

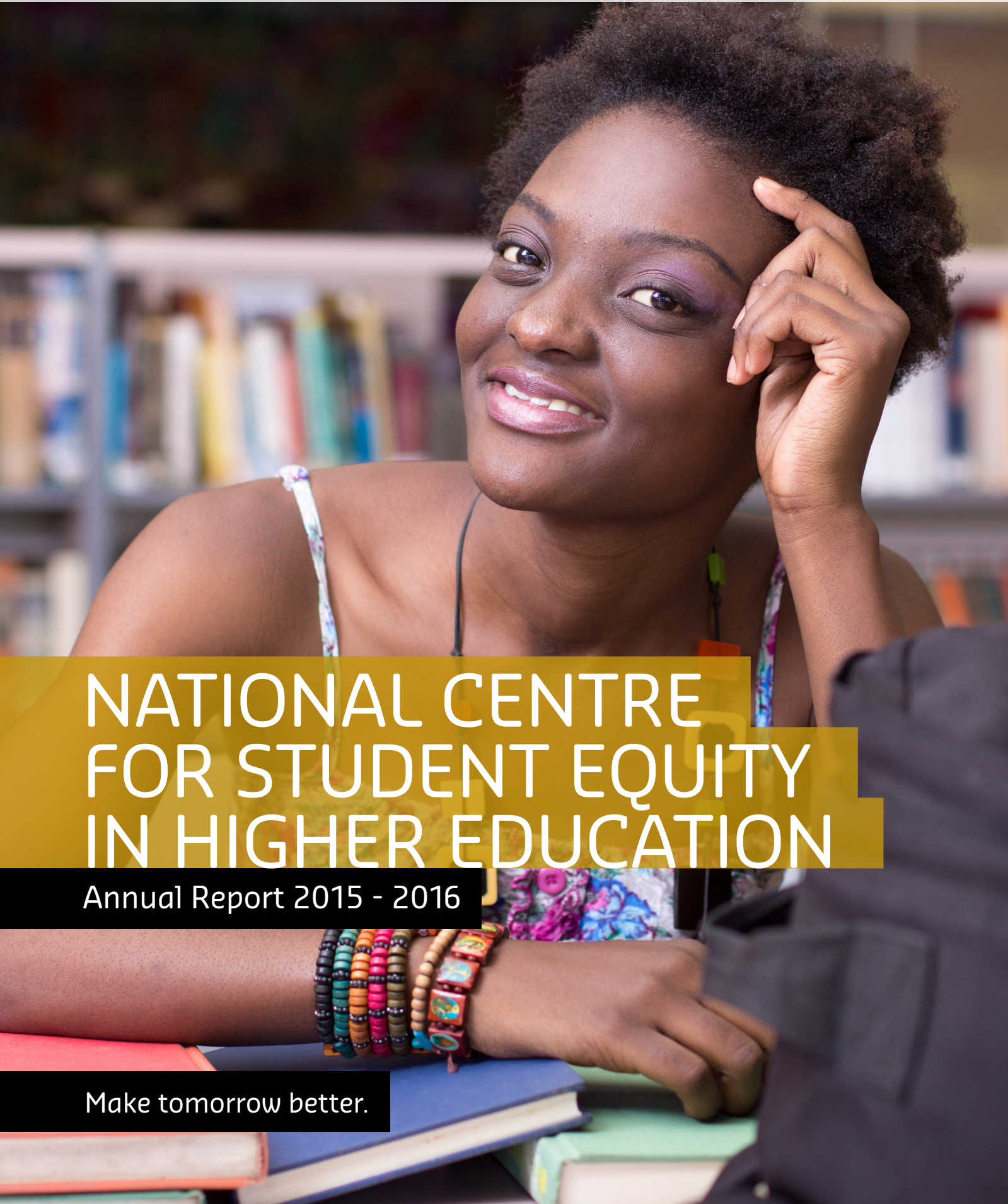


NCSEHE

National Centre for Student
Equity in Higher Education



Curtin University



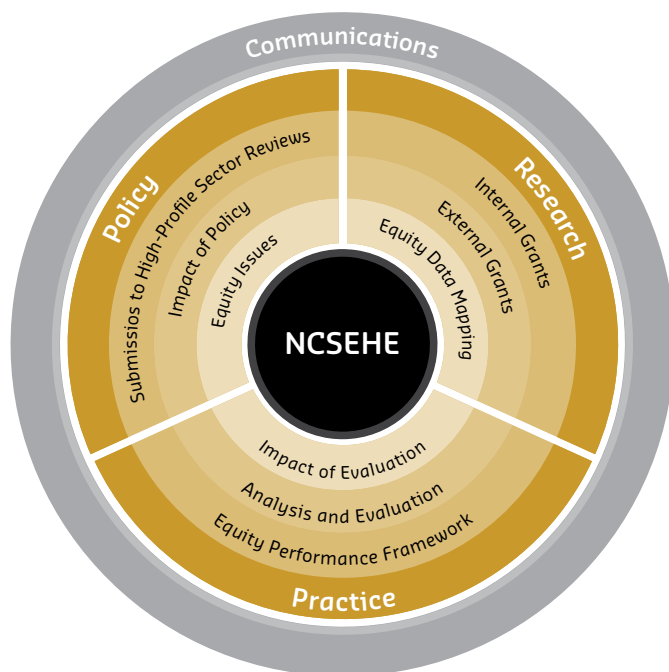
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR STUDENT EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Annual Report 2015 - 2016

Make tomorrow better.

NCSEHE OBJECTIVES

The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) is a centre for equity policy, research and practice.



Aim:

Informing public policy design and implementation and institutional practice, to improve higher education participation and success for marginalised and disadvantaged people

Objectives:

- to be at the centre of public policy dialogue about equity in higher education
- to 'close the gap' between equity policy, research and practice by:
 - supporting and informing evaluation of current equity practice, with a particular focus on identifying good practice
 - identifying innovative approaches to equity through existing research and the development of a forward research program to fill gaps in knowledge translating this knowledge into practical advice for decision-makers and practitioners alike.

Closing the gap with interlinked programs of activity:

- Research – sharing knowledge, providing evidence and foundations for policy and practice
- Practice – trialling, implementing and benchmarking research outcomes
- Policy – using research and practice outcomes to evaluate the impact of initiatives and advise on policy.



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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) is dedicated to providing strong national leadership in student equity in higher education.

In its third year of operation, the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) continues to provide strong national leadership in student equity in higher education, connecting practitioners, researchers and stakeholders. We are proud to promote evidence-based programs, policies, and practice, and engage in continuous quality improvement, enhancing the lives of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We know from the OECD Report (2015) that particular activities help to create greater equality of opportunities and growth in the long term:

- promoting access to education, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- improving job-related training and education, and access to formal education over the working life; and
- facilitating access to jobs (and career prospects) for under-represented groups (especially youth and women).

Two major highlights for the NCSEHE over the past year include the production of a new publication and the selection of three inaugural Equity Fellows.

Informing Policy and Practice: 2014 Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program Projects, brings together the first 12 research reports funded via the NCSEHE's Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program. The publication was launched at the 2015 AARE Conference in Fremantle, Western Australia, and has been very well received.

The Equity Fellows Programme is an exciting initiative that will fund six National Fellows over the course of two years. The Fellows will work on equity-based research projects in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, the NCSEHE and various universities. Inaugural Fellows, Dr Erica Southgate, Dr Cathy Stone and Dr Nadine Zacharias are well on track to complete their Fellowships by the year's end. The NCSEHE looks forward to sharing their work at a dedicated forum in November 2016.

An important objective of the NCSEHE concerns the timely generation and dissemination of news, and contemporary evidence and research in student equity in higher education. Our outreach and engagement metrics continue to reflect the impact the NCSEHE has made through our website, ncsehe.edu.au, receiving 103,402 visits from 50,476 unique visitors. Our eNews subscribers now number 1,127, and our Twitter followers now exceed 770 people and organisations, many from overseas.

As outlined in last year's Annual Report, Progress Report 4 for the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, the NCSEHE's Operational and Research Business Plan, and a number of Director's Reports provided to our high profile Advisory Board, the NCSEHE has:

- continued its strong performance, meeting all KPIs required to honour its contract with the Australian Government;
- as a part of the NCSEHE's Conditions of Grant, the Centre has now funded 24 external competitive research grants, committing more than \$1.08 million to further inter-sectoral research;
- completed work on the Equity Performance Framework for Australian Higher Education for the Australian Government Department of Education and Training;
- completed additional research projects awarded in 2015 via the Australian Government's Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP) funded National Priorities Pool initiative, of which funding of \$1.72 million was granted;
- continued to enhance the NCSEHE's visibility and brand recognition with internal and external stakeholders, including awareness of the Centre nationally and internationally;
- published and disseminated new research findings both on the web and in reports with the aim of a more fully informed and better-equipped sector;
- continued providing supervision for two high-quality Doctoral students currently completing their studies full-time within the NCSEHE; and
- continued to collaborate with internal and external research staff and visiting fellows, along with important stakeholders.

Outputs generated by the NCSEHE during the 2015-16 reporting period include:

- 54 publications, including the research publication, *Informing Policy and Practice*;
- 21 eNews editions, available online at ncsehe.edu.au/news-events/newsletters/;
- 7 online editorials;
- 23 conference papers and keynote presentations at a number of high-profile national events such as the Albury-Wodonga Forum on Regional and Rural Higher Education at La Trobe University; the Student Recruitment and Retention Forum in Sydney and the Strategies for Student Retention Conference at Victoria University; the Engagement at the Interface: Indigenous Pathways & Transitions into Higher Education Forum at Charles Darwin University; the Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) Conference at Deakin University; and the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference in Fremantle; and
- 10 Curtin University-based presentations given by NCSEHE staff and visiting Fellows, both national and international. Each presentation attracts on average 30 guests, for a total of just over 300 total participants, nationwide.

On 18 June 2015, the NCSEHE's website was archived by the National Library of Australia (Pandora), underscoring its value and contribution to Australia's knowledge-base.

Once again, our achievements illustrate the breadth and depth of a wide range of initiatives undertaken by the NCSEHE that combine to drive positive change in the education sector to improve equity and access in higher education for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. As the NCSEHE continues to build links with stakeholders – including academic researchers, policy analysts in government and education, and equity practitioners – it acts as a catalyst for connecting and disseminating research and information aimed at building a more equitable education system. While the majority of our effort remains focussed on the Australian education sector, we also engage directly with respected overseas research

organisations. These strategic relationships enable us to incorporate news on international best practice into our reports and communications with our stakeholders.

We value our connections with universities and related educational institutions and will continue to inform programs and policies in ways that make them more efficient and effective in maximising the engagement of equity students in higher education. Similarly, we will continue to fund research projects that shape progressive change in higher education, using our links with the academic research community to aid us in identifying equity research gaps. Most importantly, we will continue to strengthen our valued relationships with equity practitioners, leveraging their knowledge to assist everyone in building a more equitable education sector.

Professor Sue Trinidad

Director

National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education





As Interim Chair, I have overseen three NCSEHE Advisory Board meetings held on 17 July 2015, 4 December 2015 and 8 April 2016.

Continuing under a robust governance framework, the Board oversees the National Centre's business. Our meetings draw on the Board's commitment, depth of knowledge and experience reviewing the progress of key initiatives, reviewing the strategic direction of the NCSEHE, and approving the third round of the NCSEHE's competitive research grants program.

The Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program, along with other activities undertaken by the NCSEHE, ensures the National Centre continues to provide a strong evidence-base to close the gap between research, practice and policy of student equity in Australian higher education.

The grants program has been a significant achievement, having funded 34 research projects across Australia in areas of strategic importance between 2014 and 2016 for a total investment of just under \$1.4 million. Such progress would not be possible without the work of the NCSEHE's Advisory Committee and its Chair, Emeritus Professor Lesley Parker, in reviewing proposals and subsequently recommending successful applications to the Board. On behalf of my fellow Board members, I thank the Advisory Committee for its work.

Through its three programs of Evaluation, Research, and Data Analysis, the NCSEHE continues to promote researchers' comments via the media, research reports, and legislative submissions, ensuring that critical voices are heard to refine the policy focus and deliver targeted results.

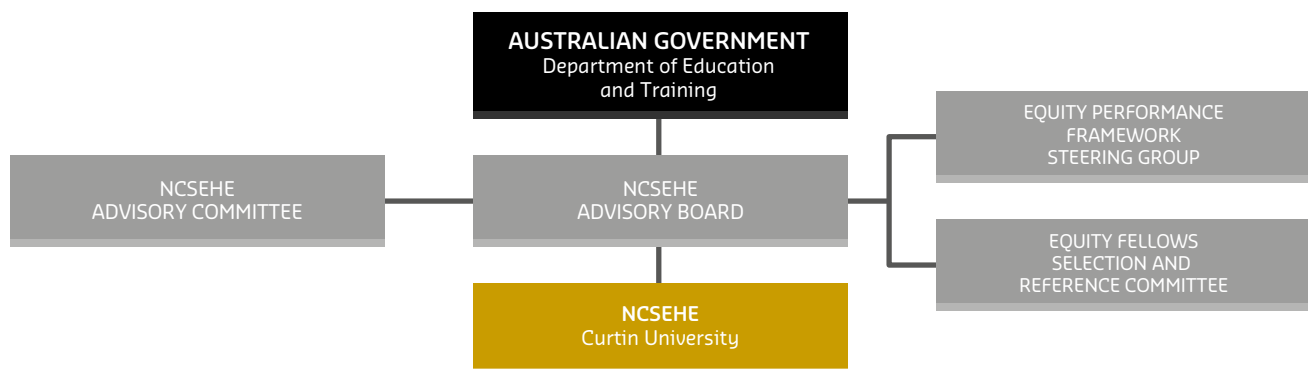
As is evident in the following pages, the NCSEHE team has had another productive year. I commend the Director and her team for their work, and look forward to working closely with them over the coming year.



Professor Carmen Lawrence
Interim Chair
NCSEHE Advisory Board

CENTRE STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The NCSEHE's Advisory Board has an important role in the effective governance of the Centre and is a source of expert advice.



The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education is situated within the John Curtin Institute of Public Policy (JCIPP) at Curtin University. The NCSEHE is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training with in-kind and cash support from Curtin University.

NCSEHE Advisory Board

The NCSEHE's Advisory Board has an important role in the effective governance of the Centre and is a source of expert advice. It has no delegated authority from Curtin University to formally control the Centre, but wields significant influence through its involvement in the Centre's planning and budgeting. The Advisory Board:

- assists in Centre strategy, risk management and compliance;
- assists in identifying research and research income opportunities and expanding the range of stakeholders involved in, and aware of, the Centre;
- assists during the preparation of long-term plans, budgets and appropriate performance measures and targets; and
- formally endorses plans, performance measures and targets, and Annual and Financial Reports.

The Advisory Board meets at least three times per year. Membership is comprised of stakeholder nominees from academia, government and industry, with one Curtin University representative. The Chair of the Board is appointed by mutual agreement between Curtin and the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. The Advisory Board meetings during the 2015/16 reporting period were held on 17 July 2015, 4 December 2015 and 8 April 2016.

Australian Government Department of Education and Training representative, Ms Julie Birmingham, left the Board in April 2016. Her position was subsequently filled by Mr David Fintan.

The NCSEHE Board members are:

- Professor Carmen Lawrence, School of Psychology, University of Western Australia (Interim Chair);
- Professor Bruce Chapman, AM, Professor of Economics and Director, Policy Impact, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University;
- Professor Colleen Hayward, AM, Head of Kurungkurl Katitjin, Centre for Indigenous Education and Research and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Indigenous), Edith Cowan University;
- Mr Paul Nicholls, Director, Strategic Projects, nominee of Curtin University Deputy Vice-Chancellor R&D, Professor Graeme Wright, Curtin University;
- Ms Julie Birmingham, Acting Branch Manager of the Governance, Quality and Access Branch in the Higher Education Group of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training (Outgoing);
- Mr David Fintan, Branch Manager of the Governance, Quality and Access Branch in the Higher Education Group of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training (Incoming);
- Ms Louise Pollard, EPHEA Nominee, Ordinary member, EPHEA and Manager of Aspire UWA, The University of Western Australia; and
- Professor Kerri-Lee Krause, Universities Australia Nominee and Provost and Professor of Higher Education, Victoria University.



NCSEHE Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee that provides advice and input from a wide range of stakeholders supports the Advisory Board. The NCSEHE's Advisory Committee is comprised of Board-approved delegates from across Australia, who have been at the forefront of establishing equity and outreach programs.

The Advisory Committee oversees the research and dissemination program, and meets via tele-conference. The Advisory Committee oversees the Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants program, providing directions for the call-for-applications, and recommending proposals for approval by the Board.

In 2015, the NCSEHE Advisory Committee was comprised of:

- Emeritus Professor Lesley Parker, AM, FTSE (Chair), Curtin University;
- Professor Sarah Paddle, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Deakin University;
- Professor Cindy Shannon, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Education), University of Queensland;
- Associate Professor John Guenther, Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Remote Economic Participation, Flinders University Northern Territory; and
- Associate Professor Wendy Nolan, Director and Head of School Centre for Indigenous Studies, Charles Sturt University Dubbo, New South Wales.

2016 Advisory Committee members are:

- Emeritus Professor Lesley Parker, AM, FTSE (Chair), Curtin University;
- Professor Liz Cameron, Director of the Koorie Institute, Deakin University;
- Professor Denise Wood, Professor of Learning, Equity, Access and Participation, CQUniversity Australia;
- Associate Professor John Guenther, Principal Research Leader, Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Remote Economic Participation, Flinders University, Northern Territory;
- Associate Professor Michele Fleming, Dean of Students and Director, Student Engagement Directorate, University of Canberra; and
- Ms Ruth Tregale, EPHEA Nominee, Treasurer, EPHEA and Director, Widening Participation, Macquarie University.

Equity Performance Framework Steering Group

The Equity Performance Framework Steering Group provided oversight of the trial and production of the *Equity Performance Framework for Australian Higher Education*, a project that concluded in December 2015.

Members of the Steering Group were:

- Mr Craig Ritchie;
- Ms Julie Birmingham;
- Ms Louise Pollard;
- Dr Fadwa Al-Yaman, Head, Indigenous and Children's Group, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare;
- Professor Ian Anderson, Chair, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council;
- Dr Andrew Taylor, Branch Manager of the Economic and Market Analysis Branch in the Research and Economic Group of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training;
- Mr Bruce Caldwell, Assistant Director, National Centre for Education and Training Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics;
- Mr Myles Burleigh, Acting Director, National Centre for Education and Training Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics;
- Ms Sue Fergusson, General Manager, Statistics, National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER);
- Dr Mette Creaser, National Manager, Statistics and Analytics, NCVER;
- Dr Nathan Cassidy, Universities Australia representative;
- Mr Alan Keith, Manager, International Education Policy, Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET); and
- Mr Larry Davies, Acting Chief Executive Officer and State Executive Officer, ACPET.

Equity Fellows Selection and Reference Committee

Through the Australian Government Department of Education and Training's HEPPP-funded 2015 National Priorities Pool initiative, the NCSEHE received \$1.54 million to fund six Equity Fellowships between 2015 and 2017.

Overseeing the call-for-nominations and Fellow selection process is the Equity Fellows Selection and Reference Committee.

The Equity Fellows Selection and Reference Committee comprises:

- Emeritus Professor Lesley Parker, AM, FTSE (Chair);
- Professor Richard James, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Director of the Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education, The University of Melbourne;
- Ms Mary Kelly, Equity Director, Queensland University of Technology;
- Ms Vicki Ratliff, Director, Equity Programs, Australian Government Department of Education and Training; and
- Professor Sue Trinidad.

Research Adjuncts

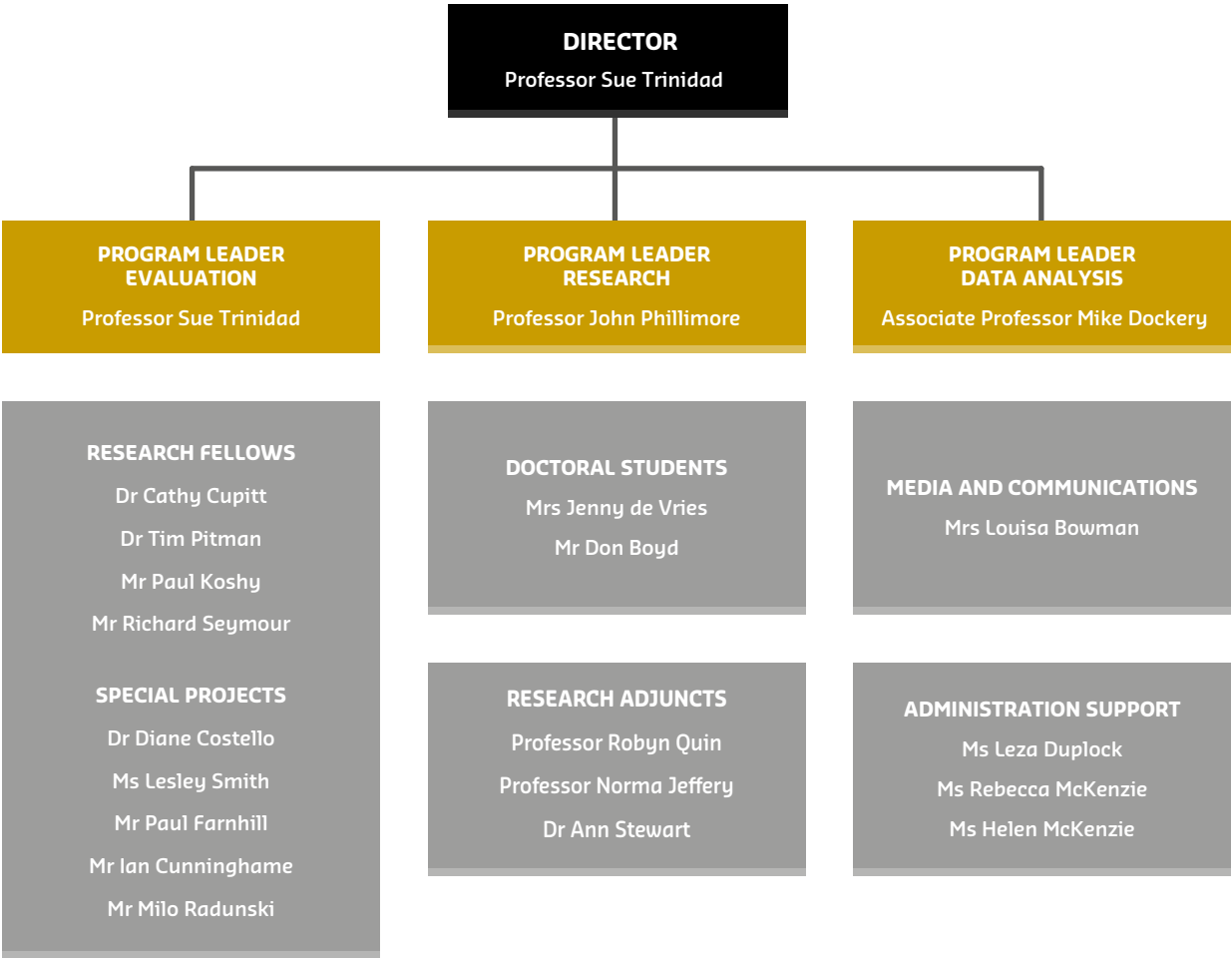
Three Research Adjuncts currently provide the NCSEHE with advice and conduct scholarly research on request:

- Professor Robyn Quin, Higher Education Consultant, Curtin University;
- Professor Norma Jeffery, Higher Education Student Equity Consultant, Curtin University; and
- Dr Ann Stewart, Higher Education Consultant, University of the Sunshine Coast.



RESEARCH TEAM

The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education is home to a diverse group of researchers, students and professional staff.





Professor Sue Trinidad

Director and Program Leader

Prior to becoming the Centre's Director, Sue was Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Humanities at Curtin University during 2007–2012. In these roles she provided academic

leadership for five schools and led the Higher Education Equity Participation Program for a large faculty which had many low socio-economic status, Indigenous and regional students. Sue is an established scholar in the areas of higher education pedagogy and change management, the use of technology and student learning. Her research covers higher education and leadership, including the use of technology for regional, rural and remote areas to provide equity access to all students regardless of their geographical location. Sue has been involved in consultancies, research projects and grants both in Australia and internationally, including Australian Research Council and Office for Learning and Teaching funded research. She currently sits as an advisor to the Western Australian Minister of Education on the Regional and Remote Advisory Council (RREAC). Her teaching, learning and research have been acknowledged by a number of awards including the 2001 Life Membership Award for the Educational Computing Association of Western Australia for her work with teachers, two best research paper awards in 2004 and 2006, the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence and Innovation in Higher Education in 2010, the 2014 PTCWA Outstanding Professional Service Award, and an Office for Learning & Teaching Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning in 2014.



Professor John Phillimore

Program Leader

John is the Executive Director of the John Curtin Institute of Public Policy (JCIPP) at Curtin University and works on a range of public policy issues including federalism, higher education policy, public sector management,

innovation and technology policy, and the Australian welfare state. John is NCSEHE Program Leader for Program 2 – Equity Policy and Research Program and oversees the NCSEHE's Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program.



Associate Professor Mike Dockery

Program Leader

Mike is Principal Research Fellow with the JCIPP, NCSEHE Program Leader for Program 3 – Student Equity Data and Analysis, and leads the CRC for Remote Economic Participation's project on Indigenous mobility. He is also part

of the research team at the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, where his research pursuits include the school-to-work transition, the effects of work and other labour market experience on happiness and wellbeing, and Indigenous labour market and social outcomes.



Dr Tim Pitman

Senior Research Fellow

Tim has worked in higher education since the mid-1990s and has extensive experience in research and student administration. His areas of research include higher education policy with a focus on access and social inclusion

in higher education, approaches to lifelong learning, experiential learning and the recognition and credentialing of prior learning. He is a regular contributor to higher education policy debate in print, online and on radio.



Dr Cathy Cupitt

Research Fellow

Cathy has worked in higher education for the last 19 years. For the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Cathy has been researching student access, retention and success in higher education, focusing on

online education. She is currently coordinating a large-cohort unit for Humanities at Curtin University, and is integrating the best practice findings of her research into both Open Universities and Open Curtin modes of learning and teaching.



Mr Paul Koshy

Research Fellow

Paul works within the Centre's Equity Policy and Research Program area, looking at education, participation and outcomes. His research experience is primarily in applied economics, labour market, and higher education studies

and he has participated in over fifty contract research projects for state and national governments, private sector organisations, and international agencies. His recent work has included policy research into geographic measures of socioeconomic status and higher education policy. Paul is currently completing a PhD on the socioeconomic determinants of higher education participation. In December 2015, he completed his work on the Equity Performance Framework project, for which he was co-manager.



Mr Richard Seymour

Research Fellow

Richard has over 10 years of experience in labour market economics, and has worked on a number of research projects for the Western Australian Department of Training and Workforce Development, the CRC Construction

Innovation, the Australian Fair Pay Commission, the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, and the Victorian Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development. Richard also has over 10 years of experience in information technology, with extensive experience in software and database development and recently completed his PhD thesis.



Dr Diane Costello

Research Officer

Diane has over 15 years of experience in the higher education sector, undertaking a variety of research projects, consultancies and teaching in the field of community psychology.

The vast majority of her projects involved applied research with Indigenous, regional and remote communities, guided by a social justice analytical framework. After completing her contract as a Research Fellow in the field of social sustainability with the Faculty of Humanities, Diane joined the NCSEHE in 2014, where she is currently involved in undertaking research activities in projects related to access, attrition and retention of equity students, including an evaluation of Australian higher education enabling programs.



Mr Ian Cunningham

Research Assistant

Ian has a Masters degree majoring in professional writing and publishing and a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Internet Communications. He is currently assisting the NCSEHE with the cataloguing of its past and present

research to a referencing database, conducting reviews of 2014 and 2015 funding round reports, and assisting in gathering research relating to social mobility through higher education.



Mr Paul Farnhill

Policy Analyst

Paul is an Economist and Policy Analyst with wide experience in policy issues in government and industry. Paul worked for the Financial Times newspaper in London before joining the Western Australian Government in a range of

roles in economic development and policy analysis. He has also been a political speech writer and advisor to Ministers and Premiers. Paul joined the NCSEHE in 2016 to contribute to the Centre's writing, communications and publications with a focus on policy and research.



Ms Lesley Smith

Higher Education Consultant

Lesley is an experienced strategic planner and policy analyst who worked for the Western Australian and Victorian governments before joining Curtin University as Director, Strategic Planning. She has substantial

experience in policy development and implementation for services for people with disabilities, and worked part-time with the Centre while completing her PhD.



STRATEGIC PLAN

The NCSEHE's five-year Strategic Plan enables the team to reflect on its activities and outputs and focus on the future.

Australian Government Contract and Intent		Establish a reputation for high quality products that inform public policy and 'close the gap' between equity policy and practice.	
Strategic Priorities		Fostering Research	Evaluating Progress
Strategic Objectives		Facilitate and conduct research and build a research community to produce high quality research and publications	Contribute to improved equity outcomes at the program, institution and national level
Key Initiatives		• External commissioned research • Internal research • National competitive grants scheme • Relevant publications and dissemination and engagement activities	• Conduct project evaluations • Collate and analyse national equity statistics and survey data, including about those excluded from participation • Establish online site for the collection of student data from education institutions and tertiary applications centres • Develop and trial a framework for measuring equity performance in Australian higher education
Outcomes	12 months	Quality research outputs, papers, briefing papers, distribution of finalised reports for a national research network	Quality research outputs, papers, briefing papers, distribution of finalised reports for a national research network
	1 - 3 years	• Invitations to collaborate in international research • Nationally competitive research process producing estimable research	• Accessible data and resource analysis tools via NCSEHE website for research and equity practitioners • Evaluation capacity and expertise

	Establish a strong national presence with key stakeholders	Establish partnerships that enhance the outcomes of the centre
Informing Policy	Translating Research into Practice	Strengthening Partnerships
Contribute to public discussion and provide evidence to inform government policy in the area of disadvantage in higher education	Provide equity practitioners with resources, knowledge, best practice exemplars, informed advice and the evaluation of programs	Create national and international linkages, partnerships and collaborations to build capacity to improve participation and success in higher education
• Disseminate information on equity groups' access and participation • Appropriately communicate high quality research to policy makers • Engage policy makers in discussion on higher education policy and practice	• Identify and share current practice • Evaluate current sector initiatives • Assist in the evaluation of equity initiatives • Share associated tools and resources across the sector	• Provide appropriate information to the wider community • Establish links with international organisations with similar objectives to foster comparative analysis and collaborate on issues of mutual interest
Submissions to high profile reviews within the sector	• National forums and events • Publications, dissemination via web	• Partners actively engaged • Established networks of researchers, practitioners, policy makers and university executives
Evidence-based public policy commentary and analysis	The Australian Government and higher education community understand the role and have confidence in the NCSEHE	

RESEARCH PROGRAM

The Centre's focus is based on three programs of research activity: Equity Policy and Program Evaluation, Equity Policy and Research, and Student Equity Data and Analysis.

The NCSEHE's key purpose is "to inform public policy design and implementation, and institutional practice, to improve higher education participation and success for marginalised and disadvantaged people."

In keeping with its purpose, the NCSEHE is connecting Commonwealth student equity policy with the activities of higher education institutions and national equity outcomes, through its input into comparative assessment of institutional strategies, systemic assessments of policy achievements, and of national policy-making, given this evidence.

The Centre's focus is based on three programs of research activity:

- **Equity Policy and Program Evaluation**

The Centre is providing leadership and support in developing a national approach and resources to evaluate the impact of initiatives to increase participation of people from low socio-economic status backgrounds and other equity groups in higher education.

- **Equity Policy and Research**

The Centre is furthering equity policy and planning in Australia, sharing knowledge and capabilities developed in Australia, and providing evidence on the impact of policy on equity outcomes in the system. By enabling national research and engagement on higher education policy and practice, the Centre ensures its research includes analysis of all student equity groups, including people with disability and people from low socio-economic status, Indigenous and rural and remote communities.

- **Student Equity Data and Analysis**

The Centre conducts analysis of higher education datasets from a student equity perspective. This encompasses:

- compiling and analysing national equity data and survey data on student transition to higher education;
- managing a website, data.ncsehe.edu.au, that presents data on student equity performance in higher education; in particular, the mapping of higher education participation data in Australia; and
- providing access to sources for data and data-driven research on equity policy and programs from around Australia and the world.

PROGRAM 1 – EQUITY POLICY AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Program Leader Professor Sue Trinidad

The Equity Policy and Program Evaluation program is focused on evaluating current sector initiatives and identifying best practice; developing a National HEPPP Evaluation approach; and sharing associated tools and resources across the higher education sector.

The NCSEHE continues to undertake leadership and support in the important areas of equity policy and program evaluation by providing assistance with the evaluation of programs and working on relevant projects and the promotion of such projects.

A significant evaluation project undertaken during 2015-2016 has been the RMIT *I Belong* Evaluation. *I Belong* is a HEPPP-funded outreach program that has been run by RMIT since 2012. Students from regional Victoria visit the university's city campus and engage in a range of activities designed around three key themes: belonging, awareness and aspiration. The NCSEHE was selected to complete the evaluation project in two parts. Part one of the project was completed by December 2015, whereby two reports were provided to RMIT University. One report focused on the Middle Years activities and the other on the Senior Years activities. Part two of the project concerns qualitative data that have been collected and analysed from interviews with secondary school students and teachers who participated in *I Belong*. The final report for the project is due in July 2016.

In early 2016, the NCSEHE contributed two submissions to the Higher Education Standard Panel's consultation on the transparency of university admissions processes. In brief, the Centre recommended in the first instance:

- special consideration be given to the needs of students from equity group backgrounds;
- the improved transparency and accessibility of entry information, including information on alternative entry pathways, scholarships and enabling programs;
- improved capacity for students to compare university entrance requirements and opportunities;
- broader reporting of entrance data through QILT; and
- consideration of the important role of university outreach programs in directing students to information on courses and institutions.

In the second submission, the NCSEHE and the *Enabling Programmes for Disadvantaged Student Groups* (Enabling courses for SES student groups) research team recommended that greater attention be paid to students entering university via alternative pathways, such as enabling programs.

The third submission the NCSEHE made was to the Productivity Commission, which recently put out a call for submissions to its Education Evidence Base Inquiry, focused on school and early childhood education. The NCSEHE has recommended that any review of evidence collection in the education system should consider the inclusion of data on higher education and other post-school outcomes. A list of the submissions received by the Productivity Commission to date is available on its website, pc.gov.au.

Research projects completed by December 2015 included the Australian Government Department of Education and Training Equity Performance Framework for Australian Higher Education (\$400,000). This project provided three options to be considered for a future Equity Performance Framework.

The NCSEHE also worked on a number of HEPPP-funded National Priority Pool projects during the 2015-16 year. These included:

- **Software solutions for universities to identify and support low-SES students, \$23,000**
Completed in December 2015, this project enabled the precise identification and mapping of regional/remote and LSES students on the basis of the Public Sector Mapping Agency's Geocode National Address File;



STAFF PROFILE

Ms Rebecca McKenzie

I hold a Bachelor in Agribusiness and have more than 10 years of operational and project management experience in Western Australia's Agriculture and Biosecurity public sector, working on a nationally significant pest incursion project. Having many years of administrative experience, I am currently assisting the Centre in various administrative and research-related activities, including the Centre's valuable project work in areas such as Equity Scholarships and Equity Fellowships. In 2015, I also took on the role of Executive Officer for SPERA.

- **Enabling courses for SES student groups, \$155,785**
A collaborative research project undertaken by researchers from the NCSEHE, La Trobe University, Federation University Australia and Deakin University, this project analysed the effectiveness of enabling programs offered by Australian higher education providers compared to other sub-bachelor pathways. The project team was invited to present on the research at the Australian National University Planners (ANUP) meeting in June 2015 and at the National Enabling Educators Association conference (NAEEA) in November 2015. The research was also presented at the national AARE conference in Fremantle in December 2015;



- **Social marketing strategy to low-SES communities, \$580,000**

With QUT as lead university representing the Queensland Consortium, and working with the NCSEHE and EPHEA, the project team has worked to develop a social marketing strategy for widening participation in higher education in Australia. Due for completion in 2016, the NCSEHE worked on an initial position paper in conjunction with researchers from James Cook University and the University of the Sunshine Coast. A Special Interest Group session was held with practitioners at the 2015 EPHEA Conference in Geelong as an important component of stage one of the project; and

- **Fellows Programme, \$1,540,000**

The aim of the Fellows Programme is to support Equity Fellows to undertake strategic, high-impact, high-profile leadership projects targeted, sector-wide, at improving the access, participation and success in higher education of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. As part of the Fellowship, Fellows will spend a period of time working in and with the Australian Government Department of Education and Training facilitating mutually beneficial engagement between the Department and the sector. Six Fellowships will be awarded between 2015 and 2017. The value of each Fellowship will be up to \$215,000, covering engagement of a Fellow for a period of 12 months (FTE). The Programme's nomination guidelines, forms and Terms of Reference for the Equity Fellows Selection and Reference Committee were reviewed at the Selection and Reference Committee's first meeting, held at the Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education in Melbourne on 30 June 2015. The announcement of inaugural Fellows occurred in late 2015 with the Fellows beginning their projects in early 2016. A brief overview of the three 2016 Fellow's projects is given on pages 32-33 of this Annual Report.

Finally, the NCSEHE has continued to develop its profile and reputation over the third year of its operation in the Equity Policy and Program Evaluation area. By providing leadership and support via research and resources, the Centre is working towards a national approach for evaluating the impact of initiatives to increase participation of people from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education.

PROGRAM 2 – EQUITY POLICY AND RESEARCH

Program Leader Professor John Phillimore

By enabling high-quality national research and engagement on higher education policy and practice, the Centre ensures its research includes analysis of all student equity groups including people from LSES, Indigenous, remote and rural communities, and people with disability. The Centre also works on producing and disseminating relevant publications and conducting outreach and engagement activities.

Research covers three broad streams of interest:

- national policy-making and target-setting;
- access, participation and outcome patterns among the equity groups; and
- comparative evidence on strategies to meet equity participation and outcome targets.

The Equity Policy and Research Program not only draws on the resources of the Equity Policy and Program Evaluation Program and the Data and Analysis Program, but it also informs activities in both areas. The program recognises the NCSEHE's need to involve and partner with researchers from around the country to ensure that the Centre can tap into relevant research excellence that exists across Australian universities and related research institutions. As a result, the Equity Policy and Research Program involves two main elements:

- in-house research by Centre staff; and
- a Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program.

In-house Research

Research work by NCSEHE staff includes the following:

- Book chapters and academic journal articles, details for which are provided in the following pages of this Annual Report.
- A briefing note by Research Fellows Paul Koshy and Richard Seymour in September 2015, which provided an update on domestic undergraduate student enrolment and equity outcomes from 2007 to 2014, and was published on the NCSEHE website. It is regularly cited by scholars and equity practitioners in the sector.
- Attendance and presentations at conferences. In 2015-16, this included a paper given by Paul Koshy at the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE) conference held in Cardiff, Wales, in July 2015; poster displays by NCSEHE PhD students, Don Boyd and Jennifer De Vries, at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) conference in Fremantle in December 2015; and a further international presentation given by Paul Koshy at the European Access Network (EAN) conference held in Dublin, Ireland, in May 2016.

Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program

Two of the 12 projects funded by the 2014 Research Grants program had already been completed and published in 2014-15. The remaining ten projects were completed and published in 2015-16. In addition, eight of the 12 projects funded by the 2015 Research Grants program were also published, and the remaining four are progressing smoothly and will be published in the second half of 2016. Details of published reports are included in the list of publications found in the following pages of this Annual Report.

Applications	2014 Round	2015 Round	2016 Round
Number of applications	35	44	44
Funds sought	\$2,164,994	\$1,238,205	\$1,562,891
\$ per application	\$61,857	\$28,141	\$35,520
Lead applicant - universities	17	19	20
Lead applicant - other orgs	2	2	0
Participant units and orgs only	15	7	10
Total number of researchers	133	138	126
Outcomes			
Number of grants	12	12	10
Funding	\$741,328	\$342,819	\$360,307
\$ per application	\$61,777	\$28,568	\$36,307
Lead applicant - universities	8	10	9
Lead applicant - other orgs	2	1	0
Participant units and orgs only	5	4	6
Total number of researchers	43	46	31

Project Title	Lead University	Chief Investigator	URL
Access to Higher Education: Does Distance Impact Students' Intentions to Attend University?	RMIT University	Professor Rob Stratthdee	ncsehe.edu.au/access-to-higher-education-does-distance-impact-students-intentions-to-attend-university/
University Experience for Disadvantaged Students and Influence on Academic Outcomes	The University of Western Australia	Assistant Professor Ian Li	ncsehe.edu.au/university-experience-for-disadvantaged-students-and-influence-on-academic-outcomes/
Rippling Stories of Success: Indigenous Students' Positive Higher Education Experiences	Charles Darwin University	Dr Jack Frawley	ncsehe.edu.au/rippling-stories-of-success-indigenous-students-positive-higher-education-experiences/
Identifying Strategies for Improving VET to HE Transitions for Indigenous Learners	Charles Darwin University	Associate Professor James Smith	ncsehe.edu.au/identifying-strategies-for-improving-vet-to-he-transitions-for-indigenous-learners/
Factors Influencing Participation and Migration of Regional Higher Education Students	La Trobe University	Associate Professor Buly Cardak	ncsehe.edu.au/factors-influencing-participation-and-migration-of-regional-higher-education-students/
Mentoring Programs and Equity Groups: The Australian Story	Curtin University	Associate Professor Susan Beltman	ncsehe.edu.au/mentoring-programs-and-equity-groups-the-australian-story/
It's About Time: Working Towards More Equitable Understandings of the Impact of Time for Students in Higher Education	The University of Newcastle Australia	Professor Penny Jane Burke	ncsehe.edu.au/its-about-time-working-towards-more-equitable-understandings-of-the-impact-of-time-for-students-in-higher-education/
WIL Wellbeing: Exploring the Impacts of Unpaid Practicum on Student Wellbeing	Queensland University of Technology	Dr Deanna Grant-Smith	ncsehe.edu.au/wil-wellbeing-exploring-the-impacts-of-unpaid-practicum-on-student-wellbeing/
Identifying School Engagement Practices Facilitating University Participation of Equity Students	The University of Queensland	Dr Wojtek Tomaszewski	ncsehe.edu.au/identifying-school-engagement-practices-facilitating-university-participation-of-equity-students/
Understanding the Completion Patterns of Equity Students in Regional Universities	University of the Sunshine Coast	Professor Karen Nelson	ncsehe.edu.au/understanding-the-completion-patterns-of-equity-students-in-regional-universities/

Several reports received media coverage, and some have been used subsequently as the basis for academic journal articles and chapters. In addition, findings from several research reports funded by the Centre were presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference in Fremantle held between 29 November and 3 December 2015.

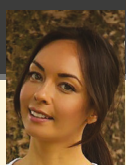
A third grants round was run in 2016, supported by the NCSEHE Advisory Committee chaired by Professor Lesley Parker. The maximum grant was increased to \$40,000, up from \$30,000 in the previous year, with priority placed on research relating to regional and remote students, following the emphasis on students with disability in the 2015 round. Research aimed at increasing access and participation by Indigenous students was also targeted.

Applications for the 2016 Student Equity in Higher Education Grants Program opened on 7 December 2015 and closed on 19 February 2016. Information about the grants round was distributed to all universities, subscribers to the NCSEHE email newsletter, followers of the Centre's various social media channels, and posted on the Community of Science grants website. Once again, a rigorous selection process was undertaken by the members of the NCSEHE Advisory Committee, assisted by NCSEHE staff. Each application was read and ranked by each committee member, followed by discussion before a final recommendation was made, which was then considered at a meeting of the NCSEHE Advisory Board.

The tables on the previous page summarise the applications received and compares them with those received in the two years prior. A total of \$360,307 has been awarded in 2016, bringing the total amount invested in the grants program since its inception in 2014 to \$1.4 million, funding a total of 34 research projects.

Between 2014 and 2016, successful applications were received from 22 institutions, and a further eight are partners on projects led by another organisation.

The list of grants funded under the 2016 Student Equity in Higher Education Grants Program is provided in the table on the previous page. Discussions have been held with all grant recipients and contracts have been signed. Projects span six to nine months, with the first research reports expected in October 2016.



STAFF PROFILE
Ms Silvia Soltyk

Sylvia holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Economics) and Bachelor of Science (Statistics) with Honours. Sylvia previously worked in research at the School of Economics and Finance at Curtin University. She is currently assisting the NCSEHE team as a research assistant focusing in data analysis and statistical modelling.

PROGRAM 3 – STUDENT EQUITY DATA AND ANALYSIS

Program Leader Associate Professor Mike Dockery

The key objective of the Student Equity Data and Analysis Program is to collate and analyse national equity statistics and survey data. The NCSEHE undertakes to:

- ensure that comprehensive statistics on the current status and historical trends in higher education equity for each of the equity target groups are accessible through the Centre; and
- facilitate research on key equity issues.

The current activities of the program are carried out by NCSEHE Research Fellow, Paul Koshy (0.6 FTE allocation to the program) and Program Leader Associate Professor Mike Dockery (0.2 FTE), in collaboration with researchers from Curtin and other universities. For seven months in the 2015-16 reporting period, this included Richard Seymour (0.2 FTE), who is still active in the program as an external participant.

Over the course of the past year, the program continued to expand its activities in the area of equity performance data analysis and research. A significant aspect of this work was the Equity Performance Framework project, which was funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. The project concluded in December 2015, culminating in a report prepared by Paul Koshy and NCSEHE Senior Research Fellow Tim Pitman, that outlined options for the extension of current equity performance data reporting in Australia. It is anticipated that this report will contribute substantially to discussion in this area at the national level in the coming years.

In operational terms, the program raised public discussion of equity performance data through the ongoing release of the *Student Equity Performance in Australian Higher Education* Briefing Note, the latest version of which reports on trends between 2007 and 2014. In addition, the program saw the development of a data portal for university-level equity statistical reporting which will serve as an introductory project for future reporting under the Equity Performance Framework, whether that occurs through the NCSEHE or elsewhere. The data portal's web address is data.ncsehe.edu.au.

The work looking at equity performance has translated into three conference presentations given by Paul Koshy over the past year at peak international forums: the 2015 Further and Continuing Education (FACE) Conference, the 2015 Global Access to Post-Secondary (GAPS) Education Conference and the 2016 European Access Network (EAN) Conference. The presentations have provided the NCSEHE with exposure for its work on equity data collection and

reporting and established important connections in relating the Australian experience to what is happening in higher education internationally and vice versa.

Another important project in 2015-16 was the development of a software package to assign student residential addresses to statistical area 1 (SA1) for Curtin, a project led by Richard Seymour and funded through the Australian Government Department of Education and Training's HEPPP-funded 2015 National Priorities Pool. The project, which was undertaken in conjunction with a team from Flinders University in South Australia, involved the development of mapping software which allows Curtin University administrators to map student movements to Curtin from Perth and across Western Australia. The software details the socioeconomic and regionality factors of the areas in which students live, as well as important measures such as transport infrastructure access.

The Student Equity Data and Analysis Program also continued to expand its use of longitudinal data sets, notably the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey to examine outcomes from higher education and factors shaping parental expectations of university attendance by their children. The work has been led by Mike Dockery and over the year culminated in the publication of a paper on graduate earnings in *Economic Analysis and Policy* and a presentation on parental aspirations for higher education, given at the AARE Conference in December 2015. The conference presentation is forming the basis for a research article which will be submitted to an international journal.

In addition to this research work, progress continues in relation to the development of a linkage between the WA Raine Study cohort and administrative data from WA universities. The linkage will result in a unique data set to enable researchers to examine education choices and outcomes in the context of a rich set of health, household and early childhood explanatory variables. Alongside the work being done with the HILDA dataset, the work with the Raine data will provide evidence for policymakers and practitioners on the key factors affecting higher education participation and provide indications for future developments in longitudinal collections in Australia.

The progress made in 2015-16 will form a basis for an ongoing expansion of activities within the Equity Data and Analysis program, one which will continue to deliver outcomes from practitioners and policymakers in the future.

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RESEARCHER'S REPORTS

NCSEHE's Research Fellows provide an update on their activities over the past twelve months

ASSOC. PROFESSOR MIKE DOCKERY

In my 0.2 FTE role as Student Equity Data and Analysis Program Leader, I continued overseeing and collaborating in the work undertaken by Paul Koshy and Richard Seymour through 2015-2016, as well as contributing to the review processes for grant applications and NCSEHE research reports. Significant NCSEHE outcomes for the year included the acceptance of two papers in peer-reviewed journals, one on differences in graduate earnings by university institutional sector and one on measurement of student socioeconomic status, and a report on graduate outcomes for equity groups in collaboration with researchers from the University of Western Australia, Flinders University and the University of New South Wales. The latter report is also the basis for a journal article currently under review.

I continue to work on the WA Raine Study cohort linkage and papers on parental aspiration for children's university attendance and differences in outcomes for students by school sector.

In addition to my role with NCSEHE, I manage the Population Mobility and Labour Markets project for the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation and am a Principal Research Fellow with the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre. My activities in these roles throughout 2015-2016 have been complementary to the NCSEHE research in focussing on socio-economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and on the impact of parental work patterns on the wellbeing of families and children.

DR DIANE COSTELLO

My role at the NCSEHE as a research officer is incredibly rewarding, and I am very fortunate to have been involved in two key research projects. The first, titled "The Pathways to Higher Education: The efficacy of enabling and sub-bachelor pathways for disadvantaged students", involved my participation as a research assistant in undertaking the study. The research examined the efficacy of enabling programs in supporting equity students' transition to university. The project has now received Departmental approval for public circulation.

The second project, titled "Social Marketing Strategy for Low SES Communities", involved supporting my colleague Dr Cathy Cupitt in undertaking the Queensland University of Technology-led Social Marketing project. The NCSEHE collaborated with research staff from three universities and the Department of Education and Training, to complete the project's position paper. A key finding that resulted from our work on this project is that while many practitioners are engaged in progressive equity practice, not enough of them are documenting their work and results. The literature upon which equity research is based often lacks these important and innovative voices.

It is very fulfilling also to have the opportunity to work collaboratively with colleagues in writing submissions, funding applications, and NCSEHE publications that promote equity policy and practice and the development of innovative research.

DR CATHY CUPITT

In the final seven months of my secondment to the NCSEHE, my main focus was on the Queensland University of Technology-led Social Marketing project. With my colleague Dr Diane Costello, and staff from QUT, James Cook University, University of the Sunshine Coast, and the Department of Education and Training, we completed the project's position paper, which reviewed current literature about widening participation in higher education and the programs which have taken place in the sector, and mapped these findings to potential social marketing approaches. The position paper considered barriers, aspirations, place and pathways, and those who influence under-represented cohorts when they decide to undertake higher education. It came in at over 200 pages, and provides a comprehensive overview of the current status of widening participation outreach in Australia.

As part of this project, the project team also sought feedback on the position paper's findings from an expert panel at the EPHEA Conference held at Deakin University's Geelong campus in November 2015. This focused on two areas in particular: the development of personas which represented the focal equity groups, and expert feedback on the project's conceptual model and approach. The session I led on persona development was well received, and generated considerable interest and responses from the expert panellists.

A paper on the findings from this project is due to be presented at the STARS 2016 conference.

I presented several other papers during this period, focusing on the findings from the Online Learner Engagement Survey, and the development of personas representing the students from equity backgrounds at Curtin University.

It has been a rewarding two years working for the Centre. As I return to coordinating the core first year communications unit for Humanities at Curtin University, I take with me many ideas for ways to improve engagement and retention for this cohort, based on the research findings from the projects I undertook for the Centre.

DR TIM PITMAN

In early 2016, the Centre finalised its report into how effective university enabling programs were at helping transition students from disadvantaged backgrounds into higher education. The project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training and was led by myself, along with Sue Trinidad and interstate university colleagues. The project involved examining 48 enabling programs offered across 27 universities, and comparing the first-year retention and success rates of students transitioning via an enabling program, compared to other pathways. We also analysed the responses of more than 2,500 students surveyed across Australia, who had entered university via one of a number of alternative pathways, including enabling programs.

Our research found that there are a wide variety of enabling programs offered across Australia. In raw number terms, they are second only to the vocational pathway in terms of transitioning disadvantaged students into higher education. For some groups – most notably Indigenous students – enabling programs are the most utilised route to university. The project team and I also found that generally speaking, students from recognised equity groups who use enabling programs are retained at better rates than those who use other pathways. The students themselves reported very high levels of satisfaction with their enabling program experience. Furthermore, the absence of fees encourages many students who might otherwise not have been able to attend university, to enrol in an enabling program.

In our report, we make a number of recommendations about how enabling programs could be improved. These include: making more places available across Australia; encouraging universities to recognise each other's programs as an entry pathway; providing more and clearer information to students, especially on the internet; and that universities continue to work on improving the academic scaffolding and support provided in their programs.

MR PAUL KOSHY

In many ways, 2015-16 was a year of consolidation for the NCSEHE with the work of the previous years beginning to bear fruits across all programs.

For me, this involved the finalisation of a major project, A Framework for Measuring Equity Performance in Australian Higher Education, which was presented to the Australian Government Department of Education and Training at the conclusion of 2015 and now awaits public comment and discussion about the next stage of its development.

As part of that project, I was able to research equity policy data collection in Australia, work which contributed to three presentations at international conferences. The first of these was at the Further and Continuing Education (FACE) Conference in Cardiff in July 2015, where I discussed overall equity policy in Australia over the last decade. I presented a second paper at the Global Access to Post-Secondary (GAPS) Education Conference in Kuala Lumpur where I looked at equity measurement and performance in recent years. In 2016, I followed this with a paper on equity data measurement in Australia over the past two decades at the 25th European Access Network (EAN) Conference in Dublin in May 2016.

These conference presentations provided an international context for the work the NCSEHE is doing in equity data performance measurement and facilitate our exposure to significant international developments. One such development is the social program of the Bologna Process, a joint initiative of 45 countries involved in the dominant global higher education grouping, as well as relevant and important projects in the international sphere, such as the UK's Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) Program based at the University of Kent. I think these contacts will provide for an extension of the work undertaken on the Equity Performance Framework in Australia, and this augurs well for real outcomes from that research over the coming years.

Aside from this work on performance data, I also participated in the NCSEHE's internal research program, looking at critical issues in education participation. Issues range from the influences on parental aspiration formation in Australia (work that is still underway) to the modelling of higher education graduate salaries and an examination of the impact of institutional type

MR IAN CUNNINGHAME

My role at the Centre has grown steadily since I joined the team in August 2015. Whilst completing my Masters dissertation through the end of 2015, I conducted a scoping study for the Centre on the impact higher education has in driving social mobility in Australia. From the findings, a brief report and infographic were developed, which will form the basis of a discussion session being led by Professor Sue Trinidad and I at the 2016 STARS Conference in late June 2016.

Along with cataloguing the centre's academic resources for ease of reference using the referencing tool Mendeley, I also assisted in developing graphics for the *I Belong* Middle Years and Senior Years reports, as well as proofing and formatting a number of other reports completed in the latter half of the year.

In 2016, I have been primarily involved in a research meta-analysis to uncover gaps in equity research and practice. Following the publication of project reports from two major funding rounds delivered by the NCSEHE, and the completion of a range of equity policy and program evaluations resulting from national HEPPP funding across multiple institutions, there has been a plethora of new information produced by researchers. As the NCSEHE will play a significant role in the funding of further equity research, it is important that current research is assessed and that a cohesive future direction for policy development and additional research is established.



DOCTORAL STUDENTS

Curtin University funds the Centre's two mature-age Doctoral students, both of whom are on track to complete their studies in 2016.



MRS JENNY DE VRIES

I hold a Bachelor of Education (Primary) (Hons) degree. My previous research investigated the relationship between professional learning and information and communications technology integration into the classroom by in-service teachers. My professional background includes primary education, banking and customer service. I am also a sitting member of the organising committee for the Australasian Evaluation Conference (AES16) to be held in Perth on 19-21 September 2016, and chair of the sub-committee for Emerging Evaluators for this conference. Over the last 12 months I have:

- completed the collection and analysis of all data, including initial and follow-up interviews and document analysis;
- attended the professional learning workshop, Introduction to Program Logic and Theory of Change, presented by Dr Delwyn Goodrick in Canberra, ACT;
- attended the professional learning workshop, Fundamentals of Good Evaluation Reporting, presented by Anne Markiewicz at the 2015 Australasian Evaluation Society Conference in Melbourne, VIC;
- presented at the 2015 Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) Conference at Deakin University's Geelong Campus with my Doctoral colleague Don Boyd. Our presentation was titled, University Outreach, Access and Support: Student knowledge, motivation and connection to attend university;
- presented a poster at the 2015 AARE Conference at Notre Dame University's Fremantle Campus, titled Sustainable University Outreach, Access and Support Programs: Designing an Evaluation instrument; and
- planned and delivered Program Logic Model workshops at RMIT University in Melbourne, VIC, CQUniversity Australia in Rockhampton, QLD, and Deakin University in Geelong, VIC, for university-based student equity practitioners.

I am now nearing the completion of my Doctoral study which aims to identify measures or indicators of success for university-based student equity programs. My work in this area has enabled me to develop an in-depth understanding of the planning, delivery and evaluation of student equity programs. I expect to submit my thesis for examination during the third quarter of 2016.



MR DON BOYD

My Doctorate is focused on investigating the transition into higher education by regional students in Western Australia and Queensland.

My work in this most recent reporting period was defined by five principal activities, namely: finalising data collection sites, developing quantitative and qualitative research instruments, collecting and analysing data, and the ongoing writing of my thesis.

I collected data from eight schools in total, four in Western Australia and four in Queensland. The data collection process required that I travel extensively by air (32,504 km) and road (2,000 km), and to remote locations. The literature review I conducted enabled the creation of a questionnaire focused on the knowledge that year 9 and 10 students have about university. In total, 205 students completed the questionnaire. I subsequently interviewed seven groups of students, consisting of between 12 and 17 participants, and spent approximately 70 minutes with each group.

I am currently nearing the completion of my project and, like my Doctoral colleague Jenny, am working toward having my thesis ready for submission in the third quarter of 2016.

In addition to the above, I have:

- presented my preliminary findings at a Higher Degree by Research Students' Colloquium, held at Curtin, in late August 2015;
- presented at the 2015 Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA) Conference held at Deakin University in Geelong, VIC, in November 2015;
- presented alongside Jenny at the 2015 EPHEA Conference in Geelong, VIC, in November 2015;
- presented a poster at the 2015 AARE Conference at Notre Dame University's Fremantle Campus, titled What Might it be Like Going to University? University Knowledge Held by Young People in Regional Australia;
- been featured in the Summer 2015/16 edition of Curtin University's R&D Now magazine; and
- remained active in my capacity as a member of the SPERA National Executive Committee.

EQUITY FELLOWS

The Equity Fellows Programme aims to support Fellows to undertake strategic, high-impact, high-profile leadership projects targeted, sector-wide, at

improving the access, participation and success in higher education of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training is funding an Equity Fellows Programme under the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP). The NCSEHE has been charged with managing the Programme.

Six Fellowships will be awarded between 2015 and 2017. The value of each Fellowship will be up to \$215,000, covering engagement of a Fellow for a period of 12 months (full-time equivalent).

The aim of the Programme is to support Fellows to undertake strategic, high-impact, high-profile leadership projects targeted, sector-wide, at improving the access, participation and success in higher education of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

As part of the Fellowship, Fellows will spend a period of time working in and with the Department of Education and Training facilitating mutually beneficial engagement between the Department and the sector.

The NCSEHE's inaugural Equity Fellows, Dr Erica Southgate, Dr Cathy Stone and Dr Nadine Zacharias, commenced their Fellowships in January 2016. The next three Fellows will be expected to commence in January 2017 or as negotiated in contract.

All Fellows Programme applications are assessed on merit by a dedicated Selection and Reference Committee and endorsed by the NCSEHE's Advisory Board.



DR ERICA SOUTHGATE

Despite the significant expansion of higher education and its increasing social diversity, young people experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage are vastly underrepresented in high status degrees such as medicine, law and engineering and their associated professions. This is even the case for disadvantaged students with high academic achievement and high educational aspirations.

My Fellowship project aims to provide a targeted and theoretically informed examination of the factors that impede access to high status degrees for students facing disadvantage. I will comprehensively analyse data from such research with such students and systematically canvas the perspectives of key stakeholders from Australian peak professional bodies, universities, policy arenas and in careers education. Finally, I will provide a roadmap for how new technologies can be harnessed to provide timely, authentic and effective connections to the professions for these young people.



DR CATHY STONE

Online learning has a critical place in widening access and participation and facilitating success in higher education for a diverse range of students, many of whom are from backgrounds which have been historically underrepresented at university. Increasing numbers are taking up the opportunity to study online, particularly through open-entry pathways. However, within the open-entry and online space, attrition rates are very high.

My Fellowship project investigates the range of practices, supports and retention strategies currently being used within online learning at Australian universities, and at the Open University UK, examining their effectiveness in terms of access, retention and academic success, and the extent to which they meet the different and complex needs of this diverse range of students. I will also examine current international research into academic success and retention in online education, the findings of which will underpin the development of a set of national guidelines for improving the access, academic success and retention of students in online education.



DR NADINE ZACHARIAS

The introduction of the Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program (HEPPP) in 2010 created new opportunities for Australian universities to make strategic and systemic changes in improving access and delivery of higher education to diverse learners. No systematic investigation of how HEPPP was operationalised by universities has been conducted at the national level to understand whether and how the vision of a more equitable Australian higher education system was realised through the national equity program.

My Fellowship aims to bridge the gap between policy and practice to create a better understanding of how equity policy in Australia is implemented, what works and why. It investigates the impact of HEPPP on equity policy, practice and thinking and asks whether HEPPP is the best possible funding mechanism to achieve greater participation and success of diverse learners. The goal is to enable the sector to fully realise the promise of HEPPP for greater social and economic prosperity through access to, and success in, higher education for all Australians.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

In June 2016, the NCSEHE celebrated three years at Curtin University.

Media

In the past year, we have posted 98 news and events items, and 42 publications to our website. Our online presence has continued to grow to 103,402 website visits from 50,476 unique visitors, up from 90,512 and 44,153 respectively last year. Our eNews subscriber count has risen to 1,127 subscribers, up from 642 last year. The Centre publishes an eNews edition approximately twice a month and has published 21 editions in the past year, all of which are available online at ncsehe.edu.au/news-events/newsletters/

The Centre's website continues to be featured on a number of third party sites, including:

- The Conversation: theconversation.com
- Australian Policy Online: apo.org.au
- Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training: adcet.edu.au
- EduResearch Matters, the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) blog: aare.edu.au/blog/
- VOCEDplus, NCVER's international tertiary education research database: voced.edu.au
- Research Professional: researchprofessional.com
- Wikipedia: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Educational_equity#Reputable_research_centers_and_associations

In terms of broadcast and print media, the NCSEHE has been featured in The Australian (both print and online), the Australian Financial Review (print), The Age (both print and online), X-press Magazine (print), The West Australian (both print and online), Campus Morning Mail (online) and Campus Review (both print and online). The projected advertising value of this exposure exceeds \$283,966 (iSentia mediaportal), up from \$127,000 last year.

The Centre's social media accounts include:

- Twitter: @NCSEHE
- Google+: plus.google.com/+NcseheEduAu/
- LinkedIn: [group linkedin.com/groups/National-Centre-Student-Equity-in-5101326](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/National-Centre-Student-Equity-in-5101326)
- LinkedIn: [company page linkedin.com/company/national-centre-for-student-equity-in-higher-education/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-centre-for-student-equity-in-higher-education/)
- Slideshare: slideshare.net/NCSEHE.

Informing Policy and Practice

The NCSEHE's core objectives are to be at the centre of public policy dialogue about equity in higher education and to close the gap between equity policy, research and practice.

Since 2014, the Centre has run an annual competitive research grants program through which it funds research projects in institutions across Australia. The projects funded in 2014 and 2015 have come to a conclusion and the Centre has subsequently dedicated resources to bringing the research findings together in two new publications: *Informing Policy and Practice: 2014 Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program Projects* and *Informing Policy and Practice II: 2015 Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program Projects*.

The *Informing Policy and Practice* publications not only highlight the range and scope of projects funded by the NCSEHE, they also offer further opportunities for insight and discourse by way of the commentary featured within each report's spread, generously contributed by leading equity policy experts, researchers and practitioners.

Informing Policy and Practice: 2014 Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program Projects was launched at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference in Fremantle in late November 2015. The publication has been very well received. *Informing Policy and Practice II* will be launched at the 2016 HERDSA Conference in Fremantle in July 2016. Both publications will be made available in two versions: a digital version which will be hosted on the NCSEHE website, and a print edition which we will forward to stakeholders across the country and contribute to the *Australian Policy Online* database.

**Establish
Centre Profile**

**Generate
Support**

**Provide
Value**



Top 10 downloads from NCSEHE website

	TITLE	AUTHOR/S	URL
1	Crossing Cultural Borders – A Journey Towards Understanding and Celebration in Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Australian Contexts (PhD Thesis)	Dr Marianne McLaughlin	ncsehe.edu.au/publications/crossing-cultural-borders/
2	Partnerships in Higher Education	NCSEHE	ncsehe.edu.au/partnerships-in-higher-education/
3	Overcoming Adversity Among LSES Students: A Study of Strategies for Retention	Ms Ameera Karimshah, Dr Marianne Wyder, Associate Professor Paul Henman, Mr Dwight Tay, Ms Elizabeth Capelin and Dr Patricia Short	ncsehe.edu.au/publications/overcoming-adversity-among-low-ses/
4	Out of Care, Into University: Raising Higher Education Access and Achievement of Care Leavers	Dr Andrew Harvey, Dr Patricia McNamara, Ms Lisa Andrewartha and Mr Michael Luckman	ncsehe.edu.au/publications/out-of-care-into-university-raising-higher-education-access-and-achievement-of-care-leavers/
5	Student Equity Performance in Australian Higher Education: 2007 to 2012	Mr Paul Koshy	ncsehe.edu.au/publications/student-equity-performance-australian-he-2007-2012/
6	Access and Participation in Higher Education: Outreach Access Support	NCSEHE	ncsehe.edu.au/access-participation-higher-education/
7	Choices, challenges and changes: Exploring transition, persistence and engagement for first generation, female university students	Dr Sarah O' Shea	ncsehe.edu.au/publications/choices-challenges-changes-exploring-transition-persistence-engagement-first-generation-female-university-students/
8	The Effect of the 2014-15 Federal Budget's Higher Education Proposals on Students	Mr Paul Koshy, Dr Tim Pitman and Professor John Phillimore	ncsehe.edu.au/effect-2014-15-budgets-higher-education-proposals-students/
9	Widening Participation in Australian Higher Education	Professor Trevor Gale and Dr Stephen Parker	ncsehe.edu.au/publications/widening-participation-australian-higher-education/
10	A Critical Interventions Framework for advancing equity in Australian higher education	Dr Ryan Naylor, Dr Chi Baik and Professor Richard James	ncsehe.edu.au/publications/critical-interventions-framework/

Events

The past year has been eventful in the most literal sense of the word.

In Perth, the NCSEHE team has again been fortunate to attend a number of WA EPHEA Chapter meetings: at The University of Western Australia on 18 June 2015; at Curtin University on 13 August 2015; at the University of Notre Dame on 29 January 2016; at The University of Western Australia on 5 April 2016; and at Curtin University on 27 May 2016. The meetings are an excellent opportunity to network with equity practitioners and serve as another channel through which the NCSEHE can disseminate news and information. The National EPHEA Committee has been supportive of the WA Chapter's work and provided funding for professional development opportunities for the group, which were availed of in early 2016. The NCSEHE and the WA Chapter have also been invited to contribute to the quarterly EPHEA newsletters, which reach EPHEA members nationally and internationally.

In June 2015, the NCSEHE held a Monitoring and Evaluation Forum at RMIT University in Melbourne. The forum was facilitated by 2014/15 NCSEHE Visiting Fellow, Dr Ryan Naylor, and NCSEHE Doctoral student, Mrs Jenny de Vries. Fifty equity practitioners and researchers attended and took away with them practical evaluation tools, resources and reference points for future use. Attendees were appreciative of the opportunity to come together to discuss an increasingly important aspect of their roles and network with inter-university colleagues.

In early July 2015, we attended the inaugural STARS (Students Transitions Achievement Retention Success) Conference in Melbourne. NCSEHE Director Professor Sue Trinidad gave a presentation on social inclusion in higher education and Post-Doctoral Research Fellow Dr Cathy Cupitt presented on her research into online learners and grit.

2015 International Visiting Fellow Dr Bernadette Sanderson visited the NCSEHE in mid-July 2015 and worked closely with Professor Sue Trinidad to examine social mobility in Scotland and Australia. During her short visit, Bernadette was kind enough to give a presentation in which she discussed her work in Glasgow and Scotland's widening participation efforts.

In early September 2015, Professor Sue Trinidad and the NCSEHE's Research Assistant, Mr Ian Cunninghame, facilitated a Social Marketing Focus Group. Participants of Curtin University's PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) program gathered together to provide the NCSEHE with feedback on draft personas Dr Cathy Cupitt and Dr Diane Costello developed via their literature searches and work on the QUT-led *Social marketing strategy to low-SES communities* project. The Focus Group allowed the NCSEHE to refine its personas and capture additional real-world insights.

In mid-September 2015, Dr Cathy Cupitt presented some preliminary findings from her study into online learners to a group of over 30 people from Curtin University, Murdoch University and Open Universities Australia. A few short weeks later, Professor Sue Trinidad gave a presentation focused on student equity policy and practice at the ACER-sponsored Strategies for Student Retention Conference at Victoria University in Melbourne.

In early October 2015, NCSEHE Research Fellow Mr Paul Koshy attended the 2015 Global Access to Postsecondary (GAPS) Education Conference in Malaysia. Paul gave a presentation on trends and developments in access and participation in Australian higher education. Later that same month, NCSEHE Senior Research Fellow Dr Pitman and Media and Communications Officer Mrs Louisa Bowman travelled to Darwin to attend the 2015 HEPPP National Forum at Charles Darwin University (CDU). The Forum was focused on Indigenous pathways and transitions into higher education and was hosted by CDU's Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges & Education. NCSEHE 2015 Visiting Fellow, Associate Professor James Smith, presented on behalf of himself, Professor Sue Trinidad and CDU's Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, Professor Steven Larkin, on the topic of participation in higher education in Australia among under-represented groups. Dr Tim Pitman, along with project team colleagues from La Trobe, Deakin and Federation University, presented preliminary findings from a study he led, examining enabling programs and vocational education training in Australia and how such pathways are used by Indigenous peoples to transition into higher education. From her office in Perth, Professor Sue Trinidad gave a webinar presentation to a University of Tasmania Community of Practice, the topic for which was social inclusion in higher education.



STAFF PROFILE Mrs Louisa Bowman

I have been the Centre's Media and Communications Officer for three years now. I was the first person in my family to attend university in 2004 and subsequently hold two bachelor degrees, one in marketing and one in accounting and taxation. I have over 14 years of professional experience in marketing and communications, business development and tax accounting. In 2014, I became Treasurer for the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA), a role I maintain in 2016. In 2015, I was asked to be an iAwards judge.

November 2015 saw members from the NCSEHE spend two weeks in Geelong to attend both the 2015 Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA) Conference and the 2015 Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) Conference. Both events were held at Deakin University's Geelong Waterfront Campus. At the SPERA Conference, NCSEHE Doctoral student, Mr Don Boyd, presented on work undertaken with Professor Sue Trinidad, investigating the capacity of regional young people to commence university study. At the EPHEA Conference, Dr Cathy Cupitt and Professor Sue Trinidad gave a presentation on the various student personas the NCSEHE developed earlier in the year, and how the personas could be used by universities to focus outreach, access and support resources. NCSEHE Doctoral students, Mr Don Boyd and Mrs Jenny de Vries co-presented a session in which they discussed their respective research studies - Don's on regional high school students' knowledge about university, and Jenny's on stakeholder engagement during the planning of student equity programs. Professor Sue Trinidad also presented a session in which she discussed opportunities for universities to collaborate with the NCSEHE. At the EPHEA Conference, Mrs Jenny de Vries and Dr Cathy Cupitt also led a Special Interest Group (SIG) each. Jenny, in collaboration with Mr Liam Downing from Charles Sturt University and Dr Angela O'Brien-Malone and Dr Mark Diamond from the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, led a SIG focused on monitoring and evaluation. Cathy, working with Associate Professor Maria Raciti from the University of the Sunshine Coast and Ms Sandra Bridgland, Ms Kate Flynn and Ms Gabrielle O'Brien from Queensland University of Technology, led a SIG discussing the *Social marketing strategy to low-SES communities* project. Later in the month, Mr Joseph Slavens from Azusa Pacific University in California visited the NCSEHE to present on his Doctoral study, which is examining social justice engagement in the United States. Lastly, Dr Nicholas Holyoak from Flinders University, with NCSEHE Research Fellows Mr Paul Koshy and Mr Richard Seymour, gave a presentation on software enabling the identification of regional and remote and low-SES Curtin University students, and the distances and potential travel networks used by these students to attend university.

In December 2015, the NCSEHE team attended the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference at the University of Notre Dame Australia in Fremantle. The NCSEHE had organised professional and higher education special interest group sessions during which both NCSEHE staff and researchers and practitioners in receipt of a Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program grant presented on their various research projects. The NCSEHE's publication, *Informing Policy and Practice: 2014 Student Equity in Higher Education Research*



Grants Program Projects was launched at this event.

In January 2016, the inaugural NCSEHE Equity Fellows, Dr Nadine Zacharias from Deakin University and Dr Erica Southgate and Dr Cathy Stone from The University of Newcastle Australia visited the Centre to meet with the Equity Fellows Program Selection and Reference Committee Chair, Emeritus Professor Lesley Parker and NCSEHE Director Professor Sue Trinidad. The visit marked the commencement of the Fellowships. To date, the Fellows have been making steady progress on their respective projects and will visit the NCSEHE again later in 2016 to share their preliminary findings.

In late February 2016, Professor Sue Trinidad visited the University of Technology, Sydney to attend the 2016 Equity Scholarships Forum. Dr Nadine Zacharias, 2016 NCSEHE Equity Fellow and a 2015 Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program grant recipient, presented findings from her research project, *Moving Beyond "Acts of Faith": Effective Scholarships for Equity Students*.

March 2016 saw a small group from the NCSEHE visit the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE)

at The University of Newcastle Australia in Newcastle, New South Wales. The purpose of the week-long visit was to attend the CEEHE-hosted Tracking Access to Higher Education Symposium and for the NCSEHE and CEEHE teams to meet and collaborate. The Symposium was a well-attended event, with approximately 50 researchers and practitioners present from universities across Australia and the UK. Dr Sharon Smith, Director of the UK's Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) service, provided attendees with an excellent insight into the sophisticated database in use by over 50 universities in England. NCSEHE Research Fellow, Mr Paul Koshy, followed up with Sharon and the HEAT team when he visited the UK in May 2016, following his attendance at the European Access Network (EAN) Conference.

Ms Darlene McLennan from ADCET has enabled the NCSEHE to participate in two webinars in 2016. Both webinars focused on research projects concerning students with disability the projects of which were funded through our annual grants program. On 7 April 2016, Dr Ceridwen Owen, Senior Lecturer and Program Director (Architecture), in the School of Architecture & Design at the University of Tasmania presented on her research grants project, *Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Higher Education*. On 25 May 2016, Professor Sue Kilpatrick, Adjunct Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania presented her research grants project, *Exploring the Retention and Performance of Students with Disability*.

2016 International Visiting Fellow Professor Alex Jun visited the NCSEHE in late April 2016. A renowned expert on social mobility, Alex spent two days at the Centre, meeting with colleagues from across Curtin University, including Curtin Elder in Residence, Professor Simon Forrest. On 28 April, Alex gave a presentation titled, *Narratives of Academic Mobility of Disenfranchised Youth in Cambodia*.

In mid-May 2016, Professor Sue Trinidad met via webinar with members of the National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia (NAEEA). The group discussed research into alternative university entry pathways the NCSEHE completed in early 2016. On 27 May 2016, three American Council on Education Fellows visited the Centre, each one giving a presentation based on their Fellowship research. Finally, late May 2016 saw Mr Paul Koshy attend the 25th Silver Jubilee EAN Conference in Dublin, Ireland, at which he presented on the topic of 25 years of measuring disadvantage in higher education in Australia.



STAFF PROFILE
Mr Milo Radunski

I am a final year Bachelor of Arts student at Curtin University, majoring in Digital Design. I have provided graphic design and web development services to organisations both locally and internationally. I work for the NCSEHE on a part-time basis, assisting with the design and layout of its print publications and assisting with the Centre's website.

Online Editorials

1. Devlin, M., "The 'truth' about ATARs" ncsehe.edu.au/truth-about-atars/ 19 January 2015.
2. Trinidad, S., "Albury-Wodonga Forum on Regional and Rural Higher Education" ncsehe.edu.au/albury-wodonga-forum-regional-rural-higher-education/ 4 February 2015.
3. Koshy, P. "2015 Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE) Conference" ncsehe.edu.au/2015-forum-for-access-and-continuing-education-face-conference/ 13 July 2015.
4. O'Donnell, C. "The Bridges to Higher Education Initiative" ncsehe.edu.au/the-bridges-to-higher-education-initiative/ 17 July 2015.
5. Koshy, P. & Seymour, R. "Explainer: Measuring Disadvantage at a Household Level" ncsehe.edu.au/explainer-measuring-disadvantage-at-a-household-level/ 6 August 2015.
6. Koshy, P., "Post-conference summation: 2015 Global Access to Postsecondary (GAPS) Education Conference" ncsehe.edu.au/post-conference-summation-2015-global-access-to-post-secondary-gaps-education-conference/ 19 October 2015.
7. Pitman, T., "Engagement at the Interface: Indigenous pathways and transitions into higher education" ncsehe.edu.au/engagement-at-the-interface-indigenous-pathways-and-transitions-into-higher-education/ 26 October 2015.

Conference Presentations

1. Boyd, D. (2015), "Investigating the Extant Knowledge Young Regional People Have About University: Some Preliminary Findings," CBS HDR Students' Colloquium 2015, 31 August-1 September, Curtin University, Perth.
2. Boyd, D. & Trinidad, S. (2015), "Getting to university: building the capacity of young regional people to achieve this goal," Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA) Conference, 4-6 November, Deakin University, Geelong.
3. Cupitt, C., Bridgeland, S., Raciti, M., Flynn, K. & O'Brien, G. (2015), "Social marketing for low socioeconomic status communities," Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) Conference, 9-12 November, Deakin University, Geelong.
4. Cupitt, C., and Golshan, N. (2015), "Participation in higher education online: Demographics, motivators, and grit," Students Transitions Achievement Retention Success (STARS) Conference, 1-4 July, Crown Convention Centre, Melbourne.
5. Cupitt, C., and Golshan, N. (2015), "Stoppers And Student Grit In Online Higher Education," Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference, 29 November – 3 December, The University of Notre Dame, Australia, Fremantle.
6. Cupitt, C. & Trinidad, S. (2015), "Personas Project: Informing student equity initiatives in higher education," Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA), 9-12 November, Deakin University, Geelong.
7. de Vries, J. & Boyd, D. (2015), "University outreach, access and support: Student knowledge, motivation and connection to attend university," Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) Conference, 9-12 November, Deakin University, Geelong.
8. de Vries, J., Downing, L., O'Brien-Malone, A. & Diamond, M. (2015), "Student equity and HEPP: Evaluation and evidence of impact," Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) Conference, 9-12 November, Deakin University, Geelong.
9. Hayward, C. (2015), "What can we do to make universities culturally safe spaces and is having a RAP an integral part of the cultural safety journey?" Engagement at the Interface: Indigenous Pathways & Transitions into Higher Education HEPPP National Forum, 22-23 October, Charles Darwin University, Darwin.
10. Koshy, P. (2015), "Access and Participation in Australian Higher Education: Recent Trends and Development," Global Access to Postsecondary Education (GAPS) Conference, 5-8 October, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
11. Koshy, P., Seymour, R. & Dockery, A. M. (2015), "Australian Parental Aspirations for Young People's Participation in Higher Education," Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference, 29 November – 3 December, The University of Notre Dame, Australia, Fremantle.
12. Krause, K. (2015), "Access and widening participation," Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) Conference, 9-12 November, Deakin University, Geelong.
13. Pitman, T. (2015), "The use of alternative pathways to higher education by Indigenous persons: a national comparison," Engagement at the Interface: Indigenous Pathways & Transitions into Higher Education HEPPP National Forum, 22-23 October, Charles Darwin University, Darwin.
14. Pitman, T., Trinidad, S., Costello, D., Devlin, M., Harvey, A., Brett, M., & McKay, J. (2015), "Pathways to Higher Education: A Comparison of Enabling Programs and VET Pathways," Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference, 29 November – 3 December, The University of Notre Dame, Australia, Fremantle.

15. Smith, J. & Trinidad, S. (2015), "Understanding the nexus between equity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education policy agendas in Australia: What are the synergies, tensions and possibilities?" Engagement at the Interface: Indigenous Pathways & Transitions into Higher Education HEPPP National Forum, 22-23 October, Charles Darwin University, Darwin.
16. Trinidad, S. (2015), "Celebrating, Collaborating, Creating opportunities through the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education," Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) Conference, 9-12 November, Deakin University, Geelong.
17. Trinidad, S. (2015), "Considering Regional Students in the Proposed Higher Education Reforms," Albury-Wodonga Forum on Regional and Rural Higher Education, 2 February, La Trobe University, Albury-Wodonga.
18. Trinidad, S. & Phillimore, J. (2015), "Informing Policy and Practice: 2014 Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program Projects Launch," Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference, 29 November – 3 December, The University of Notre Dame, Australia, Fremantle.
19. Trinidad, S. (2015), "Outreach, Access and Support: Strategies for student recruitment and retention in higher education," Student Recruitment and Retention Forum, 2 March, Sydney Harbour Marriott Hotel, Sydney.
20. Trinidad, S. (2015), "Social Inclusion in Higher Education in Australia," Students Transitions Achievement Retention Success (STARS) Conference, 1-4 July, Crown Conference Centre, Melbourne.
21. Trinidad, S. (2015), "Student Equity: Policy and Practice," Strategies for Student Retention Conference, 29-30 September, Victoria University Convention Centre, Melbourne.
22. Trinidad, S., Smith, J. & Larkin, S. (2015), "Supporting Indigenous participation in higher education in Australia: What can we learn from the Higher Education Participation Programme?" Engagement at the Interface: Indigenous Pathways & Transitions into Higher Education, 22-23 October, Charles Darwin University, Darwin.
23. Trinidad, S. & Whiteford, G. (2015), "The Research: Equity Scholarship Provision in Australian Universities," Equity Scholarship Provision in Australian Universities Forum, 11 February, University of Canberra, Canberra.

Invited Speakers and NCSEHE Presentations

1. Chiasera, J. (2016), "Developing an Institutional Equity Plan", 27 May, Curtin Executive Briefing Centre.
2. Cupitt, C., and N. Golshan. (2015), "Participation in higher education online: Demographics, motivators, and grit," 16 September, Curtin Executive Briefing Centre, slideshare.net/NCSEHE/participation-in-higher-education-online-demographics-motivators-and-grit/.
3. de Vries, J., Naylor, R. & Trinidad, S. (2015), "Monitoring and Evaluation Forum," 30 June, RMIT University of Technology, Melbourne.
4. Goodell, J. (2016), "Performance funding and its implications for equity in US Higher Education ", 27 May, Curtin Executive Briefing Centre.
5. Jun, A. (2016), "Narratives of Academic Mobility of Disenfranchised Youth in Cambodia," 28 April, Curtin Executive Briefing Centre.
6. Owen, C., McLennan, D. & Trinidad, S. (2016), "Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Higher Education," 7 April, ADCET Webinar.
7. Rush, R. (2016), "How to Thrive When a Crisis Hits," 27 May, Curtin Executive Briefing Centre.
8. Sanderson, B. (2015), "University Partnerships for Community and School System Development," July, Curtin Executive Briefing Centre.
9. Seymour, R., Koshy, P. & Holyoak, N. (2015), "Mapping the Socio-Economic Status of Curtin University's Student Population," 19 November, Curtin Executive Briefing Centre.
10. Slavens, J. (2015), "American Tales of Social Justice Engagement," 18 November, Curtin Executive Briefing Centre.

These recognised student equity and higher education experts visit the NCSEHE to collaborate with the Centre's researchers to progress specific projects.



Associate Professor James Smith is the Program Manager for the HEPPP-funded Whole of Community Engagement initiative within the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Indigenous Leadership at Charles Darwin University. His role involves working with six remote Indigenous communities to build aspiration, expectation and capacity to participate in higher education. Prior to his current appointment, James worked in a variety of executive and senior management roles in the Northern Territory in both the health and education sectors and has developed a strong background in health promotion and community development. He is a Fellow of the Australian Health Promotion Association and Associate Editor of the Health Promotion Journal of Australia and the International Journal of Men's Health, as well as an Adjunct Research Fellow with the Collaboration of Evidence, Research and Impact in Public Health (CERIPH) at Curtin University.

James visited the NCSEHE for a second time in 2015 in late November, joining the NCSEHE team at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference.



Dr Bernadette Sanderson is the Director of the Schools for Higher Education Programme in the West of Scotland (FOCUS West), based at the University of Glasgow, in Scotland, in the UK. The FOCUS West Programme is a government-funded, long-term initiative, which is designed to widen access to higher education for under-represented groups. Its network and partnership includes eight universities, nine colleges of further education, 40 secondary schools and a number of government agencies. Prior to undertaking this role, Bernadette worked as Director of the West of Scotland Wider Access Forum, which developed research and practical projects supporting routes to higher education for a large variety of under-represented groups, including adult returners to degree study, and students articulating from college to university. Bernadette has also worked as a Research Fellow in higher education, and as a secondary school teacher and lecturer/ Head of Department in the college/ further education (vocational) sector. She has also contributed to published research in the area of widening access to higher education and has delivered papers in this area both in the UK and internationally.

Dr Bernadette visited the NCSEHE in July 2015 to learn about Australia's widening participation efforts. She shared details on a number of widening participation innovations Scotland has underway, and gave a presentation on the topic, "University Partnerships for Community and School System Development".



Professor Alex Jun is a TED speaker and the author of *From Here to University: Access, Mobility, and Resilience Among Urban Latino Youth* (Routledge Press, 2001). He has published extensively on issues of postsecondary access for historically under-represented students in under-served areas, and recently completed a three-year narrative inquiry research project on the educational mobility and academic resilience of Khmer orphans, about which he is writing a book. Alex conducts research on issues surrounding higher education globalisation in the Pacific Rim, and while studying at the University of Southern California, he earned a Ford Foundation Fellowship to conduct research on college preparation programs for urban youth. At Azusa Pacific University, Alex teaches courses on diversity and social justice in higher education, comparative higher education, and qualitative research methods. He joined the university after 15 years as a faculty member and administrator at the University of Southern California.

Alex visited the NCSEHE for two days in April 2016, with Azusa colleague and Doctoral student, Joseph Slavens. He met with a number of senior Curtin University staff to discuss diversity and equity in higher education in Australia, the ways in which the NCSEHE and his team at Azusa may collaborate, and gave a presentation titled, "Narratives of Academic Mobility of Disenfranchised Youth in Cambodia".



Professor Janelle Chiasera serves as the chair of the Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences and professor in the Clinical Laboratory Science Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). In her administrative role, she provides broad strategic oversight, guidance, and fiscal soundness to further advance education, clinical, and research initiatives of the department. She is responsible for leading and aligning eight individual programs, eight program directors, and 35 faculty and staff to school and university strategic priorities. Over the past four years, she has been responsible for leading major transformational change department-wide, uniting two freestanding departments, and aligning the unified department to a single strategic direction. Janelle is a tireless advocate of leadership development and has completed multiple leadership development programs within and outside of UAB, such as the UAB Executive Development Program, Momentum Leadership Program, and the Harvard Management Development Program, to name a few. She is currently co-facilitating a school-wide leadership development program (LeaderSHP) to help build a pipeline of strong leaders school-wide.

An American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow, Janelle visited the NCSEHE in late May 2016, with her colleagues Professor Joanne Goodell and Dr Rosalee Rush, all three of whom gave presentations at a WA EPHEA Chapter meeting held at Curtin University. Janelle presented on the topic, "Developing an Institutional Equity Plan".



Professor Joanne Goodell is a professor in Cleveland State University's (CSU) Department of Teacher Education. Before joining the faculty of CSU in 1999, she taught high school mathematics for 13 years in Australia, and was department chair for five of those years. She currently teaches undergraduate and graduate mathematics education methods and qualitative research methods courses. Joanne was president of the CSU Faculty Senate and was on the CSU Board of Trustees for three years from 2011 to 2014. In addition, she is the CSUteach Education co-director, principal investigator of the Noyce MUST STEM Fellows program, and a fellow and co-director of the University STEM Education Center. Joanne's research interests focus on equity, reform, retention, and professional development issues in the teaching and learning of mathematics and related disciplines in universities and secondary schools. Since joining the faculty in 1999, Dr. Goodell has been awarded over \$15 million in external funding to provide professional development for STEM university faculty and K-12 teachers, provide scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students pursuing STEM degrees and teaching licenses; and implement CSUteach to update the secondary mathematics and science teaching license programs. During her ACE Fellowship at her host institution Kent State University, Joanne has participated in planning a math boot camp for incoming students who place into remedial classes, a completion grant program, a new one-stop student services department, a five-year enrollment growth target and a move from remedial mathematics pathways to co-requisite pathways.

During her visit to the NCSEHE in late May 2016, Joanne presented on the topic, "Performance funding and its implications for equity in US Higher Education".



Dr Rosalee Rush was named Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communications at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania in August 2012, four years after arriving at the university as Director of Communications. The Michigan native is responsible for all aspects of the university's internal and external communications, marketing and advertising, including brand strategy, strategic communications, web and digital communications, sports information, enrolment management marketing and emergency communications. Rosalee also serves as the university spokesperson and crisis communications coordinator.

Prior to joining Bloomsburg University, Rosalee was a communications specialist with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, serving as editor of the agency newsmagazine *Michigan Business Report*, and managing the agency's quality-of-life e-publication, *MiLifeMiTimes.com*. Earlier in her career, she worked with Michigan's Office of Services to the Aging, Michigan Jobs Commission, and Industrial Relations Council on G.O.A.L.S., a consortium of 20 top American corporations and 20 of the top graduate universities in human resource management.

Rosalee serves on the Board of Directors for the College and University Public Relations and Associated Professionals (CUPRAP) and is a member of Geisinger Medical Center's Women's Health Volunteer Leadership Council. Co-author of *Learning Organization Principles: The Impact on a Midwest State Government as Perceived by Its Employees*, she received a King/Chavez/Parks Future Faculty Fellowship and was named a Fellow at the National Summer Institute for the Center of Multicultural Excellence Academy at the University of Denver in 2008.

During her ACE Fellowship at her host institution Bucknell University, Rosalee analysed student pre-and post-enrolment engagement levels and university connective values as factors to enhance student retention and success. As part of her Fellowship, Rosalee visited the NCSEHE in May 2016 and presented on the topic, "How to Thrive When a Crisis Hits".

RESEARCH ADJUNCTS

Research Adjuncts contribute expertise to the NCSEHE through consulting with staff and stakeholders as required, and advising on and contributing to activities in their areas of interest.



Professor Robyn Quin was Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) at Curtin University from May 2007 until July 2012. Her major responsibilities included teaching and learning, student administrative services, support services, equity and social justice, distance and E-learning, Indigenous studies, library services and the Curtin Vocational Education and Training Centre. She was previously Pro Vice-Chancellor (Engagement) at Edith Cowan University (ECU) and was responsible for community engagement, public relations, corporate communications, marketing, student recruitment, alumni relations, graduations and philanthropy. Prior to that appointment she was Executive Dean, Faculty of Education and Arts, ECU, responsible for teaching, research and outreach for the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, School of Education, School of Humanities, School of Communications and Multimedia, and School of Contemporary Arts. While at ECU she secured an equity grant from the then Department of Employment, Education and Training to raise awareness in LSES students in the ECU catchment area of university courses, study and life. During this period, she addressed the Federation of Ethnic Councils of Australia on equity issues related to students with English as a second or other language. At Curtin University, she prepared the institution's successful submissions for HEPPP funding and led the equity initiatives from 2010–2012. In 2014, in conjunction with the NCSEHE, she managed the evaluation of the combined Victorian universities HEPPP-funded equity initiative, LEAP (Learn, Experience, Access Professions). In 2015, Professor Quin provides the Centre with valuable support by way of being one of a number of external reviewers called upon to review research reports submitted to the NCSEHE by Student Equity in Higher Education Research Grants Program grants recipients, and has most recently conducted an evaluation of the RMIT *I Belong* program.



Professor Norma Jeffery was seconded to Curtin University in 2009 from the Western Australian Department of Education, to undertake research projects of mutual benefit and interest to the Western Australian Department of Education and Curtin University. The central theme of these projects has been equity and social inclusion issues for all years of schooling, with a particular focus on the impact of disadvantage on the transition from school to further education. The negative impact on achievement in schools with high concentrations of students from LSES backgrounds has underpinned research papers examining the factors that influence student access to university, strategies for improving eligibility for university entrance of students from LSES communities and equity issues and alternatives for university selection criteria. Professor Jeffery has had 40 years experience as an educator, including as the Chief Executive Officer of the Curriculum Council in Western Australia, leading the review of post-compulsory education and the development of the curriculum framework, and as acting Chief Executive Officer of the Western Australian Department of Education Services. She later had a senior executive position with the Western Australian Department of Education with responsibility for policy, planning and accountability for government schools.



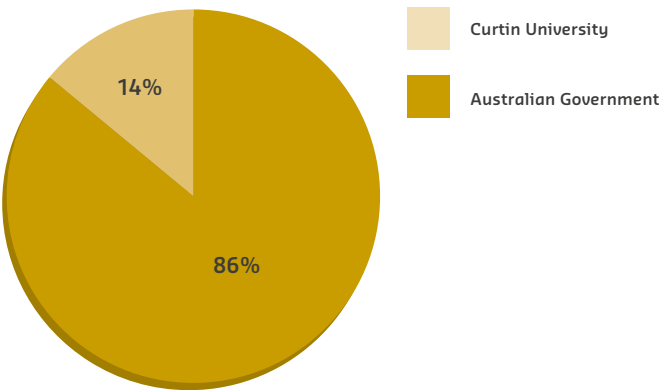
Dr Ann Stewart has significant expertise in the broad field of Education, having spent 20 years in the Northern Territory in various senior roles including education of the deaf and the field of Aboriginal Education. Dr Stewart has worked in early intervention programs, primary, secondary and tertiary education settings. She has held senior positions related to staff and student equity in the three metropolitan Queensland universities, including twelve years as Director, Equity at The University of Queensland. Dr Stewart ran her own diversity consultancy for four years and recently retired from the position of Head of Student Access, Equity and Diversity at the University of the Sunshine Coast, although she continues to work with the equity community in Australian higher education by undertaking short-term equity and diversity-related projects.

ADMINISTRATION

The NCSEHE receives its funding in stages from the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. The funding is contingent on the successful attainment and completion

of various key performance indicators and milestones, detailed in reports prepared by the Centre’s Director Professor Sue Trinidad with the assistance of the Curtin University finance staff.

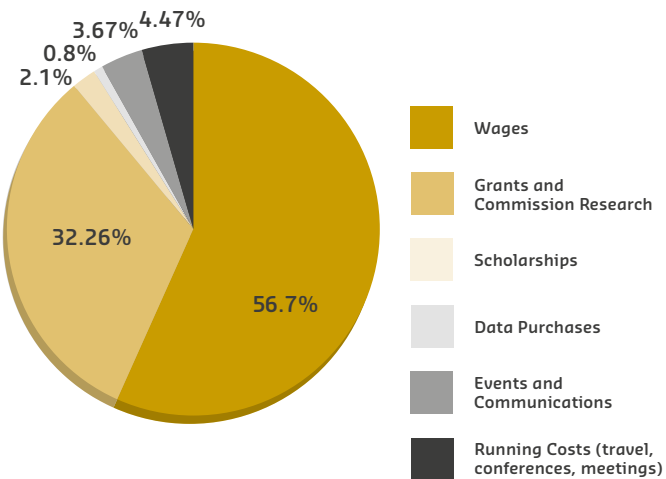
INCOME RECEIVED BY THE NCSEHE IN THE THREE YEARS TO 30 JUNE 2016



Income received by the Centre in the three years it has been hosted by Curtin University has amounted to \$7,710,255.

This total includes a cash contribution from Curtin and interest revenue.

EXPENDITURE IN THE THREE YEARS TO 30 JUNE 2016



During this same time period, the Centre has expended \$3,847,57, comprising staff remuneration, the 24 research grants funded in 2014 and 2015 and initial instalment payments for grants and commissioned research committed in 2016, Doctoral scholarship payments, events and communications expenses, and day-to-day operational costs.

The NCSEHE operates with the equivalent of 3.8 fulltime research employees, 1.0 full-time media and communications employee, a 0.4 full-time graphic design employee and the equivalent of a 0.4 full-time administration employee. Curtin University funds the Centre’s two Doctoral students and until 31 December 2015 funded one Post-Doctoral Research Fellow.

On Curtin University’s Bentley campus, the NCSEHE is located within Building 100 (Vice-Chancellory) and has the use of a dedicated set of offices and meeting space.



NCSEHE ADVISORY BOARD

The NCSEHE Advisory Board has an important role in the effective governance of the Centre and is a source of expert advice.

Membership is comprised of stakeholder nominees from academia, government and industry.



Professor Carmen Lawrence (Interim Chair), School of Psychology, University of Western Australia. Dr Lawrence served in both State and Federal politics over a period of 21 years, including as the Western Australian Minister for Education and Aboriginal Affairs, and as the first woman Premier and Treasurer of a State government. At the federal

level she was Minister for Health and Human Services, and Minister assisting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women. She was elected national President of the Labor Party in 2004. She is now Director of the Centre for the Study of Social Change at The University of Western Australia, and Chair of the Australian Heritage Council.



Professor Kerri-Lee Krause, University Australia Nominee, Provost and Professor of Higher Education, Victoria University. Professor Krause has senior executive portfolio responsibility for higher education learning and teaching, research and community and industry engagement at Victoria University, Melbourne. She is internationally

recognised for her research on the contemporary undergraduate student experience and implications for quality and standards.



Professor Bruce Chapman, AM, Professor of Economics and Director, Policy Impact, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University. Professor Chapman is a renowned labour and education economist. His policy experience includes designing the Higher Education Contribution Scheme in 1988, as a senior economic

adviser to Prime Minister Paul Keating from 1994–1996, and as a consultant to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Bank. In 2001 Professor Chapman was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for “contributions to the development of economics, labour market and social policy.”



Mr Paul Nicholls, Director, Strategic Projects, nominee of Curtin University Deputy Vice-Chancellor R&D, Professor Graeme Wright. Mr Nicholls has a strong interest in developing outcomes-focused working relationships between education stakeholders and also in the development of evidence-based policy and programs that support all

Australian students to achieve their full potential. In his previous role as Director Science Partnerships at Scitech, Mr Nicholls established equity-related science education programs in LSES and remote and regional communities. In his current role, he has responsibility for ensuring that appropriate governance arrangements are in place for Curtin University research institutes and centres. Mr Nicholls is a Fellow, Leadership Western Australia and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Professor Colleen Hayward, AM, Head of Kurongkur Katitjin, Centre for Indigenous Education and Research and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Indigenous), Edith Cowan University. Professor Hayward’s policy and program activities always reflect the needs of minority groups at community, state and national levels. She received the

Premier’s Multicultural Ambassador’s Award in 2006, and the National NAIDOC Aboriginal Person of the Year Award in 2008. In 2012 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for “service to tertiary education through administrative and research roles, to the advancement of the rights of Indigenous people, particularly in the areas of social welfare, law and justice and children’s health”.



Ms Julie Birmingham, Acting Branch Manager of the Access and Participation Branch in the Research and Strategy Group of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. He has also held positions at the Awakabal Newcastle Aboriginal Co-operative, and served on the Boards of the Aboriginal Health and Medical

Research Council of NSW and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. From 1999–2002 he was the Chief Executive Officer of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.



Mr David Fintan, Branch Manager of the Higher Education – Governance, Quality and Access Branch at the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. David's responsibilities include managing equity and access programs, governance and system design. Prior to joining the Department, David held various positions at the

National Disability Insurance Agency as head of risk management and governance, and practiced law specialising in administrative and public law including as partner at DLA Piper.



Ms Louise Pollard, Ordinary member, EPHEA, is Manager of Aspire UWA, The University of Western Australia's nationally recognised widening participation program that works with 63 schools in Perth and regional Western Australia to raise aspirations for higher education.

ACRONYM LIST

AARE	Australian Association for Research in Education
ACE	American Council on Education
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACPET	Australian Council for Private Education and Training
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ADCET	Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training
AM	Member of the Order of Australia
ANUP	Australian National University Planners
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CEEHE	Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education
CERIPH	Collaboration for Evidence, Research and Impact in Public Health
CRC	Cooperative Research Centre
CSU	Cleveland State University
EAN	European Access Network
ECU	Edith Cowan University
EPHEA	Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia
FACE	Forum for Access and Continuing Education
FOCUS West	Focus On College and University Study, West of Scotland
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
FTSE	Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences
GAPS	Global Access to Post-secondary Education
HEAT	Higher Education Access Tracker
HEPPP	Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme
HERDSA	Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia
HILDA	Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia
JCIPP	John Curtin Institute of Public Policy
LEAP	Learn, Experience, Access Professions
LSES	Low Socio-Economic Status
MUST	Masters of Urban Secondary Teaching
NAEEA	National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NCSEHE	National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NPP	National Priorities Pool
NSW	New South Wales
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PASS	Peer Assisted Study Sessions
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PTCWA	Professional Teaching Council of Western Australia

QUT	Queensland University of Technology
R&D	Research and Development
RMIT	RMIT University
RREAC	Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council
SA1	Statistical Area Level 1
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SIG	Special Interest Group
SPERA	Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia
STARS	Students Transitions Achievement Retention & Success
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
STEMM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine
TED	Technology, Entertainment, Design
UAB	University of Alabama at Birmingham
UK	United Kingdom
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
US	United States
UWA	The University of Western Australia
WA	Western Australia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND IMAGES

Acknowledgements

This Annual Report could not be completed without the efforts of a dedicated team of people and the support of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training and Curtin University.

Sincere thanks go to Mrs Louisa Bowman, the Centre's Media and Communications Officer, for coordinating this publication, and to Mr Milo Radunski for graphic design.

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Page 49 – Photo of David Fintan by Louisa Bowman

Page 49 – Photo of Louise Pollard courtesy of Louise Pollard

About Curtin

Curtin University is widely recognised for practical research that is firmly focused on solving real-world problems. Underpinning Curtin's research endeavours are strong partnerships with industry, business and government, which result in outcomes that greatly benefit the broader community locally, nationally and globally. Curtin has been ranked in the top 2 per cent of universities worldwide in the Academic Ranking of World Universities 2015, improving more than 150 places in the past two years. Our globally relevant research has been a major driver for this improvement.

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National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education Curtin University

Building 100
Kent Street Bentley WA 6102
GPO Box U1987 Perth WA 6845

Tel: +61 8 9266 1573
Email: ncsehe@curtin.edu.au

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