



## THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY & DIVERSITY PRACTICE

**'Frankly, too many of our diversity efforts take place in the tactical realm, lacking an overarching strategic plan.'**

(Williams, D. (2013), p.185).

## EMERGING THEMES

Successful equity and diversity strategy:

- ✓ is built on the idea that inclusive practice brings organisational dividends and institutional excellence. This is vital as universities face the challenges of diversification, massification, corporatisation, hyper competition, globalised markets, and shrinking public funding.
- ✓ advances the academic project and preserves academic freedom.
- ✓ calls for a fundamental departure from business-as-usual to rise above the complex strategic pressures in Higher Education equity & diversity practice.
- ✓ must BRIDGE the gap between national policy and whole-of-institution student equity outcomes, given that many inequities persist despite national policies of massification and diversification.
- ✓ requires executive Higher Education leaders to **MOBILISE** strategy development, implementation, and long-term monitoring.
- ✓ articulates **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES** applicable across the whole institution, systemically linked to core university missions, and synchronising equity efforts at all levels of the organisation.
- ✓ is well-resourced and **EMBEDDED** into organisational systems of funding, planning and performance accountability.
- ✓ is **CONTEXTUALISED** to address student individuality, unique local factors, and specific institutional characteristics.
- ✓ measures equity-related impact via a **CENTRALISED EVALUATION** framework to determine the strategy's effect on dismantling persistent inequities.
- ✓ evaluates impact beyond student attrition, retention, and success metrics and focuses on student equity outcomes across the whole student lifecycle.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

How can research inform the development of whole-of-university equity & diversity strategy to improve student equality?

## METHODOLOGY

1. Review international academic literature, relevant studies, practice guidance and existing relevant sector practice.
2. Identify applicable frameworks, models, and/or practice guidance drawn from relevant research.
3. Demonstrate how frameworks, models and practice guidance could be applied to construct a meso-level equity, and diversity strategy model for Australian

## RESEARCH INFORMED MODEL FOR MESO-LEVEL EQUITY & DIVERSITY STRATEGY IN AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS



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