

DASSH ADI Network Report

The second workshop conducted through the DASSH Associate Deans (International) network was held in Melbourne at RMIT on May 11th, 2018. The theme for the event was “International Recruitment in a Capped Environment” and sought to explore how the ASSH disciplines can respond to the recent decision to re-introduce caps for Commonwealth Supported Places in Australian universities.

The workshop was attended by representatives from a number of Australian universities, including the University of Adelaide, the University of New South Wales, The University of Technology, Sydney, the Australian Catholic University, Griffith University, Swinburne University, RMIT, the Australian National University, La Trobe University and the University of Melbourne. As with the first workshop in 2017, the event was attended by a mix of academic and professional staff, reflecting the need for close collaboration in the international recruitment space.

The workshop centred around two main presentations followed by extended discussions. The first presentation was from Chris Francis, the Head of International Recruitment at Swinburne University. Chris’s presentation focused on the need to properly understand recruitment channels in an increasingly competitive international student market. While many universities are focusing their attention on partnerships with international universities, Chris argued that it is important to remember that the majority of international students are still recruited through traditional agent networks.

The presentation generated a lively discussion around trends in international recruitment and canvassed a range of issues around dealing with agent networks and other recruitment channels. What became clear is that while every university is dealing with the same issues, their approaches are quite different, especially in terms of how international offices are structured at different institutions.

The second presentation was from Chris Ziguras from RMIT, and focused on trends in international student enrolment across the ASSH disciplines. Drawing on data from a range of sources, Chris demonstrated that while international enrolments in these disciplines have not reached the same levels as areas like Business and Engineering, there has still been growth over the past decade. It was also noted that the vast majority of this growth has come from an influx of students from China, echoing comments from Chris Francis about the continued importance of the Chinese market. A copy of Chris Ziguras’ presentation can be downloaded from the password protected section of the ADI Network website.

This presentation also generated a great discussion, focusing mainly on the opportunities for increasing international recruitment across the ASSH disciplines. It was noted that while the creative disciplines were currently the main focus for international recruitment in ASSH across many universities, opportunities also exist in more traditional areas of study. It was also noted that ASSH disciplines can sometimes be disadvantaged by university recruitment strategies, with some potential partners who are strong in ASSH teaching and research not receiving attention because they have a relatively low overall institutional ranking.