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Introducing CHEEDR

Vision

The Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research (CHEEDR) informs University strategies for improving the access and achievement levels of under-represented students. The Centre has a particular focus on students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds, and has responsibility for the oversight and reporting of the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP).

Objectives of the Centre:

- Develop research and policies that help the University to improve the access, achievement, and outcomes of under-represented students, consistent with Future Ready objectives and targets.
- Oversee and coordinate the University’s major student equity funding (HEPPP), ensuring strategic fit, efficacy, evaluation, and strategic relevance of all projects.
- Increase the public profile and reputation of the University by producing, publishing and circulating research and evaluation findings on student equity in higher education.
- Support the operations of the Colleges through the provision of specific analysis and reports as required.
- Build research and evaluative capacity, communication, and collaboration within the University in the area of student equity.
- Demonstrate national and international leadership through securing external competitive research grants and influencing public policy on student equity in higher education.
Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, Director
BA (Hons) Melb., PhD Melb.

Andrew has published widely in areas of higher education policy, including issues of access, student retention, regionality, and international student equity. He is lead editor of Student Equity in Australian Higher Education: Twenty-five years of A Fair Chance for All (Springer, 2016)

Lisa Andrewartha, Senior Research Officer and Senior Project Coordinator
BAppSc (Hons) RMIT

Lisa has worked across a broad range of research projects designed to improve equity in higher education. Lisa’s recent research publications have focussed on: students from low socio-economic status backgrounds; care leavers in higher education; outcomes of tertiary enabling programs; employability in higher education; and postgraduate student equity.

Michael Luckman, Senior Research Officer
BSocSc (Hons) La Trobe, MPubPol Melb.

Michael has extensive experience working on higher education data analysis projects. He has led internal evaluations of La Trobe University’s School Partnerships Program, College of Science Health and Engineering (SHE) outreach programs, and analysis of La Trobe’s equity and teaching and learning performance measures. Michael’s recent research publications have focussed on: re-recruitment of students who have stopped out of higher education; equity within student globalization activities; care leavers in higher education; predictors of student attrition; and patterns of regional student relocation.

Giovanna Szalkowicz, Senior Project Coordinator and Research Officer
BA (Hons) University of San Andrés, MA (Hons) La Trobe

Giovanna has worked across a broad range of research projects designed to improve the access and achievement levels of students who are under-represented in higher education. Giovanna’s recent research publications have focussed on: students from low socio-economic status backgrounds; attrition in higher education; university participation of new migrants in regional communities; student re-engagement with higher education; and nested courses.

Hannah Beattie, Administration Officer
BA La Trobe

Hannah completed a Bachelor of Arts at La Trobe University, majoring in Sociology and French. Prior to her position at the Centre, Hannah worked in Student Services for the College of SHE at La Trobe.
Staff funded through competitive external grants 2017:

Dr Mark Mallman, Senior Research Officer

BA Centre College (USA), MA La Trobe, PhD La Trobe

Mark’s research experience is in the areas of socio-economic mobility, the sociology of higher education, as well as multicultural social relations. Mark has a masters and PhD in sociology. His doctoral research examined the multiple social factors that enable and pose barriers to university participation for mature-age learners and for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Mark’s research interest in socio-economic inequality and ethnic diversity (including amongst migrants and refugees) includes work with Dr Anthony Moran, commissioned by the Victorian Multicultural Commission, researching migration, multiculturalism, and social cohesion in regional cities. Mark’s recent publications have focussed on working-class university students; mature-age university students; upward social mobility; and multicultural social cohesion.

Beni Cakitaki, Research Assistant
BPPE La Trobe

Beni Cakitaki is currently completing a Bachelor of Politics, Philosophy and Economics (Honours) at La Trobe University. Prior to his position at CHEEDR, Beni worked as a research assistant on higher education policy at the Grattan Institute under Andrew Norton, and contributed to a number of Grattan reports. His research focus includes Australian higher education, labour markets, Australian economic history and government budgets.

Naomi Tootell, Senior Research Officer

BSc (Hons), BA (Hons) Melb.

Naomi is currently coordinating La Trobe University’s efforts on the Sidney Myer-funded Raising Expectations project. She previously worked on the National Priorities Pool project, 'The adaptation of tertiary admissions practices to growth and diversity'. Naomi has contributed to various ARC and government-commissioned research projects at the University of Melbourne and Charles Darwin University. She is a PhD candidate in sociology at the University of South Australia.
Director’s Report 2017

In 2017 the Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research continued to drive student equity issues within and beyond the University. Centre staff published four major national reports on student equity and we were also pleased to receive new external grants related to: teacher professional development; new migrant students; equity within third party and non-university providers; the experiences of students who are military veterans; and the equity implications of performance based funding. Within the University, the Centre continued to oversee Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) funds on behalf of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). Programs funded through HEPPP contributed to the University again exceeding its target of participation from low SES students.

Pleasingly, the Centre’s work on students from out-of-home care backgrounds (e.g. residential, foster and kinship care) was recognised both within and beyond the University in 2017. The University’s strategy to support out-of-home care students won the Australian Financial Review award for best national project related to equity and opportunity. Centre staff also led a collaborative bid that received the University’s premier staff award, for ‘Living the Cultural Qualities’ of La Trobe.

National reports and related publications covered the relationship between student equity and employability strategies; the need to recruit and support care leaver students in higher education; a comparative study of equity strategies across universities; and the re-recruitment of students who have withdrawn from higher education. This last report captured significant policy attention, and was followed by a presentation to the Higher Education Standards Panel (HESP) and the subsequent inclusion of significant reference to our report in the HESP’s own report on completion and related publications.

Strong international collaboration continued, with co-investigators from the US and UK involved on multiple research projects. We received a visiting La Trobe fellowship by Dr Carla Houkamau on educating diverse student groups in New Zealand, and I presented at the US Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) conference in Houston, on design and implementation issues with performance based funding.

We received generous grants in 2017 from the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, the Australian Government Department of Education, the Australian Government Department of Veterans’ Affairs, and the Sidney Myer Foundation (triennial grant).

Thanks to the Centre staff and to our many colleagues who support student equity and diversity so strongly within and beyond the University.
The Centre’s Strategic Plan

The major strategies of the Centre’s 2017 plan include:

1) DEVELOP RESEARCH AND POLICIES THAT HELP THE UNIVERSITY TO IMPROVE THE ACCESS, ACHIEVEMENT, AND OUTCOMES OF UNDER-REPRESENTED STUDENTS, CONSISTENT WITH FUTURE READY OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

Research and analysis will include projects examining the efficacy of alternative selection pathways, the profile of the University cohort, the retention, achievement, and completion levels of under-represented students by course and level, and the factors influencing the decisions of prospective students in areas of disadvantage. Members of the Centre will work closely with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (DVCA), College Pro Vice-Chancellors (PVCs), the Executive Director of Educational Partnerships and Quality, the Executive Director of Student Services, and staff from the Planning and Institutional Performance Unit (PIPU).

2) OVERSEE AND COORDINATE THE UNIVERSITY’S MAJOR STUDENT EQUITY FUNDING (HEPPP)

The Centre will work with the DVC (Academic) to ensure the strategic fit, efficacy, evaluation, and strategic relevance of all projects funded through HEPPP.

3) INCREASE THE PUBLIC PROFILE AND REPUTATION OF THE UNIVERSITY NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

Members of the Centre will increase the University’s profile by: publishing their work in recognised journals, academic books, and other fora; hosting international visiting research fellows; developing a media profile and presence; engaging in public policy; and presenting findings at conferences and other public events. Collaboration will be sought with industry, community and educational partners, and external funding will be sought as required. The website will be used to showcase research reports and findings.

4) SUPPORT THE OPERATIONS OF THE COLLEGES AND DIVISIONS

The Centre will support the Colleges and divisions by providing analysis for members as required, responding to specific research requests, and contributing to corporate documents and institutional reports and proposals as needed. Specific requests for analysis and research will also be incorporated into the Centre’s project schedule, in consultation and in line with resource capacity.

5) BUILD RESEARCH AND EVALUATIVE CAPACITY, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY IN THE AREAS OF STUDENT EQUITY

Moves to increase collaboration will include the hosting of regular internal seminars and symposia, the use of a research clearinghouse as a communication platform for the exchange of information and discussion, and the inclusion of members, affiliates and students into the CHEEDR circle. Findings will be regularly circulated and select staff and students will be invited to contribute to the Centre in a formal capacity.

6) DEMONSTRATE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP THROUGH SECURING EXTERNAL COMPETITIVE RESEARCH GRANTS AND INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY ON STUDENT EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The Centre will seek external funding through the Department of Education and Training, the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), and other fora, and engage with policy makers at a national level.
Higher Education Participation & Partnerships Programme (HEPPP)

What is HEPPP?

The Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP) provides Australian Government funding to assist universities to improve access, participation and completion rates of students from low socio-economic status backgrounds.

HEPPP has three components:

- The Participation and Partnership funds, both allocated by formula, to support programs that assist students from low socio-economic status backgrounds to access, succeed in, and complete higher education; and
- The National Priorities Pool, a small quantum of competitive grant funds to support Commonwealth priorities, such as raising the access of low socio-economic status students in regional Australia.

What is HEPPP at La Trobe?

At La Trobe, the Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research (CHEEDR) in the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) portfolio administers the distribution of HEPPP funds.

HEPPP projects run across both the Colleges as well as areas such as La Trobe Learning and Teaching, Educational Partnerships and Quality and the Equity and Diversity Centre. Table 1 shows the major HEPPP-funded projects at La Trobe in 2017.

Table 1: Description and objectives of some of the major HEPPP initiatives in 2017.

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<tr>
<th>INITIATIVES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTIONS AND OBJECTIVES</th>
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<tr>
<td>School Partnerships Program</td>
<td>Collaborate with 38 low socio-economic status schools to deliver activities that provide extra curriculum support, academic preparation, and awareness of university courses and future careers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science, Health and Engineering (SHE) Outreach programs</td>
<td>Stimulate interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) disciplines, particularly for students from low socio-economic status and regional schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce (ASSC) Outreach programs</td>
<td>Development and pilot of new outreach opportunities for students from low socio-economic and regional schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succeed Program (Academic Early Warning System)</td>
<td>University-wide communication and referral strategy designed to identify and engage commencing undergraduate students at risk of disengagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UniBridges</td>
<td>Increase the interest and achievement of students from low socio-economic status backgrounds in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). This aim is promoted by delivering thematic curriculum across a cluster of secondary school subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Learning Advisers (PLAs)</td>
<td>Provide academic information, mathematics and literacy advice, and basic resume checking to students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Subject Support Tutor Program**

A discipline and course-specific academic support program for academically under-prepared students. The Program includes one-on-one or small group support for students requiring additional explanation of subject content, and monitoring of student engagement in order to follow-up with students who show early signs of difficulty.

**Equity and Diversity Centre (EDC)**

The EDC promotes equal participation of all students and staff of La Trobe and fosters an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

**Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research (CHEEDR)**

The Centre leads research, analysis and evaluation to inform University strategies for improving access and achievement levels of under-represented students.

The Centre also regularly conducts evaluations of major HEPPP-funded programs and provides an advisory role, including provision and analysis of relevant institutional data, and consultation with program managers on the development of methodologies for internal program evaluations.

**Equity scholarships and bursaries**

- **Access Scholarships**: Awarded on the basis of educational disadvantage to support students.
- **Work Help: Employment Grants**: Awarded on the basis of financial disadvantage to assist low socio-economic status students with placement.
- **Student Mobility Assistance Scholarships**: Awarded on the basis of financial disadvantage to assist low socio-economic status students participating in an overseas exchange.
- **Bursaries for Care Leavers and Students from Refugee Backgrounds**: Awarded to all eligible commencing, domestic undergraduate students at the University who spent time in formal out-of-home care (i.e. foster care, residential care, kinship care, ward of the State) or who entered on humanitarian visas.

**Major evaluations**

- School Partnerships Program
- College of Science Health and Engineering (SHE) Outreach Program.

**Impact of HEPPP-funded programs**

HEPPP programs have contributed to an increase in the proportion of enrolments of students from low socio-economic status backgrounds at the University. Provisional student census data for 2016 shows that La Trobe University’s undergraduate low socio-economic participation rate is now 21.6 per cent, well above the Future Ready target of 20 per cent. The increase in low SES participation is partly attributable to an extensive and concerted outreach campaign to low SES schools and communities. Equally, the provision of targeted bursaries assists under-represented students at university to participate in globalisation, employability and other campus experiences. HEPPP funding also supports mentoring and academic support programs for under-represented students, while bursaries for globalisation, employability, and other activities support the success and graduate outcomes of low SES students.
Planning for 2018

The Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) worked with the Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research, College Pro Vice-Chancellors, the Executive Director of Educational Partnerships and Quality, the Executive Director of Student Services and other senior staff to establish 2018 HEPPP priorities and budgets. Priority was given to larger HEPPP initiatives that influence systemic change. All HEPPP projects are assessed against Commonwealth eligibility criteria and the University’s strategic objectives. Program evaluation is an inherent component of all initiatives. The agreed priorities for 2018 included:

- School Partnerships Program
- College outreach activities to secondary schools and other sites
- Succeed Program (Academic Early Warning System)
- Peer Learning Advisers (PLAs)
- Subject Support Tutor Program
- Equity and Diversity Centre (EDC) programs
- UniBridges
- Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research (CHEEDR)
- Equity scholarships and bursaries – e.g. Work Help: Employment Grants, Student Mobility Assistance Scholarships, Care Leaver Bursaries and Students from Refugee Backgrounds Bursaries.

Further information

If you are interested in further information about HEPPP please contact the Centre on cheedr@latrobe.edu.au
Institutional Strategies

La Trobe University’s care leaver strategy

Supported by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (DVCA), the Centre worked to develop a holistic strategy to attract and support care leavers – i.e. those who have spent time in out-of-home care, residential care, kinship care, or as a ward of the state – at the University. The strategy aims to:

- raise the higher education aspirations for young people in out-of-home care and care leavers;
- increase enrolments of care leavers at La Trobe University;
- increase support for care leavers attending La Trobe University to encourage their success in higher education; and
- continue leading the national research agenda and influencing national policy on care leavers and higher education.

The Centre also led the development of bursaries for all commencing, domestic undergraduate students at the University who spent time in formal out-of-home care. The University’s care leaver strategy won the Equity and Opportunity category of the Australian Financial Review (AFR) Higher Education Awards in 2017. CHEEDR and contributing staff from across the University were also awarded the 2017 Vice Chancellor’s staff award for their care leaver research and initiatives.

Table 2: La Trobe University care leaver initiatives

<table>
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<tr>
<th>INITIATIVES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>Successfully advocated a change to the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS) application to enable care leavers to be captured as a specific ‘difficult circumstance’ in the admission process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>Developed Care Leaver Bursaries. All commencing, domestic undergraduate students at La Trobe University who are care leavers are offered a $500 bursary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach programs</td>
<td>Worked with the School Partnerships Program and other areas to develop outreach programs to inform care leavers of the variety of pathways into university. This work included an outreach day for students in out-of-home care, carers and agency staff held at the Bendigo campus on 23 September, 2016. In 2017, the School Partnerships Program extended its outreach program to two flexible learning schools, which have a high proportion of young people in out-of-home care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Developed a process to identify care leavers enrolled at the University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support services</td>
<td>Collaborated with Student Development Advisers and other staff to introduce structured support services for care leavers, including personalised academic support and centralised referral to other support services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>- Conducted internationally leading research on care leavers accessing higher education through the report: ‘Out of care into university: Raising higher education access and achievement of care leavers’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Led a project funded by the Department of Education and Training, titled ‘Recruiting and supporting care leavers in Australian higher education’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- In November 2017, Andrew Harvey presented as part of a Special Interest Group for Out of Home Care Leavers at the Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) Conference, Brisbane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Influence</td>
<td>Presented before the Senate Committee hearings into Out-of-Home Care, with this advice informing the majority of the ‘Higher education and training opportunities’ section of the Senate Committee’s subsequent report.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

La Trobe University has received funding as part of three externally funded projects to undertake specific activities within the above strategy.
- A $724,000 large grant from the Sidney Myer Fund to the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (CFECFW) for a project on which La Trobe University is a consortium member. The three year project has allocated funding for wrap-around and outreach services for care leavers so there is managed provision of support for this cohort that are embedded into both new and existing initiatives within the University.

- A $127,000 National Priorities Pool grant for research into 'Recruiting and supporting care leavers in Australian higher education'. The project was funded for 2016 and La Trobe University was the lead partner with three other universities. The project included: developing methods for higher education institutions to collect data on care leaver students; conducting in depth interviews with care leaver students to improve understanding of their needs; developing a university handbook for care leavers; and developing guidelines for university staff delivering outreach and support to care leavers.

- A $64,000 grant from the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) to increase the visibility of the out-of-home care cohort and to provide a strong information base for future policy and research work. The 2014 research project, 'University Access and Achievement of People from Out-of-home Care Backgrounds', mapped the higher education sector in relation to people from out-of-home care backgrounds, including kinship care and foster care.

**La Trobe and Fed Uni’s Care Leaver Strategy wins prestigious higher education award**

La Trobe University and Federation University Australia’s Higher Education for Care Leavers Strategy won the Equity and Opportunity category of the 2017 Australian Financial Review (AFR) Higher Education Awards. The awards recognise innovation and achievement in Australia’s higher education sector. Over 100 entries were considered by the judging panel of eminent higher education veterans. The winners of the AFR Higher Education Awards were announced at a gala dinner on 29 August, as part of The Australian Financial Review Higher Education Summit. Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, Director of CHEEDR, accepted the award.

**La Trobe Staff Awards: Vice Chancellor’s ‘Living the Cultural Qualities’ award**

The CHEEDR team and other contributing staff from across the University were awarded the 2017 Vice Chancellor’s ‘Living the La Trobe Cultural Qualities’ award. CHEEDR and contributors were recognised for their ‘outstanding contribution to La Trobe University leading to the first major national research project into care leavers and higher education; underpinning the Higher Education for Care Leavers Strategy, an innovative approach to transforming the lives of some of society’s most disadvantaged people through education’.

**Further information**

More information about La Trobe University’s care leaver strategy is available at [www.latrobe.edu.au/cheedr/care-leavers](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/cheedr/care-leavers)
La Trobe’s support for new migrant groups

La Trobe continues to attract and support new migrant groups at University, including those from refugee backgrounds.

Table 3: La Trobe University new migrant group initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INITIATIVES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>The Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP) provides strong foundational skills and strategies for learning across a variety of interrelated subject areas to ensure students reach tertiary level by the completion of the program. TEP enrolments include students from refugee backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Financial Support | **Bursaries for students from refugee backgrounds:** All commencing, domestic undergraduate students at La Trobe University on humanitarian visas were eligible to receive a $500 bursary in 2017.  
**Humanitarian Scholarships:** In 2017 La Trobe introduced humanitarian scholarships for students who are seeking asylum or are refugees on temporary protection visas.  
- Two undergraduate coursework (Bachelor) scholarships. These scholarships cover full tuition costs for the duration of the degree (maximum of three years) and a $3,000 per year cost-of-living bursary.  
- Fifteen Tertiary Enabling Program scholarships. These scholarships cover full tuition costs for the twelve week Tertiary Enabling Program and a $1,500 cost-of-living bursary. |
| Support Services  | **Support for students from refugee backgrounds webpage:** This dedicated webpage provides useful information about La Trobe, including offers, fees and the support available to students from refugee backgrounds.  
**Support Officer:** There is a Support Officer located at each campus of La Trobe University. These staff can help students understand the way things are done at an Australian university, and can potentially provide financial and other assistance. They can also help students to apply for a place and a scholarship at La Trobe.  
**Pro bono advice for people seeking asylum:** La Trobe Law School has partnered with the ASRC to run a clinic offering free legal services to asylum seekers. |
| Research          | - La Trobe led a $144,460 project funded by the Department of Education and Training, titled ‘Raising university participation of new migrants in regional communities’. The project was led by Director of the Centre, Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, and Senior Lecturer, Dr Anthony Moran.  
- Other new migrant research at La Trobe includes: Migrant workers in Shepparton: intersections of social and spatial mobility; Reimagining refugee resettlement through a transnational lens: The Karen in Bendigo; and Tongans in regional Victoria: settlers, seasonal workers and overstayers. |
Webpage: La Trobe’s support for new migrants

La Trobe University’s Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research (CHEEDR) created a webpage outlining the range of financial, academic and personal support available to new migrant students. The page also outlines major interdisciplinary research projects being undertaken across the University which aim to increase our understanding and support of migrant groups. The page was developed in consultation with the Equity and Diversity Centre, Future Students’ Centre, La Trobe International, and the Transforming Human Societies Research Focus Area (RFA).

La Trobe’s support for new migrants webpage: http://www.latrobe.edu.au/cheedr/new-migrants
Internal Research

Targeted institutional research

The Centre retained a focus on supporting access for under-represented students and also strengthened efforts to improve retention and student success across the whole university.

Campus Climate

In December 2017, the Centre commenced the pilot Campus Climate survey. The survey explores student perceptions of diversity on campus, including: potential benefits of diversity for teaching and learning; effectiveness of current pedagogical/andragogical approaches; support offered to students from diverse backgrounds; and experiences of discrimination. The project will inform teaching and learning practices as well as broader University strategies, consistent with the strategic objective of inclusive excellence. The Centre will commence analysis of the survey in 2018.

Internal data requests and analysis

In 2017, the Centre analysed student completion rates at La Trobe University. The findings were presented to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

The Centre also responded to data requests from a number of La Trobe employees, including subject and course coordinators, HEPPP project coordinators, and La Trobe Teaching and Learning staff. These requests include providing data on student equity and teaching and learning indicators.

Retention and completion performance

In 2017, the Centre completed a briefing paper on La Trobe’s retention and completion performance. The paper also looked at the initiatives designed to improve the University’s performance. The briefing was provided to the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment Bill

In May 2017, the Government brought forward the Higher Educational Support Legislation Amendment (A More Sustainable, Responsive and Transparent Higher Education System) Bill 2017 to make policy changes in the higher education sector. The Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee invited stakeholders to respond to the Bill.

The Centre was asked to examine a number of key issues presented in the Bill. The Centre examined: the treatment of permanent residents and New Zealand citizens under the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS); and, looked at the equity effects of reforms to the enabling loading. The briefing papers were provided to the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

Evaluation of the School Partnerships Program

In 2017, the Centre commenced the biennial evaluation of the La Trobe School Partnerships Program (SPP). The SPP involves the collaboration between La Trobe University and local schools, whereby year 7 to 10 students are given access to a range of engaging activities designed to raise awareness of higher education and inform career aspiration. Activities are closely linked to curriculum, aiming to aid motivation and learning confidence.

The evaluation includes a survey that measures the university aspirations of over 10,000 students from the thirty eight schools involved in the SPP. In addition to students, over 890 school staff were surveyed. The project also measures other elements of student and teacher experiences related to aspirations, including the analysis of the influences that might inform individual ambitions.

The Centre has commenced the analysis of the surveys and will present the evaluation report to the Manager of the School Partnerships Program in 2018.
**College of Science, Health and Engineering (SHE) outreach program evaluation**

The outreach program evaluation was completed in collaboration with the College of Science, Health and Engineering (SHE) and analysed the participation and experience of La Trobe University’s science, health and engineering students who participated in secondary-school science outreach programs. The purpose of this project was to ensure the outreach programs continue to be appropriately targeted by the University and to examine any potential impact the program might have on school enrolment patterns.

The Centre used data from the University’s RightNow database to examine patterns within university enrolments compared to the number of outreach sessions by school. Results from this project support previous research suggesting that science-based outreach programs are very well received by students, with both quantitative and qualitative survey data indicating high satisfaction with the program.

We found that, on average, there has been a corresponding increase in enrolment rates as outreach intensity has increased. The survey highlights the positive influence of the outreach program on student recruitment decisions, and the need for further breadth of outreach among major feeder schools.

**Submissions to inquiries**

In 2017, the Centre contributed to a number of La Trobe submissions to national and state inquiries.

**Table 4: Inquiry submissions the Centre contributed to in 2017.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INQUIRY</th>
<th>BODY CONDUCTING INQUIRY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Government’s Inquiry into Regional Development and Decentralisation</td>
<td>House of Representatives Select Committee on Regional Development and Decentralisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry into School to Work Transition</td>
<td>Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education</td>
<td>Department of Immigration and Border protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa Simplification: Transforming Australia’s Visa System</td>
<td>Department of Immigration and Border protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible key elements of HEPPP Guidelines</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonski Review - Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scholarships and Bursaries

Access Scholarships

La Trobe University offers a number of Access Scholarships to students commencing tertiary studies for the first time who can demonstrate financial hardship and/or educational disadvantage.

Work Help: Employment Grants

The Centre found that students from regional areas and low socio-economic status backgrounds are less likely to participate in work experience opportunities that are vital in improving graduate employability. To address this issue, the Centre proposed implementing employability bursaries for disadvantaged students valued at $2,000 per student. The Centre worked with the Colleges, Student Services, and the Academic Services Management Office to develop the employment grants scheme for low socio-economic status students.

The Work Help: Employment Grants were first offered in 2015. In 2017, over 145 Work Help: Employment Grants were awarded to financially disadvantaged students. The employment grants will continue to be HEPPP-funded through 2018.

The Centre has continued to conduct research into employability, and was awarded a $76,000 research grant for 2016 from the HEPPP National Priorities Pool. The project, titled ‘Student equity and employability in higher education’, investigated how institutions can ensure their employability strategies are accessible and relevant to diverse student cohorts, particularly students from low socio-economic status backgrounds.

Student Mobility Assistance Scholarships

Research undertaken by the Centre in 2015 highlighted that both low socio-economic status and regional students are less likely to enrol in a language unit and less likely to travel internationally for study. To address this issue, the Centre subsequently worked with Student Services, the Academic Services Management Office and La Trobe International (LTI) to develop the Student Mobility Assistance Scholarship to assist low socio-economic status students to participate in overseas study programs. Now in their second year, the Student Mobility Assistance Scholarships were awarded to 30 financially disadvantaged students in 2017. The Mobility Assistance Scholarships will continue to be HEPPP-funded through 2018.

Care Leaver Bursaries

The Centre conducted research on care leavers accessing higher education through its report Out of care into university: Raising higher education access and achievement of care leavers. The research found that people who have spent time in out-of-home care rarely transition to higher education. To address this issue, the Centre proposed the development of a bursary to assist care leavers starting university. In 2017, the $500 bursaries were awarded to all eligible commencing, domestic undergraduate students who have spent time in out-of-home care. The Care Leaver Bursaries will continue to be HEPPP-funded through 2018.

Bursaries for students from refugee backgrounds

The Equity and Diversity Centre continues to support students from refugee backgrounds, and every domestic student accepted on a humanitarian visa is eligible for financial support. In 2017, $500 bursaries were awarded to all eligible commencing, domestic undergraduate students at La Trobe University on humanitarian visas. The bursaries for students from refugee backgrounds will continue to be HEPPP-funded through 2018.

Humanitarian Scholarships

In consultation with staff from La Trobe International and Educational Partnerships and Quality, the Centre led the development of two new undergraduate and fifteen new Tertiary Enabling Program humanitarian scholarships, for students who are seeking asylum or are refugees on temporary protection visas.

People who are refugees on temporary protection visas or are seeking asylum on bridging visas are currently
considered as international students, and are therefore required to pay full fees for enabling and coursework programs. The Centre worked with La Trobe International (LTI) and the Tertiary Enabling Program to define the humanitarian scholarship model, which covers all tuition costs, and includes cost-of-living bursaries. The new Humanitarian Scholarships were offered for the first time in 2017.

One of the 2017 undergraduate humanitarian scholarships was awarded to Iranian refugee Tala Afshak. The scholarship provides Tala with free tuition for her nursing degree at La Trobe and $3,000 per year to cover living expenses while she undertakes her course. Tala’s story has attracted national media attention, including an article in *The Age*. 
Recent Competitive External Grants

In 2017, the Centre worked on seven competitive external grants, valued at over $1.57 million.

Table 5: The Centre’s competitive external grants 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT TITLE</th>
<th>FUNDING</th>
<th>YEAR AWARDED</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
<th>LA TROBE’S ROLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Designing Equitable Principles for Performance Based Funding</td>
<td>$37,250</td>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education</td>
<td>LEAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Equity at and beyond the boundary of Australian universities</td>
<td>$39,500</td>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education</td>
<td>PARTNER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Supporting younger veterans to succeed in higher education</td>
<td>$21,975</td>
<td>July 2017</td>
<td>Department of Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>LEAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Raising university participation of new migrant groups in low SES and regional communities</td>
<td>$144,460</td>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>Department of Education National Priorities Pool 2016</td>
<td>LEAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Improving education outcomes for young people in out-of-home care</td>
<td>$724,000</td>
<td>June 2015</td>
<td>Sidney Myer Fund</td>
<td>PARTNER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Development of an international student equity admissions framework</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Margin Buster Micro Grant University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>PARTNER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,573,169</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National reports

The Centre completed four externally-funded national research projects in 2017:
1. The re-recruitment of students who have withdrawn from Australian higher education
2. Student equity and employability in higher education
3. Recruiting and supporting care leavers in Australian higher education
4. A comparative evaluation of the efficacy of the equity strategies employed by Australian universities.

Additional staff members

Joining the five core members of the Centre, three additional, fixed-term staff members were funded through external grants between January 2017 and December 2017.
National Priorities Pool

**Professional development in equity interventions for school teachers**

La Trobe is a partner on a $600,000 research grant from the Department of Education and Training’s 2017 National Priorities Pool funding round. The successful project, ‘Professional development in equity interventions for school teachers’, is led by the University of Newcastle in a consortium with La Trobe. La Trobe is represented by Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, Director of CHEEDR, and Professor Jo Lampert, Professor of Education at La Trobe.

The project will develop, trial and evaluate a suite of innovative professional learning modules designed to build teachers’ capacities to better support students from low socio-economic status backgrounds on the path to higher education. The aim of the project is to develop high quality professional learning modules, customised to support Australian teachers across three stages of schooling (Years 1-6, 7-9, 10-12) and accessible to teachers of students from low socio-economic status backgrounds in all geographic areas and all schooling sectors (government, Catholic and independent).

**Raising university participation of new migrants in regional communities**

In October 2016, La Trobe received a $144,460 grant from the Department of Education and Training’s 2016 National Priorities Pool funding round. The successful project, ‘Raising university participation of new migrants in regional communities’, was led by Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, Director of CHEEDR, and Dr Anthony Moran, Senior Lecturer at La Trobe. The project explored the university aspirations and experiences of new migrants in low socio-economic status, regional communities, and the extent to which regional campuses support ethnic, socio-economic and religious diversity.

Our research involved interviews and focus groups with a wide range of new migrants and related stakeholders in the regional Victorian communities of Shepparton and Mildura. Findings reveal multiple challenges for the higher education sector, from diversifying university outreach, admission schemes, and pathways to facilitating more inclusive courses and campuses.

The project team also included Dr Mark Mallman and Giovanna Szalkowicz. The final report was submitted to the Department of Education and Training in early 2018.

**A comparative evaluation of the efficacy of the equity strategies employed by Australian universities**

This project examined the efficacy of equity strategies employed at Australian universities which are aimed at improving opportunities and the success in higher education by people from low socio-economic status backgrounds. The $156,686 project was led by Central Queensland University in partnership with Federation University of Australia, University of the Sunshine Coast, University of Newcastle, La Trobe University and James Cook University. La Trobe University was represented by Associate Professor Andrew Harvey.

The project conducted a comparative evaluation of the efficacy of the approaches each partner university employs to guide the prioritisation, management and evaluation of the outcomes of initiatives aimed at increasing access, participation, and outcomes for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The project also reported how the partner universities act on the findings from evaluations to plan future equity-related policy, initiatives and services.

As a part of the project, a good-practice guide was developed to assist the wider higher education community in applying effective approaches to guiding selection, management, evaluation and acting on the findings of equity initiatives within their own institutional contexts. The final report was submitted to the Department of Education and Training in early 2017.
National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE)

Designing equitable principles for performance based funding

In August 2017, La Trobe received a $37,250 research grant from the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education’s (NCSEHE) 2017 funding round. The project will outline effective design principles of performance based funding (PBF) models, to protect and support student equity in Australian higher education. Current Government proposals include plans for a mainstream PBF program worth $500 million, as well as a smaller PBF element of HEPPP funding. These proposals are in addition to recent performance based measures in Indigenous support funding. Drawing on evidence from the United States and United Kingdom and an analysis of national data sets, the project will explore principles required to support identified student equity groups, and to ensure equitable assessment of admissions, student success, and graduate outcomes.

The project is led by Associate Professor Andrew Harvey (Chief Investigator) and Matt Brett from La Trobe. Project partners include Dr Tiffany Jones (The Education Trust), Professor Julia Clarke (Manchester Metropolitan University), and Associate Professor Jason Taylor (University of Utah).

Equity at and beyond the boundary of Australian universities

The Centre is a partner on a $39,500 research grant from the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education’s (NCSEHE) 2017 funding round. The project will build the evidence base around student equity at and beyond the boundary of Australian universities.

Many disadvantaged higher education students are enrolled through third party delivery arrangements and non-university higher education providers. However, comparatively little is known about student demographics and learning outcomes in this domain. This project builds a much needed evidence base around student equity at and beyond the boundary of Australian universities. The project will establish baseline data and a framework for continuing analysis of student equity in third party delivery and non-university providers. The framework will support evaluation of policy changes (such as performance funding, sub-bachelor funding and provider category reforms) likely to have a significant impact on this domain of participation.

The project is led by Matt Brett (Chief Investigator), Associate Professor Andrew Harvey and Associate Professor Buly Cardak. Other project partners include Professor Peter Noonan (Victoria University).

Department of Veterans’ Affairs

Supporting younger veterans to succeed in higher education.

In July 2017, La Trobe University received a $21,975 grant from the Department of Veterans’ Affairs Supporting Younger Veterans program. The grants program supports the needs of younger military veterans as they leave the Australian Defence Force and integrate back into civilian life. The project, ‘Supporting younger veterans to succeed in higher education’, is led by Associate Professor Andrew Harvey and Lisa Andrewartha.

Working with the Australian Student Veterans Association (ASVA), the researchers aim to redress the lack of national research into the number of younger veterans at university, their specific needs and strengths, and their graduate outcomes. The project will ask for student veterans’ views on: barriers to accessing higher education; the potential to improve support services; strengths that veterans bring to their studies; formal recognition for military service; and the potential to develop and expand ASVA chapters across Australian campuses. The research will inform university policies and practices to better support younger veterans to succeed in higher education.
**Sidney Myer Fund**

*Improving education outcomes for young people in out-of-home care*

La Trobe University is a joint recipient of a Sidney Myer Fund large grant to develop, implement, and evaluate a suite of interventions to improve education for young Victorians in out-of-home care. Led by the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (CFECFW), the $724,000 grant will be used to raise transition rates to tertiary education and to improve the educational achievement of care leavers. La Trobe University is represented by Associate Professor Andrew Harvey and Professor Pamela Snow. Federation University Australia is the third member of the consortium. Additional project participants include Anglicare, Mackillop Family Services, and TAFE institutions associated with the participating universities.

The project includes training for foster carers and social workers; education resources for people in care; and new university programs for care leavers. The three year project, includes funding for La Trobe University to raise educational awareness and aspirations among young people living in out-of-home care through outreach programs. It also provides funding for La Trobe University to coordinate support for care leavers attending La Trobe University.

The project is collaborative, systemic, and state-wide. The work supports La Trobe University’s broader strategy to increase access and achievement for care leavers – including the ‘Out of care, into university: Raising University access and achievement of people from out-of-home care backgrounds’ project, the ‘Recruiting and supporting care leavers in Australian higher education’ project, and La Trobe University initiatives such as the care leaver bursary.

**Margin Buster Grant**

*International student equity admissions framework*

This project will develop stage one of the two-stage project assessing the design and effectiveness of international higher education access equity policies. La Trobe University and the University of Pennsylvania were joint recipients of the US$2,500 Margin Buster Grant.

This project aims to develop an empirical framework for international comparative evaluation of higher education admissions policies, specifically in relation to students who are defined as minorities, disadvantaged, underserved or under-represented. The nations of focus are Australia, South Africa, Brazil, and the United States.
Summary of Funding Sources

Competitive Grants 2017 - Total $1,573,169

- Improving education outcomes for young people in out-of-home care (Sidney Myer Fund: $724,000)
- Professional development in equity interventions for school teachers (NPP: $599,984)
- Raising participation of new migrant groups in low SES and regional communities (NPP: $144,460)
- Designing equitable principles for performance based funding (NCSEHE: $37,250)
- Equity at and beyond the boundary of Australian universities (NCSEHE: $39,500)
- Supporting younger veterans to succeed in higher education (DVA: $21,975)
- Development of an international student equity admissions framework (UoP: $6,000)
International Collaborations

The Centre is involved in a number of international collaborations, including: research grants, connections and visiting fellowships.

International Research Grants

‘Student Equity Admissions Framework’ project funded by the University of Pennsylvania through the Margin Buster Micro Grant.

International Connections

Manchester Metropolitan University – Professor Julia Clarke and Dr Sam Sellar

Pontifical Catholic University of Chile – A/Professor Daniela Véliz Calderón and Professor Andrés Bernasconi

American Council of Education – Dr Lucia Bratkovic

ARC DECRA Fellow – Dr Tiffany Jones

University of Southern California – A/Professor Darnell Cole

University of Utah – A/Professor Jason Taylor

University of Girona – Dr Carme Montserrat

University of London – Professor Claire Cameron.

International Visiting Fellowships

Associate Professor Stella Flores

Associate Professor Flores and the Director of CHEEDR are the lead investigators on a collaborative project which aims to develop a comparative international student equity admissions framework for higher education. This work builds on an initial seeding grant ($2,500 US) awarded to the applicant and collaborator by the University of Pennsylvania in 2015, and addresses the need to transform societies by improving educational equity and opportunity.

The Research Focus Area: Transforming Human Societies executive committee fully funded the Centre’s visiting fellowship application for Associate Professor Stella Flores in August 2016. A/Prof Flores is Director of Access and Equity at the Steinhardt Institute for Higher Education Policy at New York University.

As part of the fellowship, the Centre hosted a seminar on ‘Equity Policies in Admissions’. A/Prof Flores spoke about the ‘College Equity Trajectory’ in the United States and why it might matter for other nations. A/Prof Flores highlighted the unequal university access and completion rates in the United States and emphasised the benefits of diversity on university campuses.
Dr Carla Houkamau

In June 2017, the Centre welcomed visiting fellow Dr Carla Houkamau from the University of Auckland. Dr Houkamau is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Management and International Business at the University of Auckland. She is the Academic Director of the Tuākana programme (in the Auckland University Business School). As a social psychologist, Dr Houkamau has researched diversity within the Māori population, and the impact of systems’ bias towards Māori. She has emerged as a national expert on the concept of implicit bias.

As part of the fellowship, the Centre hosted a seminar on ‘Cooperative Learning and the Tuākana Advantage: Towards Equity in Higher Education for Māori’. Dr Houkamau outlined some of the challenges facing Māori in higher education, specifically at how unconscious bias towards Māori shapes educational outcomes.
Awards

Staff Awards – Vice Chancellor’s Living the La Trobe Cultural Qualities award

CHEEDR and other contributing staff from across the university were awarded the Vice-Chancellor’s Living the La Trobe Cultural Qualities Award. This award is awarded to an individual or team who embodies La Trobe’s cultural qualities and who has made an outstanding contribution to the University. CHEEDR were recognised for ‘leading the first major national research project into care leavers and higher education; underpinning the Higher Education for Care Leavers Strategy, an innovative approach to transforming the lives of some of society’s most disadvantaged people through education’. Over 450 staff attended the staff awards ceremony on 8 December 2017.

The CHEEDR team and contributing staff receiving the 'Vice Chancellor’s Living the La Trobe Cultural Qualities' award at the La Trobe staff awards ceremony.
La Trobe and FedUni’s Care Leaver Strategy awarded prestigious higher education award

La Trobe University and Federation University Australia’s Higher Education for Care Leavers Strategy won the ‘Equity and Opportunity’ category of the Australian Financial Review (AFR) Higher Education Awards.

Now in their third year, the prestigious awards recognise innovation and achievement in Australia’s higher education sector. Over 100 entries were considered by the judging panel of eminent higher education veterans.

The Higher Education for Care Leavers Strategy is a comprehensive approach to raise university access and success for care leavers. La Trobe and FedUni have successfully collaborated to provide outreach, academic and financial support to assist people who have spent time in foster, residential, or kinship care (care leavers).

The Care Leavers’ Strategy was informed by research conducted by La Trobe’s Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research (CHEEDR). The evidence-based initiatives have successfully: improved data capture on care leavers at the point of application and enrolment; increased outreach to flexible learning schools and care(r) organisations; improved support for enrolled care leavers through the provision of bursaries and scholarships; increased awareness of the specific needs of care leavers as an equity group through the development and distribution of guidelines for university staff; and influenced institutional, state and national research and policy agendas.

The Strategy is strongly supported by the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, which leads a Sidney Myer Fund grant project on which La Trobe and FedUni are partners. Research informing the Strategy has been funded by the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education and the Department of Education and Training National Priorities Pool.

The winners of the AFR Higher Education Awards were announced at a gala dinner on 29 August, as part of The Australian Financial Review Higher Education Summit. Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, Director of CHEEDR, accepted the award.

Media

La Trobe University. 2017. Award for children in care initiative. La Trobe University news. 30 August.

Dodd, T. 2017. ANU economist Bruce Chapman honoured with the AFR Higher Education Lifetime Achievement Award. Australian Financial Review. 30 August


Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity Research, La Trobe University. 2017. La Trobe and FedUni’s Care Leaver Strategy wins prestigious higher education award. CHEEDR News and Events webpage. 4 September.
Keynote and Policy Presentations

Careers Pathway Forum

The Director of CHEEDR spoke to over two hundred students and their parents at Cathedral College Wangaratta’s Careers Pathway Forum on 27 July 2017. The forum explored the personal skills and qualities that are required for a diverse range of career pathway options and addressed questions such as where next after school and how to prepare for life after school. A/Prof Harvey spoke about ‘pathways to the future’ and university study.

La Trobe Principals’ Dinner

The Director of CHEEDR gave the keynote address at the annual Principals’ dinner in Albury-Wodonga on 16 May 2017. The event was attended by Principals from local secondary schools, Vice-Chancellor Professor John Dewar, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional) Professor Richard Speed, and La Trobe staff.

Equity and Widening Participation Practitioners Writing Programme

The Director of CHEEDR is an academic mentor for the Equity and Widening Participation Practitioners Writing Programme 2017. Organised and sponsored by The Office for Fair Access (OFFA), Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Newcastle, the programme seeks to improve evaluation of widening participation practice in higher education by matching up practitioners with academic mentors. The mentoring programme aims to: enhance the relationship between widening participation practitioners and academics; raise the profile of robust evaluation of widening participation activity nationally and internationally; and support widening participation practitioners to present evaluations of their practice in refereed academic journals, enabling practitioners and academics to share their work with broader audiences.

A Comparative Study of the equity strategies employed by Australian universities

La Trobe University was a partner institution on the National Priorities Pool funded project: Comparative study of the equity strategies employed by Australian universities. The Director of CHEEDR presented La Trobe’s case study at the National Forum which was held at Queensland University of Technology on 21 April 2017. The project focussed on effective strategies for planning, managing and evaluating Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP) funded initiatives. The forum included presentations by project team members from CQUniversity Australia, Federation University Australia, James Cook University, La Trobe University, the University of Newcastle, and the University of the Sunshine Coast.
Improving Transparency in University Admissions Conference

The Improving Transparency in University Admissions Conference was held at Victoria University City Convention Centre in Melbourne on 6-7 June 2017. The conference featured keynote presentations from leaders in the sector on how to improve the transparency of admissions data and how to implement a transparent admission processes whilst maintaining quality and remaining equitable. Associate Professor Andrew Harvey presented on "The relationship between transparency, equity and quality: How do schools understand university admissions?". A/Prof Harvey examined some of the challenges of equity, efficiency and transparency; student perceptions and understandings; and perspectives of careers advisers.

The Higher Education Standards Panel hearing

The Director of CHEEDR was invited to attend the Higher Education Standards Panel hearing in Canberra on 8 June. The Higher Education Standards Panel held targeted hearings as part of their work on retention, completion and student success in higher education.

Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) conference

Giovanna Szalkowicz, Senior Project Coordinator/Research Officer, presented a paper at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) conference in Canberra on 28 November. The paper examined student motivations for leaving university and the factors affecting their re-enrolment.


The Director of CHEEDR presented at the launch of the National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia (NAEEA) Research Development and Collaboration Special Interest Group (SIG). The new group aims to bring together colleagues who are interested in research about enabling programs, and the transition of students into and through higher education and lifelong learning. The SIG launch was held at the University of Newcastle, Sydney campus on 27 June. A/Prof Harvey spoke about current policy settings and challenges for enabling programs.

NCSEHE’s inaugural topical workshop

The Director of CHEEDR was an invited expert at the NCSEHE’s inaugural topical workshop ‘Career advice to students in low SES or regional/remote high schools’. The small group of experts included researchers, practitioners, policy makers and community partners. A/Prof Harvey contributed his insights as a subject matter expert in research and policy, drawing especially on the Centre’s report on Tertiary Admissions Practices published in 2016. He addressed questions such as what does effective career advice to students in low SES or regional/remote high schools look like? Why is it difficult to deliver effective career advice in these schools?

This workshop was the first in a series of four workshops which aim to: define a collective knowledge base informed by research and practice; engage in strategic and action planning to guide institutional practice and future research; and develop evidence-informed policy advice. The workshop was held at the University of Canberra on Thursday, 28 September 2017.
Writing the rural into policy and practice conference

The Director of CHEEDR presented a paper at the SPERA *Rethinking Rurality: Writing the rural into policy and practice* conference, held at the University of Canberra on 27-29 September. Authored by Naomi Tootell and A/Prof Andrew Harvey, ‘*Equity and complexity: regional school students and the challenge of university admissions*’, is published in the *Rural Higher Education (Special Edition)*. The paper highlights how regional Australians continue to be under-represented within higher education, despite the recent dramatic expansion of university places and admissions schemes. The paper advocates greater consideration of student equity in university admissions policies, in addition to greater transparency.

The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) conference

Dr Mark Mallman, Senior Research Officer, co-presented a paper on ‘Migrant belonging and mobility: Participation in regional Australian universities’ at the *The Australian Sociological Association (TASA)* conference. The paper was based on CHEEDR’s research into university participation of new migrants in regional communities. It argued toward an understanding of ways convivialities in the classroom, as practices of inter-ethnic everyday interactions, produce symbolic boundaries of both belonging and stigmatisation.

Out-of-home Care Special Interest Group at EPHEA

The Director of CHEEDR co-hosted the Special Interest Group on ‘Out of home care leavers and Higher Education’ at the *Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA)* conference in Brisbane. Held on 20 November 2017, the SIG highlighted some of the current issues and practices around supporting care leavers to access and engage in tertiary education in Australia. A/Prof Harvey presented CHEEDR’s leading research into care leavers, including the resulting recommendations and findings. Participant were invited to discuss how to address the identified issues through future practice.

Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) in Houston

The Director of CHEEDR was an invited speaker at the *Association for the Study of Higher Education* in Houston on 8 December. Andrew presented on the equity implications of performance-based funding in Australian higher education.

NCSEHE Equity Fellows Forum

The Director of CHEEDR was an invited attendee at the *NCSEHE’s Equity Fellows Forum* in Brisbane on 20 November. The National Equity Fellows Forum showcased the three projects conducted by the 2017 Equity Fellows: Louise Pollard, Matt Brett and James A. Smith. The presentations were followed by a group discussion with the 60 attendees sharing insights, experiences and ideas to work toward improving outcomes for disadvantaged students in Australian higher education.
Events

Cooperative Learning and the Tuākana Advantage: Towards Equity in Higher Education for Māori

The Centre hosted the ‘Cooperative Learning and the Tuākana Advantage: Towards Equity in Higher Education for Māori’ seminar with visiting fellow Dr Carla Houkamau from the University of Auckland. The event was held at the La Trobe Melbourne Campus on 15 June 2017. Dr Houkamau is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Management and International Business at the University of Auckland and the Academic Director of the Tuākana program.

Dr Houkamau outlined some of the challenges facing Māori in higher education, specifically at how unconscious bias towards Māori shapes educational outcomes. Dr Houkamau also spoke about the University of Auckland’s Tuākana program; a mentoring program dedicated to enhancing the academic success of Māori and Pacific students. The Tuākana program offers small-group learning, face-to-face academic coaching and assessment workshops, to connect Māori and Pacific students with senior Māori and Pacific students (tuākana), academic teaching staff, and key people across the University. By adopting Tuākana as a model, Dr Houkamau’s presentation looked at ways of mitigating bias and raising the bar for Māori in higher education. The seminar was attended by La Trobe University students and staff including researchers, lecturers, and representatives from Educational Partnerships, Human Resources and Learning and Teaching.

National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE)

CHEEDR welcomed the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) staff for a formal research visit on 29 March 2017. It was an opportunity for CHEEDR and NCSEHE staff to talk about recent research and discuss possible research projects for collaboration in 2017-2018.

People seeking asylum and higher education

Senior Project Coordinator/Research Officer, Giovanna Szalkowicz, attended the National symposium: People seeking asylum and higher education held on 15 November 2017 at Melbourne University. The event brought together people from asylum seeker backgrounds and representatives from Australian universities and community organisations. Students with lived experiences of seeking asylum shared their stories and representatives from universities and community organisations had the opportunity to share examples of good practice as well as common challenges.
Publications

Book chapters


Peer-refereed journal articles


National reports


strategies employed by Australian universities. Australia: CQUniversity Australia.

Conference papers


Keynote presentations


Harvey, A. (2017). *Invited expert, NCSEHE Workshop: Career advice for students in low SES or regional/remote high schools*, University of Canberra, 28 September.


National media


Hare, J. (2017, July 5). *Free enabling programs key to education equity: Andrew Harvey*. The Australian.

Bennett, A., Harvey, A., Fagan, S. (2017, May 18). *Programs that prepare students for university study may no longer be free*. The Conversation.


Harvey, A. (2017, April 3). *Should university funding be tied to student performance?* The Conversation.


Media Appearances

Performance based funding

The Daily 2SER. (2017, April 4). *Should Uni Funding be Tied to Performance?*. 2SER (FM 107.3).


Related media

Student equity in higher education

Grants Program Projects. The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education. Curtin University: Perth.

Student attrition

Hare, J. (2017, June 7). Non university providers account for more dropouts. The Australian.

Student re-recruitment


Hare, J. (2017, March 15). Equity students more satisfied but still likely to drop out. The Australian.


Student equity and employability


First-in-family


Performance based funding


The Daily 2SER. (2017, April 4). Should Uni Funding be Tied to Performance?. 2SER (FM 107.3).


Tertiary Admissions Practices


Enabling programs

Hare, J. (2017, July 5). Free enabling programs key to education equity: Andrew Harvey. The Australian.


Higher Education Partnerships and Participation Programme


Out-of-home care

Ruah Community Services (June 2017). Positive Futures: experiences of school and further education in out-of-home care (Fremantle, Rockingham & Kwinana Western Australia). Project report.


Disadvantaged student enrolments

Nested courses


Website

Centre for Higher Education Equity & Diversity Research
http://www.latrobe.edu.au/cheedr
# Acronym list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AARE</td>
<td>Australian Association for Research in Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFR</td>
<td>Australian Financial Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>Australian Research Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASHE</td>
<td>Association for the Study of Higher Education (USA)</td>
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<td>ASRC</td>
<td>Asylum Seeker Resource Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASSC</td>
<td>College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce (La Trobe University)</td>
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<td>ASVA</td>
<td>Australian Student Veterans Association</td>
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<td>ATSI</td>
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<td>DVCA</td>
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</table>
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