

Student Equity Forum

27 March 2023

Acknowledgement of Country



Agenda

- Keynote lecture
- Analysis of sector data
- Panel Q&A session
- Refreshments



Keynote lecture

Associate Professor Nadine Zacharias

Director, Student Engagement

Swinburne University of Technology



THE BEST CHANCE FOR ALL

Australia's future depends on all its people, whoever and wherever they are, being enabled to successfully engage in beneficial lifelong learning.

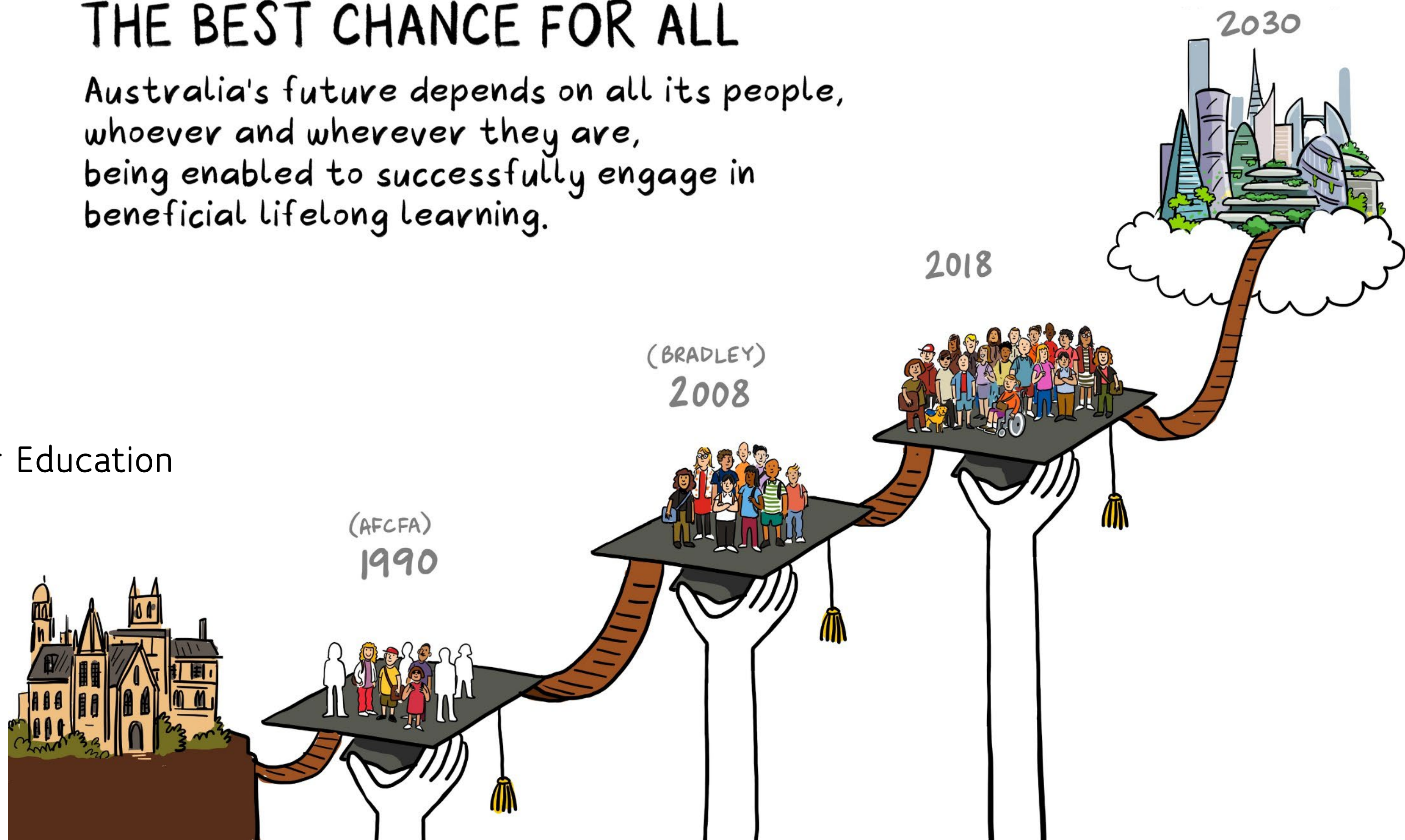
Improving Equity in Higher Education

What are the insights from the Australian success story and how do we keep it alive?

Dr Nadine Zacharias

Director, Equity by Design

March 2023



A WICKED PROBLEM

Index/Score	Level of disadvantage [^]		Population size 2016 ^{^^}		Interpretability	
	HE completion rate	Distance to singular disadvantage (percentage points)	n	%	Specific combinations of disadvantage factors covered	Interpretation of proposed cumulative disadvantage category
0	71.9%	N/A	150,364	60.97%	No disadvantage factor	
1	65.5%	N/A	73,122	29.65%	Low SES only Indigenous status only Regional only Disability only	N/A
2	59.8%	-5.6 ***	20,838	8.45%	Low SES & Regional only Low SES & Indigenous status only Regional & Disability only Low SES & Disability only Indigenous status & Regional only Indigenous status & Disability only	Two disadvantage factors
3	47.8%	-17.7 ***	2,178	0.88%	Low SES, Indigenous status & Regional only Low SES, Regional & Disability only Low SES, Indigenous status & Disability only Indigenous status, Regional & Disability only	Three or more disadvantage factors
4	34.8%	-30.7 ***	110	0.04%	Low SES, Indigenous status, Regional & Disability	

*** p<0.001

[^] from modelling 8-year completion rates for the 2011 commencing Bachelor cohort (also see right panel in Figure 14).

^{^^} based on commencing Bachelor students in 2016 (also see Table 24).

Improving access to and success in higher education is a wicked problem.

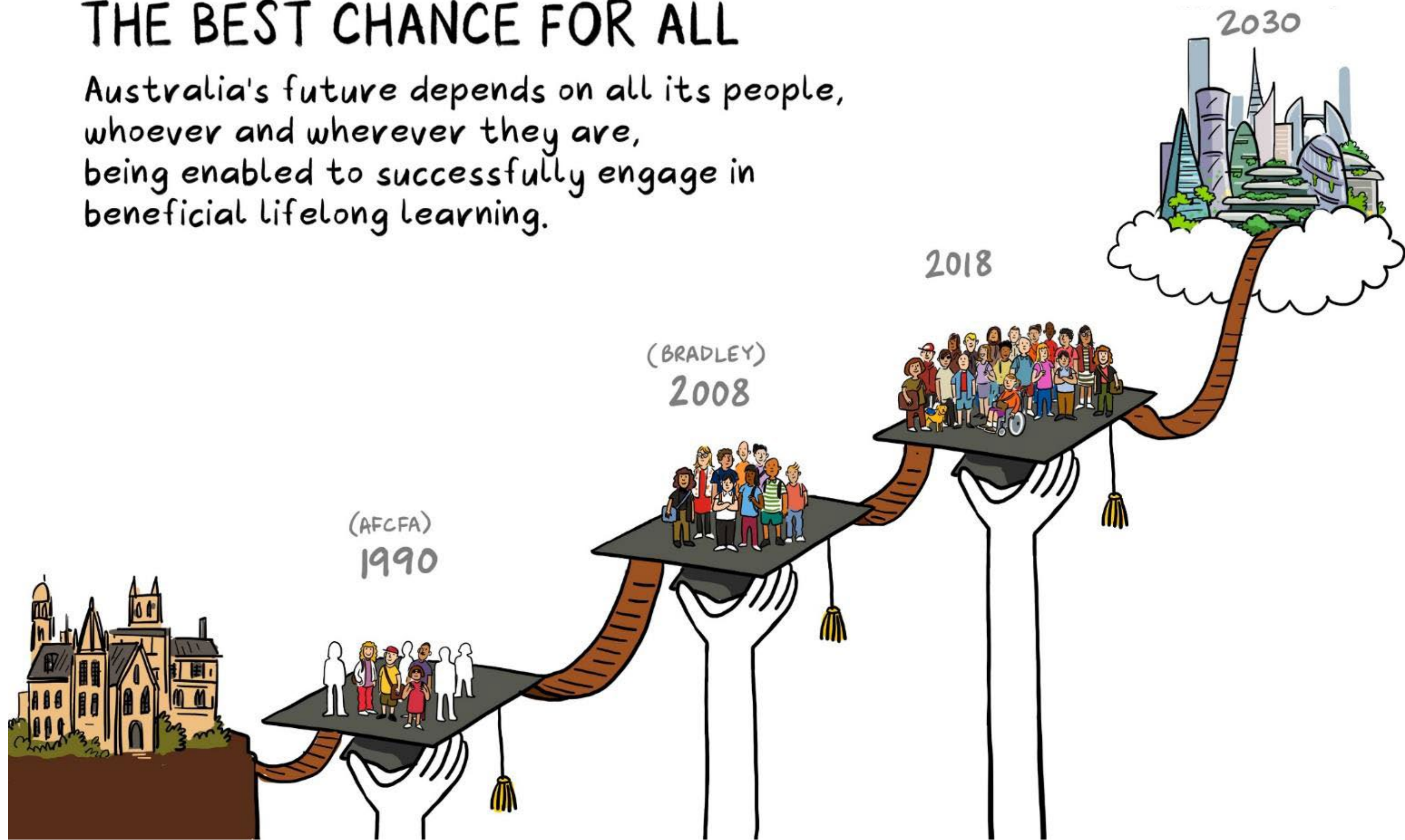
The factors which lead to the under-representation of equity groups are multilevel (macro, meso, micro), intersectional (with a compounding influence) and accrue across a person's life course.

This means that there are no simple solutions and multiple actors need to work together to achieve change.

Tomaszewski, W., Kubler, M., Perales, F., Clague, D., Xiang, N., and Johnstone, M. (2020). Investigating the effects of cumulative factors of disadvantage: Final report. Brisbane, Australia: Institute for Social Science Research.

THE BEST CHANCE FOR ALL

Australia's future depends on all its people, whoever and wherever they are, being enabled to successfully engage in beneficial lifelong learning.



Zacharias, N. & Brett, M. (2019) The Best Chance for All: Student Equity 2030 - A long-term strategic vision for student equity in higher education. Perth: NCSEHE.

THE BEST CHANCE FOR ALL

“ Australia’s future depends on all its people, whoever and wherever they are, being enabled to successfully engage in beneficial lifelong learning.

Contributing to:

A fair, democratic, prosperous, and enterprising nation; reconciliation with Indigenous Australia; cultural, civic and intellectual life.

Achieved by:

An inclusively designed system with multiple entry and exit points; proactive removal of barriers to participation; and tailored support where needed.

Accountable through:

An integrated approach to measuring success at institutional and national levels to align performance with policy objectives.

POLICY CONTEXT

Australian Student Equity Policy Framework

- Long history of policy commitment to equitable participation in HE: A Fair Chance for All (1990)
- Equity is measured as enrolment share of the undergraduate domestic student cohort
- 6 designated equity groups
- 30+ years of time series data
- 2010 higher education reforms:
 - 40/20 attainment targets
 - Demand driven funding system
 - Plus Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program (HEPPP)
- Australia is unique globally in having made a substantial (>\$1.5bn) and long-term (13 years and counting) investment into equitable participation of students who belong to nationally recognised equity groups, esp. students from low SES backgrounds.

POLICY CONTEXT CONT'D

Australian Student Equity Policy Framework

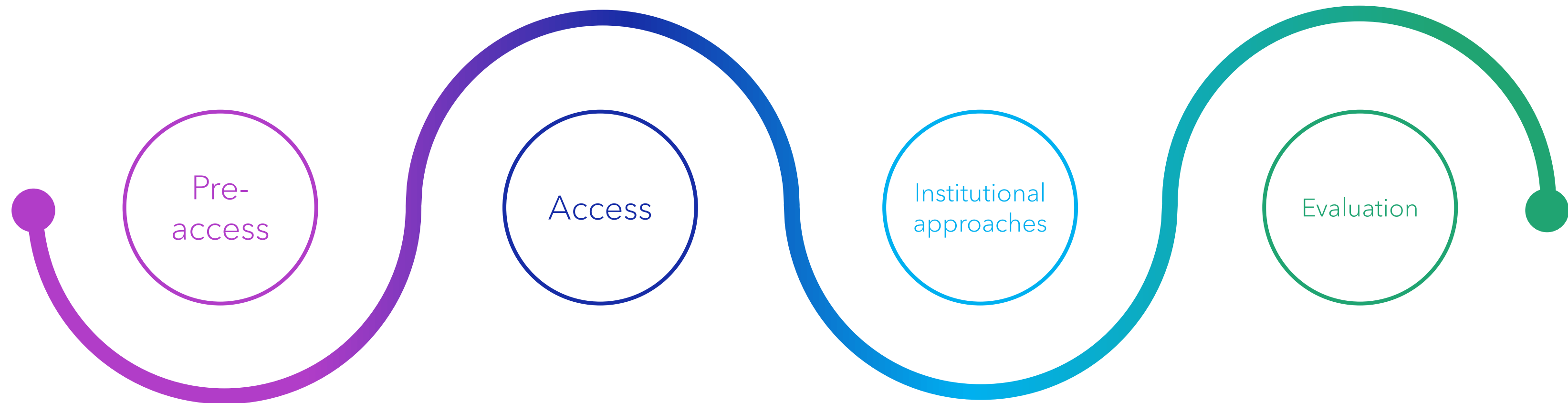
2017

- Second unsuccessful attempt at major policy reform: desire to introduce performance measures and performance-based funding with a view to curb attrition rates and the overall cost of the HE system
- Funding freeze through budget process: re-caps the system
- External evaluation of the contributions of HEPPP: insufficient evidence to demonstrate direct impact on low SES participation rate (ACIL Allen, 2017)
- Review of equity groups (ISSR, 2017)

2020: Job-Ready Graduates Bill

- New Indigenous, Regional and Low SES Attainment Fund (IRLSAF) as part of the Job-Ready Graduates Package from 2021 and in response to the Napthine Review.
- Focus: Indigenous students, students from low SES and regional backgrounds.
- Intent: realign existing funding by combining the HEPPP, regional loading and enabling loading. More flexibility for universities to use their funding to best serve the needs of their local communities.
- Partnerships: A new Regional Partnerships Project Pool will provide \$7.1 million over four years to support outreach activities that increase the aspiration of school students in regional Australia to attend university.
- 16% target for students from low SES backgrounds for 2021/22
- 2% for Indigenous students, none for R&R

IMPROVING EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION



OUTREACH

Widening Regional and Remote Participation: Interrogating the impact of outreach programs across Queensland (2017/18)

SCHOLARSHIPS

Moving beyond "acts of faith": effective scholarships for equity students (2015)

DOING HEPPP

The Australian student equity program and institutional change: Paradigm shift or business as usual? (2016)

WHAT WORKS?

Swinburne's HEPPP Evaluation Framework (2021)

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS



OUTREACH

Zacharias, N., Mitchell, G., Raciti, M., Koshy, P., Li, I., Costello, D. & Trinidad, S. (2018). Widening Regional and Remote Participation: Interrogating the impact of outreach programs across Queensland. Perth: National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE).

SCHOLARSHIPS

Zacharias, N., Kelly, M., Cairnduff, A., Cherednichenko, B., Ryan, J., George, K., Mandre-Jackson, S., Gasparini, L. & Sun, D. (2016). Moving Beyond 'Acts of Faith': Effective Scholarships for Equity Students. Perth: NCSEHE.

DOING HEPPP

Zacharias, N. (2017). The Australian student equity program and institutional change: Paradigm shift or business as usual? Perth: NCSEHE.

WHAT WORKS?

Zacharias, N., Kostanski, L., Heckenberg, S., Burova, S., Waters, J., Brownfield, N., Lowe, M., Pateraki, S., Sterland, C. (2021). Swinburne's HEPPP Evaluation Framework: Understanding Equity Student Experiences to Enhance Engagement and Success - Final report.

UNIVERSITY AS A DESIRABLE AND ACHIEVABLE OPTION?



OUTREACH

Widening Regional and Remote Participation: Interrogating the impact of outreach programs across Queensland

SCHOLARSHIPS

Moving beyond "acts of faith": effective scholarships for equity students

DOING HEPPP

The Australian student equity program and institutional change: Paradigm shift or business as usual?

WHAT WORKS?

Swinburne's HEPPP Evaluation Framework

What we knew when we started

- To access higher education, students need to jump 5 hurdles: availability, accessibility, achievement and aspiration (Anderson & Vervoorn, 1983) and affordability
- Sustained investment in widening participation initiatives in Australia
- But: little published evidence for a link between WP programs and subsequent university application and enrolment behaviour through longitudinal evaluations (Bennett et al., 2015; ACIL Allen, 2017)
- Two Australian studies have attempted to demonstrate correlation (KPMG, 2015; Skene et al., 2016)
- Aimhigher evaluation (Passy & Morris, 2010): through which processes are WP initiatives impacting on student outcomes?

Widening Tertiary Participation in Queensland

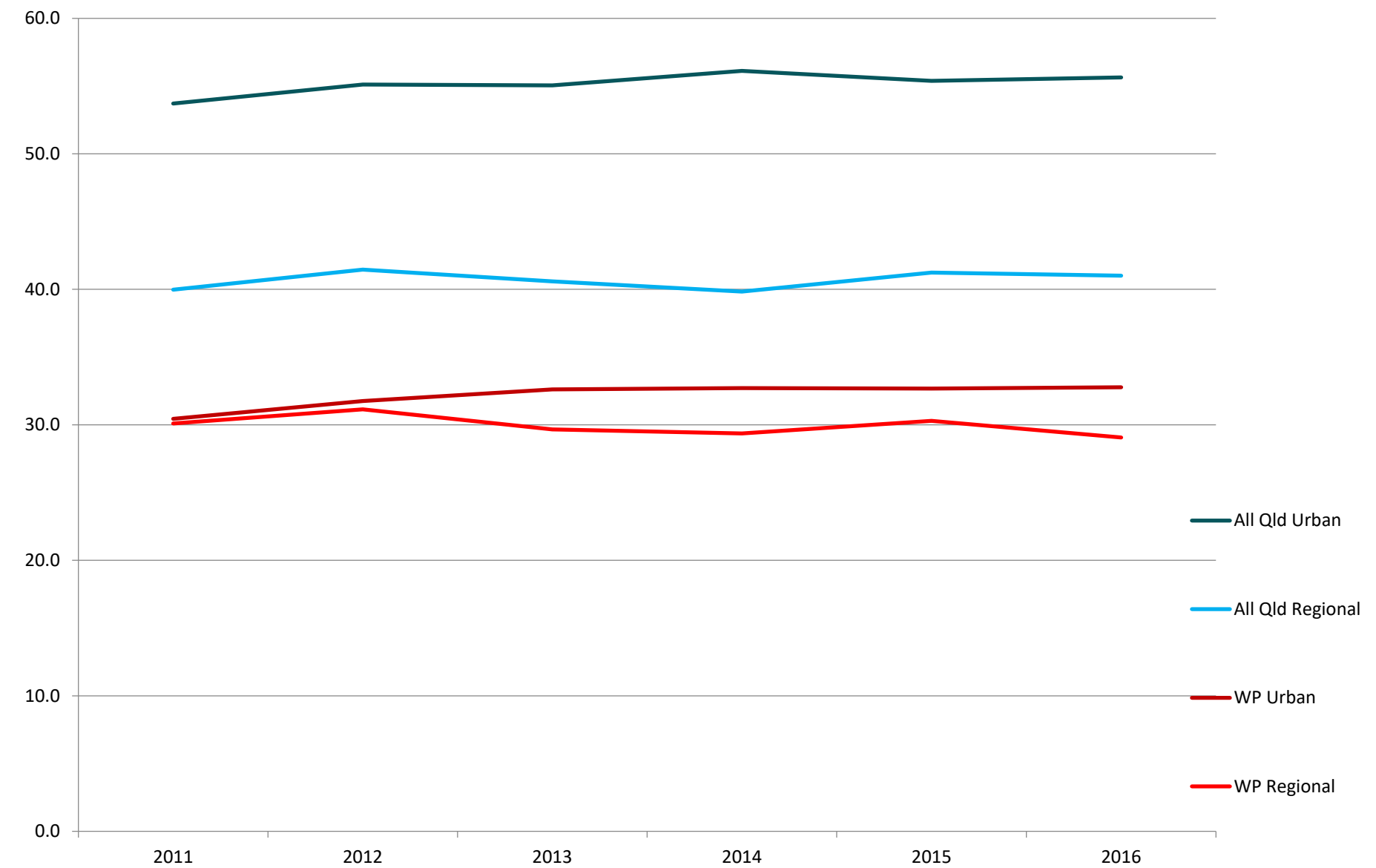
- Cluster approach: each university responsible for school outreach in designated region (Competitive HEPPP grants: \$21.2m over 3 years)
- State wide monitoring of school engagement and university applications through central project infrastructure

UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS IN QLD OVER TIME

Year 12 QTAC application rate for eight Queensland universities
(Year 12 applications / Year 12 completers as a percentage), 2011-2016

Queensland demographics (2016)

- 32% of 15-64 year population reside in low SES postcodes
- 37% of population in ASGS regional locations (29% nationally)
- 4% of population identify as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage (2.8% nationally)
- Lowest higher education participation rate in Australia (26.4% vs 37.1% nationally)



FINDINGS



OUTREACH

Widening Regional and Remote Participation: Interrogating the impact of outreach programs across Queensland

SCHOLARSHIPS

Moving beyond “acts of faith”: effective scholarships for equity students

DOING HEPPP

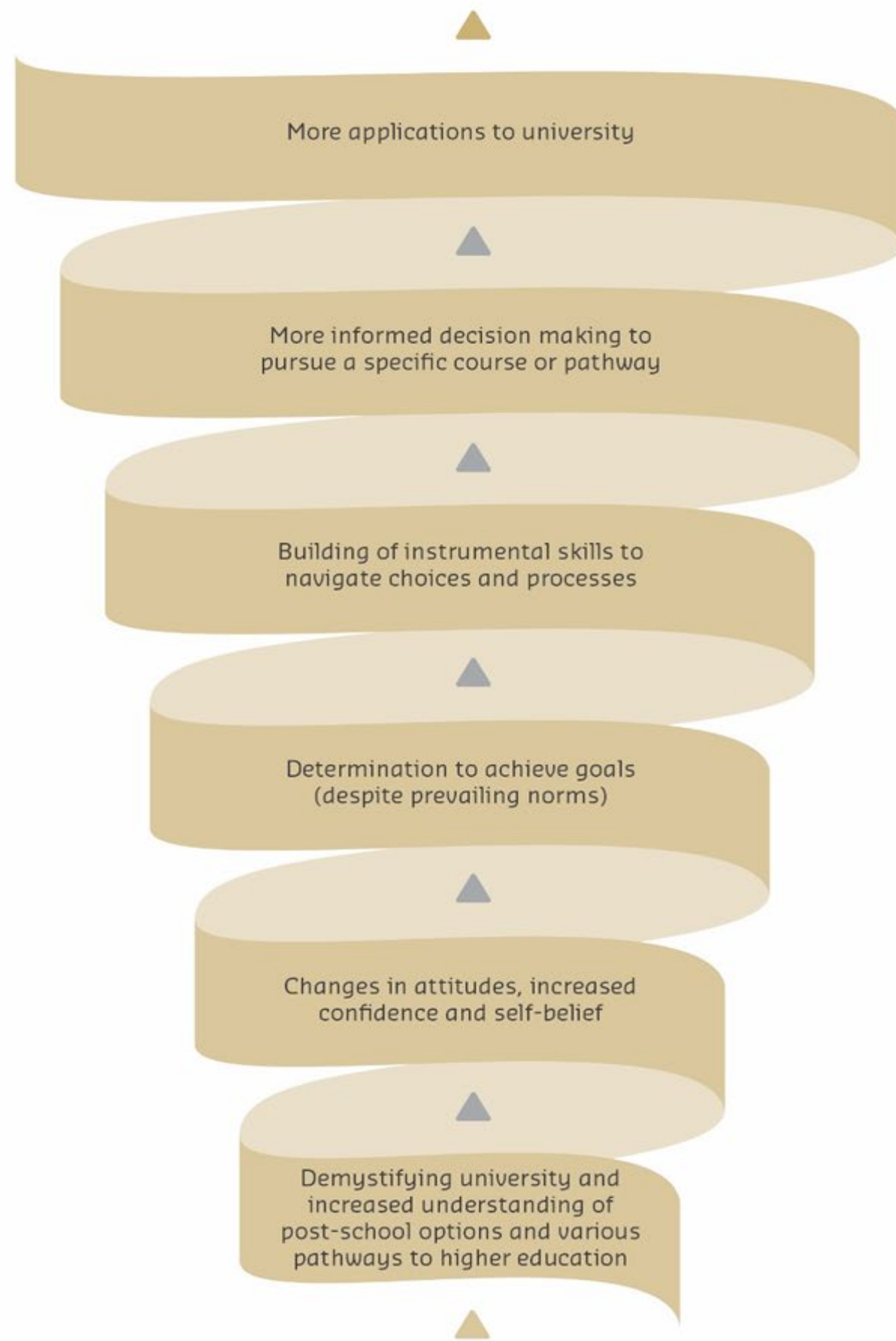
The Australian student equity program and institutional change: Paradigm shift or business as usual?

WHAT WORKS?

Swinburne’s HEPPP Evaluation Framework

- Mixed-methods and longitudinal research design
- Evidence to support the contention that high engagement widening participation programs had a positive impact on application rates, once control variables for regional and socioeconomic disadvantage and academic pathway were included.
- Degree of engagement mattered in students’ decision making about post-school options
- High level of engagement is more difficult to achieve in regions:
 - Differences in duration, depth and intensity of programs
 - Change of funding model posed challenges to cluster approach
 - Logistics, resourcing and institutional priorities mitigated against engagement with more remote schools
 - Outcomes: mostly ad hoc vs. comprehensive and integrated WP programs in regional vs. urban locations
- Ambition of ‘delivering similar things in different places’ was not fully realised

Over time, there is an observable shift in school culture and prevailing norms towards tertiary participation



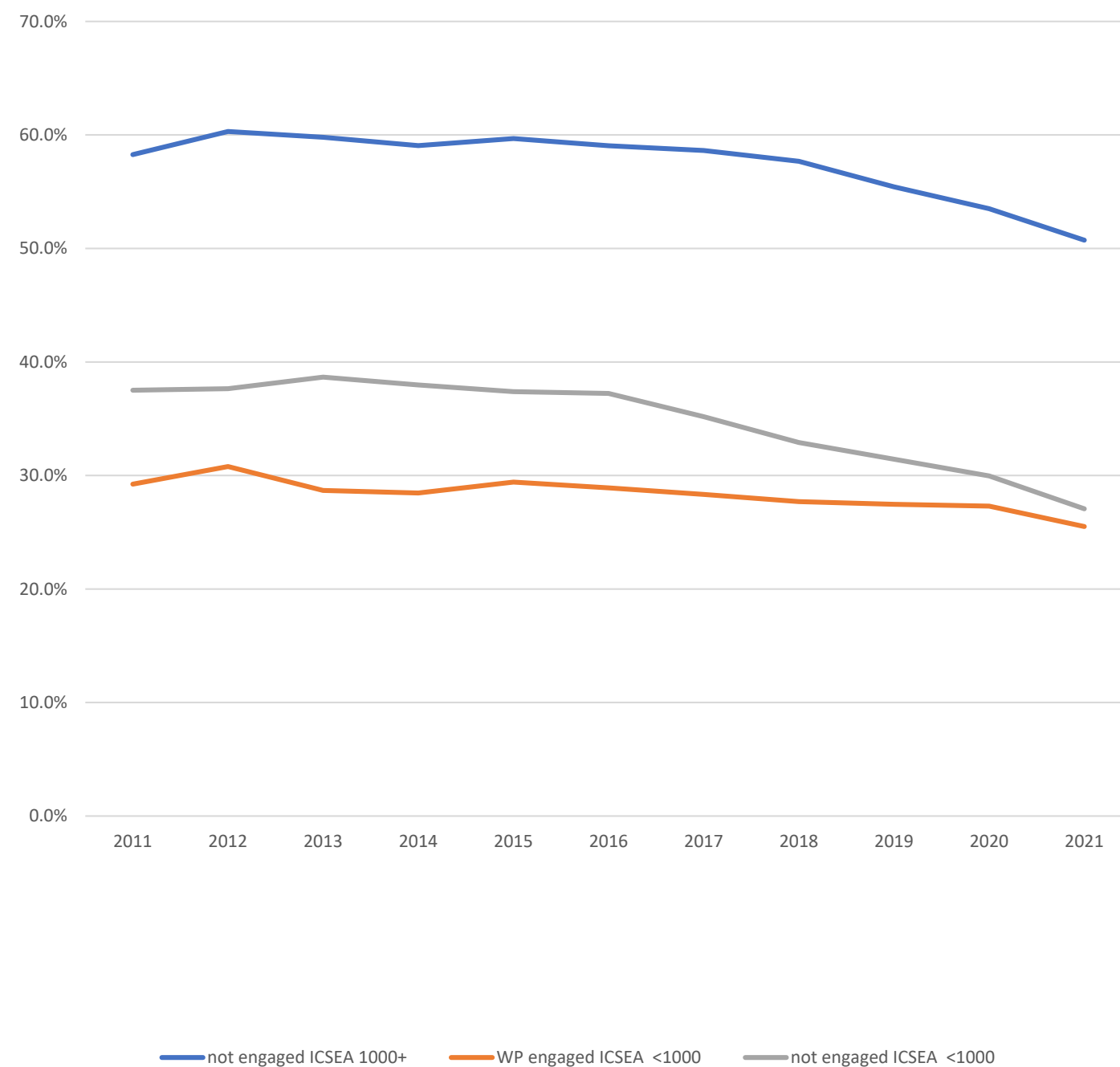
Exposure to tertiary options and university life through WP activities, especially on-campus visits and authentic information

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

- Statistically significant relationship between widening participation programs and application rates to university
- Demonstrated the value of centralised longitudinal data collection for evaluation purposes
- Virtuous cycle of sustained widening participation activity in highly engaged schools
- Analytical framework considering institutional, situational and dispositional factors to evaluate the influence of WP programs on student's decision making in urban vs regional locations

SHIFTING THE DIAL IN THE PRE-ACCESS PHASE

Year 12 QTAC application rate from regional/remote students for eight Queensland universities
(Year 12 applications / Year 12 completers as a percentage), 2011-2021



1. Develop a sustained, high engagement strategy for regional and remote communities which does not solely rely on university funding and delivery
2. Strategy complemented by Indigenous specific engagement and parent engagement
3. Improve system-wide data collection and monitoring of widening participation engagement
4. Return to demand-driven funding and improve the provision of higher education in regional and remote locations

THE STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES THAT PREVENT PROGRESS

1. The digital divide and availability of high-speed internet
2. A school system in which disadvantaged students are years behind their advantaged counterparts upon graduation
3. COVID impacted disproportionately on already disadvantaged students, esp. young ones in locked down states.

EQUITY SCHOLARSHIPS AS “ACTS OF FAITH”?



OUTREACH

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DOING HEPPP

The Australian student equity program and institutional change: Paradigm shift or business as usual?

WHAT WORKS?

Swinburne’s HEPPP Evaluation Framework

Context

- Proposed HE reform: fee deregulation, ‘Commonwealth Scholarships Program’, Start-up scholarship status change (from grant to loan)

What we knew when we started

- Financial stress is a well-established problem in Australian higher education (Bexley et al., 2013)
- 2014 NCSEHE study of equity scholarships practice (Whiteford & Trinidad, 2015):
 - Little evidence of what constitutes good practice in equity scholarships
 - Notable lack of systematic scholarly evaluation of the impact of equity scholarships on students’ access, retention and success outcomes
- Lack of comparative data on influence of scholarships on success and retention

FINDINGS



OUTREACH

Widening Regional and Remote Participation: Interrogating the impact of outreach programs across Queensland

SCHOLARSHIPS

Moving beyond "acts of faith": effective scholarships for equity students

DOING HEPPP

The Australian student equity program and institutional change: Paradigm shift or business as usual?

WHAT WORKS?

Swinburne's HEPPP Evaluation Framework

- Mixed methods using institutional case studies
- Having an equity scholarship was positively correlated with equity student retention and was reported to reduce stress levels
- Mixed findings with regard to success rates
- The influence of equity scholarships seems to be more related to recipient characteristics than scholarship type
- Male equity scholarship holders had higher retention rates and female equity scholarship holders had higher success rates

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY



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Swinburne's HEPPP Evaluation Framework

- Scholarships assist students in financial need enough to stay at university but can only do so much to overcome the effects of complex personal lives; they are no panacea
- Only a tiny proportion of the eligible student cohort, about 3%, received a scholarship
- The current measure of socioeconomic status is limited in assessing need and success as it relates to scholarships
- First published cross-institutional study of equity scholarships globally

SHIFTING THE DIAL ON AFFORDABILITY



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WHAT WORKS?

Swinburne's HEPPP Evaluation Framework

1. Evaluate the natural experiment that was the COVID supplement on Centrelink benefits and its impact on student outcomes
2. The Commonwealth needs to provide consistent, predictable and appropriate levels of income support to all students through the Centrelink system, targeted through means-testing at those who demonstrate financial hardship, and offered as grants, not loans
3. Universities should design simple scholarship architectures with high volume products to generate effective student support, efficient processes, and meaningful data
4. For optimal outcomes, scholarships need to be embedded in comprehensive support systems: money + support
5. Allocation of equity scholarships needs to be based on a [nationally consistent] multi-factor assessment process which considers applicants' financial hardship and life circumstances
6. Universities should establish a better evidence base around the impact of equity scholarships for different student sub-cohorts, the achievement of strategic objectives, and unmet demand

HEPPP AS A ONCE-IN-A-GENERATION OPPORTUNITY?



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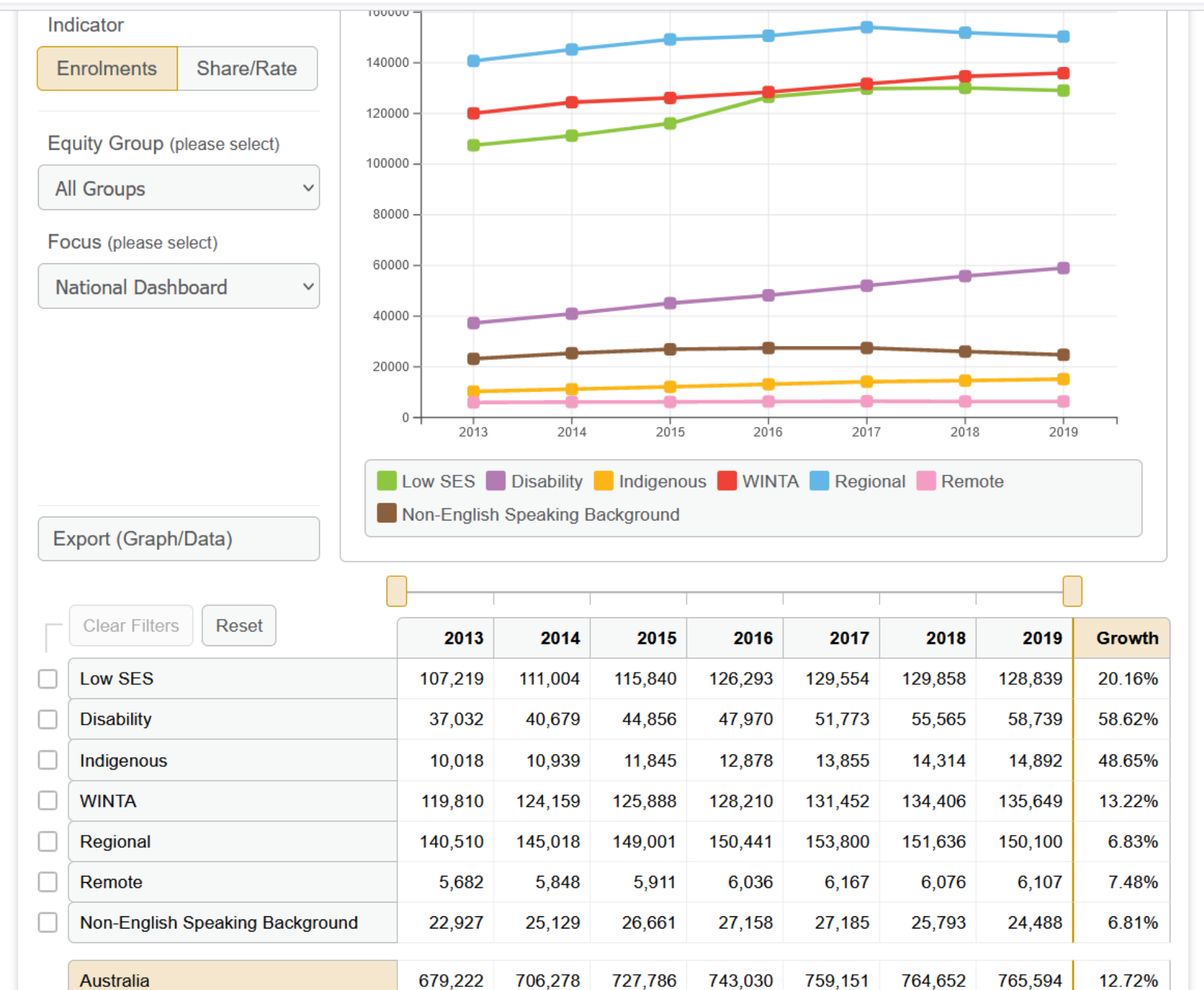
Context

- Fierce debate about sustainability of policy settings and the contributions of HEPPP

What I knew before I started

- Australian policy underpinned by dual goals of economic growth and social benefit (Bradley, 2008)
- Burke (2012): the 'neoliberal project of self-improvement through higher education' masks multiple and interrelated social and economic barriers
- Very notion of higher education as an enabler of a more just and productive society has been challenged (Marginson, 2015)
- Implications: universities tend to reproduce status quo, equity policy needs to surface socio-economic barriers to participation, equity practice needs to develop strategies to overcome them

FINDINGS



- Qualitative study using case studies
- HEPPP has provided an opportunity for universities to develop bespoke equity programs which respond to their institutional profile and strategic priorities
- Trend of stagnant participation by students from low SES backgrounds has been broken but outcomes at the institutional level were highly variable
- Impact difficult to establish empirically mainly due to the effects of the demand-driven funding system which was implemented at the same time
- But: strategic intent emerged as an important variable
- Volume of HEPPP funding mattered
- Transformational change in one case study university

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

Equity Initiatives Map of HEPPP program at XY University To be read in conjunction with the (year) HEPPP annual progress report to the Department of Education and Training							
STUDENT LIFE CYCLE	PRE-ACCESS: Outreach to Schools and Communities		ACCESS: Pathways and Admissions (Including Enabling Pathways)	PARTICIPATION: Transition, Engagement and Progression (Undergraduate)		ATTAINMENT AND TRANSITION OUT (Undergraduate)	
	Pre-Access		Access	Participation		Attainment	Transition Out
STAGE	Outreach to Schools and Communities		Pathways and Admission	Transition and Engagement	Engagement and Progression During Studies	Completion	Graduate Destinations
TARGET GROUPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infants and primary school students, teachers and parents Community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary and secondary school students, teachers and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary school students and leavers Mature age students VET students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commencing/first year students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing later year students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completing students Employer groups and professional associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduates
MAJOR AIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness of higher education pathways, opportunities and associated careers by supporting, developing and/or maintaining aspirations, expectations and attainment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for people to access and achieve at university, taking into account the degree of selectivity and distance to target communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement and belonging Academic literacies Competencies in discipline area/relevant knowledges developed through inclusive pedagogies 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employability Postgraduate study 	
EQUITY PERFORMANCE (year)	[PROPOSED: Application rate to tertiary institutions by students from partner schools]		Access rate % (low/medium/high)	Retention rate % (low/medium/high)		Completion rate % (low/medium/high)	
TOTAL INVESTMENT AND NUMBER OF INITIATIVES (year)	\$x,xxxk / y initiatives (zz% / aa%)		\$y,xxxk / y initiatives (zz% / aa%)	\$x,xxxk / y initiatives (zz% / aa%) = \$k (Transition) + \$k (Service provision, social, other) + \$k (Bridging program) + \$k (Inclusive curriculum, embedding, PD) + \$k (Role models; mentors; career advice) + \$k (Scholarship provision and grants)		\$xxxk / y initiatives (zz% / aa%)	
HEPPP-FUNDED EQUITY INITIATIVES (year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach to early years of schooling (Years K-4) Community outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach to primary and middle years schooling (Years 5-9) Outreach to senior secondary schooling (Years 10-12) Pre-university experience programs School curriculum enhancement and support and foster skills and capabilities Professional development for careers advisors and teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathways programs: a qualification that provides entry into university upon successful completion often from enabling, VET or private providers Foundation programs: programs that provide extra academic development to build skills; may be a separate qualification or part of a degree Alternative selection criteria and tools in entry requirements Outreach to VET/adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orientation programs First year inclusive transition programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic service provision Non-academic service provision (childcare, financial aid, student counselling and health) Social activities Diversity of strategies, including extra-curricular learning development and other programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative exit qualifications Careers and employment support post completion 	
COMPETITIVE GRANTS IN (year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPP in Year/s 						
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$xxx (zz%) Including: Leadership role (e.g. Director, Coordinator), Evaluation Officer, Finance Officer, Admin Officer, Project Officer Also: General expenditure and reviews of business processes 						

A set of diagnostic tools:

- Interpretive model building on Burke (2012)
- Attributes of effective HEPPP Programs
- Equity Initiatives Map extending the Equity Initiatives Framework developed by Bennett et al. (2015): enables analyses of HEPPP program design and implementation in the context of institutional equity strategy and performance

Case studies of three institutional approaches to HEPPP implementation, including success factors, outcomes and challenges

SHIFTING THE DIAL ON HEPPP DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION



OUTREACH

Widening Regional and Remote Participation: Interrogating the impact of outreach programs across Queensland

SCHOLARSHIPS

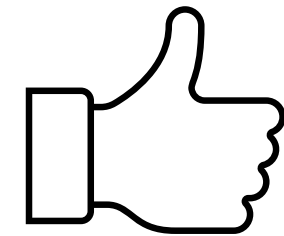
Moving beyond "acts of faith": effective scholarships for equity students

DOING HEPPP

The Australian student equity program and institutional change: Paradigm shift or business as usual?

WHAT WORKS?

Swinburne's HEPPP Evaluation Framework



The Department of Education has adopted, at least in principle, the main recommendations from the Fellowship over the past 5 years

Successive governments have maintained HEPPP funding levels and a commitment to equity in higher education

FOR THE SECTOR

1. Review and reform institutional HEPPP programs
2. Have an honest conversation about co-funding mainstream services and programs and develop sector-wide principles
3. Employ core staff on an ongoing basis
4. Implement the Student Equity in Higher Education Evaluation Framework (SEHEEF)

WHAT WORKS? AND WHAT MATTERS?



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Swinburne's HEPPP Evaluation Framework

What we knew before we started

- Core challenge is the number of variables which need to be considered to draw meaningful conclusions about the impact of activities on student outcomes (Naylor et al., 2013)
- The decision-making processes by target group students in relation to accessing higher education (Raciti, 2019; Zacharias et al., 2019) and persisting to completion (Ajjawi et al., 2019; Norton, Cherastidtham & Mackey, 2018) are complex and not all are within the control of universities (Bowles & Brindles, 2017)
- It is also evident that student success is not just a function of student or institutional characteristics (Kahu & Nelson, 2018; HESP, 2017) and an effective Evaluation Framework cannot rely on the existing Higher Education Student Data Collection alone.
- Considerable effort has been invested in the evaluation of equity programs but findings from these studies remain patchy (ACIL Allen, 2017)
- Job-Ready Graduates has added further complexity: students from three target groups

SWINBURNE'S APPROACH TO HEPPP EVALUATION



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Swinburne's HEPPP Evaluation Framework

Qualitative approach using human-centred design methodology to develop relevant variables through Student Archetypes and Journey Maps and integrate them with insights from student record data

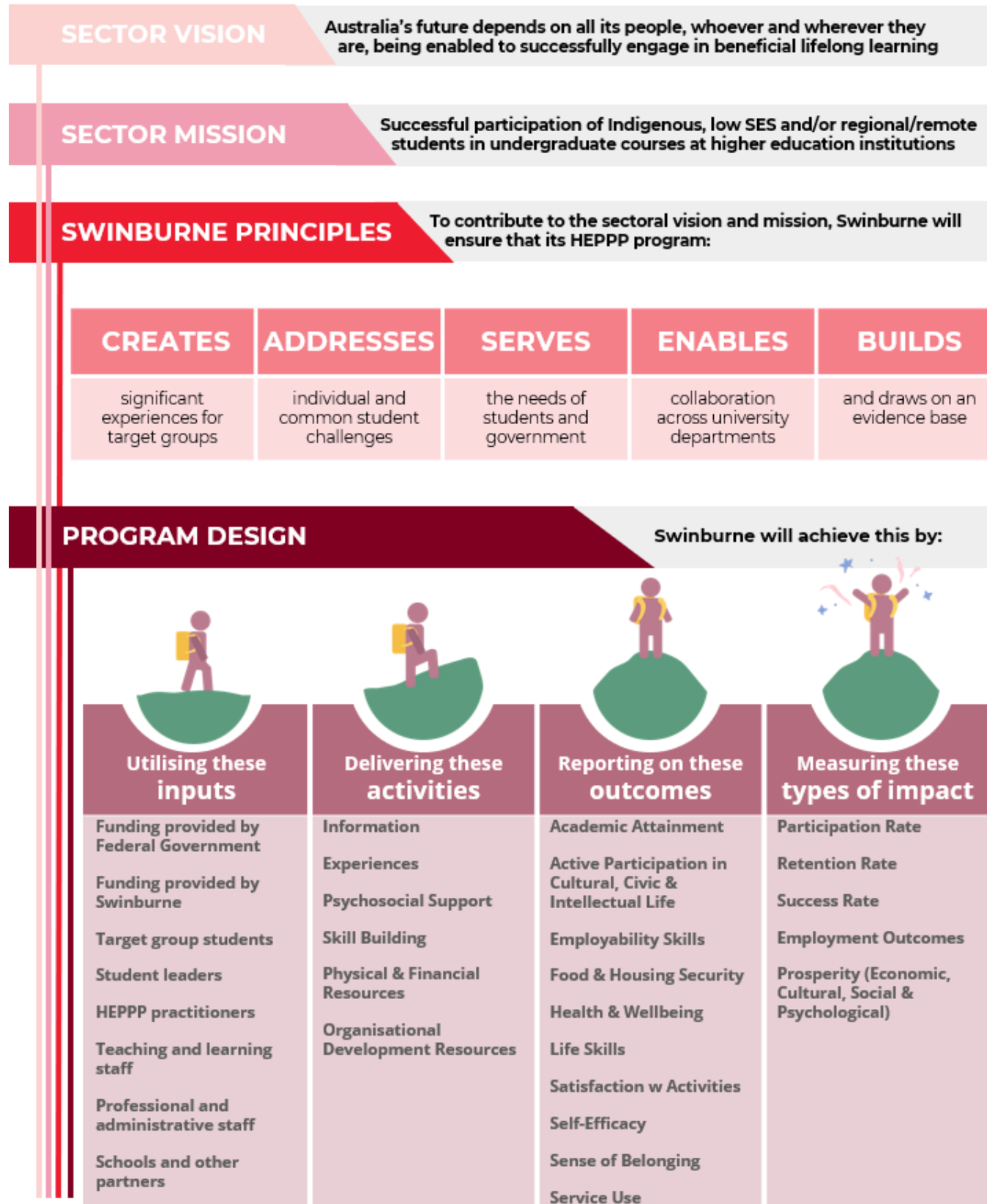
Insights from participation and performance dashboards with control group comparisons:

- Most programs (Category A) have a statistically significant positive correlation with student outcomes (retention, success and/or GPA)
- Other programs involve small sample sizes or sensitive data so that a quantitative approach is not the most appropriate way to evaluate them (Category B)
- The third group of programs (Category C) is focused on outreach and needs a national or at least state-wide approach to evaluation.

Equity group students have different definitions of success and needs throughout their University journey. While there are some cohort-specific needs, the Student Archetypes cut across the equity group classifications.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

HEPPP Evaluation Framework



A new set of analytical tools and stakeholder engagement processes applied to well-known evaluation challenges which place diverse student experiences at the heart of the investigation.

- Evaluation Framework integrating existing student record and participation data for HEPPP funded activities with insights from qualitative analysis
- Experience Map of all activities undertaken by the University across the four student lifecycle stages of pre-access, access, participation, attainment and transition out (Equity Initiatives Map)
- Student Archetypes and Journey Maps with descriptions of student behaviours and motivations which can inform engagement along with relevant variables, including skills, attitudes, traits of the three target student groups
- Program Logic Model template to be applied to all current HEPPP funded activities

SHIFTING THE DIAL ON EVALUATION



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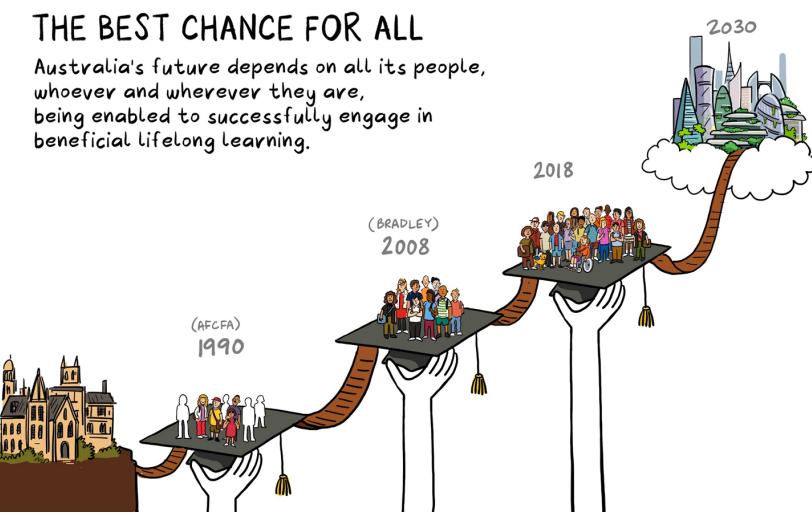
The Australian student equity program and institutional change: Paradigm shift or business as usual?

WHAT WORKS?

Swinburne's HEPPP Evaluation Framework

1. Collaboratively implement the SEHEEF
2. Establish a national database for student engagement in Widening Participation initiatives and central infrastructure for evaluation
3. Fully realise the potential of HEIMS/TCSI and QILT data analysis
4. Strategically and systematically engage in data linkage projects
5. Undertake meta-analyses, synthesis and translation of existing research for practitioner and policy audiences
6. Trial innovative initiatives which aim to overcome structural and/or persistent barriers to participation
7. Re-position the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) to take on or support these programs of work in collaboration with the sector

INSIGHTS ACROSS THE DECADE



OUTREACH

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Swinburne's HEPPP Evaluation Framework

Macro (Policy)

- The combination of demand-driven funding and HEPPP shifted the dial on equity student participation. As soon as the system was re-capped, equity participation started to decline.
- Universities can be trusted and valued partners of very disadvantaged schools and create a virtuous cycle of cultural change in favour of post-school education. This work makes a measurable difference and needs to be sustainably funded.
- Income support needs to be provided by the Commonwealth through Centrelink.
- Gonski school funding remains an aspiration and is the missing link for attainment.

Meso (Institutional)

- Evidence-informed and honest assessments of institutional HEPPP programs are required to ensure the best use of equity funding.
- Placing students at the centre of program redesign is paramount.
- Equity practitioners have much to gain from collaborative program evaluation and continuous improvement activities.

Micro (Initiative)

- Share and adopt best practice approaches to established initiatives across the sector and trial some truly innovative ones!

"Access without support is not
opportunity."

Vincent Tinto

LET'S DESIGN

THANK
YOU!

And my next venture:
equitybydesign.com.au



Global Best Pro

Sector data analysis

Emeritus Professor Alan Pettigrew

Fellow of Senate and Pro-Chancellor

University of Sydney



Analysis of
Institutional Student Equity Performance Data, 2011 to 2021

27 March 2023

Emeritus Professor Alan Pettigrew
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<https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/2021-section-16-equity-performance-data>

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Data Source.....

2021 Section 16 Equity performance data

! If you have trouble accessing this document, please [contact us](#) to request a copy in a format you can use.

Higher education equity performance tables for 2021 full year.

If you require further information, a data request can be submitted to the Department. Please see the [Data Requests](#), [Data Protocols](#), [Data Privacy and Visual Analytics Guide](#) page.

Download XLSX (594.8kb) 

CONTENTS

Section 16 - Institutional Student Equity Performance Data, 2009 to 2021

[Notes](#)

[Table 16.1a: Equity - Access Numbers for Domestic Students at Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2021](#)

[Table 16.1b: Equity - Access Numbers for Domestic Undergraduate Students at Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2021](#)

[Table 16.2a: Equity - Access Rates for Domestic Students at Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2021](#)

[Table 16.2b: Equity - Access Rates for Domestic Undergraduate Students at Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2021](#)

[Table 16.3: Equity - Participation Numbers for Domestic Students Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2021](#)

[Table 16.4: Equity - Participation Rates for Domestic Students at Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2021](#)

[Table 16.5: Equity - Participation Ratios for Domestic Students at Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2021](#)

[Table 16.6: Equity - New Normal Retention Rates for Domestic Students at Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2020](#)

[Table 16.7: Equity - Retention Ratios for Domestic Students at Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2020](#)

[Table 16.8: Equity - Success Rates for Domestic Students at Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2021](#)

[Table 16.9: Equity - Success Ratios for Domestic Students at Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2021](#)

[Table 16.10: Equity - Award Course Completion numbers and Attainment Rates for Table A and B Institutions, 2009 to 2021](#)

[Table 16.11: Equity Reference Values, 2009 to 2021](#)

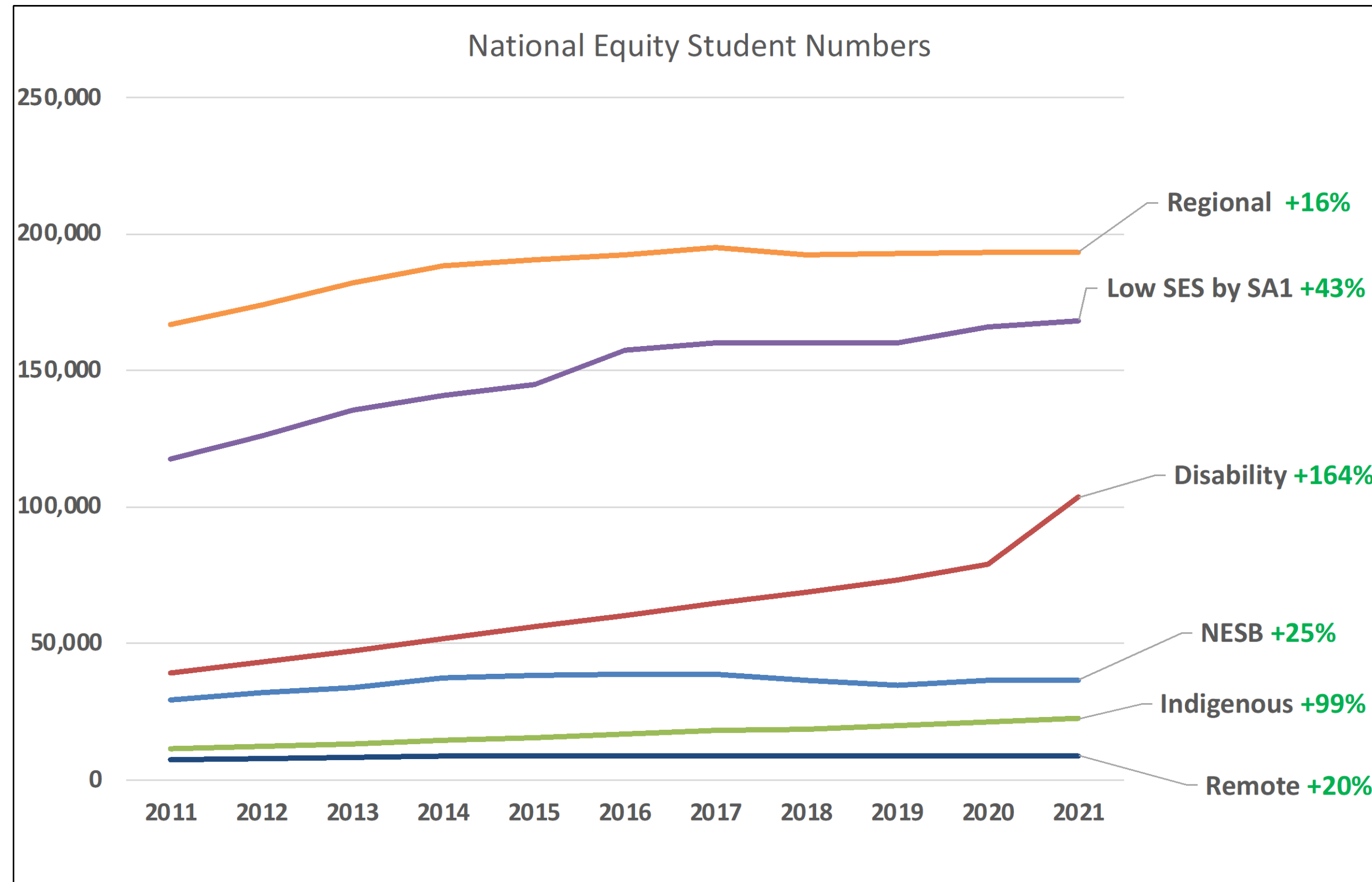
~ 90,000 data points

Data for the Equity Groups

- Low SES by SA1
- Regional
- Remote
- Disability
- Indigenous

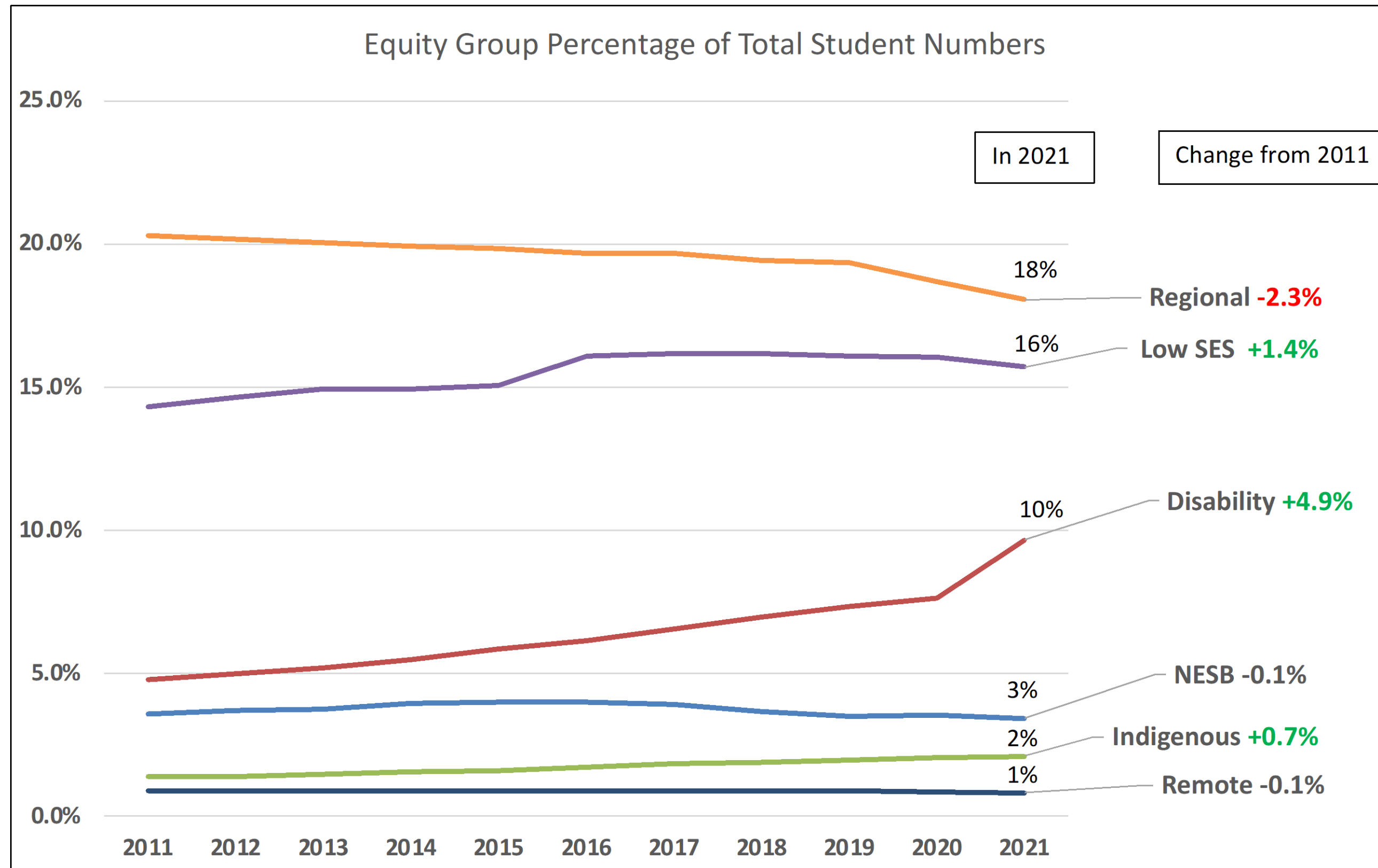
- National Participation numbers 2011-2021
- Participation numbers by university and by university groups 2021
- Participation rates by university and by university groups 2021
- National Retention rates 2011 and 2020
- National Retention ratios 2011 and 2020
- National Success rates 2011 and 2021
- National Success ratios 2011 and 2021
- Summary observations

National Equity Group Student Numbers - 2011 to 2021



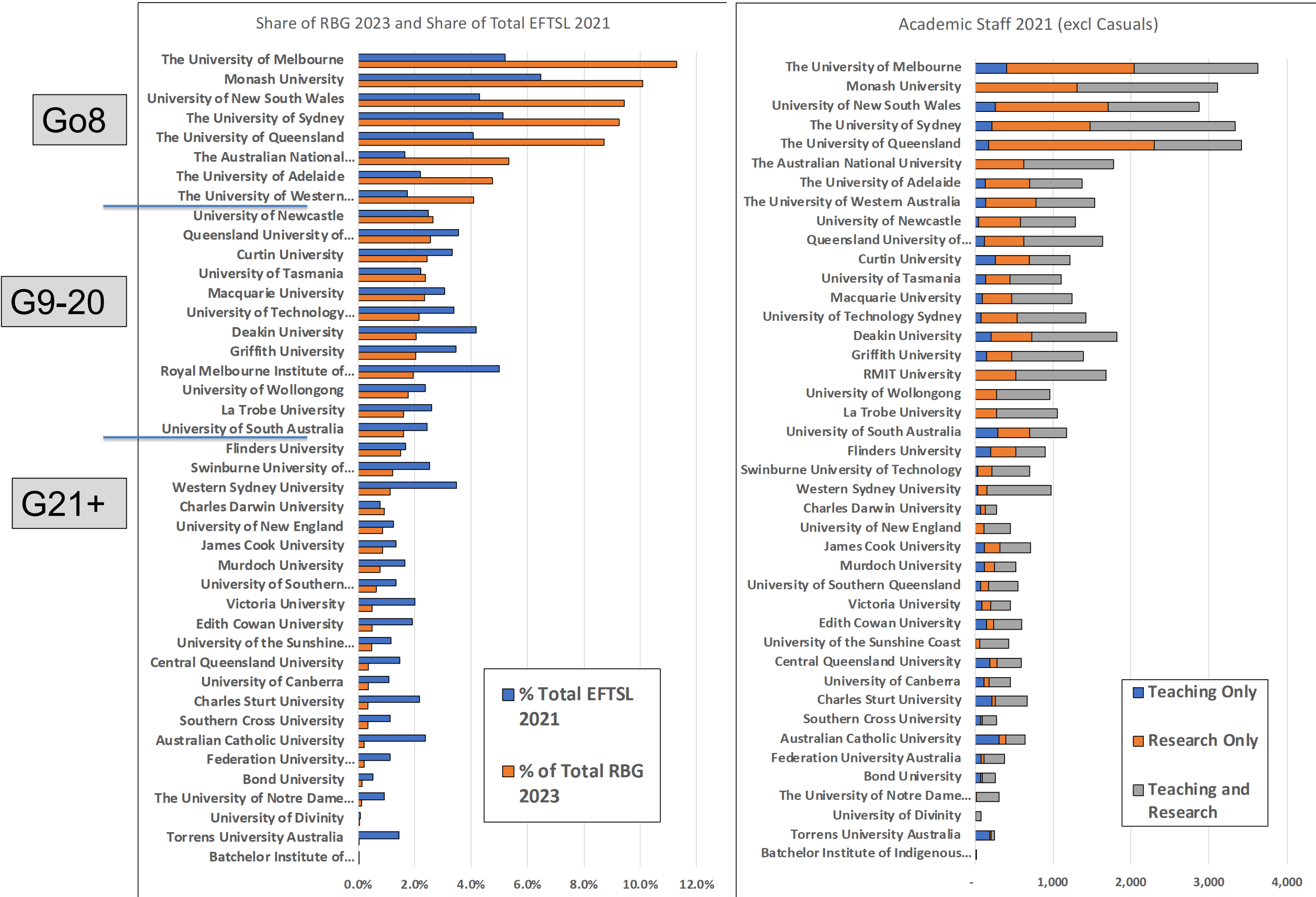
Total Domestic Student Numbers rose by 31% over the period

National Equity Group Student Numbers as % of Total Student Numbers from 2011 to 2021

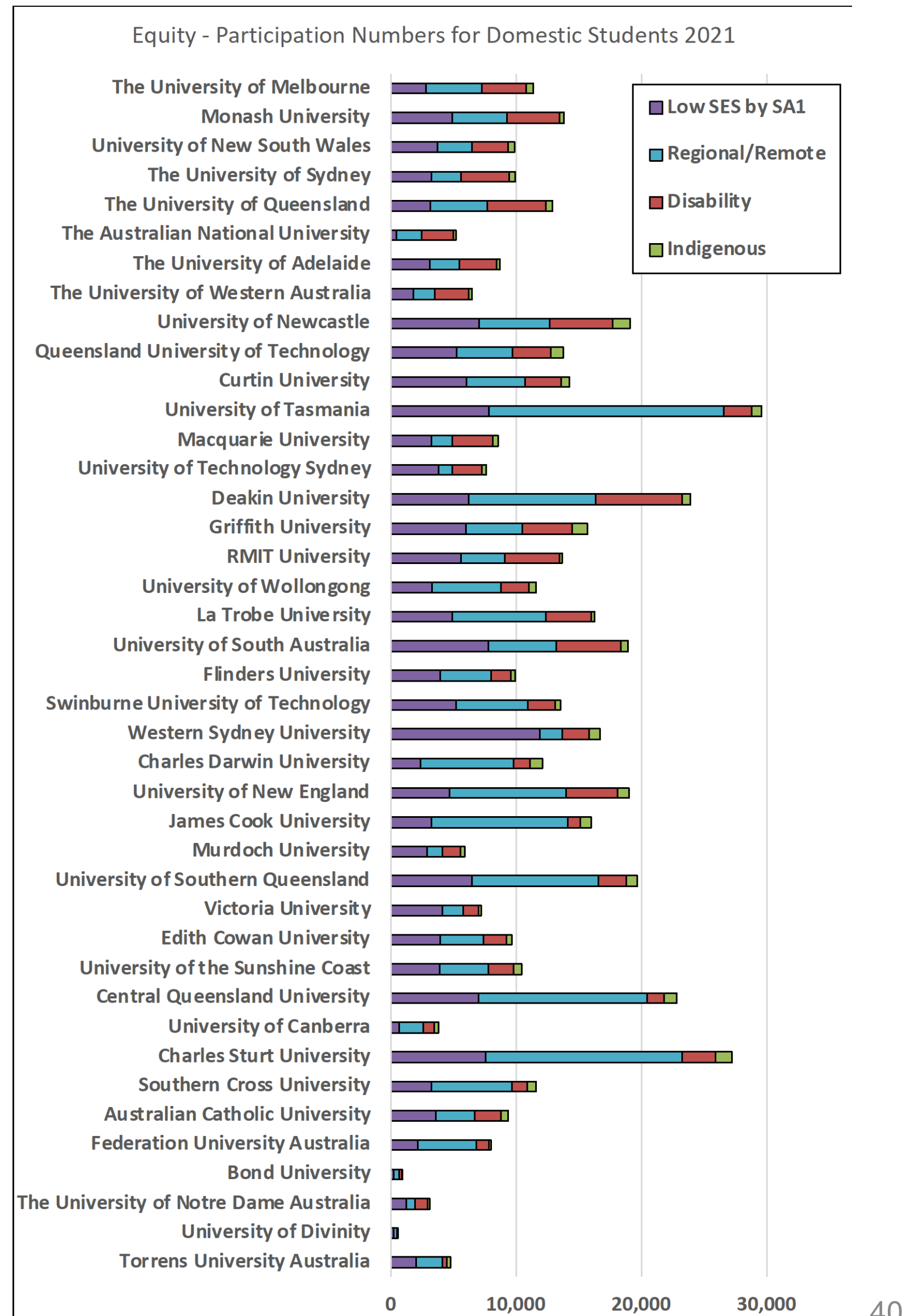


Profile of Australian universities – Students, Staff, Research

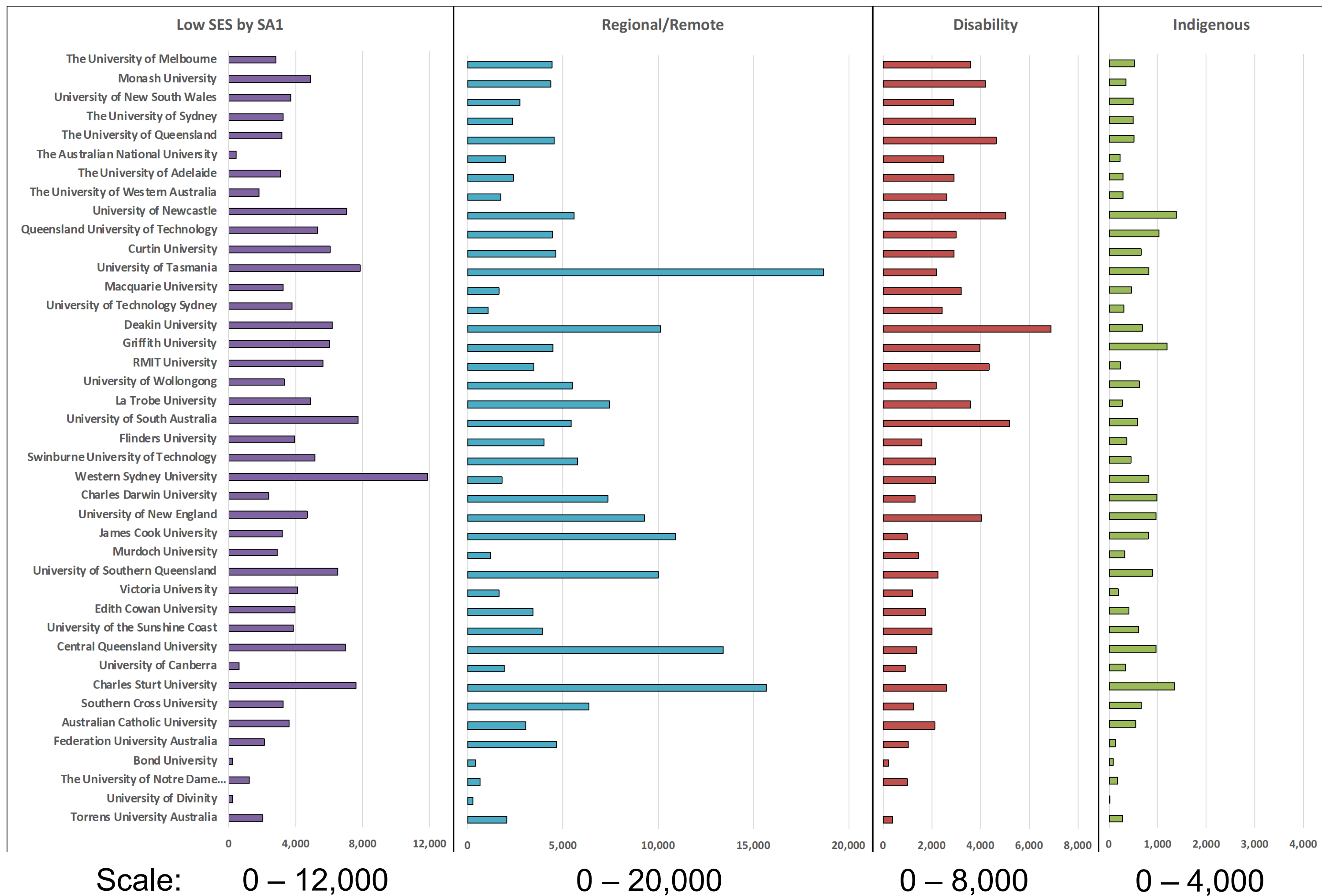
University shares of (a) Total Student Load (2021), (b) Total RBG (2023) and Academic staff (2021) (TO, RO and T&R). Data are ranked according to RBG in 2023 (as the base common factor in the analysis). The patterns of all data show the profile of Australian universities at the present time.



Equity Participation Numbers 2021



Equity Participation Numbers 2021



Equity Participation Numbers 2021

Universities with the first 50% of all students in each equity group

Ranked on Low SES	Ranked on R&R	Ranked on Disability	Ranked on Indigenous
Western Sydney University	University of Tasmania	Deakin University	University of Newcastle
University of Tasmania	Charles Sturt University	University of South Australia	Charles Sturt University
University of South Australia	Central Queensland University	University of Newcastle	Griffith University
Charles Sturt University	James Cook University	The University of Queensland	Queensland University of Technology
University of Newcastle	Deakin University	RMIT University	Charles Darwin University
Central Queensland University	University of Southern Queensland	Monash University	University of New England
University of Southern Queensland	University of New England	University of New England	Central Queensland University
Deakin University	La Trobe University	Griffith University	University of Southern Queensland
Curtin University		The University of Sydney	Western Sydney University
Griffith University		La Trobe University	University of Tasmania
RMIT University		The University of Melbourne	James Cook University
Queensland University of Technology			

12 of 42

8 of 42

11 of 42

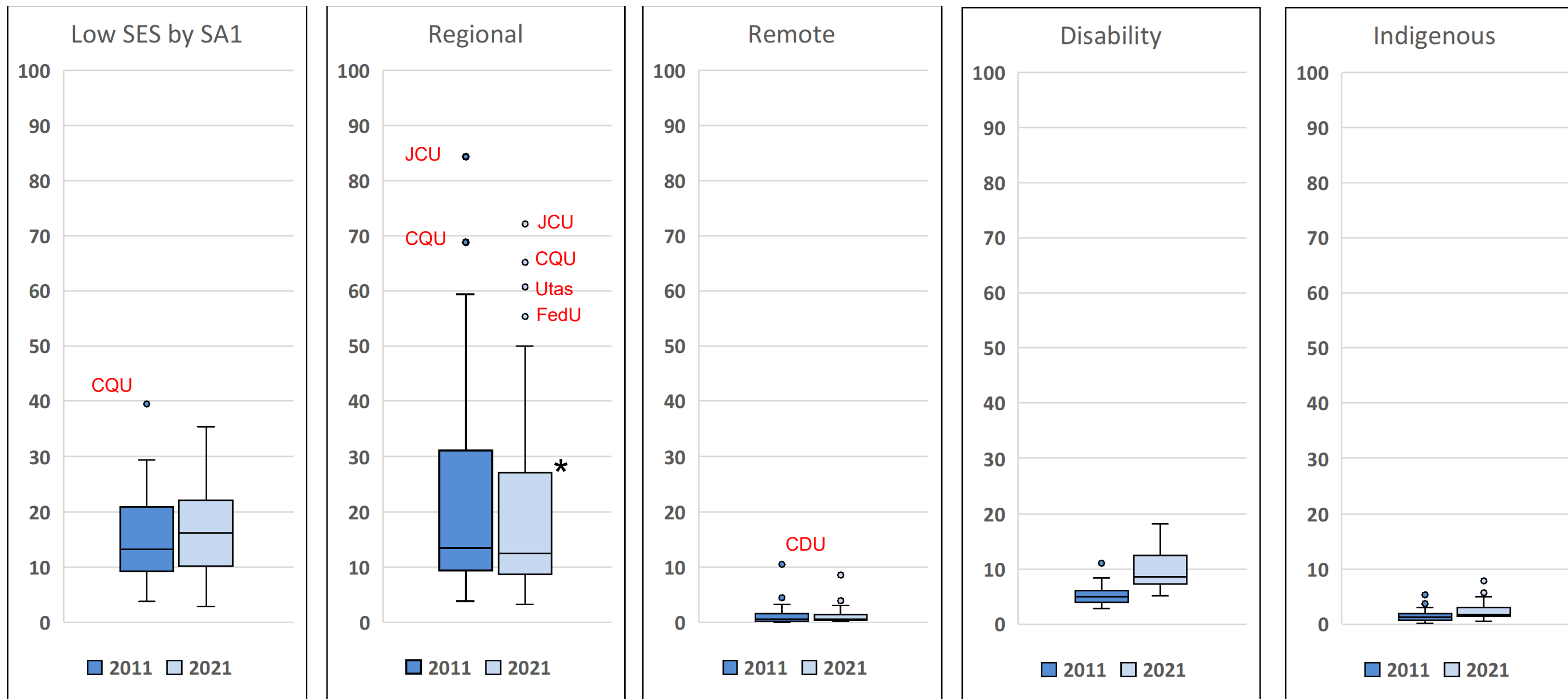
11 of 42

Bold = Domestic EFTSL <=3.0%

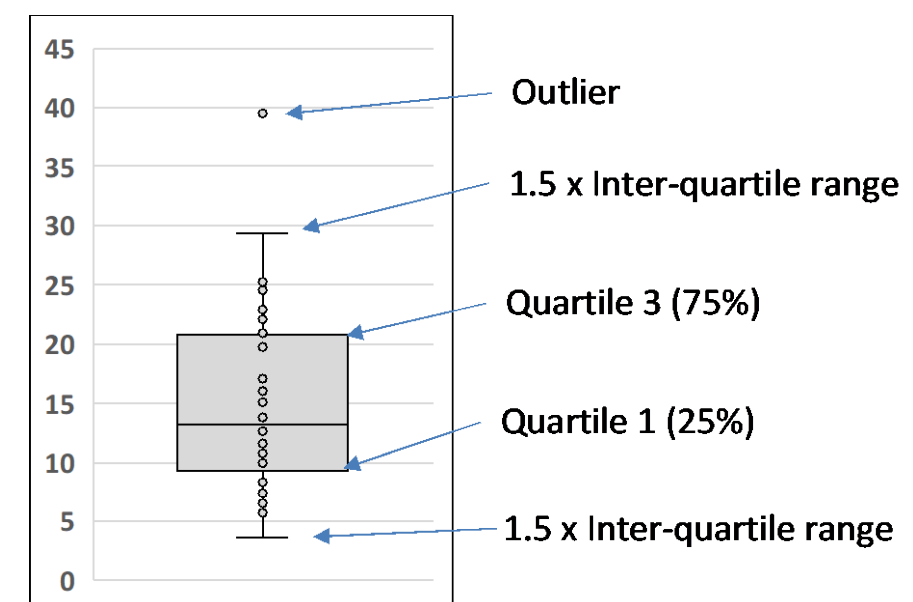
Participation Rate (%) 2011 and 2021

= Students in Equity group / All students

All universities, not including Torrens University and Batchelor Institute



* Note: A decline in Participation Rate can be due to either growth in total domestic numbers exceeding growth in an equity group or a decline equity group numbers alone, or both.



Participation Rate

(%) 2011 and 2021

Note: different scales per Equity Group

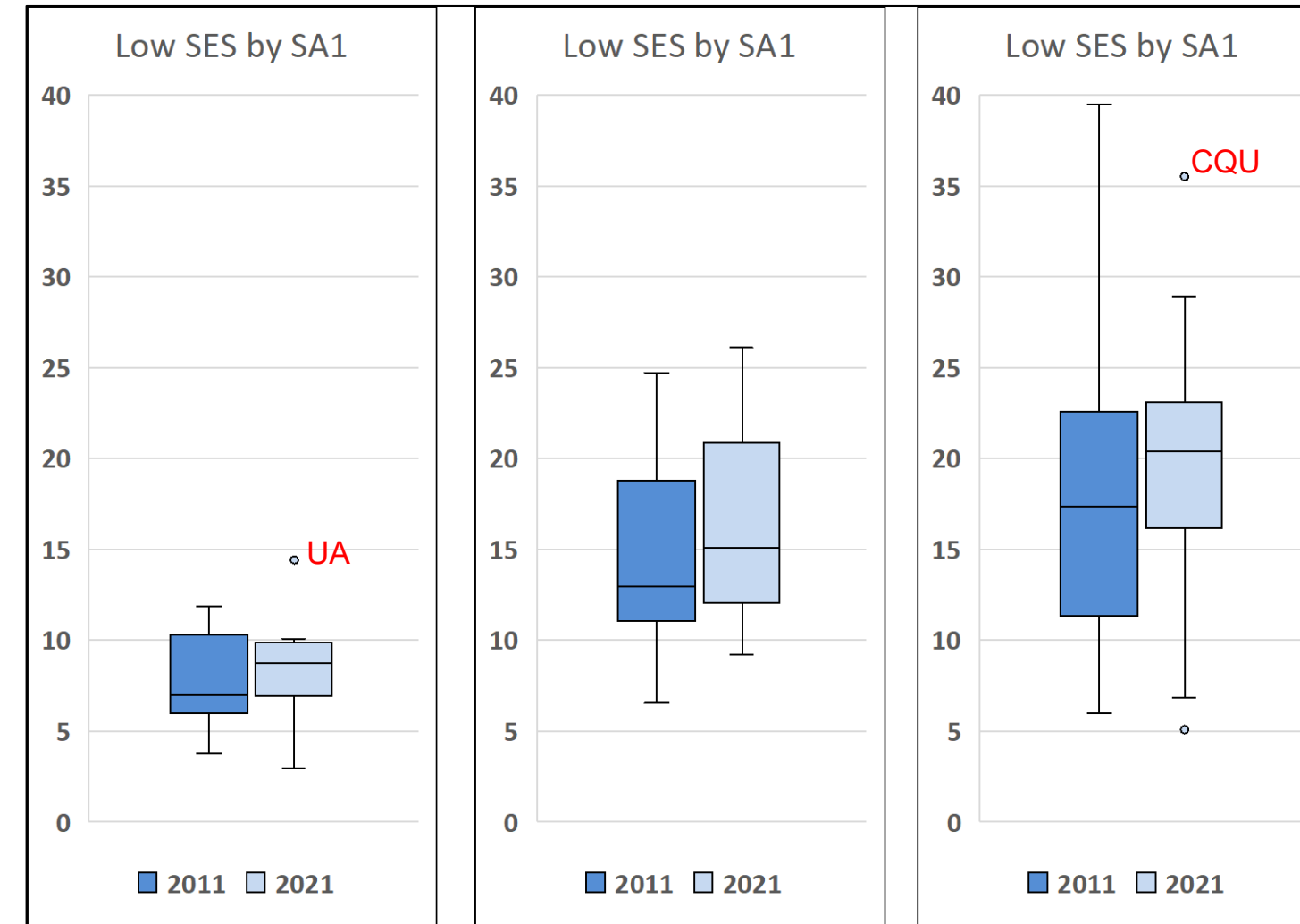
Low SES

Regional and Remote

Go8

G9-20

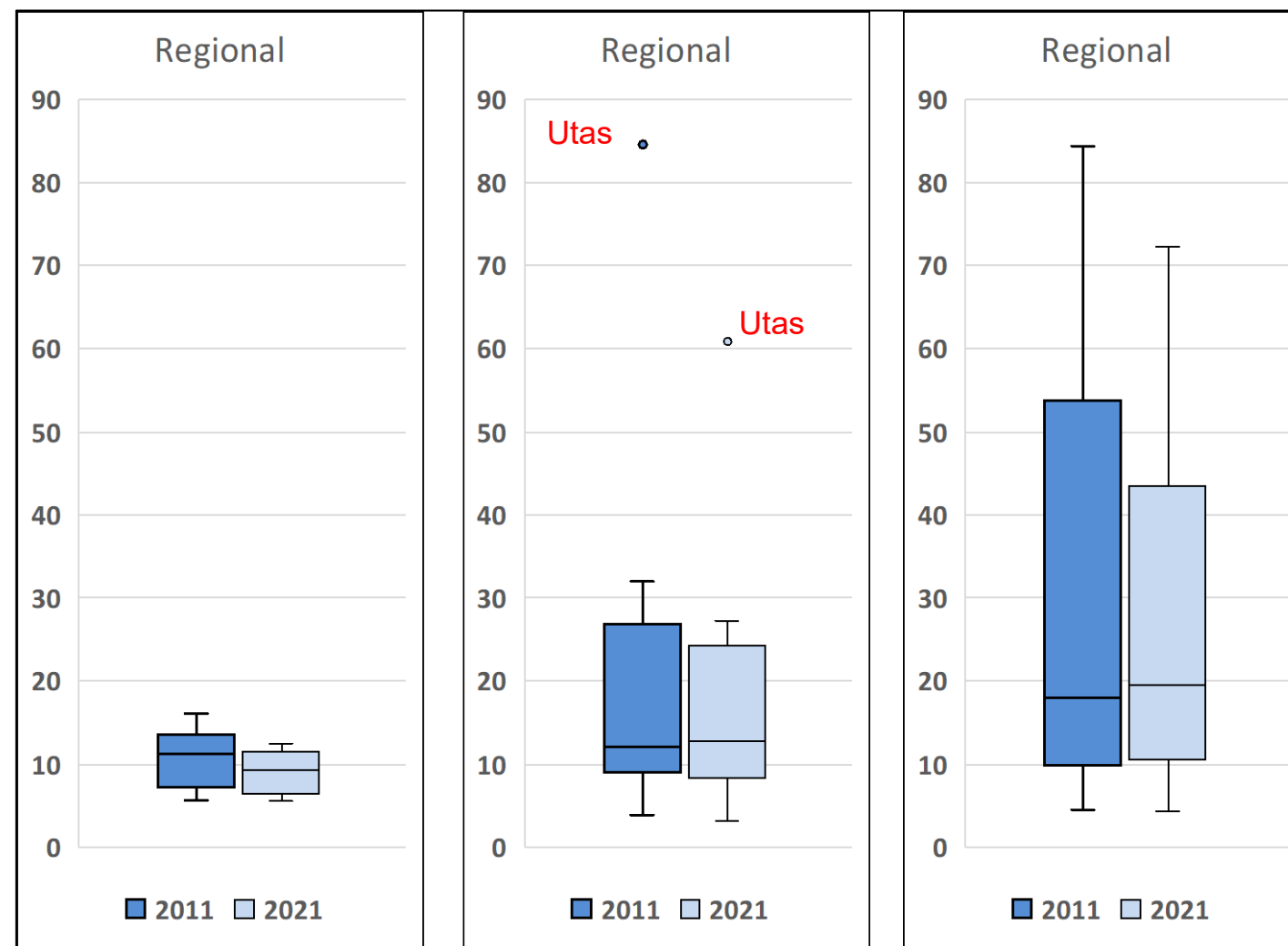
G21-40



Go8

G9-20

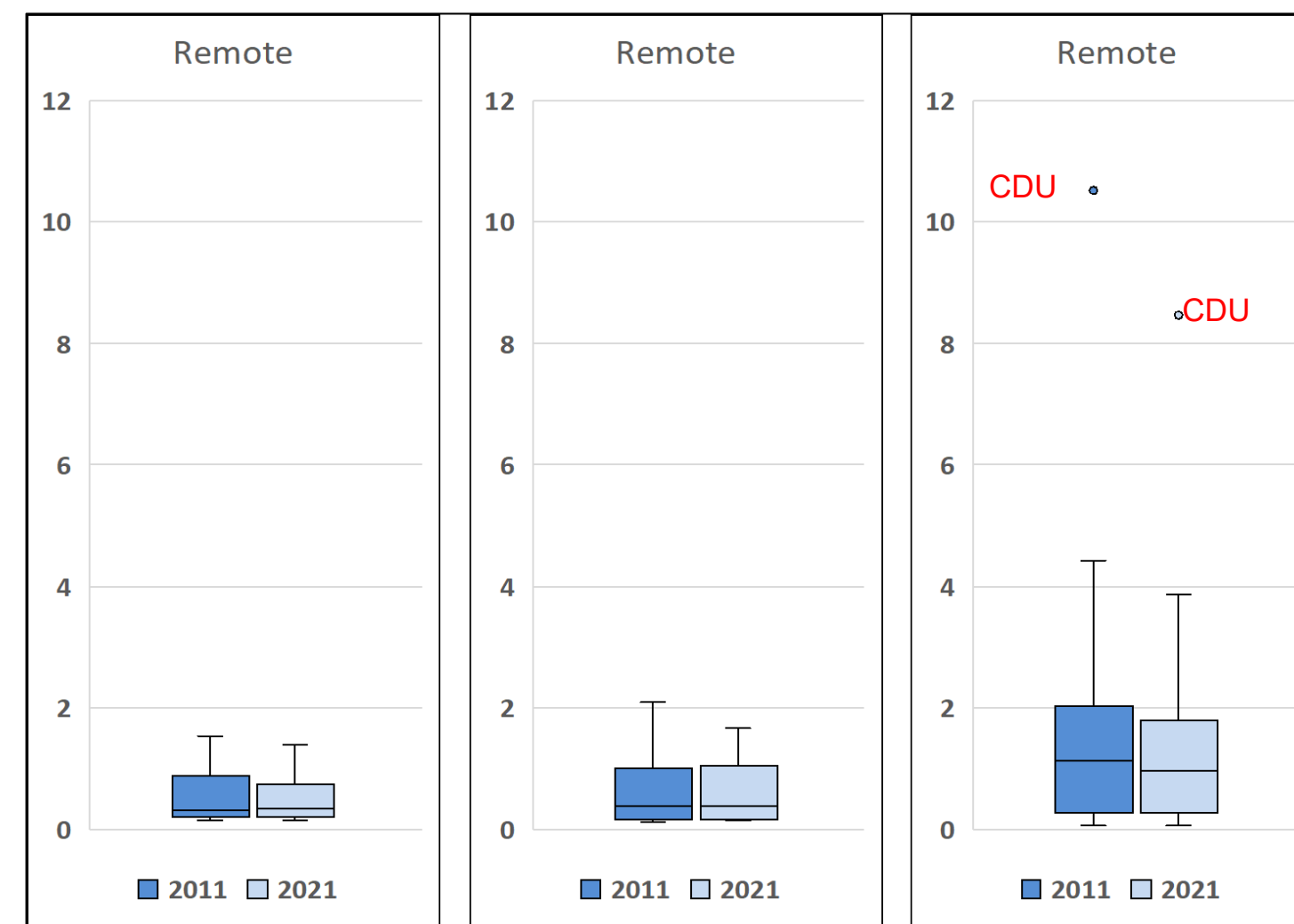
G21-40



Remote

Remote

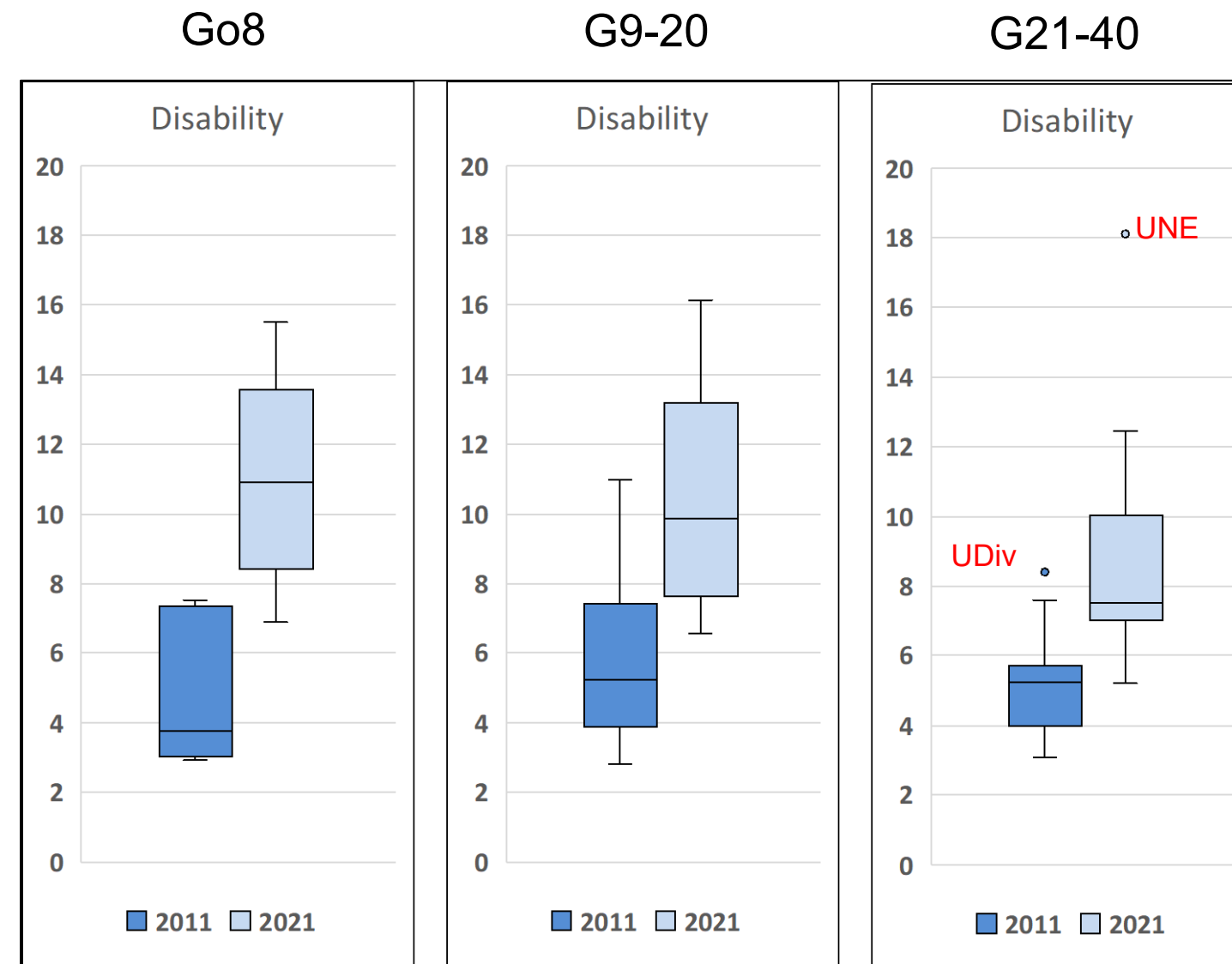
Remote



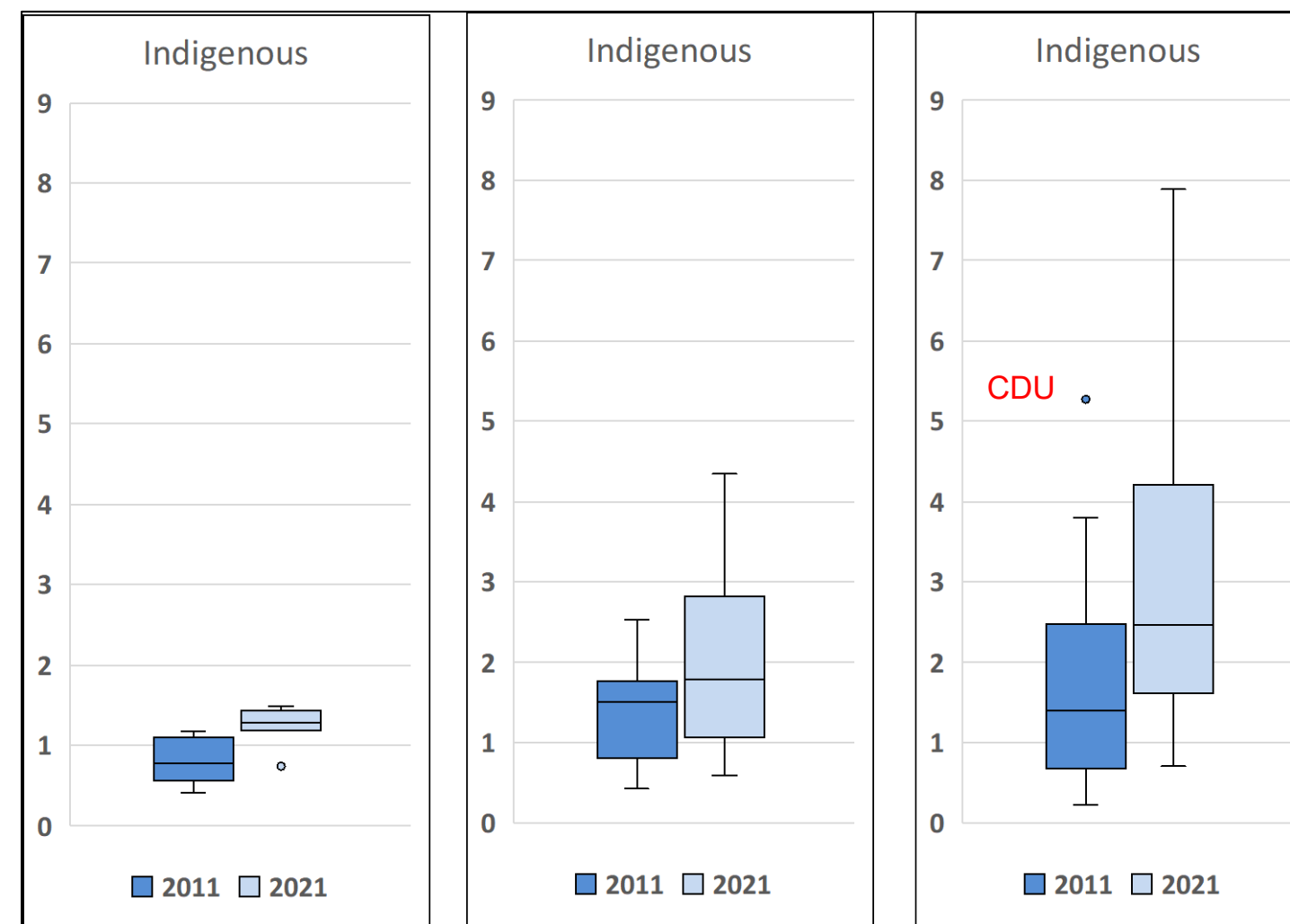
Participation Rate (%) 2011 and 2021

Note: different scales per Equity Group

Disability



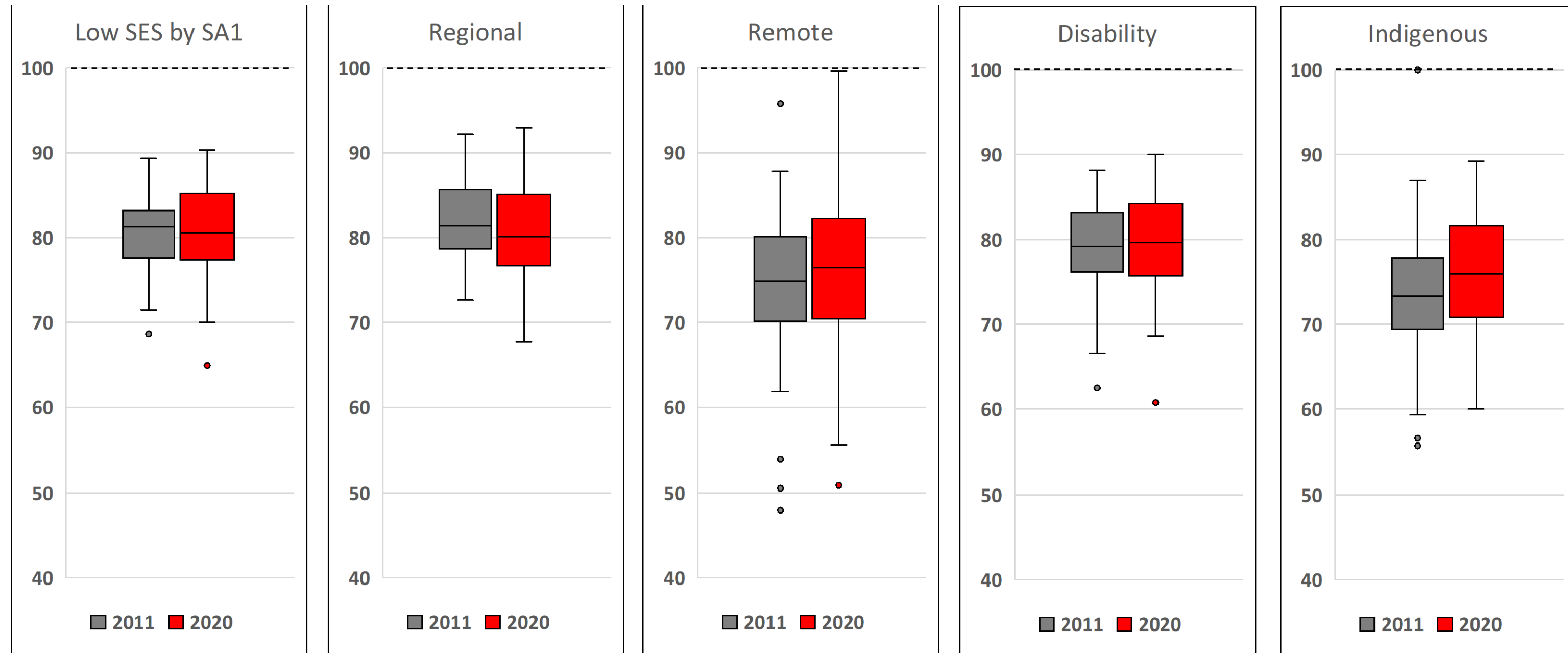
Indigenous



New Normal Retention Rate (%)

= Continuing Students / All enrolled students minus completed – 2011 and 2020

All universities, not including Torrens University and Batchelor Institute



The retention rate formula comprises the following calculations:

"Students"=All students in the Equity group,

"Completed"=All students who complete a course in the reference year or the following year,

"Base"="Students" minus "Completed",

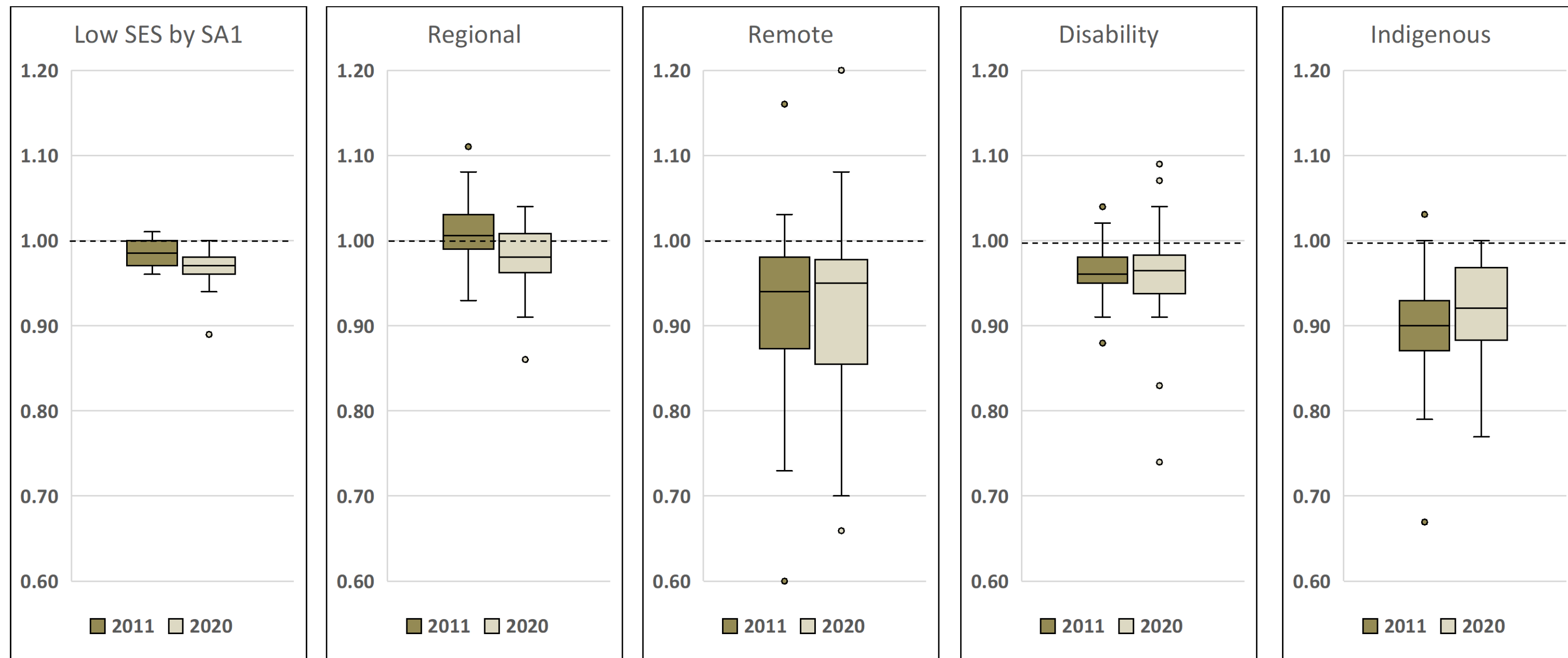
"Retained"=Number of students from "Base" who are enrolled the following year,

"Retention Rate"="Retained" / "Base".

Retention Ratio

= Retention Rate of Equity Group / Retention Rate of Other students in 2011 and 2020

All universities, not including Torrens University and Batchelor Institute



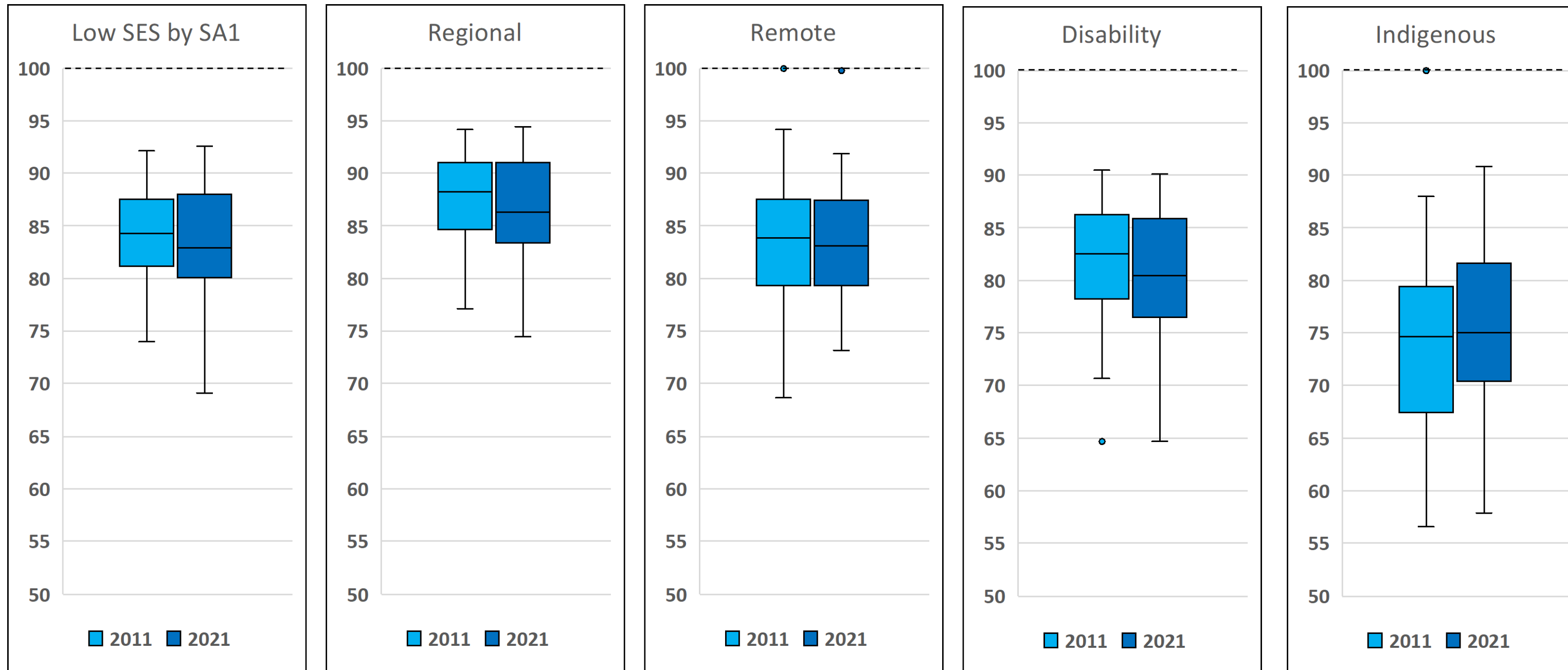
Retention Ratio = New Normal Retention Rate of Equity Group/ New Normal Retention Rate of Other students

The Retention Ratio is the retention rate for the equity group divided by the retention rate for students not in the equity group. A Retention Ratio of greater than 1.0 indicates that the students in the equity group have a better retention rate than the non-equity group students.

Success Rate (%)

= EFTSL passed / EFTSL certified (passed, failed, withdrawn) - 2011 and 2021

All universities, not including Torrens University and Batchelor Institute



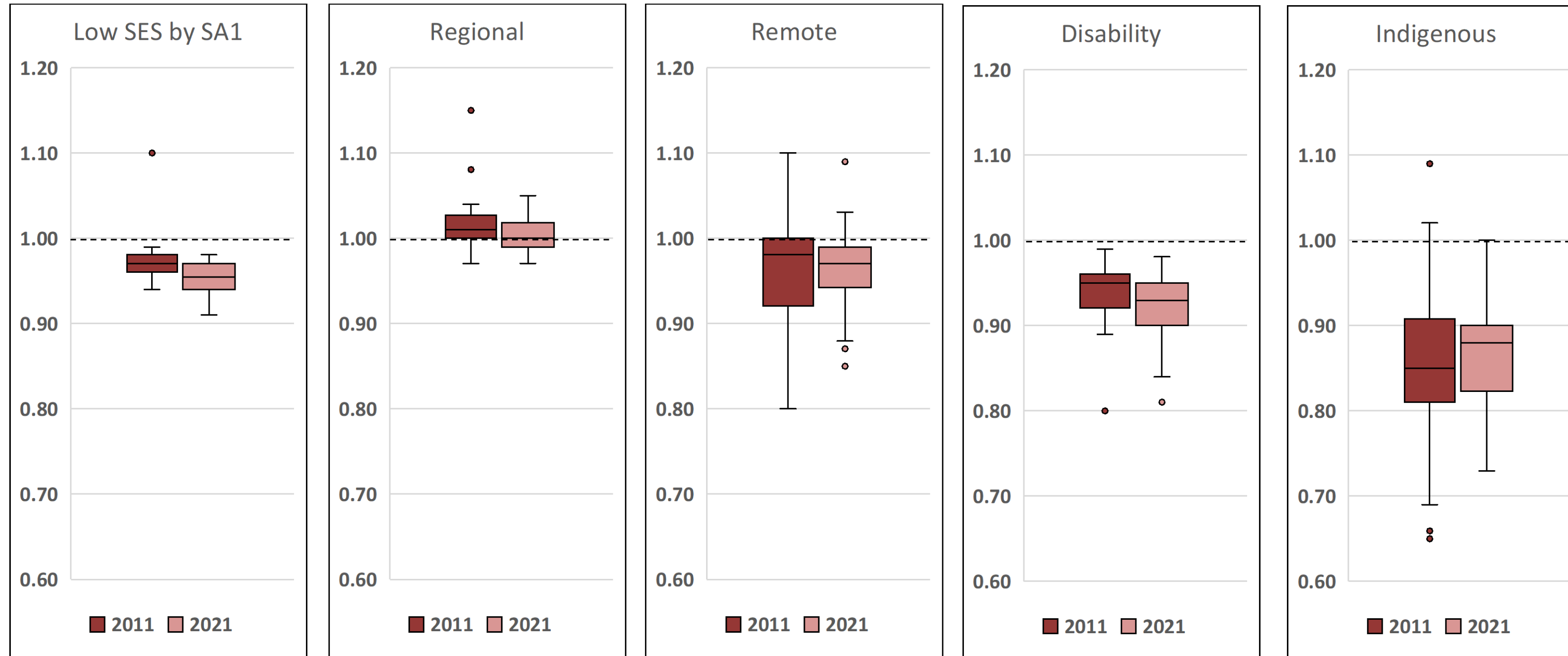
Success Rate = EFTSL passed / EFTSL certified (passed, failed, withdrawn)

Success Rate measures academic performance by comparing the effective full-time student load (EFTSL) of units passed to the EFTSL of units attempted.

Success Ratio

= Success Rate of Equity students / Success Rate of Other students – 2011 and 2021

All universities, not including Torrens University and Batchelor Institute



Success Ratio = Success Rate of Equity students/ Success Rate of Other students

Exception: Low SES group.

Success Ratio of Low SES = Success Rate of Low SES/ Success Rate of High SES

The Success Ratio is basically a comparison of the success rate for the equity group divided by the success rate for students not in the equity group. A Success Ratio of greater than 1.0 indicates that the students in the equity group have a better success rate than the non-equity group students.

Summary observations for discussion

- Over the last 10 years **growth in national numbers of**
 - Low SES, Disability and Indigenous students \gt growth in total domestic students, and
 - Regional and Remote students \lt growth in total domestic students.
- On a national basis, **equity group participation** is
 - highest for Low SES and Regional students and
 - very low for the Remote, Disability and Indigenous groups.
- There is considerable **variation** across the university sector **in participation rates** for equity groups and it is **heavily weighted towards smaller institutions** with lower overall student load, smaller staff numbers and lower research scale.
- **Retention rates** for equity students are **variable** across universities for all groups.
- **Retention ratios** indicate that
 - Low SES, Regional and Disability groups are comparable to other students.
 - Remote and Indigenous groups are slightly lower than for other students.
- **Success ratios** for
 - Low SES and Regional groups show little variation across universities and are very comparable to, or better than, those for other students.
 - Remote, Disability, and Indigenous groups show wider variation across universities and progressively lower success ratios.

Thank you

Panel session

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Acting CEO
Country Universities Centre

Dr Leanne Holt

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy)
Macquarie University

A/Prof. Nadine Zacharias

Director, Student Engagement
Swinburne University of Technology

Darlene McLennan

Manager
Australian Disability Clearinghouse on
Education and Training

Dr Kylie Austin

Associate Director, Student Equity and Success
University of Wollongong

The Hon. Prof. Verity Firth AM

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Social Justice)
University of Technology Sydney

Thank you!

Afternoon tea and networking in the foyer