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The points listed on the slides that follow were voiced by NAEEA members and their associates during an interactive session on Day 2 of the 2018 NAEEA Symposium held at the University of Newcastle, 27-28 September.
The enabling sector and the role of NAEEA

• As a sector proving our case is becoming more important on all scales so we need to clearly articulate what we are about – especially through research and unifying the sector with strong relationships and leadership.

• We need a national and institutional mapping of enabling programs.

• For the purpose of clarity, we need to extend discussions on where enabling sits in order to influence government policy and policy in schools and universities.

• **Defining the role of NAEEA is essential.** The importance of strategic communication in the enabling sector – NAEEA needs an orchestrated communication strategy as do individual institutions. Each institution needs to be proactive in supporting NAEEA.

• **We need a set of social justice principles embedded in higher education policy.**

• It is critical to keep enabling tuition fee free.

• We need to **lobby for uncapping enabling places.** Every university should have the opportunity to provide enabling programs rather than institutional competition for limited places.

• We need to **ensure that university leaders are informed, proactive** and prepared to deal with policymaker challenges to enabling.
The importance of the enabling message

• We need to collaborate on micro and macro levels to advocate for our programs and gather information and evidence that demonstrate impact – increased visibility of the enabling sector and program contributions to the education system.

• We need to include students in advocacy to communities and politicians, and in defining what’s important.

• We should recognise the importance of telling the enabling story. And the importance of internal/institutional dialogue, especially for those who don’t understand what we do...e.g., faculties etc.

• Spokespeople are needed to promote enabling programs within communities – i.e., promoting the value of word-of-mouth from trusted influencers.

• All school students and adults should know about enabling as an option.

• We need to value students’ individual outcomes. We also need to value other pathways of education and not one way over another.

• We should ask ourselves, how do we cater to students in schools with no ATAR pathway and students who are not identified as on a pathway to higher education?
The importance of research and evaluation

- We need to develop a framework for measuring our successes as a sector and developing clear arguments to put to decisionmakers – emphasising the cost benefit of enabling.

- We should focus on successes in terms of positive attrition – there are difficulties in measuring attrition but we should attempt to capture this. There are different ways of defining success.

- We should consider developing an EQF – Enabling Quality Framework – that can include benchmarking etc., but we need to be aware of where/how we sit in relation to AQF. If we are pushed into AQF we need to be ready.

- There is value in benchmarking, but also in maintaining the diversity of programs across Australia. Benchmarking can address concerns about consistency of quality across the sector.

- Research infrastructure is critical for the enabling sector.
Enabling educators matter too

• Focusing on students is important but we also need to take care of staff e.g., staff development, mentoring, health and wellbeing.

• We need to promote what enabling does and keep reminding university leaders about the value of what we do and the conditions required to do it.

• We need to determine how best to support enabling staff in terms of career development and promotion.

• Research infrastructure is critical for enabling educators.

• Relate research back to professional development to help current teachers or new enabling educators to understand enabling philosophy for exchange of learning.

• As members of the enabling sector we are not in competition – we need to share more: share how we operate, evidence of student outcomes, workload implications, organisational structure, research resources, and so on.