

Concurrent Session 1

11:00am - 11:30am

Zoom

AI AT WORK AND PLAY:
BOOSTING EFFICIENCY AND
UNLEASHING CREATIVITY AT
WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY

STEVEN McDONALD

At Western, AI is transforming collaboration, creativity, and care within our professional community. This presentation highlights AI’s crucial role in enhancing workplace efficiency and staff wellbeing.

AI-driven tools like chatbots, email management, and automated proposals streamline work processes, allowing staff to focus on higher-value tasks. This fosters better collaboration, reduces stress, and boosts productivity, illustrating effective co-creation with technology.

AI also enhances personal creativity and resilience among staff. Projects in music composition and video editing provide creative outlets and develop skills transferable to professional roles. This synergy between work and personal creativity strengthens overall staff resilience and wellbeing.

Western embraces AI to build an inclusive, innovative community, using technology as a backbone for partnership and co-creation. This presentation invites attendees to explore AI as a catalyst for individual fulfilment and collective strength, advancing our mission of holistic wellbeing.

- KEY MESSAGE
1. AI Enhances Workplace Efficiency

2. AI Fosters Creative Expression

3. Synergy Between Professional and Personal Growth

4. Contributes to Wellbeing and Resilience

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SMALL DIFFERENCE, BIG
OUTCOMES

MARLENE HENRY
NICOLE KING

In April, the Australian Universities Accord brought the issue of placement poverty out into the open, and the Placmeents Hub at Western was already at the forefront through its offering of HUBGrants to currently enrolled Undergraduate, Honours and Coursework Postgraduate students. These small grants support the costs of placements and WIL experiences. This is a pilot program offered in 2024, and in this session, we will provide:

- research into why supporting unpaid placements, and providing a grants program can make such a difference to the student journey
- the results and reach to date of the program
- the financial and placement issues raised by students applying for these grants
- the difference made by these small grants to students who have applied.

In supporting students in their journey through their degrees and placements, Western can gain so much more insight into how we can address and change the landscape of placements and WIL to benefit future students and their graduate aspirations.

KEY MESSAGE

Forging a path to placements
enrich the student journey
together

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TOGETHER WE GROW
STRONGER

JOSH MASON

The Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education is dedicated to empowering Indigenous students at Western through a variety of programs, services, and facilities that support their academic journey. It fosters a strong sense of community and belonging, offering a culturally safe environment for learning and engagement.

Badanami aims to enhance students’ strengths and capabilities, ensuring success across the Indigenous student cohort at Western.

Personalised initiatives, such as the Deadly Chat, social events, and one-on-one interactions, form the cornerstone of their engagement model, emphasising individual and tailored connections.

KEY MESSAGE

Highlights the need for staff and
collaboration in guiding Indigenous
student success.

Concurrent Session 2
12:00pm - 12:30pm

Zoom

CO-CREATION WITH YOUR
AI PARTNER : GET READY
FOR THE NEXT
REVOLUTION

PAOLO SPINETTI

This presentation aims to familiarise staff with the current capabilities of AI and demonstrate how to leverage simple, free tools like BingChat to maximize efficiency. Key points include:

1. Current landscape of AI and tool use
2. Exploring AI Tools: A review of accessible AI tools that can enhance productivity, focusing on free options such as BingChat for policy questioning and efficient information retrieval (including output use for Powerpoint/slide generation).
3. Effective Prompt Structuring: Guidance on crafting optimal prompts to obtain accurate and relevant responses from AI tools.
4. Advanced AI Capabilities: An overview of the potential of more advanced tools, like Python scripting, which are powerful but currently less user-friendly for the average user.

This presentation aims to enhance comfort with AI use by showcasing its capabilities and practical applications, while acknowledging that some may find its use challenging or risky.

KEY MESSAGE

Lets get creative and work towards getting that balance back into our lives

Concurrent Session 2
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Zoom

REFRAME YOUR WORK
LIFE FOR CLIMATE ACTION
AND WELLBEING

RENEE BOUCHER
DANIEL JANTOS

The climate crisis is the defining challenge impacting our lives and wellbeing. Eco-anxiety affects mental health, with action identified as a key coping strategy. While personal climate action is common, incorporating it into work can be challenging. Future jobs will require climate knowledge, and our university emphasises sustainability literacy. Despite being a sector leader, many staff may be unsure how to contribute.

In this interactive workshop, we will share how we’ve integrated climate action into our roles, fostering conversations with colleagues and students. We will provide examples of impactful collaboration and small actions that enhance wellbeing and professional satisfaction. Participants will explore tools and resources to creatively incorporate climate action into their work, contributing to the collective effort and experiencing empowerment and wellbeing.

KEY MESSAGE

- Climate action is everyone’s responsibility. We all have skills to contribute and a role to play.
- Sustainability literacy is an important skill for workplaces of the future.
- Taking action and collaborating with colleagues is both empowering and an effective way to address eco-anxiety and support our current and future wellbeing.

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STRENGTHENING SERVICE
PARTNERSHIPS

NICOLE ANDERSON
VERONICA DE PAOLI

One of the University’s service excellence principles is “working together”. This is defined as “Work collaboratively and respectfully, in genuine partnership towards common outcomes, avoiding the ‘us’ and ‘them’ mentality, underpinned by effective communication”.

The 2022 service survey identified "working together" as the most important principle to staff. But what does effective collaboration look like, and why are some partnerships more successful?

Service team members find some end users easier to collaborate with than others. What defines a 'good customer,' and what do our service areas value in partnerships? Conversely, why do some end users have better experiences with certain services?

This workshop will explore fostering collaboration between service teams and users. Key elements include effective communication, building relationships, honesty, constructive feedback, and recognising great service. We will discuss how to operationalise "working together," build trust, and break down silos.

KEY MESSAGE

- Find out why some service partnerships are more effective and collaborative than others?
- Ideas on how to ‘work together’ more effectively (one of our service excellence principles)
- Know what service teams value in end users
- Know what end users value in service teams

Concurrent Session 3
2:00pm - 2:30pm

Zoom

CAN RURAL HEALTH EXPERIENCES HAVE A WORKFORCE IMPACT THROUGH VIRTUAL REALITY?

EME JOHN
DR LEVI UCHECHUKWU OSUAGWU

Recruiting healthcare professionals to rural areas is a global challenge. Traditional methods face barriers like cost and accessibility. Innovative solutions are needed, especially in rural Australia. Virtual reality (VR) offers a cost-effective, scalable solution. This study aims to develop an immersive VR experience showcasing rural health careers to attract professionals.

Researchers collaborated with rural schools and health organisations to create VR content based on factors influencing rural practice decisions. Filming included community members and staff, highlighting authentic rural health practices and lifestyles. Ethical and technical considerations were carefully addressed.

Preliminary findings show enthusiasm from healthcare workers and community support, underscoring VR's potential in addressing workforce shortages.

The next phase involves testing the VR experience by presenting it at career fairs and events. Participants will complete pre and post surveys on their attitudes toward rural health careers, with semi-structured interviews providing deeper insights.

KEY MESSAGE

Virtual reality (VR) technology could offer a cost-effective and scalable solution to provide immersive experiences, potentially increasing interest in rural health careers and addressing workforce shortages.

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EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE - THE DIQO WAY

SREE CHANDRA
DAVID LAUGERY

Social connection at work is incredibly important to employees' emotional well-being. It fulfills the contact and connection we crave with other people.

At DIQO, we focus on enabling staff to work at their peak. This presentation focuses on how DIQO addresses problems of people from working in silos, improving on communication, staff skill-sets and team building.

The activities initiated throughout the year at DIQO shows improved staff engagement and loyalty, fewer absenteeism and greater connection between team members.

KEY MESSAGE

Collaborative social activities pave the way for knowledge sharing and emotional well-being which are key to achieving positive work outcomes.

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TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER: EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN THROUGH THE HARVEY NORMAN YOUNG WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

CHRISTIAN BURDEN
SOPHIE PARTRIDGE
CANDICE O’CONNOR

Western’s Engagement and Advancement portfolio presents the collaboration between Ms. Katie Page, Harvey Norman, Western Sydney University, and Auburn Girls High School in establishing 'The Harvey Norman Young Women’s Leadership Academy.'

Ms. Page and Harvey Norman are donating \$7.9 million to fund tailored workshops, professional development for teachers, family engagement sessions, learning grants, and university scholarships, aiming to develop students' capabilities and foster leadership and educational success.

A research component ensures continuous improvement and best practices. The 'Page Fellows Mentoring Program' will support mentorship and leadership development for university-bound students.

This academy will empower young women, positioning Auburn Girls High School and Western Sydney University as leaders in nurturing future female leaders.

Join us to explore the impactful outcomes of this collaborative initiative.

KEY MESSAGE

A collaborative and co-creative approach internally and with business and community can produce high-impact outcomes - we can and should want to be part of that.