WIL Australia

Newsletter April 2026

From the President

Dear Members,

It is April, with teaching and WIL activities well underway.

Currently, advocacy and delivery of professional development opportunities are key activities of your Board, its Committees, and the Chapters.

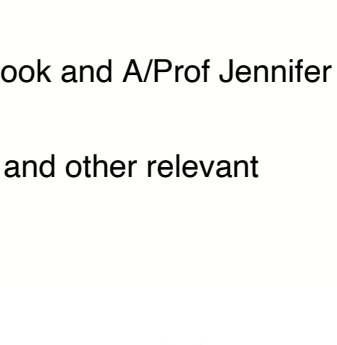
Our advocacy work remains closely aligned with current sector reform conversations, including ongoing policy dialogue through national association partnerships and international perspectives on WIL policy and system design.

In this newsletter are details of new WIL Australia events for April and May, and links to recently recorded webinars – including on the Refreshed WIL Australian Quality Standards, and Lessons from Canada's WIL Journey. These opportunities are provided to share evidence, strengthen collective voice, and inform Australian discussions around WIL funding, regulation, and quality assurance.

Also read on for valuable information on:

- a paid Communication Intern opportunity with our Engagement and Advocacy Committee
- WIL Australia Scholarship Applications
- registration and abstract submission for our October conference
- new resources including the Updated Quality WIL Standards and 2020 v 2024 GOS snapshot
- well-deserved, WIL-related AAUT citations for Dr Laura Rook and A/Prof Jennifer Ruskin
- as well as events and information from CRADLE, WACE, and other relevant associations.

We encourage members to engage with these opportunities and resources, and to contribute feedback via our website, Chapters, or directly to the Board.



Best wishes,
Michael O'Connor
President, WIL Australia

Updates & Events

Understanding the National Code and Implications for WIL Practice

ONLINE EVENT

Date: 15 May 2026
Time: 12:00pm AEDT

Register

WIL Awards - how to submit a successful nomination

ONLINE EVENT

Date: 22 April 2026
Time: 12:30pm AEDT

Register

National Associations as Policy Partners: Lessons from Canada's WIL Journey

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING WEBINAR

Date: 9 April 2026
Time: 1:00pm AEDT

Watch

Slides

Introducing the Refreshed WIL Australia Quality Standards Framework (2026)

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING WEBINAR

Date: 24 March 2026
Time: 12:00pm - 1:00pm AEDT

Watch

Resources

WIL Australia
Conference 2026
WIL for Impact: Partnering for Scalable Practice

WIL Australia Conference 2026

Updates & Opportunities
WIL Australia is pleased to share the following key updates and opportunities for April. We encourage members to engage, apply, and participate where relevant:

🔷 **Support Grants**
Explore available grants designed to support participation in WIL initiatives and events.

🏆 **WIL Awards**
Celebrate excellence in Work-Integrated Learning. Nominations are now open across multiple award categories.

📄 **Abstract Submissions**
Submit your abstracts and contribute to showcasing innovative practices and research in WIL.

👥 **Group Bookings**
Take advantage of group booking options for upcoming events and conferences.

📚 **Case Study Awards**
Share impactful WIL case studies and gain recognition for best practices and innovation.

💡 **Reminder – Online Information Session**
"WIL Awards: How to Submit a Successful Nomination"
Join this session to gain insights and tips on preparing a strong and competitive award submission.

Bring Your Team – Group Registration Available

Attending conferences is even more valuable when you share the experience with colleagues. The WIL Australia Conference 2026 offers reduced group registration rates to make it easier for teams to participate together.

Institutions can take advantage of the Group Registration Rate of $745 per person when five or more members from the same institution register at the same time.

This is a great opportunity to bring your WIL team, colleagues, or emerging practitioners to connect, share ideas, and explore innovative approaches to Work-Integrated Learning.

📅 **Conference dates:** 18–20 October 2026
📍 **Location:** Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide/Tandanya
👉 Register your team today and make the most of the conference experience.

Register Now

APPLICATIONS CLOSE 30 JUNE 2026
WIL AWARDS 2026
The National WIL Awards celebrate outstanding contributions to Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) across Australia.
These prestigious awards will be presented at the WIL Australia Conference 2026 in October and provide an excellent opportunity to showcase innovation, collaboration, and impact in WIL practice.
www.wilaustralia.edu.au

WIL Australia Awards 2026 - Now Open!

WIL Australia proudly recognises and awards individuals, teams and industry/community partners for their outstanding and sustained contributions to quality WIL practice. The bi-annual awards are presented at the WIL Australia conference. The Awards are open to the following:

- Local Hero Award – Organisation
- Innovation and Excellence Award – Individual or Collaborative Team
- Collaboration Award – Organisations
- People's Choice Award – Individual or Collaborative Team (Top 5 Case Study)
- Honorary Life Membership – Individual

WIL Australia recognises that work integrated learning needs institutions and partner organisations to collaborate to provide an authentic learning experience for students engaged in WIL. We also know that individuals within many of our institutions and partner organisations go beyond our expectations and integrate WIL into their operations and activities and work hard to improve the WIL experience for students.

Key Dates

Applications Close: 30th June 2026
Find out More: here

Information Session: register here

National WIL Awards

WIL Australia Conference 2026 – Call for Abstracts

The Conference Program Committee invites abstract submissions from researchers, academics, practitioners, professional staff, and industry and community partners aligned with the following conference sub-themes:

- Designing Scalable and Sustainable WIL Models
- Partnering for Impact: Collaborating with Purpose
- Mobilising Students for Lifelong Learning and Career Development
- Enhancing Quality, Inclusion, and Innovation through Evidence-Based Practice

You may be the lead on one presentation only, regardless of presentation type. Joint submissions with students, industry, and community partners are encouraged. Early Career Researchers and research students are also encouraged to submit.
Submission requirements:

- Abstract: maximum 250 words
- Theme alignment statement: maximum 100 words
- Roundtables: key take-aways for participants (max 100 words)
- Panels: panellist names and affiliations (maximum 5), plus indicate 20 or 40 minutes

Final submission deadline: 30 May 2026

For full submission details, presentation formats, and key dates, visit the conference website.

Call for abstracts

Partner with Us – Sponsorship Opportunities Available

The WIL Australia Conference 2026 invites organisations to partner with us as sponsors and connect with a national community of educators, researchers, industry leaders, and practitioners dedicated to advancing Work-Integrated Learning (WIL).

Sponsorship offers a unique opportunity to showcase your organisation, share your expertise, and build meaningful partnerships with universities, industry, and the broader WIL community.

A range of sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities are available, including Gold, Silver, and themed sponsorship packages, designed to maximise visibility and engagement during the conference.

📅 18–20 October 2026
📍 Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide/Tandanya

If your organisation is interested in supporting the conference, we would love to hear from you.

Sponsorship

2026 Student Scholarships

A small number of scholarships of $1,500 are available to provide financial support for students undertaking a WIL placement in Australia as part of their 2026/2027 university studies.

2026 Applications Open: 16 February 2026
Applications Close: 1 May 2026

Criteria for applicants

Scholarships are open to students who:

1. Are from institutions with WIL Australia Full Institutional Membership.
2. Are based in an RA1-RA2 location and will undertake a WIL placement in an RA3-RA5 location (With the requirement that you are travelling more than 60 km) OR Are based in an RA3-RA5 location and will undertake a WIL placement in an RA1-RA2 location(With the requirement that you are travelling more than 60 km).
3. Students can be domestic or international.
4. Genuine relocation is required.
5. 3 weeks duration minimum and occur between 1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027
6. Placement must be full time. Full time is considered a minimum of 4 full days per week.

Learn More

WIL Australia
APPLICATIONS OPEN 16 FEB 2026
APPLICATIONS CLOSE 1 MAY 2026
2026 WIL AUSTRALIA STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS
A small number of scholarships of $1,500 are available to provide financial support for students undertaking a WIL placement in Australia as part of their 2026/2027 university studies.
www.wilaustralia.edu.au

2025 Student Scholarship Reflection

Physiotherapy Placement in Northern Rivers

Bachelor of Applied Science (Physiotherapy)

"As part of my placement, I also attended weekly Multidisciplinary Case Study Discussions as well as Education Programs, which were able to provide students with a unique opportunity to collaborate with and learn from the other members of the Multidisciplinary Team. Our learnings from these programs can then be directly translated into collaborative patient-centred care with actual patients, especially in the hospital setting. "

PAIN CLINIC
NSW Health
Northern NSW Local Health District

Read More

Communications Intern

WIL Australia is seeking a motivated Communications Intern to support the development of a fit-for-purpose, sustainable communications plan. This project-based role will focus on reviewing current communications practices, engaging key stakeholders, and producing a practical communications plan supported by usable tools.

The intern will be appointed for a fixed-term, project-based period of approximately 25 hours per week across 10-12 weeks. The role will be a paid position, with compensation set at an hourly rate of $32.00 (inclusive).

The role may be undertaken remotely, with flexibility around hours to support study or other commitments, subject to agreed project timelines.

Application Process:
Applicants are required to submit a cover letter that outlines their skills and attributes in response to the selection criteria (no more than two pages), and a curriculum vitae to admin@wilaustralia.edu.au.

If an applicant has any queries regarding the application process or opportunity they should contact Nicola Fish, Co-Chair of Engagement and Advocacy Committee, on nfish@swin.edu.au

Applications Close: 24th April 2026
Find out more here

WIL Australia Sharing

Share Your WIL Initiatives

We invite our **institutional members** to showcase their central WIL strategies and activities. Your contributions help inspire and inform the broader WIL community. Please email your submissions to **support@wilaustralia.edu.au**.

WIL Australia WIL Star

Do you know someone who deserves recognition for their **commitment and dedication to WIL**? Someone who goes above and beyond for **students, industry partners, community organisations, or university faculty**? Send us a short write-up along with a **high-resolution photo** to be included in the next WIL Australia Newsletter. Please email your submissions to **support@wilaustralia.edu.au**.

Good WIL Stories

Each month, we feature **"Good WIL Stories"** from our WIL Australia Chapters across the country. Please email your submissions to **support@wilaustralia.edu.au**.

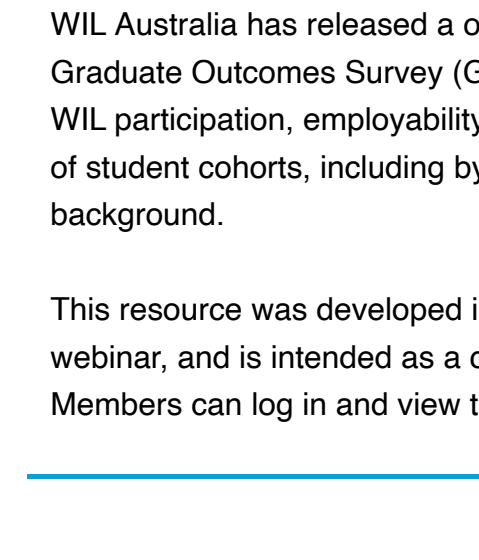
Celebrating Excellence: Dr Laura Rook and Associate Professor Jennifer Ruskin Honoured with AAUT Citation

Congratulations to Dr Laura Rook and Associate Professor Jennifer Ruskin - Co-Chair and Chapter Director respectively of the NSW/ACT Chapter - on receiving an Australian Awards for University Teaching (AAUT) Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning.

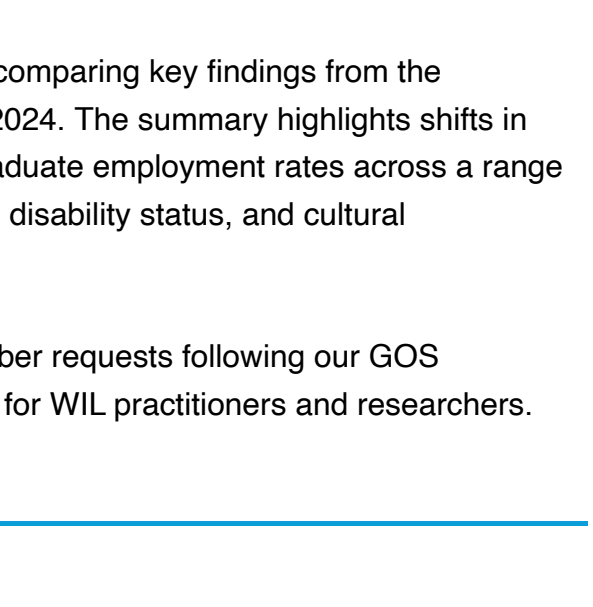
Established in 1997, the Australian Awards for University Teaching recognise and celebrate excellence in university teaching across Australia.

Dr Laura Rook is a Senior Lecturer in Management and Deputy Head of School (Education) in the Business School at the University of Wollongong. She was recognised for inspiring students through innovative, non-placement, reflection-informed WIL experiences that develop professional identity, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and career-ready capabilities across disciplines. Her sustained impact includes the integration of responsible and authentic WIL projects in third-year subjects; co-leading a university-wide learning and teaching initiative that embedded a structured reflection model across 14 subjects, as well as establishing a community partnership model in which multidisciplinary student teams act as consultants for local organisations.

Associate Professor Jennifer Ruskin is Academic Director for WIL and Employability at Macquarie Business School. Her citation was awarded to a team for leading a large-scale transformation in Macquarie's largest business programs by strengthening career pathways, student engagement, and industry partnerships. Notable outcomes include the transformation of the Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Business degrees through a fully scaffolded employability framework incorporating industry speakers and case studies, career development learning, internship simulations, diversity and inclusion training, and global citizenship awareness. This approach enables all students to undertake embedded WIL experiences from their first year, preparing students to make the most of high-quality WIL opportunities.



Dr Laura Rook



Associate Professor Jennifer Ruskin

New Member Resource:
GOS 2020 vs 2024 Snapshot

WIL Australia has released a one-page summary comparing key findings from the Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) for 2020 and 2024. The summary highlights shifts in WIL participation, employability outcomes, and graduate employment rates across a range of student cohorts, including by gender, SES, age, disability status, and cultural background.

This resource was developed in response to member requests following our GOS webinar, and is intended as a quick-reference tool for WIL practitioners and researchers. Members can log in and view the Snapshot here.

Introducing the Updated Quality WIL Standards (2026)

Why the Standards Have Been Updated

The updated *Quality WIL Standards Framework (2026)* reflect the evolving needs of students, institutions, industry partners, and the national higher education landscape. Recent insights from the National Priority Industry Linkage Fund (NPILF) highlighted both the significant benefits of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and the systemic challenges that impact quality, equity and sustainability across the sector. The refreshed Standards ensure our national approach remains responsive, future-focused, and aligned with sector expectations.

Purpose of the Updated Standards

The revised Standards aim to:

- Strengthen quality and consistency across all forms of WIL, regardless of discipline, delivery model or partner type.
- Support equitable participation by addressing financial, structural and accessibility barriers that affect students' ability to fully engage in WIL experiences.
- Provide clear guidance for institutions and partners on governance, risk management, curriculum integration, supervision and evaluation.
- Recognise the changing WIL landscape, including the rapid growth of virtual, hybrid and simulated experiences, and the need for robust quality assurance across these formats.
- Embed continuous improvement, ensuring that WIL outcomes are measured through meaningful, evidence-based indicators—not just activity counts.

Rationale Behind the Changes

The updates are informed by extensive sector consultation and key findings from NPILF (2025), which underscored the importance of:

1. **Viewing WIL as Core Educational Infrastructure**
   NPILF showed that sustained quality requires stable governance, long-term planning, and integrated systems—not short-term efforts or project-based models.
2. **Ensuring Sustainability and Shared Resourcing**
   WIL is resource intensive. The refreshed Standards make explicit the need for transparent, sustainable resourcing that recognises costs for institutions, students, and host organisations.
3. **Addressing Persistent Equity Gaps**
   National data and NPILF discussions highlighted ongoing barriers such as placement poverty, visa limitations, regional constraints, and accessibility challenges. The updated Standards bring these issues to the forefront.
4. **Supporting Quality in Virtual and Flexible WIL**
   The expansion of virtual and hybrid WIL has improved access, but requires strong assurance to ensure equivalent learning outcomes and student safety.
5. **Strengthening Reciprocal Partnerships**
   The sector called for clearer expectations around partner engagement, supervision capability, and mutual benefit—particularly for SMEs and community organisations.
6. **Elevating Evaluation and Impact Measurement**
   The updated Standards encourage institutions to go beyond counting placements, instead adopting longitudinal, outcome-focused evaluation aligned with student learning, equity, and industry impact.

Looking Ahead

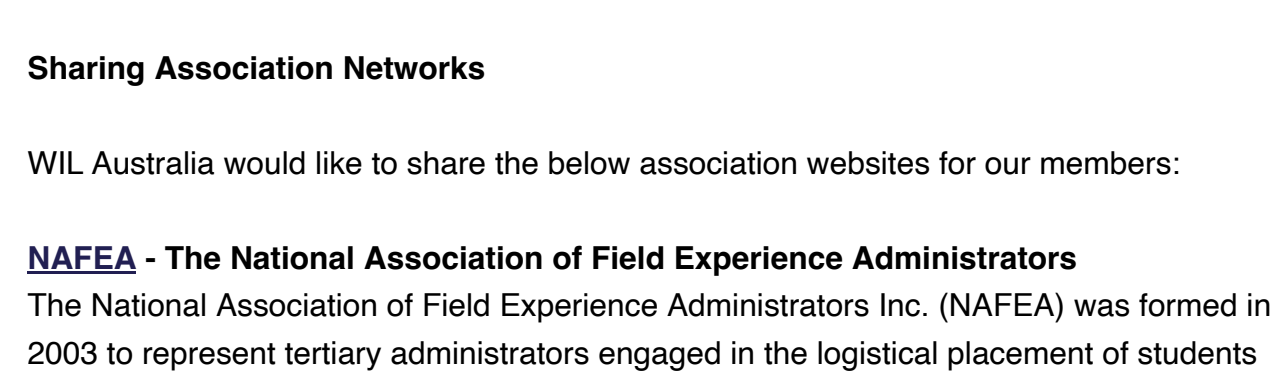
The refreshed Quality WIL Standards support a more coherent, inclusive and future-ready WIL ecosystem. They provide the foundation for consistent national practice while enabling institutions to innovate and adapt to emerging needs across disciplines and industries. By aligning with NPILF insights, the Standards position WIL as a strategic driver of student success, graduate employability and industry partnership.

CRADLE Seminar

Voice-First Written Assessment: Redesigning for evidence, access, and ecological authenticity

Date: 26 May 2026
Venue: In-person and Online

How to attend:
Please join us online using the following Zoom details:
https://deakin.zoom.us/j/81455154478?pwd=0FjnLoDgOraFdNxvfbCyB3XXAvA3bO.1
Passcode: 86435250


CRADLE Seminar Series
Voice-First Written Assessment: Redesigning for evidence, access, and ecological authenticity
Kelly Webb-Davies, AI Competency Centre, University of Oxford
Tuesday 26 May 2026
10.30 am - 12.00 pm (AEST)
Join us at Deakin Downtown or online
cradle

Sharing Association Networks

WIL Australia would like to share the below association websites for our members:

NAFEA - **The National Association of Field Experience Administrators**
The National Association of Field Experience Administrators Inc. (NAFEA) was formed in 2003 to represent tertiary administrators engaged in the logistical placement of students for field experiences.

HERDSA - **Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia**
The Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia is a scholarly society for people committed to the advancement of higher and tertiary education.

WACE - **Advancing cooperative and work-integrated education**
WACE is the only international professional organization dedicated to developing, expanding, branding and advocating for cooperative & work-integrated education programs within industry and educational institutions.

ACSES - **Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success** (ACSES; formerly National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education). Established at Curtin University since 2013 and funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, ACSES provides national leadership in student equity in higher education, connecting research, policy and practice to improve higher education participation and success for marginalised and disadvantaged people.

NAGCAS - **National Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services** is Australia's peak professional body for career development in the higher and tertiary education sector. Our members are professionals working in the student career development, employability, and graduate employment space. NAGCAS promotes an environment of professional collegiality and collaboration for experts working to support the career development learning, employability and graduate employment of students engaged in higher education learning. NAGCAS works to build and raise a strong awareness of the importance of career development and employability across the sector.

WILNZ - **Work-Integrated Learning New Zealand** (WILNZ) is a not-for-profit, incorporated society that brings together a network of people involved in Work-Integrated Learning (WIL). WILNZ brings together a network of colleagues in Aotearoa and globally, with membership including individuals and institutions with a range of roles related to different forms of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL). WILNZ supports and publishes research in WIL, and hosts webinars and an annual conference for discussion of good practice in WIL.

Are your WIL colleagues getting the WIL Australia news and access to WIL Australia webinars?

Full Institutional membership allows unlimited staff access to join:

JOIN

Work-Integrated Learning Australia Ltd, C/O Level 9, 81 Flinders St, Adelaide,
SA 5000, Australia
Unsubscribe Manage preferences