

# Fellow Profile



## Professor Jessica Vanderlelie La Trobe University

Professor Jessica Vanderlelie is the inaugural Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Success at La Trobe University. Jessica is recognised widely for her expertise as an educator and innovative approaches to supporting student transition and graduate success

**Fellowship title:** Partnering with alumni to enhance graduate success in the health science disciplines

**Year completed:** 2019

**Expertise key words:** alumni, Student Success, Health

**What did you achieve?:** To strengthen our connection with alumni, I believe we need to consider the ‘world’ of a new graduate, challenge our notions of having ‘done our job’ at graduation and facilitate connection beyond our requests for time, talent and treasure. My National Learning and Teaching Fellowship supported universities to enhance student employability and success by conceptualising and designing effective and evidence-based strategies to actively engage alumni.

Throughout the Fellowship, I connected deeply with the sector and engaged over 1900 individuals from 28 Australian and 27 international universities through research activities, presentations and workshops. This work led to the formation of the Graduate Lifecycle Leaders network that recognises academic colleagues from across the sector for their commitment to working with alumni in a mutually supportive way and the quality of their engagement activities.

The key outcomes of the fellowship were a series of theoretical frameworks and resources to support universities to maintain authentic engagement with their alumni and leverage their knowledges to support student employability. These are presented on the Fellowship website and in the five Engaging Alumni for Employability Good Practice Guides. The latter include the inaugural National Principles for Engaging Alumni for Employability and a series of contextualised recommendations, frameworks and examples of practice to empower universities, academics and professional staff to authentically engage with alumni.

I continue actively advocate for stronger relationships between academic staff and alumni professionals and deliver workshops for staff at all levels of Universities seeking to authentically engage their alumni to improve student employability and support the graduate transition.

**What does the sector need now?:** My Fellowship deepened awareness of the value of alumni engagement, it is imperative now that academic staff are supported to develop lasting connection to their graduates and embed employability.



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