

>> Professor John Phillipmore: We'll get started. I'm sure there's going to be a few people who are coming in, obviously we'll be started anyway. So, welcome. I'm John Phillipmore, Head of the John Curtin Institute of Public Policy, the JCIPP. Many of you know us, and know me, you've been at Curtin Corners. For those of you who have not, welcome. We have this every Friday afternoon, a little presentation from either an outside of Curtin speaker or an inside of Curtin speaker and, and sometimes it'll be part of an organisation and of course today we are partnering with the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, which is located in our corridor here, and Sue Trinidad is the Director of the Centre. So, I'll hand it over to Sue because Sue will introduce Mary. But, the usual format, just to let you know, the speaker will speak for half an hour or so, questions and answers, and then we'll have a civilised, you know, drink and nibbles at the end before the weekend. But, Sue? Now maybe you'll introduce Mary.

>> Professor Sue Trinidad: Okay, so, thank you John, and I welcome everyone here on behalf of, of the joint presentation today and we've been very, very fortunate to have Mary here for an entire week. It's been absolutely amazing as she's been one of our visiting fellows. And I thought the best way to introduce Mary was to go to the web. And if you type in Mary Kelly, not just Mary Kelly because you get other Mary Kellys but if you type in Mary Kelly QUT, this is what comes up: 'For anyone with a question about equity and access in universities, the usual response is, "Have you asked Mary Kelly?"' because she was rated a few years ago, I think it was 2012, 19, 20, 2012, not 19, 2012 [laughter], she was ranked in the top most influential educationalists in Australia and I think that says a lot about what Mary's been able to do.

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>> Professor Sue Trinidad: She is the no-nonsense, outspoken equity Director at QUT who knows how to fight for a cause. She is the former President of the Queensland Teacher's Union - and I'm learning a lot from her manner - who took on both sides of the Bjekle-Petersen and the Goss governments over cuts to school education funding. And the equity agenda has been galvanised within university management to focus on the issue and Kelly has emerged as a natural leader amongst those who are putting policy into practice. Hence, we had to have her come over here for a week and talk to us about some of the great things that we can be working on together and some of the projects that we can move forward on. So, as an advocate of universities cooperating on outreach activity, she chairs the working group that has developed the agreement in which all Queensland universities signed off and worked together and dividing the state between them to ensure that low-income schools are covered. So, I think that sums it up very, very nicely. So, we look forward to what you're going to tell us today in your quick half hour, Social Justice in Universities - Policy, Partnerships, and Politics. And thank you very much, Mary.

>> Mary Kelly: Thank you, Sue.

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>> Mary Kelly: Well, thank you very much for that warm welcome. I'd just like to acknowledge the traditional owners because I haven't had a chance to do that yet and I'm in someone else's country so it's a wonderful thing to be able to do that and their elders, past, present and emerging, and I now have heard a lot about the local people here, some of which was from Anita Lee Hong, who used to work here and is now the head of Oodgeroo Unit of QUT and we have a very close working relationship. So, I wanted to do that.

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>> Mary Kelly: I want to also at this point thank the Centre for first asking me over for the week. That was kind of a surprise and a bit terrifying, and I thought, "Oh, well. Have a go." And also for being so hospitable; I've been taken to the Festival of Learning and I've met with all different people about all different sorts of topics and it's been a real insight into Curtin and I've pinched about 10 good ideas, so [laughter]. I'm a practitioner rather than a researcher and it's through that lense that I'm going to look at those 3 "P" words. The focus is widening participation partnerships, not other sorts that involves universities and those specifically focused on low-income and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. So, the way this will go, I hope, and I hope you don't mind if I sit down because I'm a bit tied to these bits of paper and if I stand up I'll lose my way. I'm going to start with a couple of narratives around some partnerships. I'm going to start in the present, really, and, and tell you some of the things that are happening and have a good look at them. They're both from Queensland but I don't think that matters. They're essentially illustrative of particular points I want to make about the connections between partnerships and policy and so on. And then I'm going to travel back in time and examine the role of public policy in supporting this work and then I'm going to rocket forward into the future and look at the politics of what might be coming next and what that might mean for us all. So, to, to set the scene, universities have always engaged in partnership work, collaborated with each other, with other sectors, with community organizations and so on, and that's not new. But what, what is a little bit new is the focus on that over the last 5 years or so and the way that's allowed universities to enlarge their footprint in this space, to scale up, to join up, and to really take it on as core business.

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>> Mary Kelly: And new and interesting things have happened because of that. So, the first example I want to talk about is one about adult learners. Not schools, I think there's quite a lot of focus on schools but in Queensland and I don't know about here, there are vast numbers of unqualified adults because of our particular history and there is no way any target will ever be met by focusing on school leavers alone. So, adults learners of course, who left school early or a long time ago, in general need a bridge back into tertiary studies through some kind of preparation program or TAFE-based course and so on. So in Brisbane, none of the 3 large universities in Brisbane is a provider of tertiary preparation. It's just not part of the history. Instead, we rely on Year 12 equivalent courses in TAFE and in our case in some senior college schools, schooling. And so before there was HEPPP funding, and some of you won't know what it is but that is the incentive funding for partnerships, there was the Diversity and Structural Adjustment fund, doesn't that sound like a fun place to be? And enter stage left, Julia Gillard in 2008. It was the last year of its operation and all of a sudden, a social justice criteria appeared in the, the, the grant giving, you know, application, whereas before it was all about, you know, when they say diversity, they don't mean social diversity, they mean

different sources of institutions and their special missions. You remember all that? So, Griffith, which is our, 1 of our neighbouring universities and us put in for some money to work on this problem, this issue of adult learners and their pathways, and that meant needing to be a collaboration between 2 universities, 5 TAFEs and 3 senior colleges.

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>> Mary Kelly: And, we got the money and I'm going to tell you what happened and what we learned from it. So, basically, there's too many words there but only the last 2 dot points are important, and you can see the branding. Griffith is essentially red and QUT is navy blue so we picked other colours in order to show that this was not marketing, it was not institutional promotion, it was essentially growing people through these pathways. That was the object of our partnership. So we established a network of providers. We did an enormous amount of research on these adult learners, because no one knew much about them. We provided supports, free careers counselling, bursaries, transition advice, all that sort of stuff to help them, to try and get more people in those pathways better pass rates, better completion rates, and better transition rates into higher ed or indeed higher levels of VET, which also was a pathway. So, the main course was really in TAFE and it's a certificate 4 in adult tertiary preparation, and the research shows it's a brilliant course. It worked really well. The learners loved it. They were two-thirds poor. All the things you'd expect, so we learned an enormous amount about them. With these supports, we changed some of that data but not very much. We lowered the withdrawal rate and so on. So, we were all just chugging along there for awhile and, and after about the second meeting of the network and we're still in the trust-building phase, it became really clear that no amount of work that we would do together was going to crack a structural problem that was, became apparent, and that was that there was no state plan for adult re-entry into tertiary. These courses, in some TAFEs but not others, in some schools but not others, essentially residualised and could disappear at any moment, were a random remnant collection of coursework and not an intentional plan of any sort.

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>> Mary Kelly: And individual TAFE Directors and individual Directors General of Schooling would, from time to time, just get rid of them and all of a sudden there'd be a whole patch of Queensland without access to this sort of coursework. So, that was one thing. The second thing was there was no single place where pathways of this nature were documented or laid out so you could navigate your way through. It was a complete mystery about, if you were an adult who wanted to say, "I want, I'd like to do something in IT so I could be an IT professional," you'd have to do about a week's research on dozens of websites to find out where the courses were, what they cost, what, what they led to and which was the cheapest and fastest and did it happen at night, and so on. None of that was written down. There was absolutely no way you could navigate your way through the system. And the third thing, there was no free careers counselling or pathways advice available. So, low-income adults were on their own and they, as we found with the cohorts we researched, they made some choices that weren't optimum for them. Some didn't even need to be in that pathway. They could've gotten direct entry and some should've been in another pathway because it was, they needed Year 10 equivalent, not Year 12, 12 equivalent. So, it was all just, became really clear in about 2 minutes that we had a public policy issue so apart from all those activities which we'd planned to do, we immediately did another activity which was lobbying for public policy and that

had a number of effects. So, we only needed the permission of 10 CEOs - that didn't take long [laughter] - and then we were able to rock up to the Director General and we went 3 or 4 times and said, This is an issue, what we'd like you to do, and we had a plan, and so on, and we were beginning to make some headway and got, got some, you know, little bit of edging towards some change that we wanted and, and when, when really what happened was the government changed. There was a TAFE review and everything shifted. So, our advocacy... Mmm, I'll get onto that in a minute.

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>> Audience member: Sorry, Mary, so you're talking about a State Government change?

>> Mary Kelly: State Government, yeah. Mmmm... Where will I go? I'll go here. We had to change gear from advocating with reasonably benign government for improvements to saving the furniture, because what happened was the TAFE review essentially resulted in privatisation, campus closures, course cancellations, and machinery around putting the price up for everything above Cert 3, which got captured by the Commonwealth guarantee, Cert 3 yes, everything else full price and VET fee help. People could defer their debt. I'm, I'm sure you'll have, if you haven't already had something similar here, you will. So, that became a big challenge. Before that happened, we, there we are, meeting there, that's the group of people from the TAFEs colleges and universities. We had, we had worked very well together for 4 years. The partnership had been evaluated formally by the previous Centre, in fact, the previous National Centre and found it to be a successful one with, you know, trust and blah, blah, all those things. And the, there had been unexpected impacts like those teachers in those TAFE courses had gained more status through this partnership because they were at the bottom of the food chain in their own institutions where industry courses, industry-sponsored courses were the, the main game and they were in the community service element.

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>> Mary Kelly: So, there were all sorts of good things happened, but I think the upshot of it all was that we are, we then changed tack and had to go in and argue for the Cert 4 adult tertiary prep to be made an exception of, that it be treated like a Cert 3, that it continue to have its publicly, its public subsidy because at full cost, low-income people won't, wouldn't be able to do it. So, they could do the old course because they got discounted fees and so on for really about 400 dollars, which isn't too prohibitive over a year. New course would be \$2,000. And, so, it was going, it's going to become unaffordable and even with VET fee help, which means you can take it as deferred debt, you have to do the business case around, "Well, you go into uni with a debt and then you get more debt", you know, these are mature-aged adults. They understand debt and debt deters. So, we're terrified about it so we've been lobbying for the last little while and we'll know by July whether the Cert 4 will be priced out of the market or not and then we might have to bite the bullet on some very difficult questions like becoming a provider or helping people with their fees, we're not quite sure. But the take home point from that is really three-fold: one is the absolute importance of good public policies if universities and others are going to widen participation. There's no amount of work on individuals cultural capital that will make any difference if there's no pathway nearby or if it's unaffordable. So, I'm... I mean I know it's self-evident but it's absolutely crucial to have those public policy settings that allow us to try to make that difference.

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>> Mary Kelly: I think the second thing we learned from it was the impact of collective voices. By working together on that issue, it bound us as a, as a partnership and a network because we're looking outside. We weren't looking at the differences between us but what we had in common and, and talking to an outside agency. So, it really is a very tight-knit group that has never had a moment's trouble in, in working with each other, even though there are quite distinct differences between, you know, reasonably well-off universities, very poor TAFEs and even poorer schools. So, I think that there's a lesson in there that public policy work within a partnership isn't just an important thing to do. It's actually partnership working. It helps make the partnership and keep it together. And I think the third take home point is that our troubles were really the perfect illustration of the way, of the way Australia can't do Commonwealth-State relations very well, that we had Julia Gillard as Education Minister, there was an initial COAG national partnership around skills where all the states and the feds agreed to do certain things and so on, and there was another national partnership around skills, and that was essentially the guarantee around the Cert 3 and the, the vet fee help and so on, but none of that stopped the states, and several of them have done it, from trashing public VET, and, or getting rid of pathways. So, they signed up to the 40 percent target, that more people will get degrees, and they're making the pathways unaffordable at the same time and this competent business class is unnoticed, you know, in, in Australia because we are so used to the Commonwealth-State divide and, and that not working. But it was, I think an illustration of, of that phenomenon which is with us still. Now, the second, I'm going to change examples now and, and some of you might've picked up that little booklet and that's, that's about this. It's a different partnership and it's a more recent one, and its source of funds is the more recent source of funds, Higher Ed Participation and Partnerships Program, HEPPP, and in the initial guidelines, they used to have section A, B, and C, which became known as HEPPP A and HEPPP B and HEPPP C [laughter].

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I thought that was a triumph of bureaucracy. So, for those who are not from the sector and I know that there are some, it was basically money to support both outreach, to get more poor people into uni, and support to retain them and so that they, they completed. And people have done both sets of work. The guidelines required people to partner up. They are benign guidelines, good public policy. It was competitive. You couldn't get the money unless you partnered up and so it incentivised a huge amount, there was outbreaks of cooperation everywhere because it, it, people wanted to do it anyway and now they could do it and, and this enabled them to do it. So, it Queensland, it took a, a certain path and I'm going to tell you about a year's thinking in 3 minutes. We'll see how we go. Before HEPPP came along, the 8 universities had gathered together anyway, the Indigenous units and the equity units, wanting to collaborate more in the outreach side, so this is only about outreach, not the support side. And we had, had a formal meeting and done some thinking and we issued a communiqué, I thought that was a nice touch, like we were the United Nations, and we sent that out to our Vice Chancellors and saying, you know, we wanted to do it and why the rationale was and so on, and eventually a moment came when the Vice Chancellors said, Yes we should collaborate on this, and they left it to us to work out the details, which was good. And so we had to work out the details. What did it mean to collaborate? And in the doing of that, we first had to define the business case, and in Queensland there was a specific one. There was virtually

no unmet demand. In other words, there weren't thousands of people just knocking on the door and evil universities keeping them out. There was nobody outside the door.

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>> Mary Kelly: Most people could get in somewhere if they wanted to do because we've got rich regional, we've got good regional universities who, you know, are inclusive as well as the city ones. So, there was no one to compete over, basically. We looked at the demographics, who was in the school leaver pipeline, who's in the adult pipeline and so on, and it was terrifying. The numbers were terrifying. The scale of what needed to be done was so scary that it became obvious that one university would never, would never be able to pull any of that off. There was gaps and duplication in our existing work and we, we also had to define, there were 8 quite distinct missions among the university. Five of them already had enough low SES enrolments. They didn't need anymore but they wanted to grow. This was before uncapping, and so we just made the case that if you wanted to grow and we wanted to change our mix, we all needed the same thing and the thing was to stimulate interest in tertiary study, to take thousands of citizens and school-leaving adults from being not interested to interested, and then not worry about what happens next. And so we sort of said that was our business case and if it happened, then we would all get our usual share and we would all benefit. Working out, then, what we were going to do and where we were going to do it got a bit trickier and I'll just, I'll just go to this because we spent a long time looking at the nature of the problem. So, and basically came to the conclusion that it wasn't information, it was identity and imagination. It was more than just technical access, it was aspiration and achievement and we came up with five "A"s and said, "It's all of these things. It's complicated. It's a whole person."

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>> Mary Kelly: We looked at what does it mean for the learners to go from not interested to interested? What does that look like and what is that change process? And came up with that metaphor of the journey, where people's interest, capabilities, and capacities are built in layers slowly over time through multiple touch points and you know, and, and engagements. And we also looked at, well, what sort of outreach is required? And took note of what young people were saying in the literature which is they didn't trust marketing. They thought if someone was trying to sell you something they could not be trusted and that basically it wasn't, because they're uninterested, you couldn't have a conversation about my product's better than yours. You have to actually sell higher ed itself. So, we did all of those things and kind of came up with a way at looking at the world where it was the learner not the brand, the journey not the choice. We were building, not selling, and we all agreed about that. And just so, and you can see, this is, this is from March 2009, from that first-ever meeting of those practitioners. We were trying to determine what, what is the difference between marketing and this new form of outreach, as Bradley had called it? And we went down a set of characteristics there which distinguished it in a quite simplistic way, that it's a difference by audience, uninterested, not interested. It's a difference in the duration of the relationship, a journey, not a choice. And so on and so on. And so rather than, and then we basically said, "Well, marketing's not bad and widening participation = good. They're just fit for different purposes. They can coexist happily and they are in fact companions." We'll, we can make people interested and then the marketing departments can fight over them. That's fine, but our job was to work with

people prior to that choice and make sure that their choices were well informed and eyes wide open.

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>> Mary Kelly: So, that's how we kind of positioned the type of work and that's how we ended up with sort of figuring all that out. Then we thought of six bodies of work we wanted to do and the first two were about schools and Indigenous and that in fact is the only two bodies of work we have pursued since then. And we wrote it all down and it seems that MOU and it's got eight Vice Chancellors and the state Education Minister on it and that was our encoded document and that took a year, because in there was also, and we wanted to do Indigenous-specific work, so of course that involved all the Indigenous support units and working out how that might operate as well. So, to give you a sense of one of those, the schooling one rather than the Indigenous one, it is, as Sue said, we took every, by this time we had the cooperation of the Department. They had never put a dollar on the table but they have been very helpful with data and with advice and with opening doors to the Indigenous branch, opening doors to the vet branch and so on. We took every poor school in the state, primary and secondary, divided them into eight bunches, and each university adopted a bunch. Your bunch was the one nearest to you, in the main, so it was your backyard, the cores, the four bodies of activity that we wanted to do involved us going to schools and schools coming to us, and so you couldn't be, I couldn't do the Cape, for example, because it's 2,000 kilometres away, that had to be James Cook. So, hence, you'll see that in the map in there. The result of that was very different jobs for each university, some vast and difficult and some smaller and easier. So, we modelled the cost of provision and came up with a formula whereby each cluster would get a different amount of money if we were ever successful in our bid for money and the cluster that got the most money got 10 times as much as the cluster that got the least. So, it wasn't every child wins a prize, it was enough money to do the jobs that we set out to do, which I'd have to say, I think forgot to show that bit.

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>> Mary Kelly: One of the key things we did was we tried very hard to say, "Well, what, if we're in partnership, what's the university role? We're not parents, we're not social workers, we're not, we're not the community. We're the university, so what's our game? Our game is learning. What can we do that no one else can do?" And really, those four things across the top. We wrote that down and said we're only going to do those four things, we're not going to do other things, and that's our role and this is how it maps to the five As. That's quite simplistic but I like simple. So, the demystification experience is because we've got the role models, we've got the thing that needs to be made familiar, the encouragement and inspiration, the value add to learning and achievement through discipline connections and alternative pathways, those mechanisms are making sure the door is open. So, that's also one of the things that is being written down. So that, that took a year and then we, and then we were able to bid for funds which we, which we got, and have pursued the schooling and Indigenous projects reasonably successfully, I think, since. So, that's all very well but what's the take home point from that experience? I think, again, it's the importance of good public policy. In this case, the HEPPP funding and its role as an incentiviser and the guidelines which basically mandated collaboration, debranding, long-term relationships and so on. That, that, we

didn't have to really do persuasion around that because it was written down. If you want the money, you're going to do these things. That's very helpful.

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>> Mary Kelly: I guess the second point and one I want to emphasise is the importance of a good bureaucracy. Those guidelines didn't come about by accident. They were the subject of consultation when the government first post-Bradley announced that there would be funding, and, and lots of people actually had a hand in making sure they ended up being as supportive as they were. And that was only enabled because the then-bureaucrats were willing to do that conversation. They didn't go off into a closed room and, and write what they wanted. They actually consulted and asked what, what would be useful. And so that element, that it's not just what the government does, it's what the bureaucrats do next, that also underpins our work and either it, either enables it or destroys it. That became very clear during that partnership. Okay, that's enough of my two examples. I'm going to go on now. That's all right, you know, there we are, that's us meeting. That's the eight university consortium having its meeting. We meet about five times a year and then twice a year I report to the Vice Chancellors and the Minister and on we go. I want to shift focus now away from examples, because I think, I think those links are, are, are self-evident and all of you that are involved in partnership work would understand the links between policy and, and your daily work. I want to take a sort of practitioner-centric view of the world just for a minute. This is a slide used in another forum, the EPHEA, which someone told me once sounds like a skin disease, but it's actually the Equity Practitioners in Higher Ed Association, which is the loose-knit professional body that people like me are in across the country and it has a biennial shindig and the last one was here in, at UWA.

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And at that conference, we were talking about these connections between the making of policy, the implementing of policy, and the, and then putting it into practice on the ground and what our role as practitioners was in all of that and how we help make good policy, and how we help the bureaucrats get the micro right and then how we do it, how we actually enact it and make the partnerships we need to make. And I think that, that in those issues on the right-hand side, you can see some of the thinking that we went through which is in the making of policy, you've got to understand where you are in the landscape and equity practitioners know where they are - they are small fry, both within universities and within the public domain. So, just, it's all very well to say, well, you need to influence the making of good public policy, but that's not an easy thing to do from level X at one place. And so that notion that you first got to have a clear idea and it has to be a consensus, that you have to have allies and our natural allies are our universities, UA, ACOSS, you know, those kind of bodies, and then you have to have a good eye for intelligent opportunism and take advantage of whatever is happening in the public domain and get the timing right. And I think the Bradley Review was both created by the persistence on the issue of student poverty that went before it and became a moment, an exploitable moment in itself, and I think universities were very ready for what happened after the Bradley Review in terms of social inclusion and have made the most of it. I think they've done a good job getting that timing just right. I've always thought you can't have socialism in one country and you can't have equity in one university. It's actually got to be a matter of consensus public policy to, to do this work.

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>> Mary Kelly: I'm going to return in a way to that issue of opportunism and timing when I, when I look forward in a minute. I want to talk a little bit about policy implementation because sometimes that can be as, as important as golf is a good walk ruined. So, good policy can be trashed by bad implementation and ordinary policy can be made workable by good implementation. And as practitioners, we need to keep in touch with the bureaucrats constantly, whether they want to or not, because they're not always able to see what will work on the ground or, and so on. So, a salutary tale in this area about why the bureaucracy is so important is the story of commonwealth scholarships, and I'm going to tell it very briefly. There's a little 10-year snapshot now of what, what happened, and in part it's important because it tells us something that I'm going to come to later which is that there's been bipartisan activity around student poverty for two decades and in 2004, it was Brendan Nelson who, after a 30-year hiatus, reintroduced Commonwealth scholarships. Really old people will be able to remember what they were before 1973. And he did that because there was pressure building around student poverty. You remember the "Paying Our Way" survey that the universities, whereas the government didn't want to do it so the universities did it for themselves in 2001 and that came up with just how poor students were and that they're all working too many hours, you know, the catch-22, that they're working at least 16 hours a week in order to make money to live and that was undermining their studies.

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>> Mary Kelly: All of that had been churning around for, for a few years. So, Nelson made his move and since then, we've had three governments and seven Ministers and a variety of bureaucrats meddling with the, what happened, and the role of the bureaucracy has shifted over that time. So, very briefly, in a way it was Brendan Nelson's effort was in lieu of probably what should've happened which was a massive review of income support, youth allowance, Ausstudy and so on, which was clearly inadequate and had been proved to be inadequate, but that would've been a very expensive option, and that was not to happen until post-Bradley. So, I think the reintroduction of scholarships, which is essentially top-up money to low-income students, became his way of, of looking at that. At first, the bureaucrats were very consultative because it was a grand announcement with no detail, and they were left to work out the detail and to their credit, they did that consultatively and we had forums and [etc] and came up with a set of guidelines because it was universities who had to administer these scholarships and give them out. So, they came up with a set of guidelines which were mostly consistent but there was choices you could make in several areas. Good on them. And then as time passed, that role of the bureaucrat shifted and the role of the advisors in the Minister's office came more to the fore and this is one of the kind of lesser-visible parts of how policy gets made. And so aides to the Minister would, would hear a story about, "Oh, yeah, they're alright but we need more here in the country and we need them for a neighbourhood or we need this or we need that," whisper in the Minister's ear and the Minister would say to the bureaucrats, "I think we need, you know, different and more scholarships." By the end, we had seven different types, all with their pages of different guidelines and almost impossible to administer.

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>> Mary Kelly: And, but the numbers rose, so this, it was still a good thing. There were still millions of dollars going to low-income kids who had never been there before, so we tended to, to put up

with it. One of the things the government did was create a little moment for itself because it exempted its own scholarships from the income test under the Social Security and Veterans Affairs Act whereby if we, the university, gave a student a scholarship, Centrelink would count that as income, and if it tipped them over their edge, their youth allowance would be cut. So, they exempted their own scholarships and left ours still as counting, which of course, you know, caused four years of activity to get that change which eventually we did and we even had Natasha Stott Despoja of the Democrats. Remember them? Moving an amendment to, to change that clause and it was opposed by Wayne Swan as opposition Social Security Minister at the time. That'd be Wayne, you can write his name down [laughter].

>> Audience member: W-A-Y-N-E.

>> Mary Kelly: So, so I don't, I want to go on too often but then there was the income support review and then the government that made a decision that the scholarships should be given out at the time of office and then they made a decision that Centrelink should give them out, so they took them off us, renamed them, changed it back from seven to two and gave them to Centrelink to give out, except for Indigenous, where we've got a set and Centrelink's got a set and you've got to get the timing right because kids can't have both. It's a triumph of policy administration! So, but it's still a positive thing, and this third element about just how much negative airtime you want to give to something that is putting millions of dollars into the pockets of low-income students because it's being poorly administered, that's a choice that has to be made on a daily basis, and it's not always a good idea to whinge publicly about those sort of things. And we tended not to.

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>> Mary Kelly: So that's that story about the bureaucrats. And I'm just going to take a moment, what's next? I'm going to take a moment now just to look over the last 20 years and assert that top point, which is that when you look at who's done what, you really can see that there has been bipartisan support for equity in higher ed of one form or another for as long as I can trace. And it's about 20 years that I can remember or get people to get talk about and probably before that. We've had the Lin Martin indicators all that time. No one's ever cancelled them or said we're not collecting that data anymore. We've had equity money to universities. Before the HEPPP there was HISP, and before HISP, there was HEEP, and before that there was something else that no one can remember. It was Brendan Nelson who not only brought his Commonwealth scholarships but raised the equity money to universities four-fold. I remember it quite distinctly in 2004. It was Julie Bishop who funded the first National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education and in a way I think it was also Brendan Nelson who put the price up for students which wasn't, you know, a, a great thing to do, but in a sense that created a little moment inside my university because they didn't want to put the price up for students but they had to to balance the budget, and so I was able to make the case that some of that money should be quarantined and kept aside and given back as scholarships. And so 15 percent of the take since 2005 has come to my department to run a major scholarship scheme. And so I'm going to look forward now and, and think about what, yes. You think you can't talk a long time but you can!

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>> Mary Kelly: I will go faster. I just want, I just wanted to think, well, what are the opportunistic things that might be coming up? I think if it goes well, Gonski is something that even though it's in schooling, it will transform our work. A fair bit of what we do with schools would not be necessary if they were funded on a needs basis. The curriculum value adds, paying for the bus trips to campus, we, it would change our relationship more to a learning base set of a partnerships probably than an aspiration base set of partnerships. And if Gonski is preserved and if the needs-based allocations are preserved, that will be the biggest opportunity for us ever. It will shift that correlation between poverty and low achievement that Australian schooling does not currently shift. It's a high-quality, low-equity schooling system and it's a major national issue. I think STEM, science, technology, engineering and maths, there's, its, its airtime is perpetual because of the anxiety over skills shortages and innovation and driving the economy and so on, and there are more than one connection between widening participation and STEM aversion. If you look closely at who doesn't do STEM, it's, this is a gross generalisation but you know what I mean. It's girls, the working class, and you know, certain groups. There are cultural capital issues around STEM aversion, there are class issues around STEM aversion, and when you look at what is needed to fix that up, it is very similar to the sorts of work we've been doing in widening participation. So, you can very easily, and lots of people do it, stimulate interest in tertiary study and stimulate interest in STEM in exactly the same moment in time using exactly the same techniques and changes. I think, I think if there's money in STEM, then we should be able to get the, the, the low SES share of that.

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>> Mary Kelly: Well, we're of course we're all hanging out for the budget and I'm not sure exactly what's going to happen, but really we, I don't think it's a good idea to talk up wasteland scenarios. I think it's a good idea to talk up 20 years of bipartisan support. I know you have to plan for the worst but you've got to lobby for the best as, as much as you can. So, I just will finish now. I just want to finish with this point. This little exploration of Policy, Partnerships and Politics is a little bit, the camera's a bit close to it. If you bring the camera back and you think, well, how will change happen? It's not what each practitioner does, it's not what each researcher does, it's not what each policy maker does, it's what they do together. And the most important partnership of all is the least visible one, it's the one between those three on that slide up there. And when you think about, well, who can make that happen? There's probably only one, one organisation and that's the National Centre who can bring into dialogue those three arms of what is needed to make change happen. And I think that puts the National Centre right at the core of that social change that we're all so passionate about. So, I'm so pleased that they've been able to hit the ground running. They have built national trust very quickly and they've got runs on the board. I just wish they were in Queensland [laughter]. Thank you very much. That's it.

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[Applause]

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>> Professor Sue Trinidad: Now, it's an opportunity to ask Mary Kelly whatever you would like.

>> Dr Tim Pitman: I just want to pick up on that point of equity partnership in a university. So, look I know that this government is moving away from prescribed targets so let's just look at Bradley's one percent. Do you think, as a practitioner and what you've experienced in Queensland, thank you very much for your experience there, that, your, in your experience that you had in your organisation. Do you think that that target, if it remains, should be for every university? And I'm thinking specifically European League-status universities.

>> Mary Kelly: Well, I, I think I'd agree with Julia Gillard that everyone has to be in the game. I don't think everyone has to have the same target, and there are catchment issues. And there are, there are cultural issues as well and, and, and issues about will and effort, but there are also backyard catchment issues and who goes to what uni is, you know, quite different around the place. But, I mean, the, in a sense, I'm sick of talking about targets. Like, I'm not sure universities started to do this work for someone named "a target". I don't think we did this work because the target, our bit of the target was put in the compact, mathematically divided by 40, you know, 0.2 percent up from where you were last year. I don't think that made any difference. I don't think we did it because there was minute amounts of reward money out of the compacts if you met target. I think people did it because they want to get their numbers up and get more poor people in. So, in a sense, you can have a very long, involved conversation about all that, and people got quite exercised over the compacts and I don't think that that had any effect on anything. What made a difference was the money.

>> Dr Tim Pitman: Okay, but-

>> Mary Kelly: The incentivisation to do that.

>> Dr Tim Pitman: Okay, but putting aside the target specifically is, I mean, I'm thinking about your, I mean, your, your, your, presentation there was labelled social justice and I think about your background from the unions and, and you know, you've obviously fought for social justice for 20, 30 years, so do you think then it's right that there should be a widening participation policy that nonetheless says Yeah, but if you're a student from a certain background, there are certain universities or certain courses you're probably not going to get into?

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>> Mary Kelly: Clearly not. No, clearly not, but in, in a sense what you can't undo is a reputation pecking order. What you can undo is, well, uncapping has helped but people's wish to move from one place to another, if they don't want to leave the country and they want to go to the local university, I think that's fantastic. So, I'm just not that worried about that. Look, rich people are mobile and go around making those choices and poor people go local. So, in a sense, you can work with that and make sure those universities are as high-quality as possible or you can try and bus them, you know, to, to high-quality places I'm, I'm being silly but it's just not something I think about a lot. I do think it's access in the first instance. We haven't cracked it. So, we can start worrying about what sort of access or we could worry about it at the same time but they're not, they're not, there is no wave yet coming in. Like, it's a one percent shift in the enrolment share in low SES. That, I don't call that a revolution. So, I think we've got to still work on just stimulating interest and then do our best around access to, like informed choice making is the key, I think.

>> Audience member: So, are you still a big part of getting more people into the system?

>> Mary Kelly: Well, one of the things we've had to do is import knowledge from career practitioners into how we do our work. So, how people make choices, what happens in their identity formation years, where, where do they decide they want to go here and do that, and how does that work, how does that build up in layers, ages, and stages? And there's a whole kind of set of knowledge around that which we've tried to import into the design of, of the activities that we do and, and, this already happens in schools. Anyway, it's called career, career advice.

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>> Mary Kelly: It's not done well and it, it's not, not designed to broaden horizons or do the sorts of things that we can do, but essentially, if you, there's a way of looking at all this work in that it's careers development work. All of it. That, and the object is good choice making at the end. Informed choice making. And that's probably all you can do, rather than somehow mandate what sort of choices should be made.

>> Audience member: If you talk about equity in education, what comes to my mind is free education. I mean, we talk about the basic principles of Australia, whether we like it or not or happening or not, fair go, I mean, the basis for the question is why can't we have free education in Australia? I come from a country where my skin colour and accent was a condition of Sri Lanka, and if you go to any hospital, any department, we have products of Sri Lanka but your country we are, we are working here, giving free education. So, that's productive. That's really, if you want to deep into that. My simple question is why can't we have free education? It's all these things. They're not that [inaudible].

>> Mary Kelly: Well, bless you. Look, I wish people asked that question more often. It's like being back in the 70s, isn't it? Look, I honestly don't know except it's an act of political will that we won't and it's connected to the, to the view of the economy and what people have done within capitalism, that somehow it's not affordable and other things are. So, I mean, in a sense there's no real answer to that question that I've got any insight into, apart from observing how governments make decisions and what's happened across, across the world. It's a slippery slope though, as we see. As soon as you start, put a price on, then the price can move and it's already gone up once for students and I think the big risk in the coming budget is that it will go up again, and that students will bear the, the brunt of there not being enough money, which is hard to believe in a, in a wealthy country, to have free education.

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>> Audience member: There's an answer to that.

>> Mary Kelly: Yeah, go ahead.

>> Audience member: The reason why we have no free education is because we've got the wrong people in the government [laughter].

>> Mary Kelly: Well done, you. Yeah.

>> Malcolm Fialho: And you have to recognise that low SES picks up those from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds, but is there any more coordinated concerted effort across our sector to look at, at that crew? Specifically, say, you know, analogous to the good work we've done in the Indigenous area.

>> Mary Kelly: I think people are doing it in, in patches where it's, where it's particularly strong local issue, so I'm aware, I don't know the whole of Australia but I understand what's happening in Queensland. We've all picked up, you know, those who tend to be captured in some of the activities and the places that you end up going, the low-income communities and low-income schools, we'll capture a lot of those students. We've also got a lot of Pacific Islander people who come from the Pacific Islands to New Zealand to Australia, very large cohorts, that's south of Brisbane and north of Brisbane, and they've got particular issues because they can't get HECS. They have to pay up front. New Zealand citizens. There's a whole, although we think we might've got the government to change that policy. It's just on, it has just been shifted. So there are groups and pockets that you have, when I saw low SES, it's kind of general code for those that are under-represented and have particular barriers and needs. But there are some good programs around, refugees, often in, in conjunction with community groups and the like.

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>> Dr Tim Pitman: Can I just go back to that? I have to.

>> Mary Kelly: Oh, give us the answer, Tim! [multiple voices].

>> Dr Tim Pitman: I noted a precautionary note that they're, of the OECD countries that offer free education, Australia has a higher participation rate for every single one of them. So, in other words, the cautionary note is that the price you may get for education is the government says, "Well, I guess we're going to have to restrict the number of places because can't afford it." And when that happens, it's the disadvantaged students who are unequally impacted. So, you compare us, for example, to Canada, and Canada has a 51 percent participation rate. But they've accepted that in order to do that, the student has to be charged a certain amount. So, it's not as, I don't think it's as straightforward as free education is good, paid education is bad. It's, it's more complicated than that. That's all I have to say.

>> Audience Member: But if, if your paid education is absolutely free, [inaudible] and so your right wing is education is [inaudible].

>> Audience Member: You said-

>> Dr Tim Pitman: Yeah. Yeah. And [inaudible].

>> Audience Member: That's true.

>> Audience Member: It's good to make a contribution getting your education. Don't you think you'd value it more than, than if it's for free?

>> Audience Member: Until you get at the specific sort of education where you pay for, the one that you pay for, and the one that's free, we'll believe that.

>> Professor John Phillimore: There's a question at the back?

>> Tim Keely: Mary, you, I think, quoting you, you said something about if Gonski is done well or if Gonski is implemented it will shift our relationship, that is the university's relationship with-

>> Mary Kelly: Yeah.

>> Tim Keely: -schools, to being learning based and not aspiration based?

>> Mary Kelly: Yes [multiple voices]. Yes, it's a bit of a generalisation on reflection-

>> Tim Keely: Yeah. Is that something that's – I do engineering outreach, so that's STEM and sometimes a degree of social justice stuff. I was wondering if there were other proponents of that view out there that I could go and research and go and look at, because that's going to add coals to my fire when I go out to talk to people-

>> Mary Kelly: Right.

>> Tim Keely: -who do want to make marketing and outreach the same thing as [inaudible] that is currently an assumption at the university going on, which is to put them together, which, would possibly endanger the, the good work that it's doing.

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>> Mary Kelly: It could. Well, I know some regional universities because their catchments are so small and their staffing so small that, that widening participation and marketing is essentially done by teams that live beside each other, but they still have protocols around how they do their work, and there's no, the key question is to say to the marketing department, "What would you like to do with the grade 6s?" And the answer is nothing, because they're only interested in those about to make a choice. So, the work divides itself up basically. But, but a lot of what you would do in engineering outreach should be like stimulating interest in the field of study. So, we train our student ambassadors from engineering, like we, we try to send young people to run the activities both on campus and in schools, not to talk about courses and not to talk about the university. They're not allowed to do that. They have to talk about the knowledge, the field of study, what their career plan is, how they got there, so it's narrative. Narrative based, so kids can pick up what jobs are out there and how you get yourself into those pathways, and there's a thousand stories in their neighbouring city, which they don't know.

>> Tim Keely: Yeah.

>> Mary Kelly: So, that issue around narrative and demystification is, is just as important as trying to add to achievement.

>> Tim Keely: Yeah. So, are there any other VIPs like yourself out there, you know, trumpeting this?

>> Mary Kelly: No, no. Look, I just made that sentence up as I spoke [laughter]. Now I'm feeling quite nervous, you know. On reflection, it's a little bit meaningless.

>> Professor John Phillimore: You don't need to worry about it. You don't need to worry because the Gonski thing's probably not going to be implemented. So don't worry about it.

>> Mary Kelly: Oh, well. No.

>> Professor John Phillimore: Can I just ask a question. Queensland is so different from Western Australia, and in some ways similar - large states, big Aboriginal populations... [inaudible]

>> Mary Kelly: The two states that understand distance!

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>> Professor John Phillimore: ...both hate Canberra, the whole thing! [laughter]

>> Mary Kelly: Secessionists tendencies.

>> Professor John Phillimore: The difference is in higher education, the key difference is you've got, this is in reflection of your population, you've got large regional centres and each of the regional universities. We basically have none. I mean, we've got the Kalgoorlie campus of this university, but it's small. Edith Cowan has got the campus down in Bunbury, but it's pretty small too. But, but, but like South Australia. It's all in Perth, or it's all in Adelaide, and the reasons are a large [inaudible] in terms of higher education. But of course, nobody wants to have a campus there because it's not big enough in the population. And everyone says, well it's all going online now anyway. I mean, so, I'm just wondering from an equity perspective, and this is probably unfair to ask because you've been in Queensland for the last 30 years. Do you get the sense, though, of how important or flat or how relatively important it is to have regional campuses, regional universities, from that equity perspective?

>> Mary Kelly: Oh, I think it's crucial. One of the differences is Queensland's spread of universities reflects the spread of population. It is, it is the most decentralised state in Australia, so more than 50 percent of people don't live in the capitol city and they live in medium-sized towns growing up. So, place is very important. Marginal electorates, you know, though, there's been, there's a long history of people, everyone wants a university in their town, and so there's an, there's almost an expectation that you'll be able to get to one not too far away. So, if you look at where people go, regional people go local. They go to their regional university, and I think that's a good thing. It means that, you know, young people don't have to leave home, travel 2,000 kilometres, be lonely, pay extra money, just to do first-year nursing or something - it's just a ridiculous proposition! But, you know, they should be able to do it reasonably close to home so they can get home in an emergency, you know, rather than 3 days later and so on. So, it's just so ingrained in the way Queensland would think about it. It would be unthinkable not to have regional universities in Queensland. Just, people wouldn't stand for it.

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>> Professor Sue Trinidad: So, I think that's probably a good spot to finish. What we will have is the transcript from-

>> Mary Kelly: I might have to edit it [laughter].

>> Professor Sue Trinidad: Well, then go ahead. Edit all parts of it, make sure that it's all okay, and we'll have the Power Point put up at the website. If you did not get one of the cards for the National Centre, then please do take one. They were supposed to be postcard size, but they're a little bit big.

>> Mary Kelly: A large post card.

>> Professor Sue Trinidad: Large, large post card. But that will be where these materials will be, so. Thank you very much again for being here.

>> Mary Kelly: Thanks so much.

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[Applause]

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>> Mary Kelly: Sorry I went so long.

>> Professor Sue Trinidad: That's okay.

>> Professor John Phillipmore: One last note before you go and I'm sorry I didn't tell you, next week's Curtin Corner is Ian Satchwell, who is the Director of the International Mining for Development Centre. It's a new centre, it was established, I think by when the, when CHOGM was on. I'm pretty sure they [inaudible]. It's a, it's basically a [inaudible] but it does involve various partners. I'm pretty sure Curtin is involved in it and he'll be talking effective incentive, about building developing country capacity in mining, tapping 100 years of Australian knowledge. So, it's an [inaudible] to Director of the consulting firm [inaudible], but now he's at UWA, so that's next week on Curtin Corner. So, hopefully we'll see you in the future.

>> Mary Kelly: What's he talking about, John?

>> Professor John Phillipmore: About his Centre and about-

>> Mary Kelly: Oh, okay.

>> Professor John Phillipmore: The relationship about developing countries and mining.

>> Audience Member: Well, done. Thank you, Mary.

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