

## ABOUT THE CENTRE

### Closing the gap between equity policy, research and practice

The **National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education** (NCSEHE) began operation in 2008, hosted by the University of South Australia. In May 2013, Curtin University won the bid to take over the Centre until December 2018, and received funding to achieve its aim of informing public policy design and implementation and institutional practice, to improve higher education participation and success for marginalised and disadvantaged people. The NCSEHE's objectives are:

- to be at the centre of public policy dialogue about equity in higher education
- to 'close the gap' between equity policy, research and practice by
  - > supporting and informing evaluation of current equity practice, with a particular focus on identifying good practice
  - > identifying innovative approaches to equity through existing research and the development of a forward research program to fill gaps in knowledge
  - > translating these learnings into practical advice for decision-makers and practitioners alike.

#### Student Equity and Participation

The NCSEHE's key purpose is "to inform public policy design and implementation, and institutional practice, to improve higher education participation and success for marginalised and disadvantaged people."

In keeping with its purpose, the NCSEHE is connecting Commonwealth student equity policy with the activities of higher education institutions and national equity outcomes, through its input into comparative assessment of institutional strategies, systemic assessments of policy achievements and assessments of national policy-making in view of this evidence.

The Centre's focus is based on three programs of research activity:

#### 1. Equity Policy and Program Evaluation

The Centre is providing leadership and support in developing a national approach and resources to evaluate the impact of initiatives to increase participation of people from low socio-economic status backgrounds (LSES) backgrounds and other equity groups in higher education.

#### 2. Equity Policy and Planning Research

The Centre is furthering equity policy and planning in Australia, sharing knowledge and capabilities developed in Australia, and providing evidence on the impact of policy on equity outcomes in the system. By enabling national research and engagement on higher education policy and practice, the Centre ensures its research includes analysis of all student equity groups, including people from LSES, Indigenous, remote and rural communities, and people with disability.

#### 3. Student Equity Data

The Centre conducts analysis of higher education datasets from a student equity perspective. This encompasses:

- compiling and analysing national equity data and survey data on student transition to higher education
- managing a website that presents data on student equity performance in higher education; in particular, the mapping of higher education participation data in Australia
- providing access to sources for data and data-driven research on equity policy and programs from around Australia and the world.

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# NATIONAL CENTRE FOR STUDENT EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Strategic Plan  
2015-2018

Make tomorrow better.

# To improve higher education participation and success for marginalised and disadvantaged people by closing the gap between equity policy, research and practice.



<b>Australian Government Contract and Intent</b>		Establish a reputation for high quality products that inform public policy and 'close the gap' between equity policy and practice.			Establish a strong national presence with key stakeholders	Establish partnerships that enhance the outcomes of the centre
<b>Strategic Priorities</b>		Fostering Research	Evaluating Progress	Informing Policy	Translating Research into Practice	Strengthening Partnerships
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>		Facilitate and conduct research and build a research community to produce high quality research and publications	Contribute to improved equity outcomes at the program, institution and national level	Contribute to public discussion and provide evidence to inform government policy in the area of disadvantage in higher education	Provide equity practitioners with resources, knowledge, best practice exemplars, informed advice and the evaluation of programs	Create national and international linkages, partnerships and collaborations to build capacity to improve participation and success in higher education
<b>Key Initiatives</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External commissioned research</li> <li>Internal research</li> <li>National competitive grants scheme</li> <li>Relevant publications and dissemination and engagement activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct project evaluations</li> <li>Collate and analyse national equity statistics and survey data, including about those excluded from participation</li> <li>Establish online site for the collection of student data from education institutions and tertiary applications centres</li> <li>Develop and trial a framework for measuring equity performance in Australian higher education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate information on equity groups' access and participation</li> <li>Appropriately communicate high quality research to policy makers</li> <li>Engage policy makers in discussion on higher education policy and practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and share current practice</li> <li>Evaluate current sector initiatives</li> <li>Assist in the evaluation of equity initiatives</li> <li>Share associated tools and resources across the sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide appropriate information to the wider community</li> <li>Establish links with international organisations with similar objectives to foster comparative analysis and collaborate on issues of mutual interest</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>12 months</b>	Quality research outputs, papers, briefing papers, distribution of finalised reports for a national research network	Quality research outputs, papers, briefing papers, distribution of finalised reports for a national research network	Submissions to high profile reviews within the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National forums and events</li> <li>Publications, dissemination via web</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners actively engaged</li> <li>Established networks of researchers, practitioners, policy makers and university executives</li> </ul>
	<b>1 - 3 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invitations to collaborate in international research</li> <li>Nationally competitive research process producing estimable research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible data and resource analysis tools via NCSEHE website for research and equity practitioners</li> <li>Evaluation capacity and expertise</li> </ul>	Evidence-based public policy commentary and analysis	The Australian Government and higher education community understand the role and have confidence in the NCSEHE	