



QUEENSLAND
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INSTITUTE

A BETTER QUEENSLAND

BETTER IDEAS

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN QUEENSLAND

Better Ideas

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION & TRAINING IN QUEENSLAND

THURSDAY 6 AUGUST

7.30am – 9.00am

Customs House, 399 Queen St, Brisbane

MODERATOR:

Professor Ian Frazer AC

Ambassador and Chair

Translational Research Institute Foundation

PANELISTS:

Nik Babovic

Executive Director

Enterprise Operations, TAFE Queensland

Myra Geddes

General Manager

Social Impact, Goodstart Early Learning

Professor Geraldine Mackenzie

Vice-Chancellor

University of Southern Queensland

Professor Nic Smith

Provost

Queensland University of Technology

Professor Deborah Terry AO

Vice-Chancellor and President

The University of Queensland

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Business School

KEY COMMENTS FROM

Panelists



MODERATOR:

Professor Ian Frazer AC

Ambassador and Chair

Translational Research Institute Foundation

Welcome and introduction of panelists and invitation to share their headline views on advancing the future of Queensland's education and training.



Nik Babovic

Executive Director

Enterprise Operations, TAFE Queensland

- + TAFE Queensland is the State's largest vocational training provider and is enabling its 120,000 students to achieve their career aspirations from across 50 locations.
- + From the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown, TAFE Queensland has seen 90% of its staff move to remote working and 80% of its programs move online. Additionally, internal operations such as customer service agents and payroll have also moved to remote working, resulting in a total of 4,000 staff working online and remotely. This has seen the organisation implement cyber security training and wellbeing surveys and apps for their staff and students.
- + Demand for micro credentials has increased as people seek to remain employable given the current economic instability.
- + International students have been provided with assistance such as payment plans and also moving courses to online.
- + The shift towards online education will create a challenge around maintaining low attrition and high completion rate of programs for students. Additionally, savings may be seen in physical infrastructure requirements on campuses.



Myra Geddes

General Manager

Social Impact, Goodstart Early Learning

- + Goodstart Early Learning is Australia's largest not for profit early learning care provider, currently catering for 60,000 children every day. Early learning delivers a triple return on investment, proving the long-term benefit of investing in human capital through early learning.
- + For the first time ever, COVID-19 has shown just how important early childhood education and care is not only to our economy but our society. Also the first time ever the Prime Minister, Chief Medical Officers and Premiers have recognised the importance of child care workers as essential workers.

- + Teachers, educators and centre-leaders have really seen the pressure and stress for families that COVID-19 has brought to our society and across the social gradient, highlighting the opportunity to assist parents who are essential workers across the economy by providing high-quality childcare when needed. This enables families to take shifts when needed without having to sacrifice quality early education for their children.
- + Need to prioritise access to high quality early learning in the future.
- + Investment in children's education now will enable them to solve complex problems with creative solutions when they inevitably need to pay for today's stimulus measures as leaders in the future.
- + We need to not just survive but thrive past COVID-19.
- + Neuroscience tells us that the foundation of skills of creativity and adaptability are laid before the age of five.
- + In just 15 years time the children of today will still be paying for the stimulus measures that have arisen out of COVID-19.
- + Evidence-based approaches in the education sector must be effectively translated into practise; this translation of research into the hands of practitioners is an opportunity and area for growth moving forward.



Professor Geraldine Mackenzie

Vice-Chancellor
University of Southern Queensland

- + End-to-end education is the best way to invest in the future and advance education and training. This is achieved through collaboration and innovation. University of Southern Queensland (USQ) has always focused on addressing business, industry and community need to fully utilise the high-quality education for the benefit of the wider economy.
- + Education is essential to Queensland's future and plays a significant role in attracting talent to the region.
- + Education can advance the State's economy by creating value, particularly in research as this is a high quality area for Australia which we need to remain competitive in.
- + USQ has offered five free programs out of 30-40 micro credential/short courses, to which 20 new certificates have been added over the COVID-19 period. This highlights how COVID-19 has changed education and the direction towards which the sector may shift in the future.
- + While most students easily transitioned towards online learning, it is important to assist some cohorts, such as international students and school-leavers, in this move. However, some study areas such as aviation will remain on-campus and are difficult to move online.
- + Specialising in some areas of education may be required to remain competitive and continue to provide students with valuable skills to become job ready. In order to understand how best to serve students, stakeholder engagement with industry and communities will become increasingly important.



Professor Nic Smith

Provost
Queensland University of Technology

- + We have seen a major shift towards technology-driven workplaces and globalisation, changing the demand for the education sector. As knowledge becomes decentralised, universities and similar institutions must focus on networking and skills such as entrepreneurship and communication which will be needed to navigate the complexity stemming from an increased use of technology within industry. It is becoming increasingly important to connect education to the real World.
- + Online learning is not new. Necessity is the mother of invention and COVID-19 has therefore created the conditions necessary to advance the transition to online-based learning. Despite this, education will never be 100% digital, so universities must combine economies-of-scale where possible to continue providing a high-quality student experience whether for an online or a blended approach.



Professor Deborah Terry AO

Vice-Chancellor and President
The University of Queensland

- + COVID-19 has accelerated changes which are transforming the economy and society, creating new opportunities for industry and for the State Government, particularly for the Advance Queensland initiative, and progressing towards a knowledge-based economy.
- + The education sector will play a central role in building new ideas, skills and jobs to power the economic and social recovery into the future. Investing in the next generation's critical thinking will result in the innovation required for achieving economic growth in Queensland.
- + Additionally, working across private and public sectors will also drive jobs and growth. Soft skills such as entrepreneurship, communication and Information Technology will remain important for the sector.
- + Whilst universities' quick shift towards online or blended learning over the COVID-19 period has been commendable, there is now opportunity to improve on-campus experiences as well.

Panel Discussion

Q. The Education and Training sector is facing many challenges currently. What are your top 3 and what new opportunities will replace revenue declines in areas that may not return?

- + Any policy changes over this period pertaining to the sector must be comprehensively analysed to ensure benefits are still delivered without inadvertent adverse impacts. This is pertinent when addressing the challenge of lost international students and replacing this lost revenue moving into the future.
- + Specialising in some areas of education may be required to remain competitive and continue to provide students with valuable skills to become job ready. In order to understand how best to serve students, stakeholder engagement with industry and communities will become increasingly important.
- + Universities are robust and resilient and must be able to pivot in the medium to long term to remain relevant for changing industries. They may need to adapt to serve different niches within industry and different communities rather than taking a “one size fits all” approach. This will serve as a point of differentiation from other institutions in the Asia-Pacific region.
- + This is a time to realign, refocus and re-commit to universities’ purpose to provide high-quality offerings to students, communities and other stakeholders, and maintain strong, resilient business models.
- + Counter-cyclical demand for education will challenge educational institutions to consider the ongoing sustainability of their business models, taking advantage of this shift in the short-medium term.
- + Graduates are looking to reskill/upskill/cross-skill in order to remain competitive in the job market and this must continue to be facilitated throughout this challenging period.
- + Australia’s sovereign research capability is internationally renowned; the reliance on international students to fund this research has put this at risk as institutions now need to consider different sources of funding to rely on in order to remain internationally competitive. This must be supported by institutions alongside industry and government.

Q. Will online learning now become mainstream and how do you deliver a competitive learning experience in this arena? Will it ultimately put downward pressure on the cost/value proposition of different educational opportunities with a reduction in labour costs associated with face to face learning?

- + The shift towards online education and training will accelerate the trend towards digitisation and require professional development and training for staff to make the most of technology. This also provides an opportunity to review the delivery of programs to ensure relevance moving forward. For those courses which cannot be fully shifted online, a blended solution will be required.
- + Of the total USQ student population, two thirds are already online, two thirds are mature age and two thirds study part-time. This suggests that small, online programs related to upskilling may be popular and become the new norm. Interactive technologies must be utilised to continue providing a high-quality education to service demand for “education in small chunks”.
- + The shift towards online education will create a challenge around maintaining low attrition and high completion rate of programs for students.

Audience Questions.

Q. We are seeing massive changes in delivery and assessing education. How do we establish an evidence-base in the education sector to support this?

- + Evidence-based approaches in the education sector exist and must be effectively translated into practise; this translation of research into the hands of practitioners is an opportunity and area for growth moving forward.
 - + This is pertinent in early education and a strong method to ensure high-quality education outcomes are achieved and contribute to strong return on investment for the sector.
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Q. How can we maintain equitable access to education and training during these times?

- + Providing technology where needed to students and staff is required to avoid the “digital divide” between the digitally skilled and unskilled. This must be continually canvassed in the sector but also the wider community.
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Q. How can we enable networking for graduates moving into employment?

- + Innovation is needed in partnership with industry to maintain options for both students and potential employers or work experience providers. Graduate opportunities are an important outcome for the education sector and therefore this must remain a focus even in a digital environment
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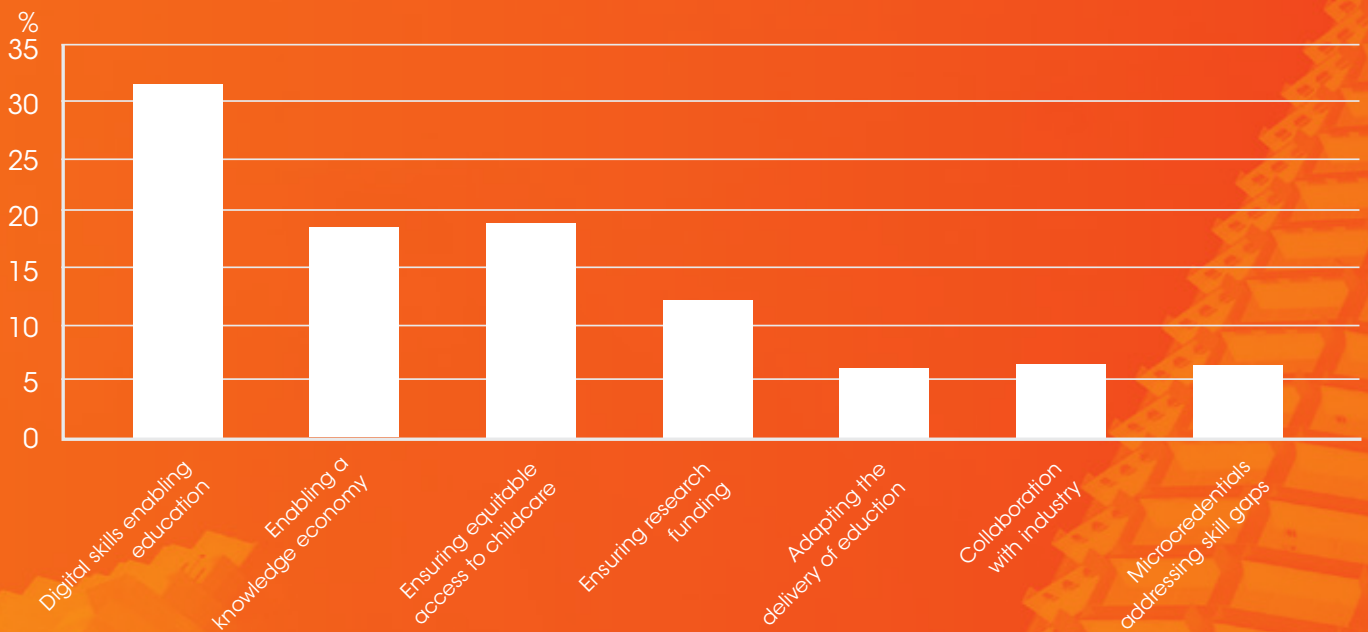
Q. How can we bring international students back after the pandemic? What will happen if this does not happen soon?

- + Pilot programs for the return of international students are currently being designed with the intention of outlining quarantine arrangements and other requirements should these students be able to return to Australian campuses either over summer semester this year or the first semester of next year. This will assist with the challenge around budget planning currently faced under current uncertainty.
- + We need to ensure Australian institutions remain internationally competitive moving forward through the pandemic.

SUMMARY OF

Attendee Comments

TOP IDEAS/INITIATIVES



SUMMARY OF

Ideas

- + We must take full advantage of the acceleration towards online learning whilst ensuring all students and educators have the appropriate skills required to benefit from this delivery method. Additionally, the use of digital platforms should maintain if not increase the quality of education provided, creating opportunity to improve blended learning where relevant.
- + It is critical that the global competitiveness of our research be maintained, universities' business models must prioritise providing research with the appropriate funding as adjust their budgets despite a drop in international students.
- + Enabling students to remain competitive in the job market with microcredentials, upskilling or cross-skilling is a strength of the sector and may address niches in the market which differentiate Queensland institutions from its competitors in the wider region.



It is critical that the global competitiveness of our research be maintained.

QFI Members



REGIONAL AFFILIATES





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