

HE FEST

17-18 Sept Conference
19 Sept Workshops
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FUTURE
CAMPUS 

HE FEST Program

17 September

9:00 - 9:10	Welcome, housekeeping and Acknowledgement of Country		Tim Winkler
9:10 - 10:00	Keynote	Professor Iain Martin - VC, Deakin	
10:00 - 10:45	Keynote	Professor Adam Shoemaker - VC, VU	
10:45 - 11:00	Morning Tea		
11:00 - 11:45	Session – streams Marketing/ other TBC	Jo Painter MD, Icon	FC AWARDS – Shortlisted speaker
11:45 - 12:30	Session – streams Marketing/ other TBC	FC AWARDS – Shortlisted speaker	Professor Andrew Norton
12:30 - 1:15	Lunch		
1:15 - 2:30	Session – streams Marketing/ other TBC	Elissa Newall , Senior Partner, Edified and panel – Creating Connection: Helping Regional Students say Yes to Uni	Emma Koval – interdisciplinary research and how to grow it
2:30 - 3:15	Session – streams Marketing/ other TBC	Associate Professor Aaron Driver – AI adoption at UNE	FC AWARDS – Shortlisted speaker
3:15 - 3:45	Afternoon Tea		
3:45 - 4:30	Plenary	Fabian Marrone , CMO and CEO of Monash College and Professor Allie Clemens, DVC (Education)	
4:30 - 5:15	Plenary	FC AWARDS – Shortlisted speaker	
6:30 - 9:00	Dinner	TBC	TBC

HE FEST Program

18 September

9:00 - 9:10	Welcome, housekeeping and Acknowledgement of Country		SM
9:10 - 10:00	Keynote	Genevieve Bell - VC - ANU	
10:00 - 10:40	Plenary	Eric Knight - DVC (People and Operations), Macquarie University	
10:40 - 11:00	Morning Tea		
11:00 - 11:45	Session – streams Marketing/ other TBC	Tim Pegler , Author, Communications Specialist	FC AWARDS – speaker panel
11:45 - 12:30	Session – streams Marketing/ other TBC	Justin Laing , Director, marketing and comms USC – Award winning comms campaigns	Professor James Vickers , UTAS
12:30 - 1:15	Lunch		
1:15 - 2:30	Session – streams Marketing/ other TBC	Dan K Pearson – Video expert and academi, QUT	COMMS PANEL
2:30 - 3:15	Session – streams Marketing/ other TBC	Tracy Chalk UTS CMO	Julie Cogan – ACU Provost
3:15 - 3:45	Afternoon Tea		
3:45 - 4:30	Session	Mike Burgess , Strategic Advisor Chegg and Ray Fleming , Founder, Stratentia	
4:30 - 5:15	Session	Neil Bennett – Photographer and Formal Visual Storytelle, News Corp	

HE FEST - Abstracts

TRACY CHALK

The case for brand in times of crisis.

We've all been there - in times of crisis, brand building is usually the first to go. But the tide is turning and the case for brand is stronger than it has been in decades. Not the old block-buster-ad approach to brand, but a subtler, more sophisticated brand story that is seamlessly woven through channel experience, messaging, content and comms. This session will explore the development and delivery of a truly integrated brand narrative and offer quick wins to create momentum while building the case for a brand led approach to higher education marketing.

JULIE COGIN

The Academic of the Future

AI is transforming universities in every domain, from how students learn, to how research is conducted, and knowledge created. As the higher education sector responds to new technologies, the role of the academic is rapidly evolving. This session will look at the academic of the future - an intermediary between the academy, AI systems, and the learner. One certainty in this changing landscape is that academics must embrace lifelong learning, not just teach it.

ELISSA NEWALL

Creating Connection: Helping Regional Students Say Yes to University

Regional students face ongoing barriers to higher education, from distance and financial stress to social isolation. In response, universities are trialling creative strategies that support students from aspiration to success. This session will explore targeted outreach programs, accommodation support packages, tailored scholarships and digital tools that foster friendship and belonging. Through real-world case studies, panellists will share how they're addressing both the practical and emotional needs of regional learners. Attendees will leave with actionable insights that align with the Accord's goal of making university participation more equitable for regional and remote learners.

GENEVIEVE BELL

Through the stories of Australia's Overland Telegraph Line, Distinguished Professor Genevieve Bell will explore what we can learn from a historical large-scale system and how we can use it as a blueprint for understanding the complex systems of contemporary AI. Interwoven with other human, technical, and ecological systems, the OTL transformed our experiences of time, distance, knowledge, and social relationships. Genevieve will use insights from the OTL to encourage different conversations about current and future human and technical systems.

Workshop 1:

Image isn't everything – but it can be

Facilitators	Neil Bennett and Tim Winkler
Date and Time:	Friday 19 September / 10:00am - 12:30pm
Venue	Deakin Downtown
Cost:	\$295

How to stand out from the herd with photographers

Too often, images are chosen to decorate, not define. In an era where anyone can generate a passable picture with AI or download a polished stock image in seconds, the institutions that stand out are those that use photography with strategic intent—crafting visual narratives that reveal who they are, not just what they offer.

With many Australian universities offering similar courses, the pressure is on to cut through the clutter and engage prospective students, donors, staff and the public with the essence of your institution's distinctiveness.

Photography remains one of the most powerful yet underutilised tools in higher education marketing. Done well, it can cut through sameness, connect emotionally with audiences, and bring authenticity to your brand.

This workshop is for anyone involved in communications, marketing, engagement or branding who wants to elevate the way their institution is seen—literally. You'll learn how to move beyond generic or decorative imagery and start using visual storytelling to define your identity, attract the right students and partners, and build lasting engagement.

Internationally recognised photographer Neil Bennett, former Head of Visual Storytelling at News Corp Australia and Head of Photography at AAP, will share expert insights into how to plan, capture and select images that communicate meaning and build profile. With experience across the UK, US and Australia—including at Monash University—Neil brings a practical, sector-informed perspective on what makes images work in the real world.

Tim Winkler, Director of Twig Marketing, will facilitate the session, drawing on more than two decades of experience working with over 30 higher education institutions. Together, they'll help you explore the strategic role of imagery in brand building and equip you to make better visual decisions across campaigns and content.

Topics covered include:

- **The perfect image brief** – What to ask, what to avoid, and how to plan for powerful results
- **Photographer vs AI vs stock** – When to invest, when to improvise
- **Choosing the right talent** – Who represents your brand and how to capture them well
- **Creative freedom vs control** – Do great shots come from detailed briefs, creative instinct—or both?

Plus, practical guidance on questions like:

- **What if my campus/lab/office is dark and ugly?**
- **How do I make dentistry, accounting, or arts courses visually appealing?**

If you want your university to be remembered—not just seen—this workshop will give you the tools and confidence to capture more images that count.

Workshop 2:

AI, Strategy, and the New Student Journey

Facilitators	Ray Fleming and Michael Burgess
Date and Time:	Friday 19 September / 1:00pm - 3:30pm
Venue	Deakin Downtown
Cost:	\$295

The world your students are preparing for is rapidly being upended. Is your marketing keeping pace?

AI isn't coming - it's already here. And it's rapidly transforming how education is delivered, consumed, and valued. For university marketing leaders, this means rethinking everything. What does it mean for student recruitment? For the value proposition of a degree? For the entire marketing function, including how we structure our teams, engage prospects, differentiate our offering, utilise third partners?

But with so much hype, and so little clarity, many are left wondering where to start, and can be tempted to wait until there's clarity before making the right decision.

You're not alone if your team is feeling stuck.

Too many university teams are stuck in reactive mode - watching AI evolve from the sidelines, unsure how to respond. As student expectations shift, employer demands evolve, and academic delivery models adapt, the role of marketing is being fundamentally reshaped. If your team doesn't have a clear AI strategy yet, you're already falling behind.

While the headlines scream innovation, your inbox is full of uncertainty. How will employer expectations shift your messaging? What role will marketing play as new forms of credentialing and hybrid delivery emerge? And just how fast will academic delivery change?

Meanwhile, other institutions are already making moves - experimenting, adapting, and building AI capability at speed. Without a clear strategy and pragmatic approach to deliver meaningful change, the risk isn't just falling behind. It's being left out of the conversation altogether.

**Join us for a pragmatic, future-focused workshop
designed for higher ed marketing leaders.**

It's clear that nobody knows all the answers, and that we are all learning from the experts a few steps ahead of us! And spending time comparing notes with leaders and colleagues, and challenging our own thinking is valuable.

Led by [Michael Burgess](#) - former Chief Student Experience Officer at Western Sydney University and ex-head of strategy at NRMA - and [Ray Fleming](#) - former global higher education industry lead at Google Cloud and Microsoft ANZ, and cohost of the [AI in Education podcast](#) since 2019 - this 3-hour workshop will blend lifting your knowledge of what's happening in an AI-disrupted world with real-world case studies, forward-looking insights, and facilitated discussions to help you:

- Understand where AI is already reshaping higher ed - from classrooms to campaign teams
- Explore how marketing can drive value in a redefined student experience
- Build the components of a roadmap to guide your team's development over the next two years

You'll leave with a sharper sense of what's possible, what's urgent, and what's next - for you, your team, and your university.



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