in one sentence, Liz and say, no. As a former curriculum developer and learning designer myself, I think that there's two things at play here. I think curriculum absolutely is the building blocks that's – completely agree with what Craig said earlier about having education at the core, having curriculum at the core, and then building out from that. But running alongside curriculum and developing curriculum in a way that is responsive and agile is also developing educator capability to be able to deliver that curriculum. And I think both of those things need to be really well-balanced, but also thought about very carefully as we think about some of those regulatory impacts. Because I think when we think about regulation, we think about the courses themselves and the design of courses as we absolutely should, but I think that capability development, educator capability and making sure that educators have that capability to develop that curriculum in that way is also really important. And it speaks to, again, educators and teachers and academic staff members really being at the core of this change and really driving this change through what happens in classroom, which at the end of the day is what's going to drive changes across both sectors.

Prof Liz Johnson (01:56:09):

And it's interesting to note, and there's a comment in the Padlet about it already that there was an Accord recommendation about this for a learning and teaching council, and it's about building capability and quality in the, it was higher education sector in that case. But I think given the focus on tertiary education, that there's a lot to be learned from each side of the, or rather all segments of the education sector. We learn from schools, we learn from tertiary education, we absolutely must be learning from industry and vice versa. That's got to be a two-way street. I do like the idea that Sherman put on the table of learner centricity here, and I know that's a passion of Kylie's, that we put the learner at the centre and follow their path, which links us back to another topic that's come up on the Padlet about career development support, which is another aspect I guess we haven't really touched on at the moment, which is we are talking about how we might respond at a systematic level and how we might think about where industry needs are and how we'll build capability building and training for those industries.

(01:57:16):

But the flip side of that is who's making the choices? And a lot of the time it's the learner that does that and that's their view of the world that we really need to bring along with us. I don't know, Kylie, Dee, whether I'm allowed to throw to the panel more broadly, but I think it's a really interesting question. Where do we see career development support sitting in all of this and what could we be doing on the ground about it right now? I have thrown it open. I'm open to any comments people would like to make.

Prof Kylie Readman (01:57:50):

I don't know if you can see or hear me, which is why I'm hesitating there, Liz, but

Prof Liz Johnson (01:57:55):

Probably can.

Prof Kylie Readman (01:57:57):

But again, I think the answer to this is part of what's emerging as a theme for all of this and some of the things Suneeti was talking about, which is collaboration. So, I wouldn't say that anyone who – there are people who are scholars and who invest deeply in the scholarship of learning and teaching, people like you and I who've spent our careers doing that support and development work and professional learning work. Equally, those people exist in TAFE. So how are we collaborating at that level to say, what are the different needs of our learners and what are the common needs of our learners and how might we then build that collaboration so that students can move more easily? And I think said at the start, Suneeti is literally across the road from me, and our students do traverse that road at Thomas Street to do some things here and some things there or out at the IATD or something like that. But do we have a common understanding of who they are and what their needs are? So that's a good starting point I think for professional learning development. And it's not something anyone's unhappy to do, I think it's just not something we've ever thought about doing. So maybe that's another turn that we could contemplate as we bring our thinking closer together.

Prof Liz Johnson (01:59:18):

Yeah, that point about making space and I would say career development support of course is a focus for industry peak bodies. And I point to the work of the Tech Council of Australia, Kate, the work that you led around developing careers and developing training

around that incredible shortage around tech jobs. It wasn't just about one-offs; it was about whole careers. As I remember, there's a lot more coming up on the Padlet. What I have seen a gap though is, what are we going to do on Monday? And I do really want to encourage folk, picking up Kylie's challenge there about making time. How would you make time? What kind of action could you take locally in your institute, or indeed, does your institute have things underway already where you can seek out partnerships? We've all got bits and pieces. I know in my own institution, Deakin, every course has industry advisory group that sits on their industry.

(02:00:15):

But I think we've also got to think about creative ways of creating good collaborations and partnerships because if you put everybody in the same box, sometimes they don't fit and then they just drop out to the side, and they don't get a voice at all. So really important here to start thinking about how we can actually start work ourselves within the structures that we've already got. There's a question here under if anything was possible. I love that column, actually, Dee, I think that's a really exciting column, about every qualification including industry training so that students developed their studies with both practical, professional and theoretical experience. Suneeti, do you reckon we can do that? Could we wrangle some kind of hybrid? I mean that's really what higher degree apprenticeships do, isn't it?

Dr Suneeti Rekhari (02:01:01):

Yeah, absolutely. And it's really what vocational education qualifications do we design with industry right from the start. So as soon as a learner walks into a TAFE course, they are part of that particular industry or employment or employer and that particular outcome. So absolutely we can work with industry, we can take them through the journey because whilst it's really important to understand what industry requirements are, we also have to prepare graduates. And I'm thinking particularly in the vocational education space, to also prepare them not only for the world of work as it exists today, but potentially what will happen in the future. There are so many rapid changes to industry, and I'm thinking of something like artificial intelligence. Our working with industry at the moment, even industry may not understand what the implications of some of those rapid technological changes are. So it's really having that longer term view of what's required and really understanding, when I think about a young tradie that walks into the classroom, they need to have the technical expertise to keep themselves safe, to keep everyone in the area that they're working in safe, to build a house that will stay standing up, or a bridge, or work with chemicals, or electricity, or whatever.

(02:02:30):

But really with that technical expertise, they also need to understand the affordances of emerging technologies and the potential change that will happen throughout the course of their career. So, I think that's the real opportunity here for us as well, to work with industry, but also with other parts of the sector on bringing that knowledge and bringing that holistically into qualifications. So, we are producing graduates that can really work across a number of different dynamic areas.

Prof Liz Johnson (02:03:05):

It's interesting, isn't it. When we think about combined qualifications or pathways with both vocational and university education coming together in a package for students. We have lots of articulation pathways between TAFEs and universities and some, but not enough, reverse articulation pathways. But they're always really quite difficult to put together, not through lack of intent or a lack of goodwill, but the structures get in the way. And I might call on you again, Craig in just a minute because they don't fit well together. We've just at Deakin been looking at how can we pin our RPL to the training packages rather than to individual institutions so that they don't have to move so fast and there's not so much administration involved, but I just wonder whether it needs a radical overhaul. Craig, thoughts?

Craig Robertson (02:04:04):

Amen to the radical overhaul. And I'm familiar with in fact, those articulation agreements at Deakin, lots of them, but not used that often. So that's a big impost on Deakin, for example, to be able to facilitate that. So, I do think part of this is around how do we get a more systemic approach to this rather than relying upon episodic responses. And that's the real challenge heading our way, I suspect. I wouldn't be a fan of tackling it back to a training package, but that's a possibility. I think that's what we need to be able to think through in a systemic way. And the Accord has set the challenge for us, right? Because we're actually, what we're wanting to be able to say is, you can start a particular point and keep going, or in fact, grab technical skills even when required. So, we do need a different way of having that recognition in some way,

Prof Liz Johnson (02:05:11):

which of course takes us straight back to the skills taxonomy and the digital passport, which is a radical new way of thinking about it. And a very interesting experiment was done over the last few years looking at micro-credential marketplace to see if we could

bring some clarity to how micro-credentials feed into this. They're another whole body of work, ancillary to the AQF at the moment, although well considered in the AQF review, I think considering that that happened in 2019. So, there's also a power of work to be done on that front. I'm going back to the Padlet, what's jumping out at you, Suneeti? I see we do have one action for Monday: contact to the Career Industry Council of Australia, which is a damn fine idea in my view. And let's get those career development conversations going. Anything catching your eye, Suneeti?

Dr Suneeti Rekhari (02:06:06):

I was going to see, it's very – I'd be interested to see what the action on Monday is. It'd be nice to have a few more comments on that. I'm surprised to see that drink a cup of tea is not number one on the list to start off Monday. But going back, I think to the conversation around RPL and micro-credentials, I think it's really interesting because building RPL from the start needs to be the aim of when we have conversations around qualifications. And unfortunately, you've given me a platform to talk about RPL and micro-credentials, so I'm going to say something. But if we design stacked qualifications where you have levels of skills and knowledge that are built in progressively, and then you have exit points and you have entry points that are designed to boost completions so that learners can exit with a meaningful qualification and join the workforce.

(02:07:00):

So, it's not really about a pathway to a qualification becomes a pathway to a particular skill that the learner can use then to use as part of their employment. So as an example, you can have a full qualification to be an early childhood teacher, we know early childhood education is one of the areas of national skilled shortage. It's one of the priority areas that we're working on at the moment. So, you could build a qualification type where they could exit as an early childhood education teacher, but you could also using RPL and micro-credentials, exit to be say something like a teacher's aide. So again, it's providing that flexibility to the learner to say these are the entry points, these are the exit points. But RPL is such an important enabler of that, and without that and without some of those structures being put in place, it's again, it becomes ad-hoc and it becomes disconnected, which really isn't helpful at the moment.

Prof Liz Johnson (02:08:11):

Yeah, I totally agree. Stackable credentials are a target globally, actually, which is really quite interesting. I do think that fits very nicely though with the career development

support. So instead of asking the learner to choose your own adventure, we give them some tools to rationalise what they're doing, even if it happens in a sort of circular way. One thing that we've learned from our stackable credential work here at Deakin is that learner pathways are definitely not linear. So, you've got to provide for learners coming back, exploring somewhere else, choosing something else to bring into their view, and particularly if they're working because those learners who are working and studying at the same time have multiple inputs into their thinking about career development. A lot will come from their work already and some will come from their study. So, I think that the two things fit really nicely, really nicely together.

(02:09:06):

I do want to draw everybody's attention though, I think it was mentioned earlier on in the session, to the case studies that the ATN have put together and these are thought provokers for you. We've already pointed to wonderful work of the Institute of Applied Technology Digital – finally found the right label there – but there's also a lot of other examples there of industry engaged curriculum. The one that we've contributed is in fact about career development and about stepping stones to careers. So please do have a look at those, pull them down, have a look at what they mean for you in your institution and where you find interesting ideas that you would want to pursue further. And I know that there's a lot of great work that's happening outside the ATN as well. And we've got another action for Monday, Suneeti: Equity Frontiers Pilot Trials Grant, which is really good. It brings in that idea about the equity dimension to the whole area. We do have some follow-up questions for Suneeti. I think, Dee, I'm reading the role of culture change as part of educator capability development. How do we get out ourselves out the straight jacket of history, thoughts on culture change for educators, Suneeti?

Dr Suneeti Rekhari (02:10:26):

Oh that's another, see you're giving me too many platforms today, Liz. But look, this a really, really important discussion and one that for people that were at the TDA convention yesterday, there were multiple strands of conversations around the cultural change that's required in the sector. But one of the examples of culture change connecting particularly to capability development that I can give is through culture change happens with whole of institutional approaches. You have to have a whole of institutional approach to a particular thing. And there are two main levers that we can use for whole of institutional change. One is through our governance and the other is through policy. So, the example that we were discussing yesterday was in the space of no surprises, self-accreditation, but in particular it's connection back to how vocational education organisations, in particular TAFEs, or any educational organisations really

can start to self-assure and give assurance to themselves that their quality processes are operating in a way that's going to lead to change.

(02:11:39):

And we can do that through things like governance because it provides us with transparency, it provides us with visibility, provides us with accountability. And accountability mechanisms I think are really important for whole scale, whole of institutional changes and cultural changes that we're talking about because we can make changes to policy. And a really good example of that was TEQSA as a higher education provider has asked all higher education providers to give them an institutional AI action plan by June this year. So that's provided us with the opportunity to think about, what are the policy changes that we need to make in response to this sort of technological change? What drives that through the organisation? Through things like capability development, through things like the creation of governance committees or governance mechanisms that can respond to that change, changes in assessment, how can that be tracked? Changes in things like learning outcomes, just curriculum. If you think about one small lever like artificial intelligence, that's going to be such a huge cultural change for our organisation. And the way to track that is through, I think, those two sorts of things. And if you replace artificial intelligence with any other type of cultural change that an organisation has to go through, I think starting with governance and policy would be the big areas to then influence change at all of the various levels that you need to.

Prof Liz Johnson (02:13:19):

Yeah, it's a big topic, isn't it? But I do love the idea of finding a lever to open a conversation and that's exactly what generative AI is doing for us at Deakin. And I know because I've focused with my ATN colleagues, that it's doing this right across the sector and I'm sure globally as well. It's a tool to open up conversations about change, about digital fluency, these persistent skills that everybody is going to need and about actually because the scale and pace of change around generative AI is so fast. We are thinking about it as a co-design activity all the time. Co-design with colleagues, co-design with students, co-design with industry partners, co-design with professional accreditation bodies, but giving people something to work on. It's a great action for Monday, isn't it? What are we going to do on Monday? And which reminds me, Dee's flicked through another question and it's for you and I actually, Suneeti, because somebody's asked what are we going to do on Monday?

Dr Dee Halil (02:14:19):

That's my question.

Prof Liz Johnson (02:14:21):

That's your question, Dee. Okay. Very cheeky. So, what am I going to do on Monday? Look, there's some fantastically rich ideas coming through here. I think the really important thing for me is to bring this conversation into my institution so that it's not a one-off conversation that sits on the side, but that we build it into our thinking around curriculum development, course strategy, learner-based enrolment and admissions and RPL that we bring in this and use the partnerships that we have already to expand our thinking. What are you going to do on Monday, Suneeti?

Dr Suneeti Rekhari (02:14:57):

Oh, very, very similar, Liz. I have a 9am Monday morning meeting every Monday with my senior leadership team and I thought that would be a great opportunity to bring, to have a conversation, particularly in light of the discussions that happened at the TDA convention, but also this really timely discussion here with the ATN about how we start to work on the crossover that's happening at the moment in the tertiary education sector. So, I think it's really important to look upwards and outwards and have those conversations, but then translating that for our teams and understanding what that looks like on the ground in terms of implementation, so that we're all swimming in the same direction and we all understand what impact the changes that we're discussing at the broader level are going to have on our day-to-day operations. So, I think really translating that for our teams, providing them with an opportunity to go, okay, OMG, this is a huge sort of thing that we have to tackle, chunking it down, understanding what the impacts of those implications are and really just having the nuts-and-bolts conversation with the team would be the first.

(02:16:14):

I mean it's probably not achievable all on the same day on the Monday, so it might be several Mondays that would require that conversation, but I think it's really important. I think that translation for our teams and translation for our people is really important here.

Prof Liz Johnson (02:16:31):

Yes, I agree. And I can see from the Padlet wall that there's a lot of thought going on continually anyway. We will need that thought. As the panel pointed to before, the experience of the sectors, all sectors or parts of the sector, needs to feed into the work that's happening centrally and we all have our fingers crossed for a very successful take-up of Accord recommendations by the Government under the guidance of Professor Mary O'Kane and the panel, including Professor Glover who has so generously been with us here today. The Padlet will keep on going as Dee said before, and it's a wonderful opportunity to share your ideas, see what other people are thinking. Please do use it. If you are taking the conversation back into your institution, take the Padlet with you and get your team to contribute to it as well. I think we've just about run out of time, Dee, am I right?

Dr Dee Halil (02:17:28):

We're just on the nose, so thank you so much. And just to reiterate that the Padlet will stay open, and it's not limited to those that have been part of the event, so you can share that with your teams, as Liz has mentioned.

Prof Liz Johnson (02:17:42):

Thank you so much to Suneeti for joining me. Craig, who I put on the spot, thank you for your contributions. Kylie, also, and to Dee of course, for setting us all up. Frank, we'll call it quits for this bit now, but look forward to seeing the output of the Padlet later on. Back to you.

Frank Coletta (02:17:59):

We do indeed. Thank you very much, Liz. And as with any symposium, there is never enough time. Thank you to you, Liz, and Suneeti and Dee as well. And thank you to all of course in the audience who dialled in on Padlet and earlier on Slido and giving us your valuable time and your insights. Thanks for attending the ATN25 National Symposium on Curriculum Innovation. We hope this continues to prompt discussions and a little bit of the debates as well around the tables and keep those Padlet bits and pieces headed our way over the next seven days. Thank you. The Universities Accord Final Report, of course, was most certainly the catalyst for this event. Our deputy vice-chancellors academic and education worked with my wonderful team, I must say, to create this space and dedicate time on a Friday afternoon ahead of the Federal Budget, which is

approaching at speed, for all of us to have this important, absolutely crucial, open and candid discussion which we have had today.

(02:19:01):

I would first like to thank Professor Barney Glover, of course, for our keynote speech. Thank you to you, Barney, and our excellent panellists and ideation facilitators. I'm going to name them all. Liz Johnson, Kate Pounder, Suneeti Rekhari, Kylie Readman, thank you to you. Craig Robertson, Sherman Young, and also Dee Halil. Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, of course, thanks to the marvellous audience out there. You've stuck with us for just under three hours now. We appreciate your interest and of course your interaction across Slido and Padlet and your generosity in sticking with us. Thank you to Damien Maher, and all the production team at Newcast. Of course, without them, this didn't go to air. They've produced this great event and our heartfelt thanks to them, and from me to our ATN Universities team whose commitment to delivering this excellent opportunity for us all to connect today was unwavering. Now finally, of course, as we are broadcasting just a couple of days out from a very special day, wishing the mums out there a very happy Mother's Day as well. And wishing everyone a safe and wonderful weekend. Stay tuned for more at ATN25 events coming up very soon, but for now, goodbye.