



“The opportunity to collectively forge an Australian community engagement classification through a world-leading framework is a game changer for higher education in Australia. Enhanced ability to benchmark, reward, incentivise and achieve scaled impact will enable and drive the critical mission of universities as institutions in service of society.”

VERITY FIRTH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SOCIAL JUSTICE, UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY.

| VIEWPOINT

PILOT TAKES OFF FOR CARNEGIE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CLASSIFICATION

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

VERITY FIRTH



As demonstrating engagement and impact of research becomes an increasing priority for Australian universities, and with a government mandate to

increase collaboration between universities, industry and end-users, 10 universities across the nation are challenging the existing definition of “engagement.”

Led by the University of Technology Sydney and Charles Sturt University with the

support of Engagement Australia, the cohort will participate in a pilot of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

Considered the gold standard throughout the US, the Carnegie Classification recognises higher education’s commitment to community engagement, with a focus on the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity, rather than the transactional



focus of the current Engagement and Impact reporting framework.

Australian Catholic University, Central Queensland University, Curtin University, Flinders University, Southern Cross University, the University of the Sunshine Coast, Western Sydney University and La Trobe University have also signed on to work together in identifying needed adjustments to the existing US classification framework, to recommend solutions, and contribute to the development of an Australian-specific version of the classification.

The University of Sydney, the University of Tasmania, Deakin University, James Cook University, Swinburne University, Federations University and the University of Western Australia are keenly watching the process as observer institutions.

While the participating universities all have distinct institutional strengths and already foster engagement with their diverse communities, the pilot reflects a need

for Australian universities to implement measures to further improve community engagement practices.

The opportunity to collectively forge an Australian community engagement classification through a world-leading framework is a game changer for higher education in Australia. Enhanced ability to benchmark, reward, incentivise and achieve scaled impact will enable and drive the critical mission of universities as institutions in service of society.

Despite the pilot assessments not being due for submission until mid-2020, the cohort is already feeling the benefit of being engaged in the process. A gathering at the Charles Sturt University's Bathurst campus in June (pictured) saw representatives from all 10 universities join together to share ideas and support colleagues as a cross-institutional community of practice.

Once the formal process of data-gathering and self-assessment is complete, the



“The nature and organisation of ‘engagement’ in Australian universities is diverse and multi-faceted; the challenge is to find unity in such diversity. The Carnegie pilot project will give all members the opportunity to apply a world class evaluative and critical engagement framework, providing a coherent focus for action and development, within a distinctively Australian context.”

PROFESSOR JIM NYLAND, CHAIR OF ENGAGEMENT AUSTRALIA AND ASSOCIATE VICE-CHANCELLOR OF AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY.

universities will then host representatives from Carnegie for campus site visits to see their reported engagement activities in action. The cohort is then aiming to present outcomes at the Talloires Network 2020 conference alongside the Canadian pilot participants.