DEBBIE: Now, everybody, it's my great pleasure to introduce one of my NDCO colleagues, Jessica Buhne, who is going to talk us through our next presentation and introduce the team that has been behind a great project that they've been doing which is making virtual work employable and career events for students with disability in the COVID-19 era. Jessica, I'm going to hand this over to you. Thank you.

JESSICA: Thank you for that lovely welcome, Deb. Thanks, Edward, Rebecca and Kate for your presentations. Really enjoyed those. Now, I'm just going to get the presentation up. Please do let me know if this is coming across okay. Is everyone seeing the title slide making virtual work?

DEBBIE: Perfect, Jessica.

JESSICA: We're off to a good start. So that's always a positive thing. So I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land and recognising their continuing connection to land, water and culture. Today I'm on the land of the Cammeraygal people of the Kuringgai tribe and I pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. As we're all joining this session from various parts of this country I would also like to further acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which you are on today and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and extend my respect to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues who are joining us for this presentation. As Deb mentioned my name is Jessica Buhne and I work in the National Disability Coordination Officer Program, which I think many know as NDCO for short and for this presentation on making virtual work, employability and career events for students with disability in the COVID-19 era. I'm joined by my lovely colleagues Friederike Gadow from the Australian National University, Michelle Jeffrey and Mel Bruniges from Macquarie University, Richard McKeon from Prosple, Krista Markham from QUT and my NDCO colleagues Jacqui Lentini and Caroline Krix. Sorry Caroline. Between us all we will be tag teaming throughout this session. So please feel free to share some of your comments, insights, experiences in the chat box. And we have Caroline, Mel and Michelle who will be happy to chat with you all and answer your questions as we go also. As I move on to the second slide, on the screen we have two images, which are the logos for two events that took place earlier this year. One being the National Diversity and Inclusion Fair and the other being the Pathways to Employability Online Series. This presentation is going to draw on learnings from both of these virtual events. And Friederike will give us a snapshot of the diversity fair or the diversity and inclusion fair, and Jacqui will give us a snapshot of the pathways to employability series, and we will have Richard and Krista coming in a little bit later as well. The presentation today is not only a reflection of both of these events but an exploration of the challenges as well as the enablers and opportunities when it comes to working towards a mutual goal. So for both the diversity and inclusion fair and P2E, the goals were to provide students with disability during this pandemic with access to employment-related tools, resources and opportunities to connect directly with employers. For these virtual events what actually really brought them to life was the collaboration between us all and I think certainly throughout this week of Pathways presentations there has been a number of sessions, which has shown the value and the power of collaboration, and we're pleased to be able to show some further examples of that as we go. So moving on to slide 3. On the screen we have a small decorative icon which shows three participants by a computer and video camera graphic on the screen. The question on the screen asks: what has been your experience working collaboratively with others, either within or outside of your university to achieve a mutual goal? So in a moment I'm going to put a poll question up. And because the two events that we're reflecting on were university-focused events, the whole question does mention university but if you're working within VET or other sectors, please do engage with the poll and do reflect on the question. And in reflecting on this question we would like to ask you to have a think about, perhaps, the last three years. So I will put the poll up in a moment. Here it is. It has moved to my other screen. We've got a few different options there. The first option is I have only worked with colleagues within my team; I have worked collaboratively with teams from other areas of my university or other education institution or other area; I have worked collaboratively with colleagues from other universities; and the final option is I have worked collaboratively with stakeholders outside of the university space. So I'm going to leave that up for another maybe 10 or so seconds. Thank you so much to everyone who has been engaging with that. And I can see on my end at the moment most people have said that they have worked collaboratively with stakeholders outside of the university space. So I will leave that up for a few more moments. And then I will do a share of that. A few more people are still completing that. So thank you so much, everyone. I will end the poll now. And share the results. So majority of people have said that they have worked collaboratively outside of the university space. There is a few people with us in the session who have only had that opportunity to just work within their team. So it is good to see that there is different experiences of collaboration. And if you would like to share them in the chat box, please do. We will come back to the poll results in a moment, or a little later on in the presentation. But in the meantime, as I move on to the next slide, I'm going to invite the lovely Friederike to come in. And she is going to talk about some of the challenges before providing us with a snapshot of the National Diversity and Inclusion Fair, and then we will come back to the topic of collaboration and opportunities throughout as we go. Over to you, Friederike.

FRIEDERIKE: Great. Thank you, Jessica. So the main challenge we were looking to address was how we can meaningfully connect students with employer diversity and inclusion initiatives. We know that employers want to engage with this cohort. For instance through - they might have affirmative measures programs, we know many employers have support structures in place for the benefit of their employees. But the challenge is how to make students aware and also comfortable to engage with employers within the diversity and inclusion context. So moving on to the next slide. Some of the barriers that we were aware of from our experience were that traditional careers fairs, whilst they're very important events, often only provide very limited opportunities for targeted conversations between diversity champions and students from diverse backgrounds. We also know that targeted employer events, for instance, employer visits on campus for students with disability or other diverse backgrounds can be a really meaningful platform for engagement but sometimes small turnout can be an issue, and employers tend to want to come and speak to large numbers of students, and obviously that can be a challenge when you're working as a single university or education provider with this employer. And then lastly face-to-face events also require students to feel comfortable to openly engage, and we know from our experience that students might be reluctant to openly turn up to these events because they fear that then perhaps information about their disability or diversity status is made public in that way. Moving on to slide 6. Thank you. So today we want to briefly highlight two collaborative events that sought to address some of these challenges, particularly in the current context of engaging with students, mostly virtually. I will briefly speak about the National Diversity Inclusion and Careers Fair and then Jacqui will talk you through the Pathways to Employability series. Moving on to slide 7. The National Diversity and Inclusion Careers Fair was born from our experience, that as I mentioned traditional face-to-face and online careers fairs, often don't provide sufficient opportunities for employers to highlight their specific diversity and inclusion initiatives. So in response to this challenge in August 2020, so a few months ago now, we launched a national fair as a pilot event which was meant to create a platform for students from different diverse backgrounds to connect with organisational diversity champions, so that they could hear about organisational practices, programs, as well as opportunities. And the fair was led by my colleague Krista Markham from the University of Queensland and I from AU, and we closely collaborated with Prosple, which resulted in a synchronised national fair across multiple branded platforms and just to give you some numbers we had a total of 22 participating universities and a total of 68 employers. So as you can hear from that there was a high level of interest which was great to see. So overall, the event went for three hours and students and graduates could choose from a really diverse program of employer presentations, there were networking opportunities and we also put together an online workshop program, which was facilitated by different university careers practitioners and NDCOs across the country, so that was another added benefit of pooling resources in that way. I will hand over to Jacqui now to talk to you about Pathways to Employability.

JACQUI: Thanks, Friederike. Okay. So back in 2009, a gap was identified that there was a lack of information and support available to university students with disability about post-study employment opportunities and the kind of support available to help with the transition from study to work. NDCOs identified the Australian network on disability, AND, as a logical partner in seeking to run a careers forum. AND subsequently sourced funding first from KPMG and then from IBM. As a result in 2011, the first graduate forum was born or what we now know today as pathways to employability or P2E. The forum was originally run over one day and due to its success it was agreed by the partners involved that the forum would be run annually and rotated between Sydney's metropolitan universities with the responsibility shared by a steering committee. Moving forward now to 2020 and Western Sydney University was due to host P2E in April of this year. However COVID-19 had other ideas and for the the first time in many of our lives we suddenly found ourselves living through a pandemic. As a result the decision was made to convert P2E to an online series so engagement could still be maintained with students who had previously registered for the face-to-face event. However as the country was sent into lockdown and isolation began two gaps were subsequently identified. The first one being that students and graduates with disability were now more isolated than ever and were struggling to connect with employers and access information. The second one being that a graduate forum aimed at addressing the unique set of challenges students with disability face was needed not only in New South Wales but across the country. With these gaps now identified the main objective was to convert the face-to-face event to a more strategic online series enabling a greater reach. As a result, unexpected collaborations were established and what traditionally was a Sydney metropolitan event soon expanded and became a national collaboration with the aim of addressing the needs of graduates with disability transitioning into employment. The organising committee now consisted of universities from multiple states, the NDCO program, and Prosple, our platform partner. The committee decided to run the forum over a six-week period with the last week consisting of an online careers fair where students could connect with disability confident employers. P2E was open to all university students with access requirements due to disability and/or chronic health condition with the aim of providing students with information, knowledge and career development strategies to undertake successful transition from university to appropriate and meaningful employment. In an attempt to maintain engagement across the six-week program, sessions were delivered in multiple formats, from pre-recorded videos, live Q&As, and downloadable resources and mix which would all be accessed through the online platform. Topics such as top tips from university careers services, USEP, an employer and employee panel, sharing information about your mental health and the neurodiverse workforce, tips for navigating your post-university employment journey were presented. The last face-to-face forum was held in 2018, and 76 students were in attendance. Richard will talk shortly about statistics from this year's forum. As a result of national collaboration the rich engagement of students with disability was far greater than all previous years. Caroline will now share in the chat box the link to Pathways to Employability site and I will hand over to my colleague Krista.

KRISTA: Thanks, Jacqui. So with these two events, one of the main things that we had to do was plan differently. What was quite interesting is that because of the impact of COVID in 2020 it really meant that working with people across Australia, across the globe like Richard, was effectively the same as working with your own team as so many of us were working from home. So it was a really great opportunity to work differently and work with more people and take advantage of the networks, the expertise and all the different backgrounds of people that have the same shared objectives. So with this collaboration we first moved to shift about our plans about a single event to one that was with multiple people in different states. What was really beneficial was that we had the ability to troubleshoot with our teams. So we had two teams for these two events and there were a lot of people that were in - on teams together. And we also had smaller groups driving different elements of these events as well. So both events had one large careers fair, and then multiple events and initiatives embedded into those - into those fairs. So the online events were beneficial because they had a wider reach. So the goal for both of these events was to create an industry and student event that was accessible to as many students as possible in Australia. We were also trying to raise the profile of these events, as we know at least 80 per cent of jobs are sourced through the hidden job market. So it's really important that we raise the profile of these events as well. With a technology partner like Prosple, one of the things that we needed to wait for as well was for technology to be ready to collaborate in the way that we needed to this year as well. So that ensured that it was cost effective and we could actually run these events online and make them accessible through both the technology, the collaboration with multiple institutes, and also sponsors to ensure that we had more accessible information. We also tried to - took the opportunity to make these events as conversational as possible, and for us to be able to develop resources. So it wasn't just a live event, that as many of the initiatives were recorded and could be accessed at different times. I believe we have now 40 recordings available for the diversity fair which is still available for interested parties to view. So with the marketing and promotion of events we really leveraged our colleagues who we collaborated with. Through the universities and social media we saw very different attendance from different universities. So that's great to see the engagement. And we also attempted to promote specific events as well. So we know there's a lot of students who are interested in general sessions and working with - attending sessions from employers that are promoting their graduate programs but we also have some students that are keen to attend solely for a specific event, so what we did is we promoted a whole heap of individual events as well for the diversity fair so students could actually create a timeline of what they wanted to attend for those days. So the benefits for students with these was real opportunities to engage with industry that had prepared and also different staff from industry to attend. So with the diversity fair we had graduate recruiters and we also had staff coming from their diversity and inclusion areas, as well as representatives from different areas in business. And it was an opportunity to check something out without having to share too much personal information as well. So it was a great opportunity for students to come into these events and have a look around and engage if they're comfortable to do so. I’ll pass on.

RICHARD: Thanks, Krista. Richard here from Prosple. And as you know, we were really fortunate to help out with the technology in both of these events. I must admit, this year we've been really fortunate to collaborate with lots of different universities and organisations, and the power of doing that, being able to leverage the expertise and learn from the people that are presenting on this call, was really, really fantastic. And in doing that, what you see on this page is the results of that. There's no way that any single university or any single organisation like Prosple could achieve this. It was actually only possible by leveraging the unique expertise and knowledge that everyone had. So when you get that right, what we ended up with at the Diversity and Inclusion Fair was this being the most popular fair that we were involved with out of more than 20 or 30 throughout 2020. We ended up with over 870 students physically joining an employer video booth and they did that over 3,000 times. So each student was joining two or three video booths at least and having meaningful interactions with employers. And that - I mean, that's fantastic from the students' point of view but it's also really amazing from the employers' point of view. They're wanting to go out there and engage these audiences, provide their own reasons for wanting to recruit a diverse workforce and by the universities working together and collaborating and providing this to them in such an easy way, it's such a benefit for them. As you can see here, technology was the most popular sector. That's a trend that we're seeing in some of the other fairs as well. And in terms of marketing - in fact, this was one of the really interesting things, one of the most impressive things I saw from working with the university teams, was the way in which they were able to engage the student audience. It says here that marketing - that email was the most effective marketing channel and that's true. But what that doesn't tell you is all the other things that the university teams did to engage their students. So I'm talking about working with individual students, societies, getting on the phone in some cases to make sure students knew the event was running and were logging on. No stone was left unturned. It's only through that level of effort across more than 20 universities that you end up with, I think, over 3,000 students actually accessing the pages on the day, which given this is not a general career fair, is a really exceptional result. If you jump to the next page. The same was true for the Pathways to Employability Session. This was a slightly different format, as we've already heard. It ran over six weeks and it finished with a career fair at the end just focused on employers looking for students with disabilities. But, again, it was a collaborative effort and the power of that collaboration to build an audience of students that need to access this content was really powerful. And we now have not only that list but we have the content that can be used in years into the future. So really pleased from the Prosple side to be able to be part of this project and we got some great results from it as well.

DEBBIE: Jess, I might need to unmute you.

JESSICA: All good, Deb, I'm on it. Thanks, Deb. And thanks Richard and to my co-presenters as well. So I guess just to echo what has been said, that despite the uncertainty of the COVID-19 environment there were these opportunities for us to come together and, as we've heard, obviously the benefit in having such a wide reach of engaging students in this space, in this virtual space. What we would like to do in the next couple of minutes we have left is to actually engage you guys a little bit and explore with you all what might be some of the challenges or barriers from your perspective when it comes to working collaboratively, so either between or within your university or your VET provider, and take a moment to reflect on that. And I will pop a poll up in a moment. But the question is, once I move this chat box out of the way, what might be some of the barriers between or within universities from taking part in such collaborative approaches. And there's a few options that are going to come up on the screen in a moment. So, for example, now that the poll is launched, is it things like sharing employer contacts, things like branding, gatekeeping - and this is multiple choice. Feel free to tick as many that is relevant to you from your experience. Is it things like time or survival mode, are you going from one thing to another, is it staff turnover, individual knowledge. So, for example, how would you even know about opportunities for collaboration? Is it individual capacity? So could your workload potentially prevent you or hinder you from taking part in collaborative events? Or is it something else? So I'm going to leave that open for a few more moments but I can see that at the moment the one with the majority of votes is survival mode. And we've got a few others that are quite close to that. So I'm going to end the polling now. And just share those results with everyone. So from that, 70 per cent of people have selected survival mode. After that we've got 40 per cent of people have said gatekeeping. And then it looks like it's a tie between not having enough time, staff turnover, individual knowledge or individual capacity. No one has selected "Other", so I was going to ask if there was an "Other", and let me pop back for a moment because I went too quickly. But, yeah, so it is interesting, I suppose, in thinking through what those challenges are and how we can start to look at those as potential opportunities. So, for example, when it comes to things like sharing employer contacts, we found out from our sessions that we really had such a good reach and for employers, the difficulty, potentially, in attending every single careers fair is quite a challenge. So it can also be a bit of an incentive to work together when we work together. Things like branding, sometimes it can give more weighting and value to things when they are co-branded. Then of course one of the things that we learnt from time was that in all of us coming together it was quite easy to share that load and share the resources. So, Deb, I know you're there. I'm going to wrap up. I'll be very quick. I will move on to the next slide. These were just some of the strategies for collaboration that worked really well for us, and some of the things that were enablers for us. Things like having that shared goal to improve graduate outcomes, things like working with Prosple as our technology partner. Each of us within the working group, having those individual responsibilities and people tapping in at different times depending on their workload. Then of course sharing those resources. The last thing that I do want to do before finishing off is just to invite you all to explore, connect and share with us. We would love to continue this conversation in the new year. And on the screen we have a web address that is going to be popped into the chat box and this is just really inviting you guys to complete the survey. It's just an online survey to let us know that you're happy for us to contact you and happy for us to continue this conversation and do a little bit of thought storming with you. So thank you. Apologies I've gone over. But thank you so much to my co-presenters and over to you, Deb.

DEBBIE: Thank you very much for that, Jess. Please everyone fill in the survey because I was one of the many people that benefitted from all the great work you did during the year for the career fair and the P2E, which is just brilliant.