



## **Response to the Accord Interim Report**

1<sup>st</sup> September 2023

Digitary is part of the Parchment group of companies. Our mission is to 'Turn Credentials into Opportunities' by enabling learners to present the best version of themselves supported by verified credentials and awards. With worldwide servicing of over 6,000 accredited institutions, our organisation is a global leader in the digitisation and verification of credentials and microcredentials.

Digitary collaborates in Australia with HES as the technology and service providers of the My eEquals platform. At the time of this response, there are 2.5 million learners who have a registered My eEquals Learner Portal account (growing by approximately 500,000 each year) and over 9 million credentials have been digitally certified and issued. The platform is widely used by learners and participants with over 6 million shared, displayed or presented verified records by learners as part of applications for employment, further studies, professional associations, visa applications and much more. Verified credentials that are issued and shared on My eEquals include transcripts, testamurs, certificates, AHEGS, statement of attainments, completion letters, enrolment letters and digital badges for recognition of microcredentials, skills, competencies and non-formal learning.

My eEquals was created with the collaboration of the initial 47 universities across Australia and New Zealand working together to enable a standardised platform for all students and graduates to view and share their awarded credentials. The initiative, known as the Digitary Student Data project originated from the Groningen Declaration Network (GDN), that both Universities Australia and Universities New Zealand are signatories. GDN is an international, non-profit and voluntary network that supports academic and professional digital credential mobility so that citizens worldwide are able to consult and share their authentic educational data with whomever they want, whenever, wherever. Bringing together stakeholders from across the global Digital Student Data Ecosystem.

Since the launch to the original 47 Universities across Australia and New Zealand in 2017/2018 the network has grown to include a total of 78 accredited institutions across Australia and New Zealand, including over 50% of TAFEs including TAFE SA, Holmesglen, and Canberra Institute of Technology. In addition, a growing number of private higher education providers making the My eEquals platform a truly sector-wide network rich with verified credentials and qualifications that learners are using, and the market recognises.

With Digitary by Parchment's global network reach and work towards global interoperability, opportunities arise for the Australian market to ensure appropriate recognition of learners outside of Australia, and the verification and recognition of international learners coming into Australia.

To the Universities Australia Accord Panel,

Thanks and appreciation to the extremely diligent efforts of Chair Professor Mary O’Kane and the wider Accord Panel, in producing this Interim Report and establishing a vision for the future. The insights and recommendations provide a clear direction with meaningful action to advance the sector for today and into the future.

Our specific response is in relation to 2.2.7 National skills passport and associated sections under 2.2: Meeting Australia’s future skills needs. We believe strong consideration should be given to the work and development of the My eEquals platform for the many and various recommendations provided in relation to a National skills passport and the involvement in work around the National Credentials Platform (NCP).

Significant investment has already been undertaken by the sector in establishing My eEquals and standardising delivery and service models for learners, that currently sits at 2.5 million learners accessing their earned credentials and is expected to reach 3 million by mid-2024. With Digital Badges introduced as part of a sector request and governance of My eEquals the request to have microcredentials recognised alongside macro credential documents, the My eEquals platform is helping to provide a holistic account of an individual's credentials and recognised skills. Today, My eEquals is operating as a secure digital platform for students and graduates to access, compile, display and share their higher education qualifications, microcredentials and general capabilities as certified by the attesting institution, and has achieved significant outcomes in improving learner experience, reducing credential fraud, enabling learner mobility and improving the operational efficiencies for both institutions and receivers/consumers of digital credentials.

Collaboration has been undertaken with peak bodies such as TDA and IHEA to enable their membership to also join My eEquals, which has now seen over 50% of TAFEs join the network and a growing number of private higher education providers. This collaboration speaks to the objectives outlined in the Interim Report to unify higher education and VET to better support students and ensure stronger recognition and understood skills and competencies can be achieved.

Digitary and in collaboration with the My eEquals community is establishing a roadmap that ensures the technological evolution of credentials is being implemented and embedded into practices, in a managed and secure manner. This includes a focus on Self-Sovereign Identity (SSI) and delivering Verifiable Credentials per the W3C standards, with a pilot recently conducted in Canada through the Ontario Government’s Virtual Skills Passport and servicing the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) for My Creds™. Digitary representative, Simone Ravaioli, sits as co-chair W3C Verifiable Credentials for Education Task Force.

Digitary’s technological and product roadmap in advancing credential delivery, recognition and digital wallets aligns with the key outcomes identified in the Interim Report.

We support the objective and vision as outlined in the Interim Report and feel that the many years of collaboration with the sector from the initiation of the Digital Student Data taskforce from 2014/2015 to today, has enabled the My eEquals platform to be best positioned to achieve the overall objectives outlined. We believe wider endorsement should be considered to have My eEquals be recognised as the platform of choice for this national objective.

Regards,

**James Murray-Beckman**

General Manager International

**Daniel Hibbert**

Director APAC