

NAEEA SYMPOSIUM 2018



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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.

Facilitated Interactive Session: Making Sense of What Matters to Enabling Staff and Students



National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia



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.**

