

# DIGITAL STUDENT DATA PROJECT

*We're on the road to credential security*

Presentation to the Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching) in ICT Disciplines

Sydney 1 April 2016

# The Opportunity: Student Mobility

- The Australian international education industry was worth \$19.2 billion in 2014/5 and is the nation's largest services export industry.
- Verifying inbound student documentation is labour intensive and costly
- Australian graduates seeking employment overseas are being required to produce electronically authenticated documents as this becomes the norm

# The Problem: Credential Fraud

- The CEO of TEQSA, Anthony McClaran, has reported that Australia was held up as an example as having one of the highest incidents of qualification fraud in the world, at the January 2016 Council for Higher Education Accreditation International Quality Group Conference in Washington.
- Certified copies of documentation are unreliable
- Credential fraud is estimated to be a \$US1 billion industry worldwide (Brown, G, 2006)
- If not addressed, this problem will only worsen.

# Global Mobility

- Working and studying internationally increasingly common
- Limited knowledge of institutions overseas
- Recruitment – too good to be true?
- Creative translations
- Authenticity and comparability of qualifications



**Can we tell a genuine Harvard  
MBA from a fake one?**

# How to obtain a degree qualification

- Earn a qualification from an accredited university (the normal way!)

## Illegitimate means

- Claim a degree
- Fabricate one (counterfeit)
- Purchase a replica testamur and/or transcript
- Purchase a 'University of life experience' degree

Brown, G (2006), Degrees of Doubt: Legitimate, real and fake qualifications in a global market



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# Groningen Declaration

- Digital Student Data Portability
- “Allowing citizens worldwide to share their authentic educational data with whomever they want, whenever they want, wherever”

<http://www.groningendeclaration.org/>

## Signatories

- Universities Australia – May 2015
- Universities New Zealand – May 2016

Fully participate in the Groningen Declaration network

“The Groningen Declaration seeks common ground in best serving the academic and professional mobility needs of citizens world wide by bringing together key stakeholders in the Digital Student Data Ecosystem.”



*Mr Neil Robinson, Executive Director Academic Services and Registrar at The University of Melbourne signing the Groningen Declaration on behalf of Universities Australia*

The Groningen Declaration was signed on 5 May 2015.



# DSD Vision and Objectives

A globally mobile student experience

Underpinned by secure and easily transferable academic records integrated through international networks

Credential Integrity and Security



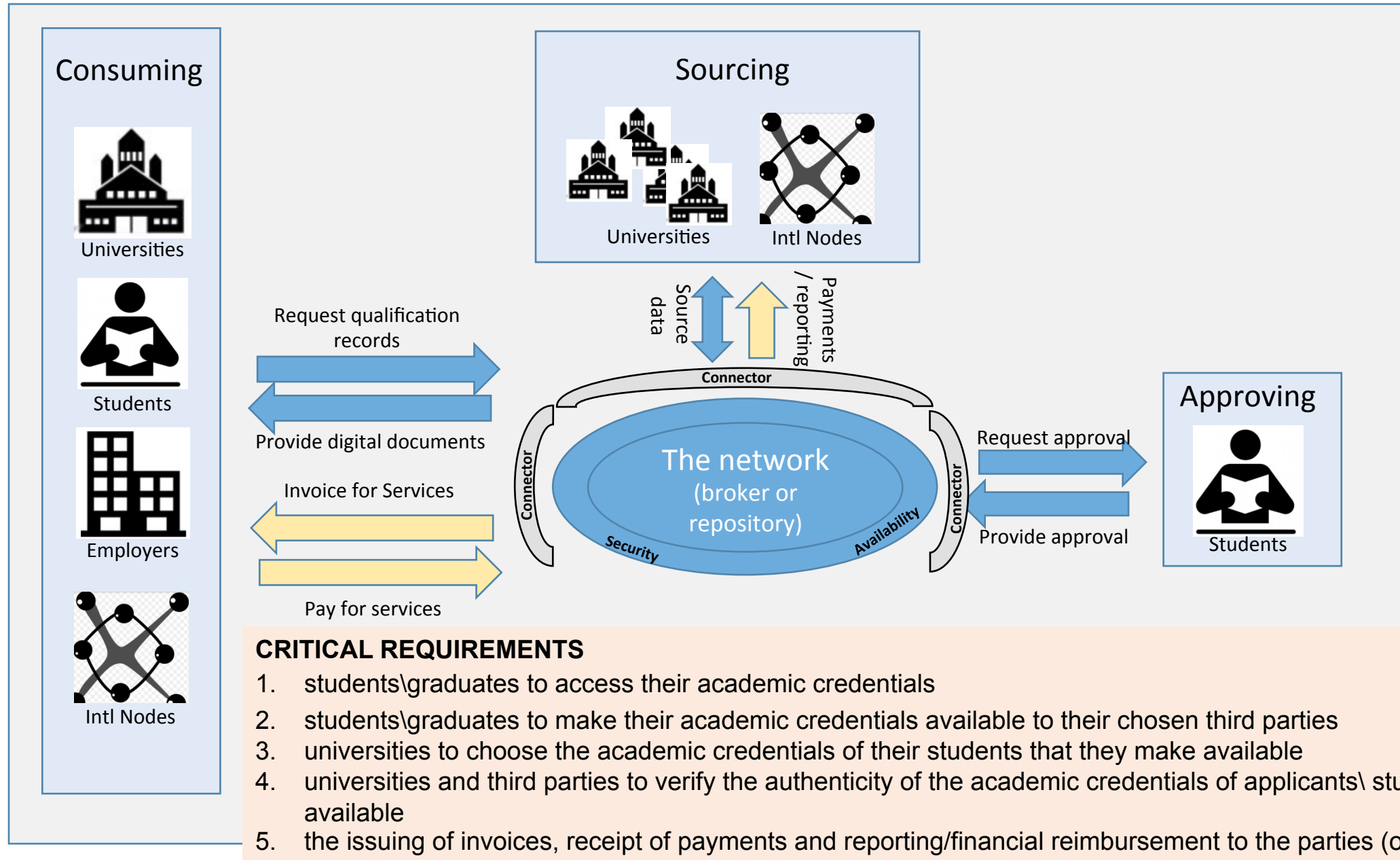
Student mobility and data portability



University productivity improvement



# Target state overview



# The Benefits...

## **Protect and enhance the reputation of the sector**

- Reduce the instances of document fraud and falsification by secure electronic data and documents accessible from a trusted source
- Raise the profile of Australia's reputation as a world-leader in international education – delivery of education experience of uncompromising quality

## **Alignment with Commonwealth Government strategies and plans**

- Drive for productivity and removal of 'red tape'
- Student centred model - Focus on end-user needs

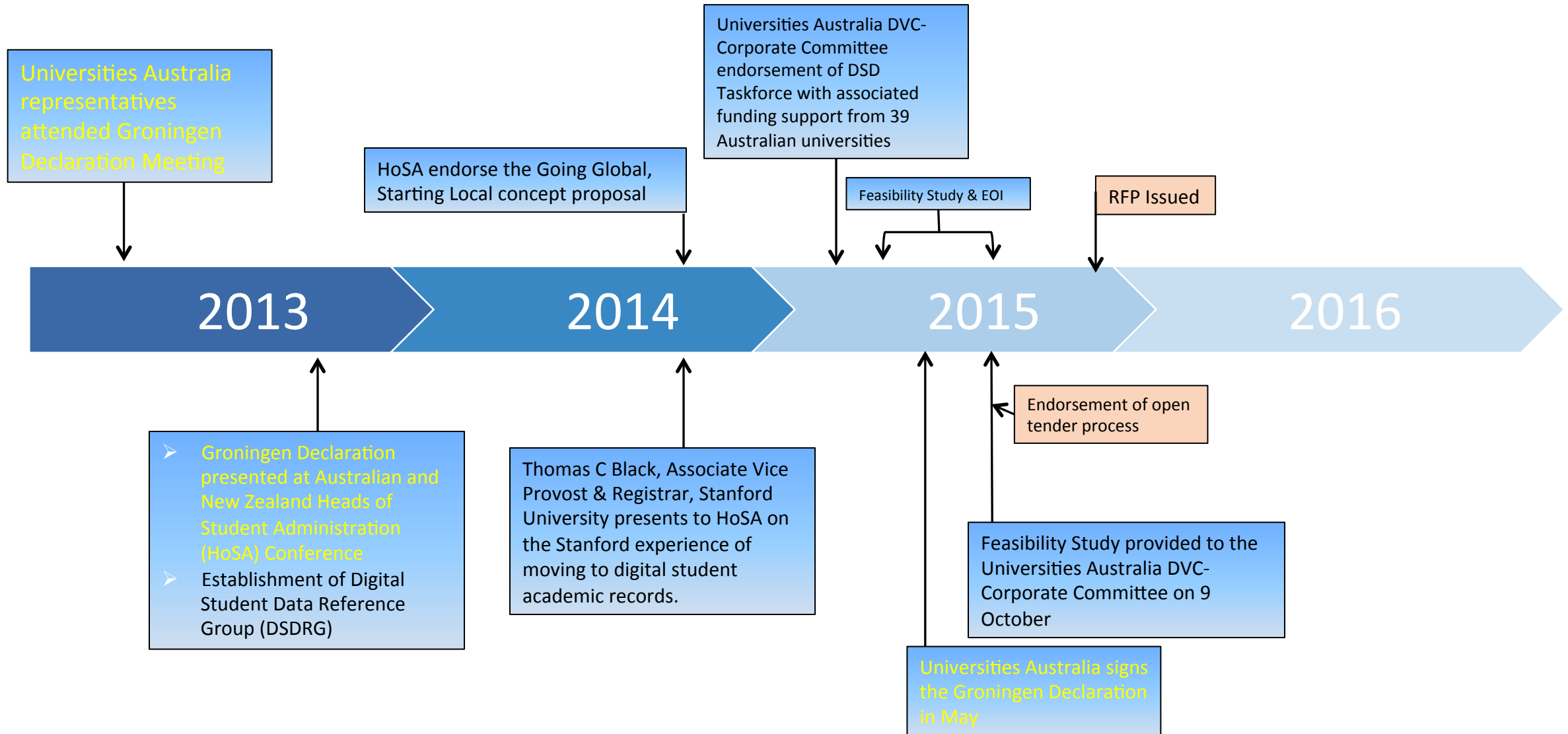
## **Rise in student mobility**

- 13-fold increase in the number of international students at Australian universities from 1988 to 2014; 25% overseas students in Australia
- Increasing administrative pressure on universities in verifying qualifications and processing admissions applications

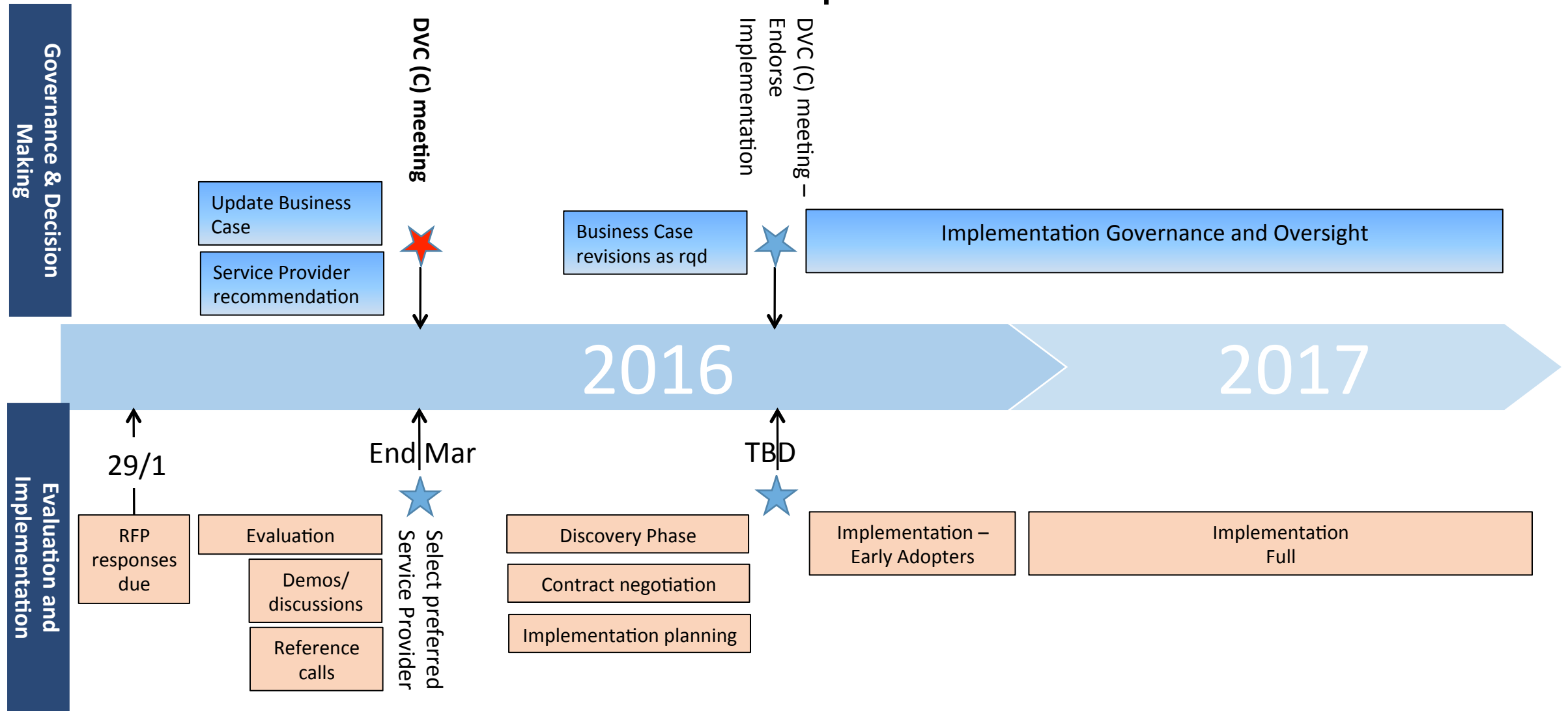
# Sector Support for the Project

- All Australian state and territories represented on the Reference Group, as well as representation from New Zealand
- 70% of the Australian sector contributed to the financial modelling
- 21 Australian and New Zealand universities evaluated the potential suppliers

# The journey so far...



# Tender Process and Implementation



# Proposed Solution

- A digital student data approach underpinned by a single provider for participating Australian institutions to deliver credential security, productivity and student mobility.
  - March 2016: DVCC endorsed
  - NZ Universities to confirm participation
- A network of credential repositories - one for each university linked to a central node for regional and international connection.
- Data remains owned by institutions
- Institutions will continue to issue hard copy testamurs at Graduation. Testamurs (qualification verification) are a matter of public record – third parties can seek access
- AHEGS and transcripts electronic only. As personal information, students grant access

# Productivity Gains

- Admission and verification services generate significant costs (labour, materials, printing, postage) and significant revenue.
- The net result across all Universities over 5 years exceeds \$4.3 million
- Charges for servicing ad-hoc requests vary significantly between Universities with a range of charges:
  - Academic transcripts \$6-\$40
  - Replacement testamurs \$0-\$267
  - AHEGS \$0-\$60
- Modelling for the DSDP indicates a similar net result can be achieved with significantly fewer resources (including implementation costs) over 5 years.



# Proposed Governance

The proposed high-level implementation governance is as follows:

- Implementation Steering Group (ISG) will have primary responsibility for financial management and overall project stewardship, including reporting to the UA DVCC on progress and critical issues and the HES Board on operational requirements. The group will have representation from the following:
  - three Deputy Vice Chancellors Corporate
  - one Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic/Education
  - one Deputy Vice Chancellor International
  - Two advisors from the Implementation Group
  - HES CEO
  - TEQSA representative (observer status)

Thank you!

Questions and  
Comments?

