

Transcript

Impact on equity practitioners with Dr Kylie Austin

SONAL SINGH: Moving on to Doctor Kylie Austin. Kylie is our President for Equity Practitioners at Higher Education Australia. So, what does this all mean for equity practitioners? She would-- what should we be doing next?

DR KYLIE AUSTIN: Thank you. I think in terms of what's next, we have alluded to the fact that we have a shopping list effectively of 45 recommendations, 47 recommendations, sorry. Rather than a roadmap.

So, I think that we've got a really great opportunity over the coming months to really advocate for what we believe are the most important aspects of the Accord, to prioritise.

In terms of both looking at staff experience in higher education, but also student experience, and things that are going to make a substantial impact to access and participation of equity groups.

In terms of the things that I think we would really, at this stage, like to see adopted. I would echo Barney's comments earlier around prioritisation of needs-based funding, as well as reviewing HELP component. And I would strongly agree that we need to really reframe disability in terms of the accord report going forward, as well.

In terms of other things that should be prioritised, I think anything we can do that gets money into the hands of students in a cost-of-living crisis, I think will make one of the greatest impacts to student participation and engagement in higher education.

And I think, as a collective, over the coming months we really want to take a really strong advocacy role. Not necessarily, I think Nadine referenced that in principle a lot of this thing sounds really great. But you are right, the devil is absolutely in the detail. I think what we want to do, and what we want to work with our practitioners across the sector on, is on the development of some good practice guides.

From our perspective as equity practitioners in the sector, what does a good practice guide for outreach and widening participation look like? What is a good practice ride-- guide for need-based funding look like? Capture the expertise across the sector so that we can be advocating and pushing this information to the various working groups that are working on the next stages of the accord, to really inform what that looks like. Based on hundreds of years of collective experience in the room.



So, I think, in terms of what equity practitioners can do. I think we referenced in a previous accord that in some ways this is our battling moment. And so, I think we have a role to play, not only within our institutions, moving equity from the fringes into the centre. But we've also got a role to play in contributing and informing the national conversation, and the steps in terms of what is next, in terms of forming up a higher education equity at the centre.

I would strongly encourage you all to engage in these conversations in your institution. Write memos, write briefing papers around what these recommendations mean for students who are studying in your institution, and in your context. But equally, worked very collaboratively with us to help inform what good practice looks like in each of these spaces, so that we can work - so that we can have that collective voice across the sector, to inform, what does that next - what do the next 10 to 15, 20 years of higher education look like for our students?