

26 September 2023

Dr Manisha Amin  
CEO  
Centre for Inclusive Design

Dear Dr Amin,

We are pleased to invite you to join the Australian Network for Quality Digital Education.

The University of Technology Sydney, with support from the Paul Ramsay Foundation, is establishing the Network to leverage edtech's potential to tackle one of society's most persistent and pressing challenges – educational inequality. The Network will be chaired by Professor Leslie Loble, and we would be delighted if you would accept our invitation to partner with us in this important work, contributing your invaluable expertise and insight to help secure a thriving future for Australia's young people.

The recent NAPLAN results showed us more of what we know. One in three Australian children is not on track for success in numeracy, reading and writing, amongst other outcomes, and the vulnerability is not evenly spread. Those who live in remote areas, those whose parents didn't complete high school or who are unemployed, are more likely to struggle. So too are our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students.

At the same time, technology and its educational applications are booming. The startling advent of ChatGPT has highlighted edtech's risks and benefits, but, fortunately, work to realise edtech's potential for social benefit is already underway. Last year, as Paul Ramsay Foundation Fellow with the University of Technology Sydney's Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion, Professor Loble, published a [report](#) exploring how we might shape AI and edtech to tackle Australia's learning divide. This paper found growing evidence that high-quality digital education technology has the potential to help improve learning for Australian students, but it needs to be well designed, appropriately used, and carefully managed. Currently, teachers, parents and schools lack easily accessible, robust evidence of quality assurance, protection from harm, and how to use edtech most effectively for positive impact.

Professor Tom Calma AO, Chancellor of the University of Canberra, elder from the Kungarakan tribal group and member of the Iwaidja tribal group, and Co-Chair of the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation says:

We know that education and technology together can change lives. But it needs to be good technology designed with affected communities and peoples. The Network gives us an opportunity to come together, listen, learn and contribute, so that our children can benefit from the best edtech – the edtech that puts their needs, learning and wellbeing first.

The Network will connect key leaders, like you, from across education, industry, social purpose and philanthropic organisations, government and research, in the common purpose of ensuring that *all* Australian students benefit from the best edtech. The Network's agenda will cover important policy questions like quality expectations and governance as well as seeking to stimulate the growing



evidence of what good looks like in the classroom, and how innovative business and investment models could support an equitable and accessible sector. The Network will have a particular focus on listening to and learning from voices less frequently heard, so that edtech can respond to the full diversity of needs and start to disrupt the education divide. From you, we need expertise and insights to help guide the work, frank and fearless questions to challenge assumptions and build understanding, and innovative ideas to move equitable education and edtech forward.

The Network will be launched in November, with three meetings planned for 2024, as well as opportunities to engage in applied research on targeted and emerging issues.

The Network is being convened with inaugural funding from the Paul Ramsay Foundation and sponsored by the Hon. Professor Verity Firth AM, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Social Justice and Inclusion) at the University of Technology Sydney.

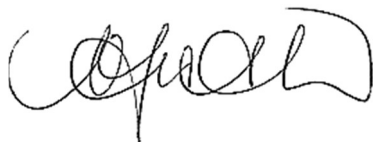
David Gonski AC, longstanding proponent of more equitable support for Australian students, has indicated his support:

Edtech is a critical component of the educational environment. We no longer ask whether schools should have computers because it is a given that computers are part of the modern world. We do however ask – and we should keep asking – how can edtech be best used to improve teaching and learning, especially for the students who need it most? The Network is an important way of creating momentum for change at a social and technological inflection point.

We look forward to hearing that you will add your voice and experience to the Network, by 6 October 2023. Please email Dr Kelly Stephens at [Kelly.Stephens@uts.edu.au](mailto:Kelly.Stephens@uts.edu.au) to confirm your interest. Kelly is Director, Edtech and Education Policy, within the Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion at UTS, supporting the Network and its associated work program.

If you would like additional information about our plans for the Network, please feel free to reach out to Kelly or Leslie, who can be reached via [leslieloble@bigpond.com](mailto:leslieloble@bigpond.com).

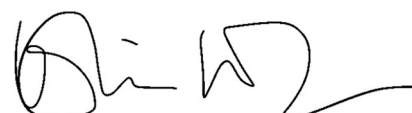
Regards,



**Professor Verity Firth**  
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Social Justice & Inclusion)  
University of Technology Sydney



**Professor Kristy Muir**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Paul Ramsay Foundation



**Professor Leslie Loble**  
Industry Professor, University of Technology Sydney  
Paul Ramsay Foundation Fellow