Exploring the challenges facing universities and the opportunities for transformation

9.00am – 9.15am Welcome
CEO, Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, Anthony McClaran

9.15am – 10.15am Sector-wide support mechanism for peer review
Dr Sara Booth, Strategic Advisor Quality (External) University of Tasmania
Peer review is critical to the assurance of academic standards in higher education. Building on the work of the Peer Review Assessment Network (Booth et al, 2015), this session will provide an overview of a joint collaboration initiative between Education Services Australia and Higher Education Services to provide a sector wide support mechanism, including an online peer review tool and professional development workshops for academics.

Developing an online peer review tool
Victoria Johnson, General Manager, Program Delivery, Education Services Australia

Piloting international peer review benchmarking for New Zealand
Dr Peter Coolbear, Director, Ako Aotearoa
Reflections on the international peer review project hosted by Ako Aotearoa and the University of Tasmania in Wellington in 2015: what we did and what we learned.

10.15am – 10.25am Student engagement in university decision making and governance- a conversation whose time has come
Professor Sally Varnham, Faculty of Law, University of Technology Sydney

Professor Varnham is the chief investigator on an Office for Learning and Teaching strategic priority project looking at student engagement in university decision making. Evidence shows that engaging students in this way is beneficial to both students and institutions. It is an embedded practice in the UK, Europe and New Zealand. The project has drawn on international experience and expertise and evidence of good practice here in Australia to identify factors necessary for successfully partnering with students in decision making processes. There are some important initiatives already occurring in Australia. The challenge going forward is to foster wider uptake.

10.25am – 10.45am Morning Tea

10.45am – 11.15am Higher education standards in a disaggregated learning environment: suggestions for policy makers, regulators and higher education providers
Emeritus Professor Christine Ewan, Office for Learning and Teaching Higher Education Standards Panel Research Fellow

The principal aim of the project was to identify implications for the Higher Education Standards framework and its implementation of the increasing trend towards disaggregating components of the higher education experience. Extensive consultations and a review of emerging trends identified that, almost without qualification, Australian providers endorsed the revised Higher Education Standards Framework and identified no significant impediments to innovation arising from it. However, they also identified scope for ambiguity within some of the concepts embodied in the HESF and the AQF and expressed strong sentiments about the importance of ensuring that the regulator (TEQSA) and the sector had a shared understanding of the interpretation of those concepts. The report offers some suggestions that might be of assistance in guiding the sector, HE Standards Panel and TEQSA towards areas where future collaborative work could be beneficial.

11.15am – 11.45am  Better 21C credentials
Professor Beverley Oliver, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Deakin University

Credentials are signals that warrant that learning has been achieved. Traditional macro credentials such as degrees have been conferred for centuries, and understood by educators, students, employers and the community. MOOCs enable anyone with an Internet connection to complete components of macro credentials from prestigious institutions and increasingly offer learners the opportunity to earn a micro credential, through verified assessment, and then upgrade to credit towards a degree, all for a fee.

In this session, Professor Oliver will give an overview of these emerging micro credentials, or 21C credentials, and propose a set of criteria they must meet to be deemed excellent. She will lead a discussion of how 21C credentials can make the degree more cost-effective for the learner, and potentially for the provider, if scale can be achieved and maintained.

11.45am – 12.15pm  Exploring the challenges of academic integrity for universities and opportunities for transformation
Dr Judith Gullifer, Sub-Dean, Teaching Excellence, Faculty of Arts, Charles Sturt University

This session will review how Charles Sturt University has utilised a case analysis approach towards changing the underlying philosophy of managing "academic misconduct" to promoting "academic integrity" as stakeholders develop process towards change. There will be time during the session for participants to share strategies that have worked well in their institution.

12.15pm – 12.45pm  Credential integrity – The Digital Student Data Project
Kathryn Blyth, Academic Registrar, Australian Catholic University

Hear the latest about this Universities Australia-led Digital Student Data Project which will provide students, employers and universities with an innovative solution that will deliver the following benefits: Credential integrity and security; enhance student mobility and data portability; yield productivity improvements for universities; and allow universities to provide and access secure academic records from local, and critically, international institutions through international nodes.

12.45pm – 1pm  Wrap-up