Transcript

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SAM WILSON: Welcome to the Public Interest Technology webinar which is the first event of the Technology by Society forum which is a new forum that's co-convened by La Trobe University and Swinburne University. Before we begin, we'd like to acknowledge that we are hosting this webinar from the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We also acknowledge that the traditional learners of the various lands in which you all work today and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are taking part in this webinar. We pay our respects to elders past and present and emerging and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and the ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters.

So please note that this webinar will be recorded, and that a link will be shared with you after the event. There will also be time of questions to a panel, after the panel discussion, and we invite you to submit your questions via the chat function of the Zoom. Well, again, welcome, everybody. My name is Sam Wilson, and I'm an associate Professor of Leadership in Swinburne School of Business, Law, and Entrepreneurship. Together with my colleagues, Professor Lawrie Zion from La Trobe University and Associate Professor Diane Sivasubramaniam from Swinburne, I'm delighted to welcome you formally to today's webinar on public interest technology which is the inaugural events of the Technology by Society forum.

Public Interest technologies put people and society at the centre of our technological choices and strive to ensure that the benefits of these technologies are widely shared. However, presently, there is limited understanding in Australia of the notion of public interest technology, in part because the meaning of the term is contingent on ongoing and emergent questions about what actually constitutes the public interest. Importantly, public interest technology isn't one thing. Moreover, it's not just about technology or the experts in technology. Instead, it includes all of those who are responsible for creating and adopting and implementing disruptive technologies, particularly in the public sphere.

Today, we're privileged to hear from three leaders in the field of public interest technology Melinda Cilento from CEDA, Amanda Robinson from Humanitech, and Professor Katina Michael from Arizona

State University. By the end of this webinar, we'll all have a deeper understanding of public interest technology and its current and emerging applications in Australia. To further set the scene and tell you more about the Public Interest Technology forum and the Technology by Society forum, it's my pleasure now to pass the baton to Diane.

DIANE SIVASUBRAMANIAM: Thank you, Sam, and hello, everyone. My name is Diane Sivasubramaniam. I'm an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychological Sciences at Swinburne University.

So as Sam has mentioned, we're here today to tackle this concept of public interest technology, and we're very excited about this event and excited to hear from our speakers. But it's important to recognise that this is not a one-off event. This event launches the Technology by Society forum which is a new initiative, a collaboration between La Trobe University and Swinburne University. Next slide, please, Paul.

So just to explain a bit about the Technology by Society forum, as you'll hear today the concept of public interest technology is a really crucial one for our economy, for our society, for the future of our research programmes but at the same time the notion of public interest is a really nuanced construct. It's really context-dependent, and it's multifaceted, and so working out what's in the public interest is not something that we can undertake lightly. This is not a matter of intuitive judgement calls or gut instinct.

If you're a software engineer who hopes to design a system or software that serves the public interest, then you shouldn't be making an assessment about public interest without calling in the appropriate social science expertise. And by the same token, social scientists who seek to interrogate the nuances of public interest should be working hand-in-hand with those who are at the forefront of technological development. So that the scholarship of public interest is grounded in the most relevant, most realistic, cutting edge contexts and applications.

So our assertion here is that robust and resilient technology, technology that genuinely serves the public interest, that technology requires interdisciplinary collaboration. It requires connection with industry and the community. And so to this end, we've initiated the Technology by Society forum. Next slide, please, Paul.

So the purpose of this forum is to promote genuine interdisciplinary collaboration between social scientists and STEM researchers and developers. So we want to help form interdisciplinary research teams, teams that are plugged in with industry and community partners, teams that are working together at all stages of the conceptualization and development and production process. Just to let you know a bit about who we are, next slide, please, Paul.

The convenors of the Technology by Society forum are Lawrie Zion at La Trobe University, myself, and Sam Wilson at Swinburne University. We are also very grateful for and we rely heavily on our steering group made up of social sciences and STEM researchers at La Trobe and at Swinburne whose names you see on this slide. You can contact any of us at any time, if you'd like to discuss the forum in more detail.

So how will this work? Well, after today's discussion of public interest technology, we would ask you to join us as part of this Technology by Society forum. The forum is open to anyone who believes their work and its impact would be improved through interdisciplinary collaboration and collaboration with industry and community partners.

So after today's event, you'll receive a follow-up email, and that email will include the recording of today's event, and it will also contain a link. So we'd ask you to go to that link and register your details and your interests, and our undertaking is to then connect you over the next few weeks with one another and engage you in a series of forum activities. So in engaging you with one another, we hope to find groups of people with similar interests or focus, so researchers who are interested in the same topic, perhaps, but from different disciplines across our two universities and industry and community collaborators, funders, partners who are interested in that topic.

Every few months, we will also host a chapter of events focused around a particular signature topic, and our signature topics would be determined by the interests of those who join us in the forum. So for example, if we have a lot of people indicating that they're interested in AI, we would hold a chapter of events around AI. A chapter of events will begin with a public talk, followed about a week later by an open roundtable discussion that any interested researchers or industry or community partners can join. And a week or so after that, we would host what we call a curated conversation, where we invite those who are most closely linked to the topic to a more focused conversation around moving a collaboration forward. And our goal is that each of these chapters of events will lead to interdisciplinary collaborative projects and papers and products.

So that's a very general overview of the Technology by Society forum, which we are launching with today's Public Interest Technology event. Sam will revisit the Technology by Society forum at the end of today's event, and he will again go over next steps on how to connect with us, and we hope that you will join us for our next chapter. But for now, sit back, and enjoy. I'm very excited to hand you over to Lawrie Zion to kick off today's Public Interest Technology event. Thank you, Lawrie.

LAWRIE ZION: Thanks, Diane, and welcome, everyone. It's great to be here, even though here is inevitably in a Zoom meeting. It's terrific to have a great panel today.

Just to start off with, I'm Lawrie Zion. I'm the Associate Dean of Research and Industry Engagement for the College of Art, Social Science, and Commerce at La Trobe Uni, and it's my pleasure now to introduce all three panellists. Then, each of them will give a short presentation about public interest technology in their worlds. After which, we'll have discussion and questions from me and from everyone joining us today.

I think it's already been mentioned, you can ask questions through the chat function. And now to our three guests. Amanda Robinson is Head of Social Innovation at the Australian Red Cross. Amanda founded the Humanitech Think and Do Tank within Red Cross, and this think tank, Think and Do Tank, harnesses the transformational power of emerging technology for good by putting humanity at its centre. Amanda's a senior and strategic social innovation specialist with a focus on emerging technologies, including blockchain, digital identity, and AI, to help solve complex social problems and to drive humanitarian outcomes at scale. Amanda, welcome.

Katina Michael is a Professor for the School of the Future Innovation in Society and School of Computing Informatics and Decision Systems Engineering at Arizona State University. Previously, Katina was Associate Dean International at the University of Wollongong, where she was employed in the School of Computing and Information Technology. She researches predominantly in the area of emerging technologies and their corresponding social implications. So welcome, Katina.

And Melinda Cilento is Chief Executive of the Committee for Economic Development of Australia, otherwise known by its acronym, CEDA, and Melinda is a company director economist and experience senior exec. She's a non-executive director of Australian unity and co-chair of Reconciliation Australia. She's also a member of the Parliamentary Budget Office panel of Expert Advisors.

Melinda was previously a non-exec director with Woodside Petroleum, a commissioner with the Productivity Commission, and deputy CEO and chief economist with the Business Council of Australia. So Melinda, welcome to you. And if I could start with you, I know CEDA has been very front foot in convening discussions about public interest technology in Australia. Perhaps, you could tell us a bit about CEDA's mission and how that connects with the concept of public interest tech.

MELINDA CILENTO: Yeah. Sure. Thanks, Lawrie. Let me start a little bit with quickly about CEDA. Fundamentally, what we're on about at CEDA is trying to improve the lives of all Australians by enabling a dynamic economy and a vibrant society. There's no doubt that technology has a really vital role to play in our future and in doing exactly what CEDA is trying to do in terms of its own purpose.

Public interest technology has already been remarked. It means many things to different people. So let me just frame up a little bit about how we think about it here at CEDA and the work that we've been doing.

Fundamentally, I think a public interest technology agenda is about making sure that we in Australia can leverage technology for the benefit of Australia and the benefit of all Australians. And that we can make the most of that technology while managing any risks that are associated with emerging technologies, their interconnectedness, and their potential impacts on individuals, our community, and our society. I think in the opening comments, it's really obvious there's a really strong alignment between the work that we're doing and this forum and its aspirations.

For CEDA and for me personally, one of the big challenges is always making sure that, when we talk about economic opportunities or when we talk about technology, that we connect individuals in the community to those issues and to the benefits, the opportunities, but also that we're reflecting always the community expectations and any adverse impacts on individuals and the communities. Why is that important from a technology perspective? Well, quite simply, I think if we don't make sure that the community understands our digital data, our tech aspirations as a nation, and the opportunities, and if we don't make sure that we connect those aspirations to the community, then we're actually not going to make the most of them.

We've seen already examples of opportunities that I think we didn't make the most of them because of community concerns that weren't connected with or weren't explored and they weren't

responded to. Sometimes, those community concerns are well-founded, and other times it's an issue around information and education and bringing the community along with you in that. If we don't do a better job of that, then we're going to see that things that we could have achieved as a nation we haven't been able to achieve at a time when, quite frankly, the rest of the world is racing ahead in this space.

CEDA's agenda focuses, public interest technology agenda, focuses in particular on two aspects. The first is around how we can build trust in emerging tech, and I'll use that as a shorthand for data, digital, other emerging techs. But how do we build trust through good governance, through transparency, and through inclusion? Why is trust important? Well, trust is important, because if we don't have it, then we're not going to get the licence to engage in these technologies, use these technologies, develop these technologies. So that's the first big chunk of work that we're doing.

And the second is really around this tech for good agenda, and I think Amanda is going to speak a lot more directly to that. But essentially, it's around how can we leverage technologies to deliver better services and to find new solutions to so-called wicked problems, if you like, which is all about delivering better outcomes for the community. So they're the two main buckets of work, if you like, that we're working on.

Let me just loop back to trust very quickly. I put a few data points out there. If you go back to the Edelman Trust Barometer of 2019, it was clear from that barometer that most Australians think that the pace of tech is moving too quickly and, equally, that they don't believe that government is able to keep up with the pace of technology. That's concerning, because I think it means that we're not in the right space in terms of building confidence around our ability to design, develop, adapt, and use technology.

There is a real risk that you get a knee-jerk, regulatory response to appease community concerns which doesn't actually end up producing the right results, either because it's not effective or because it means that we can't make the most of emerging technologies. So that for us is really important context. If you go to the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer, you're also seeing a 10-year decline in trust in the technology sector in Australia. That is concerning as well. We've seen it around the world, but it has been particularly sharp and stark in Australia, so I think we've got some work to do on trust in tech.

What have we been doing more specifically here at CEDA? We've run a couple of forums, and anyone who's interested in having a look at the videos of those, they're all available on our website, ceda.com.au. We did one in 2019 with Laura Manley from the Technology and Public Purpose Programme at the Harvard Kennedy School, which really looked at this tech governance pace but also looked at some of the tech for good work that's being done out of NYU.

And last year, we had a two-day forum, where we tried to unpack a whole range of issues that sit within this public interest technology agenda, including people like Hilary Sutcliff from the Trust in Tech at the World Economic Forum, [INAUDIBLE] from Salesforce talking about AI. So there's a lot of really good content there. So if you're interested, dive in and have a look at that.

More recently, what have we been doing? One of the things that you may have seen, we've been out recently advocating for the establishment of a chief technologist in Australia, sort of like the chief scientist. But really what we'd like that person to do, or that role to do, is to be a shining light around technology and what it means for Australia. A really transparent opportunity to talk about what our aspirations are, whether it's digital nation by 2030 or whatever it is, what the risks are, what the opportunities are, and a really overt opportunity for the community to connect into those processes.

That chief technologist would also be a source of expert, independent advice for the government. So on emerging tech, standing up and talking about the things that government should be thinking about in terms of the policies that it's developing to enable technology, to regulate technology, et cetera, et cetera. So it's really about a focal point for engagement.

And then finally, one of the key roles for that chief technologist would be building a tech assessment process and to pick up on the theme that came out already, cross-sector collaboration on what do these technologies mean for society? What do they mean for business, and how do we make sure that we're thinking about the public interest broadly defined? So that's a piece of work that we've already put out there and are trying to advocate around.

Just very quickly, the other work that we're looking to build on is how do we think about AI in a practical sense, how it's being implemented? So lots of principles out there, but what do we know about what actually works in practise, and how do we build best practise in the use of AI? Looking at how we might actually do exactly what you're already doing and leverage this further, get the collaboration of cross-sectors in through universities to better understand public purpose in the design and development and adoption phase of technology. And then also looking at tech inclusion and how we make sure that we're building the skills and the access to technology in a way that brings as many people in the community along with it.

So that's a little bit of a sense of what we're doing. I was also asked to talk very quickly about what COVID's meant. COVID's meant all of this has just been turbo charged. I'll leave it there and, hopefully, leave a bit more space for Q&A.

LAWRIE ZION: Thanks so much, Melinda. We'll come back to COVID which certainly has turbocharged I think the way that technology is being discussed in Australia over the last 18 months. So now, to Amanda, and I'm going to just cross directly to you now for your presentation. What is the Humanitech Think and Do Tank, firstly, that you founded at the Australian Red Cross, and what do you see is needed in terms of process for technologies to realise their potential in improving people's lives?

AMANDA ROBINSON: Great. Thanks very much, Lawrie. So Humanitech very much sees itself as part of this rising public interest technology movement. As you described, it's a Think and Do Tank at the intersection of technology and humanity.

So we work collaboratively across sectors and disciplines to ensure that frontier technologies benefit people and society. So the think bit is about creating insights, really understanding deeply how emerging technology impacts community and society, and partnering with leaders in this space, as

well as actually developing solutions and products. So through both the doing and the thinking, we're able to model and build on what we're learning to influence at all levels.

Earlier this year, we published our future vulnerability report which outlines our approach, and this is very much aligned with public interest tech, to advocate for and enable a new business as usual, when it comes to the production and governance of technology. This puts people and communities at the centre and really works through a multi-stakeholder collaboration actively involving civil society to make change happen. We've partnered with the Centre for Automated Decision-making and Society, and through our early ventures, the Trust Alliance and [INAUDIBLE] too are really embodying this approach and practise. And we'll continue through our lab, which we're launching in July of this year. Now, we recognise that to fully realise the potential of technology, we need to redress power imbalances and put people at the core and in control.

So public interest technology can be described as in the service of common good, and I think this is a really important description, this idea of in the service of. Technology does not that control us. We control it, but we've seem to begun to assume or accept that we are powerless in the face of big tech, and this is simply not the case.

Recently, I received text messages, and I'm sure many people on the call did as well, from people telling me that what's happened change their privacy settings without warning, and that new chat groups were available for everyone to see. It turned out that this was the default setting that had always been there. I'm not sure how or why this warning got triggered, but it played into our fears that big tech is controlling us and that we don't understand it, nor do we have the power to control it for our own purposes. So we need to make technology more transparent and put humans at the core and in control.

Back in 2019, Lucy Bernholz, who is someone we greatly admire and respect from Stanford University, noted in her blueprint report, the public interest tech movement was on the rise. She said, there's an effort underway to train and attract engineers and software designers into public interest fields. Think government, service, and nonprofits modelled on the movement that created public interest law several decades ago, the public interest technology movement is just getting started. So fast forward to 2021, and she goes even further, noting that public interest technology must go beyond using tech for good and involve civil society. She said, we have an unprecedented opportunity to lead an expanding and creating alternative public purpose digital infrastructures.

Just a couple of weeks ago, we held our own Humanitech summit which was a collective exploration examining how frontier technologies can be used in ways that benefit people and society. And we asked a number of questions there, things like how do we earn the trust of vulnerable people in communities to ensure that the benefits of technology is widely shared and that the risks are addressed? How do we ensure community voices in civil society are at the Centre and involved in evidence-based decision making about impacts as part of a new business as usual?

How do we let go of power and control and who knows better? What trade-offs are we making, and at what point are trade-offs unacceptable, regardless of the potential benefits? How are we challenging our unspoken assumptions about data in tech?

We were extremely fortunate to be joined at our summit by leading thinkers and practitioners, exploring humanity-first approaches to data and technology. One of those speakers was Rachel Coldicutt, who is former CEO of responsible technology think tank dot everyone, and she's an expert on social impacts and new and emerging technologies. She observed at our conference that both as individuals and as communities, we tend to be at the mercy of and market and the state in our digital lives, but that there's definitely an opportunity to do something that is better, more interesting, that is more dynamic, more democratic, in which all of us have more of a say. So that to me sounds very hopeful and very exciting and is why I'm so thrilled to be part of this conversation here today. Because that's exactly what public interest technology should all be about.

At the end of our summit, we had Dr. Kristen Alford, who's the director of the Museum of Discovery, give a keynote, and she talked about interstitial approaches. Which she described as the competencies we need to try to glue things together, creating bridges across different ways of thinking, different skill sets, different ways of collaborating. She said, these are rarely tech development conversations.

What we are trying to do as a bunch of humans is to create a new, shared identity. And I think this is a narrative that comes up time and time again, that actually it's not so much about the technology, though I love the idea of a chief technologist, but it's actually about us as human beings creating a new paradigm for ourselves. So this is why, as Humanitech, we said that a collaborative, accountable, humble approach to frontier technologies and public interest technology has a transformative potential to put humanity first.

So as Melinda said, I was also asked to reflect on how COVID has re-shaped how we think about technology, and really, since the pandemic began, we've seen this accelerated adoption of digital tools in all spheres of our lives. As communities, as people, we adapt to stop the spread of the virus. We're grappling with overwhelming impacts on our lives and livelihoods, and governments around the world have rolled out technological solutions to track and trace infections, as well as develop digital certificates and passports. And we've heard even despite the Australian government has just released our own digital vaccine certificate. So this has led to active debates here in Australia and globally about the implications of these tools on people's rights, and the fact that in an effort to address the threat of the virus, we have accepted unprecedented incursions on our liberty.

Recently, the Ada Lovelace Institute did a rapid evidence review on COVID-19 technology and the risks involved, including how these systems can be used to track and trace particularly vulnerable people and are open to privacy abuses, and that they may indeed facilitate exclusion, discrimination, and stigmatisation. These implications of this technology is unfolding in real time and emphasises the urgency of having a robust conversation about the role of technology in order to understand the impacts, especially for the vulnerable, both now and into the future. We need to ensure that whatever decisions we do make now do not create further harm or discrimination. So again, I'll maybe leave it there and look forward to having more of a conversation in question time, but thank you, Lawrie.

LAWRIE ZION: Thanks so much, Amanda, and now to Katina Michael. Katina, is the concept of public interest technology actually new? Maybe tell us a bit about the PIT Programme you created at ASU as well.

KATINA MICHAEL: Thank you so much, Lawrie, and to the previous two speakers, may I also say that three females on the panel, way to go. I think the main thrust of both Melinda's talk and Amanda's puts me in a good stead to describe to you what's going on in the US in terms of public interest technology and the question that Lawrie's posed, is it new? Well, let's think about that. Is public interest technology new?

Well 2018, I thought it was. At least it's a buzz term, and what happens when a new buzz term comes in, a lot of people run to it and rush to it as a way to garner funding, as a way to express their opinion about what it is, and to be in the formative and nascent stages of the definition. Of what is public interest technology? Your guess is as good as mine, perhaps.

But after spending close to 2 1/2 years around this theme and being embraced by people who really spearheaded the theme, in 2016, at least it's a term that we need to look at. I would say the definition and the term is new, but if I look back at work perhaps completed at good old University of Wollongong, when I was there from 2001 onward, I would say there is an antecedence. One of the things I think, as we are forming a community in this field, is to say let's look at where we've come from and where we're going to.

I remember a young man in my first class by the name of Jason Sargent is now a doctor, Jason Sargent at Swinburne University of Technology. And he came into my office and said, I think I'm going to do a project on biometrics, and I said, are you sure? And his next response was, I think I'm going to do a project on the cause of our displacement, one of several case studies. Where he was thinking about the digital transformation before the term of digital transformation came out and was looking at how to help displaced persons that had had their particulars, their passports, their identity tokens taken from them. Many of them victims of genocide, many of them seeking refugee electronic identification, and then the data collection that happened to actually determine war crimes and what kind of software possibly would be deployed in the data collection and prosecution process.

So an end-to-end response and relief software system which went through several stages, and I keep thinking about this. I know the Red Cross, shortly after, had done some work with Harvard University, maybe in 2005-6 but this work was actually completed in 2003-4. I think it was one of the first public interest tech mega-scale kinds of deployments that I had the joy of being a part of, and we talked about these framework modules, these components and phases, but what was the public interest? It was those displaced persons, those who had lost their voice, the voiceless, the homeless, the refugees, the aliens, the discriminated against. Those who had lost their property and livelihood, those who had had things stolen, and so how can technology help these people, and that's when we start to talk about Justice. Justice is a key term in all of this.

So what is the public interest? It depends on what you're looking for, but I want to go back to the words that were used by the two panellists-- citizens, community, and well-being, and context is

everything in this instance. The customer is included not excluded. The citizen is included not excluded, and you cannot determine the public interest without the key stakeholder, the citizen.

So while I'm an advocate of interdisciplinary studies, of which I'm a joint hire, and most of my team that I director joint hires in several schools with many affiliations, it's not just about how business and STEM can incorporate the humanities and the social sciences. It's not about humanising STEM and engineering, for example, alone, but it's actually not fighting that battle, saying of course it's about incorporating the humanities and the social sciences within business and STEM. But most of all, it's about somehow empowering the citizen that belongs to a community, a local community, to drive the solutions.

Once upon a time, in the 1700s, we are told by [INAUDIBLE] who quotes Gideon that everyone was a designer. Everyone was a solutions architect, because necessity created that process. And then we move towards dividends and earning money from our developments and our inventions. And then of course, there were shareholders and that process of necessity was bastardised to some degree because then we started to look at economics. And there's nothing wrong with economics, but when we look at some of the big tech corporations, perhaps we can say they have gone amiss, particularly with some of the more vocal and public misdemeanours that have been performed. And we see this time and time again, and it does come back to professional ethics, as we'll see.

But according to the PIT-UN, just to make sure I'm on time, it's a field dedicated to leveraging technology, to support public interest organisations that serve the people. What is a public interest organisation? Are all corporate entities public organisations? What about public-private, third-sector collaborations?

How do we involve the whole ecosystem and not just a part of it? Is it just about private corporations? Is it about how public private partnerships occur? Is it how we harness technology and allow technology to be used by non-government organisations and also not for profits? To come into this ecosystem, which is entirely complex, to exchange, to have a seat at the table, to actually voice their opinion, to be heard, to be listened to, for deliberation to occur through a co-design process, or a participatory or inclusive process or consultative process.

There are all these different types of design processes, but when we look at PIT, Public Interest Tech. And these are coming out of the early reports where 60 interviews, full-length interviews, were done between Friedman Consulting and NetGain, back in 2016, we see that there is a need for interdisciplinary pedagogy. That's where ASU and another 31 universities in the states have come on board.

It's a philosophy. It's an ethos. It's an approach. It's an ethic for professionalism. It's cross-sector.

It includes everyone from scientists, to policy makers, to leaders, to field experts, to mums and dads, to elders in the community, to advocates, to activists, to all of these different players who often are not on speaking terms. This is about the empowerment of all of these individual entities to be heard, to be listened, to contribute to solutions. And so says Bruce Schneier says, public interest tech is not just one thing. It's many things. It's about tech policy.

It's about how tech projects can have a public benefit. It's an organisation with a public interest. It's public interest technologists, and more and more people are starting to use this terminology.

What is a public interest technologist? How do I become one? How do I engage in curriculum and degrees and degree offerings that enable me to garner some expertise, to call myself a public interest technologist? And who is behind this thrust in PIT? The ACLU, the American Civil Liberties Union, the MacArthur Foundation, the Mozilla Foundation, the Knight Foundation, Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundations, of course, in America, that's been a very vocal entity.

In fact, last year, Dr. Roba Abbas and I are partnered with New America with the IEEE Society and the social implications of technology and helped host a two-day event called the Public Interest Technology University Network event, and this year, on November 1 and 2, it is being hosted by Arizona State University in person and hybrid. So you're all welcome to try and get access to that day two which is open to the public, but that's where we start to have dialogue. And I do remember the head, the CEO of the Public Interest Technology University Network, Endrien [INAUDIBLE] offer through Roba Abbas the potential to internationalise this network.

And what we've got at the moment are 36 universities. We started with 21, went to 28 in the second year, and already 36. And I hope it does bust open internationally, because that'll give room to Swinburne and La Trobe, University of Wollongong, and so many others to come on board who are ready. A lot of Australians actually have been a part of this, as I've said before, close to 20 years.

So with those closing comments, I'm going to just fall short of my 40 slides and just say the PIT careers that are available are such as you see here. ASU specialises perhaps in a masters of science in public interest technology. It's the first degree with the actual namesake, the name PIT, and we are pushing forward advocacy coordinators.

And these are the job roles we actually crosschecked with employers, analysts and designers, big data governance managers, content strategists, environmental affairs managers, planners and solutions advisors, UX experience designers, data privacy management managers, integrity, trust, and safety officers, human rights officers, cyber security managers, child rights campaigners, privacy data misuse analysts, and so many more. Their vocations are widespread. These are the universities in the network. I list some of the list. I think it's the first 21.

And perhaps, just finish off with the core courses that are in our degree. We begin with the principles of public interest technology. We then go into a design course specialising in the co-design practise, where people actually understand the process end-to-end and engage in a real public interest technology project that's called the 50-day Challenge.

We then do technology impact assessments, but they can take different flavours and then public engagement strategies. And then we have an applied project, and we allow individuals to choose four electives from any school they want, so long as they begin to specialise in a roadmap, for example, security and public interest tech, biomedical devices and public interest tech, software quality assurance and public interest tech, public engagement and public journalism, public journalism, public law, and all of these other interests areas. So with that, thank you for listening, and I'll stop sharing.

LAWRIE ZION: Please, don't stop sharing. Thanks so much, Katina, for that. Can I just ask, Katina, a bit about who's doing these courses that you just showed us? What kind of people are enrolling with them, and are they all at the master's level, or are some of them undergraduate courses as well?

KATINA MICHAEL: We have an Innovation for the Future Of Society, an IFOS degree, at the bachelor's level, and we've had that now for about six or seven years. So that's an entry-level degree in the College of Global Futures. In the College of Global Futures, we have two other schools, the college the School of Sustainability and the School of Complex Adaptive Systems, and they work with the Future of Innovation in Society School, where we look at things like digital storytelling. We look at design approaches, participatory approaches, and participatory governance, responsible innovation. We look at areas to do with science and technology policy, the human and social dimensions programmes, and all of these are quite vibrant.

In terms of the Master of Science in Public Interest Tech, an incredible mix of people. That's what makes this classroom so dynamic. We do have undergraduates who are just finishing, have had some work experience, and are entering, just following through from the bachelor's degree. But

Then we've got big tech managers coming in and saying, well, I'm a little bit disgruntled with what's going on right now. I want to make a change within my big corporation, my big tech corporation, and these are the people who are not afraid to voice their opinions, but also see that they can make changes from within. And this is where we start to look at responsible innovation practises.

We've also got intelligence personnel. We've got our security personnel. We've got a range of people. For example, people who are into publishing on governance issues, people that are engaged in rescuing sea lions and looking at how technology can enhance rescue processes.

A lot of not for profits and non-government organisations, and people just who want to do it for the sake of it. I basically encourage people to come in, clean slate, and to fuse their day job with the degree. So every assessment task they do is linked back to their degree.

It's quite practical to their job, and sometimes my students say, sometimes, I don't know if I'm working or I'm studying. What am I doing? And I said, that's good, because when that blurring point happens, you know you're in the right place.

LAWRIE ZION: I want to thank the three of you actually for your presentations. I've got lots of questions, but I want to also flag at the moment that, if you do have questions, just go into the Q&A, not the ABC Programme Q&A. Just stay with the Q&A on your screen now and put questions forward there. It was interesting hearing just now, Katina, you talking about what you're offering at Arizona State University.

But I'm wondering if for the kind of active citizenship that you're talking about and that Amanda talked about as well, where do we need to go more broadly in education, so that people can actually participate in these discussions? And to talk to Melinda's point about declining trust in technology, what do we need to do to get people more involved, so they don't just feel invaded or overwhelmed by development? So that's a question to everyone on the panel. Who wants to go first?

SPEAKER: Well, Lawrie, I'm happy to jump in there. I think what you've just talked about is actually one of the reasons why we were advocating for a chief technologist. It's to actually provide a lot of visibility on this and to have a focal point at a time when we've seen a musical chairs of ministers and whatever else, that it's hard to get this transparency and visibility.

One of the things, the tech assessment process, which is great to see that being embedded in curriculum, if you go to the technology and public purpose group that I talked to about, spoke to earlier at the Harvard Kennedy School, one of the things that they do is produce technology briefs on emerging technologies that everyone's hearing about which quite frankly they produce for politicians and people up on the hill in DC but also for the wider community. They're publicly available, and they'll pick a topic and, they'll explain what it is. And then they'll summarise the key issues that people should be thinking about.

So I think there's a role for formal education, but I also think there is a role for information to be provided in a way which is user friendly, which people can find themselves, which is independent, trusted, expert advice. So that there's a source of that that people can go to and inform themselves, as well as thinking about the broader skills that we're going to have to bring in, quite frankly, from primary school through to high school and then tertiary education. Thanks,

LAWRIE ZION: Amanda, did you want to add anything to that?

AMANDA ROBINSON: Yeah. I was just having a look through the questions too, Lawrie, and I think someone's touched on this, that it is a generational exercise I guess. And as Melinda rightly said, this is going to require us to rethink the way we educate future leaders, and that it does become a mindset shift. That we are starting to think about the implications of technology on the whole of community on society, and that we're understanding and building in diverse perspectives.

So one of the things that we've been doing, and I've mentioned our summit a couple of weeks ago, the second day-- the first day was virtual, second day face-to-face, which we've just managed to get in before the lab is locked down in Melbourne, but that was about bringing diverse perspectives. So we had technologists from corporates. We had people from civil society. We had people from academia. We had people with lived experience. So to really understand the issues that we were trying to solve from multiple angles, so that when we do start to come up with what the solutions are, we walk into these solutions with our eyes wide open, or as wide open as they can be. To make sure that we don't do further harm, and that we aren't getting into a situation where we have the unintended consequences years from now that are problematic.

So I think it is just being really clear about thinking quite intentionally about the technology, not just now but into the future. How could these technologies be used in ways that we might not be imagining, as we're developing a product or service? And this goes for a corporate as much as it does for a non-profit who are building products and solutions. And really having that humanity first principle in mind fit, as we're going into it from the very outset.

KATINA MICHAEL: I think that's absolutely well-said, Amanda, and I just have one more slide to show on that topic. Sorry, folks. Let me just find that slide again, and it was basically from more than code, the organisation. That was saying there's a mismatch at the moment between the needs and those people who are graduating.

There's requirement for there to be interdisciplinary fluency, but we now try to do that by bringing together the anthropologists and the biologists with the cybernetacists and the engineers and the control systems theorists, and that happened through the 1946 Macy conferences. We just going back to what we already know. We need fluency between the disciplines.

We don't need siloing, but we're hell bent at the moment with continuing this practise of siloing within disciplines. And it's just actually impacting our academics negatively and also our student population. Where is this liberal arts ingestion into the STEM discipline?

No. We don't have time, and we don't have space, because the ACS won't accredit us with these practises. Or we won't be accredited in the business discipline, if we don't do x or y. Well, we've got to stop this, but as you know, it takes a change to happen through the major universities, like Harvard and Stanford, ASU, who's number one in innovation, and they're leading the charge really but then to see a whole ripple effect through.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

LAWRIE ZION: Do you think, Katina, that the situations, this public interest tech ecosystem, is different in the US to Australia? Is the siloing that you've just talked about broadly the same?

KATINA MICHAEL: Oh, look, we have siloing all over the world. We're working in an open system, an open ecosystem, a complex system. What we do in Australia will affect the US, will affect China, will affect all of these places.

Our workforce moves. Don't worry about what's happening at the moment with COVID. I just look at myself and my family. We're mobile, despite that the pandemic has disrupted this mobility.

So the siloing is happening all over the world. The mismatch is happening all over the world, and we're not graduating the right kinds of people with the right kinds of skill sets. Because we just want to say, business is business, and IT is IT, and engineering is engineering. But we're not looking at the notion of the complexity, where we look at people and tasks and structures and so forth in sociotechnical systems which are complex and open.

And there's a lot of embeddedness now. There are a lot of black boxes now. There are a lot of things that can't be explained through what we used to be able to do. And how do we create this new band of employees that sits somewhere in between to be the fluency translator?

And so it's the translationists we're looking for, and I'm not just talking about AI here. But wouldn't it be great if everyone got that education, and of course, people began to specialise. You're not going

to change your medicine field, but even our medical doctors require to be somewhat tech ready to a degree.

Look at deep brain stimulation. Look at these embedded black box implantable that are being used in the medical field or AI systems to detect whether someone has an illness or a precondition to something. So I'll just stop there and say, it's global.

SPEAKER: Lawrie, can I just quickly jump in on this?

LAWRIE ZION: Sure.

SPEAKER: I think, when we did our forum last year, we did a session on-- well, we ended up talking a lot about artificial intelligence, and Katina's right. It's not just about this, but I think it is where there are some really good examples at the moment. And the thing that really surprised me, when you have a look at how many frameworks and principles and how much public commentary there is about all this, that when you sit down and talk to people who are doing it in practise, there were two comments that just absolutely floored me from our panellists.

One was a guy by the name of Bill Simpson-Young who just said, people don't understand how easy it is to break the law with AI. And then he went on to talk about all the graduates that they are recruiting and how few of them actually have the real ability to understand safe, responsible, and sustainable use of the technology. And they've just come out of uni, and he said, it's the idea that you can teach this in a two-week spot on ethics course is just nonsensical.

And then you have Schlesinger from Salesforce, and they're all over this stuff. He described AI as like finance in the 1980s, and I'm old enough to remember what that was like, and it was a train crash. Right? So this is a really big issue, and that's just one example.

LAWRIE ZION: Melinda, I'm really interested to hear, because you mentioned before, and I saw you on TV talking about this a couple of weeks ago. Given all of this, what's been the reaction when you pitched the idea of a chief technologist in Australia?

SPEAKER: It's really interesting, because we got really good a lot of feedback through social media and things like that, very little take up in mainstream media. Look, this is interesting, because everyone's loving the public interest technology term on this forum. But because it does require a little bit of explanation, it hasn't quite grabbed the imagination that it might in other places.

The chief scientist is quite interested in my idea, possibly because it does encroach on her job a little bit, but I think there's genuine appetite for it. I think we're just going to have to keep pushing, and I think the fundamental intent behind it, there is a lot of support for that which is really pushing the visibility of this. And so more power to this conversation and others who are behind it.

LAWRIE ZION: Thanks for that. I'm going to go to questions now, because they're coming thick and fast, and there are some really great ones. From Katie Holmes, who says great panel, she's got a question for Katina, but I think it would be interesting to get everyone's view on this.

Katie says she's really interested in the philosophy underpinning PIT, especially the implicit underlying values. Who gets to determine which public, which citizen, and how differences between different interests actually get resolved? And I think we've seen a bit of this with the debates about COVID, as to the public interest case for opening up, the public interest case for suppressing the virus. OK. It's not binary, but we can see different perspectives generated through the prism of public interest.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

SPEAKER: Let me just jump in, and sorry, Katina.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

SPEAKER: This is public policy writ large. Isn't it?

LAWRIE ZION: Yeah.

SPEAKER: This is the fundamental issue around all public policy and making decisions that influence others. Right? I think the fundamental point about the public interest technology agenda is that making sure that we're talking about who's got the skills and expertise. The network nature of new technologies, the scale impact of new technologies, the pace at which they're changing is what makes that so interesting and unique and dynamic.

And I think it does present a different complexion of challenges, if you like, and breaking down those silos is absolutely fundamental. In all these issues, there's always going to be a debate about what public, what interests, whatever. That's why we actually use the language of safe, sustainable, and responsible, as distinct from talking about ethics which can mean different things to different people. There's never going to be a perfect answer, but we have to have greater transparency and greater discussion around it and understanding around how the decisions and the framing reflects community expectations.

LAWRIE ZION: Thanks, Melinda

AMANDA ROBINSON: That's fantastic, Melinda. I think it comes back to the discussion and the point that Katina raised earlier on around the participatory models and the ways in which we engage with community to understand what their interests are. As Melinda said, I think how we then resolve conflicts of interests or the challenges around competing interests, they're going to stay with us. And I'm sure that we'll need to come to ways to be able to resolve that, but at least starting again with this mindset and the methodologies and approaches around participatory design, engaging with community, ensuring that we get diverse perspectives, at least put us on the right playing field for them to be able to have those discussions and ensure that we are considering multiple interests and looking at it from multiple perspectives

KATINA MICHAEL: Yes. I think that's beautifully said, Amanda and Melinda, representation at the Table. Co-design takes time. it takes deliberation. It takes money and funding. It takes people to want to listen. It takes care, respect, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

I have been a part of the Australian Privacy Foundation now since 2008, and often, the agenda for discussions are set by big tech corporations who say, we invite you to come to our premises, but here's the agenda. You can't have a say. So you go to the big tech corp. You hand over your mobile phone and everything else. You're held captive, and you listen to eight hours of product fest talk. That's not dialogue, and that's not respectful. That's not being inclusive. That's not being consultative. That's not design justice. That's not the public interest. That's the corporate interest, and there's nothing wrong with corporate interests, so long as they fuse with the empowerment of the citizen.

And forgive me for wanting to share one more slide, but it is this. It's citizens as designers and understanding the lived experience and professional expertise. We're not one dimensional as people. We're all citizens. We're all either-- well, we're definitely children of somebody. We belong to several communities, one or more, that could be local. They could be transnational. They could be regional. We have a say, but some of us also carry additional professional expertise. How do we tap into that?

The other thing is what kinds of tools and processes and methods and design foci do we have in order to elicit responses from people at large? I often show soldier crabs that I see down south in the Illawarra in the thousands, and they're all moving towards different directions. They all have different needs. How do we address those needs, but even how do we get the homeless person to be represented at the table?

How do we facilitate the discussion? How are we respectful? Because in the end, it is about this. Beyond even co-design, it's about community-driven design.

But who's the community? Is it Climate Council? Is it the Aboriginal population in Kiama? Is it the under 16's in Kiama?

Is it the elderly in Kiama? Is it the single parents in Kiama? Is it those with disability in Kiama? Is it those who have a non-English speaking background in Kiama?

How do we empower these groups, and the way we do it is by caring, and I think this is the fundamental thing. When we want to talk scalable solutions, right, global. As [INAUDIBLE] says, we have to think grassroots and local. President Michael Crow says that at ASU, local solutions that are scalable.

And so for me, if you can get close enough to a community member to hear what their needs are, to say I care for you. I love you. I will make sure you have a warm shower tonight. I will make sure you have shelter tonight. I will make sure you get up in the morning and you have Panadol on the meds that you require.

That's when I know I'm close, but we're not close. From each other, not only are we physically distancing at the moment, because we have, we're like this. The user is over there, as if we're not a user of something. We can't be that clinically separate and disparate from each other. If we want to do true PIT, it's personal.

It's like people who read the Bible and go, yeah, I'm a Christian. I read the Bible, and then go and do something different. Well, guess what, PIT is another one of these testimonies or testaments or philosophies or ethos, whether it's the Koran, the Talmud, whatever it is, your religious book that you follow.

We have to open up the PIT Bible and go, I'm going to practise as a co-designer, the fact that I'm a citizen and a designer, and I have professional expertise. It's not a go home and forget about what I did at work. This is a community thing. We can enact change, if we live the change.

LAWRIE ZION: Thanks for that, Katina. Big tech has come up, as I thought it would, and there's a question from Barbara [INAUDIBLE] who-- I'm just interested in your thoughts on this. Your overall proposition fits into-- sorry, not Barbara's question. We'll get to that. Sorry.

Thomas, what role does big tech play in PIT, and how can their business models actually incorporate PIT beyond tokenism? And I know, when I say PIT, I should be saying PIT, because the acronym is read like a word. So yeah, but we'll solve that problem of acronyms later. How can businesses incorporate PIT beyond tokenism?

AMANDA ROBINSON: I might just quickly jump in and say, I don't think we have the business models for this yet, Lawrie. And it's a great question, and again, it comes back to we are designing the future live as we go, and so the business models haven't been created yet. I think we've seen emergence of different schools of thought around how big corporate or big business can engage in the for-profit sector from shared value and CSR. So we've been on that journey for quite some time, and we've never quite left it on how we really embed this.

And I think again, it's going to take a new generation of leaders to actually be determining what are the new products, services, business models that are going to deliver a return to community, but beyond that, just a return for shareholders. And so it's challenging, and I think increasingly, business is stepping into this space and certainly looking to engage with civil society more and more. But it tends to still be on the edge of core business and looking at some of these more CSR-type initiatives, as opposed to really rethinking our business models, our sales approaches, the way we build technologies, design products and services for our customers that actually ensure very inclusive and considered a way of engaging in the community.

LAWRIE ZION: Thanks, Amanda. Melinda, what about it CEDA? What do you see when businesses come along to PIT seminars and want to get involved? What are you seeing there?

SPEAKER: Yeah. So look, let me be really upfront. We've got some big tech organisations that are actually involved in our advisory work in shaping some of the work that we do or I guess presenting a perspective. Everything we do is then independently vetted, if I could just make sure I'm protecting myself there. But look, I think number one, they have to be part of the conversation because of their size. And if we are going to get change, then we've got to bring them along.

I think it's a really interesting example of how things happen really quickly, and then we've turned around and looked back and said, oh my gosh, whoops, there's some unintended consequences here of network scale businesses. Particularly, we've had a lot of conversation here around platforms and

media and all the rest of it. For what it's worth, I think there's some other issues there that haven't been fully explored that I think are probably a bit more important.

And Francis Fukuyama in the US has done some really interesting work around the implications of platform media distribution and democracy. So I think they have to be part of it. I think there's still a lot of thinking to go on about where we're going to land with all of this.

But the other thing to just note is that my consumer-centred design is an absolutely critical direction for the future. Businesses that want to engage their customers and consumers understand this, and that is going to require a move in the direction that Katina spoke to. Will we get to her Nirvana in the near future? Who knows, but there is a really strong commercial imperative for people to actually start engaging their consumers and customers and broader stakeholders far more genuinely than they have in the past.

The final thing I'd say is that I'm a huge fan of transparency. I think the more that people and businesses are expected to be upfront about what they're doing, the principles they're applying, how they're measuring them, then the more information and ammunition, if you like, that we have. As just little tangent, I know someone's talked about how do we bring investors in. I have floated the idea of adding a T to ESG. I know it covers off on the governance piece, but I think being very explicit about how you use technology and data in your business, what principles apply, and how you are engaging with your customers is actually a starting point for them.

LAWRIE ZION: Thanks. We've got a question here from Jason Prakash. What are your thoughts on some innovative ways we can overcome the friction within private and public companies, where existing measurement and reward systems are focused on financial returns and project completions, rather than including the more holistic public interest duty? Does anyone have any thoughts on how we can do that?

And he goes on to say, triple bottom line does not appear to have achieved the level of public interest awareness it could have. Is it just a case of creating a movement and building our generation? Do we need greater policy intervention to keep this whole process at one?

KATINA MICHAEL: I think, it actually relates to the previous question. We're on treadmills of production at the moment. We're on the materiality gung-ho bandwagon. Produce a shiny gadget, buy it, Christmas, Easter, wrap it up, birthday present, and we're seeing all sorts of debacles.

Like an engineer accidentally forget a microphone in the nest device. It was an accident. Nobody picked it up during the production plant process, just an accident. Sniffing Mac addresses a street view cars go around and around the bend. Accident, we didn't know it was open, and we didn't know we were data collecting. Autonomous vehicles in the states that take the data of drop offs and pickups and everything else that comes back from the autonomous vehicle and analyses it to death to on-sell it for value added.

Look, there's nothing wrong with that. When we can start to enforce penalties that actually mean something, it's not just about legislation and regulation and standards and codes and soft floors and codes of conduct and blah, blah, blah. We haven't talked about regulation very much today, and

there's an issue there. Even if we have the laws, even if they're enforceable, the penalties are quite meaningless.

I remember studying, in 2011, a breach of a case in Hong Kong application by service location GPS data. The company was fined 2,040 Australian dollars, when I did the conversion. That's really going to upset someone. Even $4 billion, do we think it's going to upset the big corp players? No. It's not, and they have been hit with big anti-trust lawsuits.

It's a drop in the bucket, because we're the product. And we continue to survive, and we continue to feed the machine. And we do need to change this advertising model that seems to be sucking us all in, as we type on our search boxes A, B, and C. That's got to change.

The new model might be based on time. The new model may be based on public interest law, public interest journalism, public interest engineering, our volunteer time. I receive volunteerism in return. It might be on micro payments.

It may be community-based. The community wishes to donate half a cent a micro payments over time to ensure clean drinking water, depending on where they are. Clean air, whatever it is, these models are changing.

But what we have at the moment are the big tech corporations basically saying, oh, you're a social bank? Come with us. We'll give you our platform. You just come with us. This is an alternate way of working.

You can continue with your social bank, and you can use our platform. And then within 12 months, they say, now, you have to pay for our platform. Sorry. You had a really good idea, but we're going to charge you now. That's heinous.

So there's shaming and naming practises. Although, I'd rather not get to that point. I'd rather we have some form of enforcement of our standards, first of all, which are soft. They're soft laws. They're not regulations, and they're not laws, but they could be de facto.

We've put forward recently at the [INAUDIBLE] P2089 standard for children online and their digital practises. Well, is that enforceable? No. Even if the standard comes through in a couple of weeks, it won't be enforceable, but it's a step in the right direction.

We have to be able to look at each other and say, what's the minimum wage? Is everyone well-off, or is the CEO earning like 90% of the total labour output? We've got to come back to some balance.

LAWRIE ZION: Sorry, I'm muted. It had to happen. Sorry about that. We do have a regulation question from Muhammad at Swinburne. He's asking if governments are too slow to act, legislate, and accept technological innovations. Giving the example of recent payments to hackers in the US and Australia, where in one case technology was used in a positive way to disable criminals getting ransom money, and in another case the hackers won. Is there a broader question here about when governments can accept and legalise use of cryptocurrency which in this case allowed hackers to be traced.

SPEAKER: Well, I'll jump in here, if you like. A couple of quick responses to Katina. The points about the fines and things like that, everyone knows that people make decisions on the basis of a regulation around what's the probability of getting caught, and what's the consequences of it? So I think the probability of getting caught is something we've got to grapple with.

Let me take a step back. In a forum last year, I can't remember who said this, but the basic consensus was, when we were talking about regulation, was that governments respond to community angst but usually on the wrong issues, with the wrong response, and it has no impact. And then you kind of get in this cycle of community had expectations, didn't work, and so on and so forth. Regulation absolutely has a role to play. Does government respond too slowly? I don't know.

Let's talk about Uber. Uber was hardly relying on leading edge technology, and what did it take, three years before we actually got our heads around what we were going to do in any state on Uber, on something as simple and straightforward as Uber? You can go to Eastern European countries and see examples of responses there that dealt with the social consequences and concerns in an anticipatory fashion ahead of what they did. So have we got any examples here that I would really point to and say, we nailed it? I'm struggling, to be honest.

One of the biggest problems and where I've had a lot of interest in this, in my former life at the Productivity Commission, I worked with Peter Harris on the data access and availability work. And the thing that really struck me about that was how going into a lot of the government organisations, there was a default no or default yes response. So people were either really gung-ho for data, or they just saw data as a huge privacy risk, even though they had a whole bunch of data that they weren't properly looking after anyway.

I'm generalising here, but I think there is a massive credibility issue here, massive, massive, massive. And one of the things that we have to do is really encourage this collaborative process and try to find ways to get people to have the conversations to really put safe, sustainable technology right at the core. Because it's in the technology companies best interest in the long run as well. But before we start pulling the regulatory lever, we've really got to build capability. We've really got to get expert, independent advice, and then we've got to have a truckload of transparency.

LAWRIE ZION: Amanda, you're nodding yeah. Do you want to add anything to that?

AMANDA ROBINSON: Yeah. I'm nodding along with the comments around expertise and getting the right expertise. I think until we start bringing in the right expertise, and again across multi-sector and multi-disciplines to really further the narrative, further the discussion, then, as Melinda said, I think pulling the regulatory lever is really at the end of the process. That actually we should be fostering these collaborative conversations, first and foremost.

The other thing I would just, to the earlier conversation too, is just to mention the big corp or the big corporation movement as one of those vehicles by which organisations can actually become more accountable to their stakeholders, not just their shareholders. It's not something that's had as much as momentum here in Australia as it has in the US, and certainly there's no legal entity that we can engage in here. But we can sign up as organisations to become a big corp, but that is one way in which there is an avenue to, at least in the US so far. I'm not aware of it's in any other countries to

get that legal status where you have a duty beyond just your shareholders to deliver value to community.

LAWRIE ZION: Are you seeing much of that in the US, Katina?

KATINA MICHAEL: Arizona is a very unregulated state, and it's do as you wish. That's where all the autonomous vehicle companies flock to for trials. I got off the plane, in 2018, I think it was March, and saw everything happening in front of me. But what I'll say is it's a little bit blasé of a market, and I don't wish for us in Australia to, even though, obviously, we've got transnational companies everywhere with a presence in most jurisdictions and markets, I want us to be more Australian here.

I want us to keep to our values. We haven't talked about value-sensitive design today-- privacy by design, security by design, engineering by design, democracy by design, all of these various approaches which put values at the heart of the design process. What values are we talking about, human rights? I haven't heard that mentioned yet today, and we are getting to that point know.

AI, you just have to look and listen to Ed Santa in his latest report, human rights and AI. Are we going to just continue on and like nothing has happened? Web scraping for automatic identification or facial recognition images. No, we shouldn't.

I think there is a way of doing things, and I don't want us to go against what we naturally feel for the sake of money. And it goes back to that unfortunately-- products, services, you've got people salivating over brokering deals in the millions and the hundreds of millions. Again, there's nothing wrong with money, but let's not think about that.

Let's think about the people who require help, and I can tell you, in every household in Australia, someone needs help, at least one person. Who is helping? It could be a child with autism who's non-verbal. It could be someone with schizophrenia. It could be someone who's lost their job. It could be someone who broke their leg. It could be someone who needs to get into university or to TAFE to get a vocational trade but can't, because they have four kids.

My father couldn't learn English, because he had four children and was working shift work in a factory. He still doesn't know English. He's 88. Nobody helped my dad. He helped us, his kids, but nobody helped my dad.

This is unheard of, when I tell people. I'm a professor. He's really proud. He can tell me that in Greek, but not in English. Right? Why aren't we looking?

Forget about this. This is the enabler. This carries the voice and data traffic. This allows us to bond and connect and care and check up on each other. It's the social network, not the damn gaming platform that I'm addicted to, not the gambling machine that I use when I wake up in the morning, not the one that I troll my neighbour when he gets out of his house.

We're using this for the wrong reason. We're not teaching our kids in school how to use this tool. It's so powerful, but we have to be looking as humans, what do we need? We need this-- happiness, joy support, feeling loved, and guess what, I'd say a great majority of Australians don't feel happy when they wake up in the morning.

I think they feel unloved and lonely, especially during COVID. I think they feel blasted stressed out of their guts. When are we going to wake up and go, the real problems are-- the real problems are not more of this or getting the next upgrade or getting the latest AI the takes a bit a photograph of outside. We've already got the best sensors in here.

We have to start caring. That's the solution, the process. That's what's going to lead to prosperity, to people being more productive in the workplace, to people coming out with better solutions in technology that actually mean something to people. Not just another shiny gadget that you get at Christmas time, because it's cheap, cheap.

LAWRIE ZION: One final question for me, Katina, partly a response to that, and also, I think because this is the inaugural forum of Technology by Society. Two universities have come together to make this our launch event, and so the last question which comes from an Longorn University, to everyone. Universities are not small organisations. How can we turn these ideals back towards our own work and bring our colleagues and students along on this work? It's a big question. If you've got the answer, that'd be great.

AMANDA ROBINSON: I don't have the answer, wish I did. But if I think about it from the work that we're doing at Red Cross with Humanitech, everything that we do is about influencing and advocating. So we talk about it on behalf of people who are experiencing vulnerability, but actually what we're doing is influencing and advocating. So everybody that we speak to, every engagement that we have, every panel that we speak at, every discussion that we're invited into, and we talk about being invited into the non-traditional discussions, the National Blockchain Roadmap discussions. The things that are happening in the country, where a not for profit would not typically get invited into.

We're banging on doors and getting a seat at the table. Because it is so important that civil society, that community is represented. And so I think it is a mystery that everybody becomes an advocate, everybody seeks for opportunities to influence at every level, in every conversation that we're having, and in that way, we build this momentum. We build this movement around public interest technology, create that awareness, and build the groundswell.

SPEAKER: I'll pick up the baton there and use a slightly different word, if you like. I think what I was thinking, Lawrie, when you asked the question, was I think this is an issue around empowerment.

LAWRIE ZION: Yeah.

SPEAKER: And I think the complexity of technology, the language that's used-- I am an economist. We love to use language that actually excludes people from conversations, so that we feel super smart. Right? The challenge is to actually try to figure out how we convince people that they can actually understand this, that they should understand it? That as Katina says, you pick up your phone, it's a powerful tool. How do you want to use that tool and for what purpose?

And when you go to work, whatever you do, you're thinking about what is the role of the technology that you're using or that you're going to deploy or that you whatever? So I think it's just this piece

about empowerment, trying to get more people to understand that they can learn about this, or they have to teach people about this, so that they can act in their own best interests. I think that's the crucial issue for me,

LAWRIE ZION: Finally to you, Katina, public interest tech is on the radar. What more can universities do though?

KATINA MICHAEL: I want us to imagine going back to some work done in the US on sociotechnical imaginaries. We have a mental model at the moment that's being shoved down our throats by a lot of different stakeholders all around us. It's noise, perhaps. It's the attention economy.

Most kids actually can go, oh, yeah, Elon Musk and his autonomous cars and the brain implants of the Neuralink. But I want us to reimagine the world we want to live in, one where we feel safe and secure physically, one where our body is not undergoing, as Christine Perakslis says in the US, allostatic overload. I want us to be able to get up and be productive, because we care about something meaningful.

So what do I say to my students? There are 10 of you in my class. We're going to have 10 different projects, or you're going to self-group and place yourselves in a group. What's the most important thing to you right this second, right now in my class, today?

Go and do it. Go and interview the stakeholders. Don't think of a project. Go and innovate.

I'm not saying don't innovate. I'm saying innovate your guts out but with something you care about, something that's meaningful. Just like Amanda's doing with the Humanitech, it's going to go viral.

I'm sure, Amanda, because you care about it. I've heard how you're talking about it today, and Melinda your forums, right? They're going to-- Melinda, I'll tell you a story.

I wrote to the PIT-UN CEO with Dr. Roba Abbas and I said, by the way, CEDA is doing something on PIT. She goes, really? I didn't even know about that. Right? That was a year ago. So that's when we have our hearts invested, and we support each other.

We're not jealous of each other. We don't compete against each other. We don't steal things from each other. We go, you're the expert on this. Tell me what part of the puzzle am I missing?

Give it to me. Share it. Come and join me. Come and group, as Diana and Samuel are doing, with this tech in society forum.

We're going to hear from them in a moment. Come and join our forum. It's open. We need you, and I think when we're needed, that's the most wonderful feeling in the universe.

LAWRIE ZION: Katina Michael, Melinda Cilento, Amanda Robinson, thank you so much for this. It felt like 10 minutes that we're just getting going, but unfortunately, time is running out, but thanks so much for joining us today. You certainly inspired me, and I'm sure other people who are joining us

from all over the world on this forum tonight. I'm going to now quickly hand you back to Sam with some closing comments and a bit more about the Technology by Society group. Thank you.

SAM WILSON: Well, maybe you can close the slide up. I'll just talk off the cuff here. Well, thanks, everyone. Thanks for your attention this last hour or so. Paul, could you, please, close the slide? Thanks very much.

So everyone, on behalf of Lawrie, Diane, and all of those who had the time to join us today, I would like to offer a hearty vote of thanks to Melinda Cilento, Amanda Robinson, and Katina Michael. I think you'll agree that it was a fascinating, wide-ranging conversation and really highlighted I think that values and our interests and our choices and our sense of who we are and what we want to become is just as important here as the technology itself. So I think that really brought those ideas to the fore and that were in a really powerful way.

And just the passion that was brought to this was fantastic as well, because of course, this is about where humanity, as Amanda would say, meets technology. And it's something that we all have a stake in, and it's something that we could all influence, if only we actually get up and do something about it. So Katina, thanks for that call to action, which I think was implicit in a lot of what you were saying there.

So I think-- it's banal to say it is, of course-- but it's clear that PIT is something that is a huge issue for us, and hopefully, as people become more and more familiar with it, they'll engage with it more and more as well, understanding both the opportunities but also the challenges in actually in fully realising this idea in it's many and varied forms. I just want to remind everyone too that this webinar has been recorded. I know there was a lot of ground covered here, so the webinar is recorded, and a link will be shared with you in a follow-up email to you. So you'll have a chance to watch and re-watch this again and share and so forth. But there's lots of great things to mind here, and I know that Diane and Lawrie and I will be doing just that after this to really direct the deep insights and take this further.

I guess the segue goes nicely to the whole purpose of our forum which is to try and bring institutions from all sectors across and with us, to explore how technology might be created in the service of society. That's why we call this Technology by Society. It's curated by society and serves our interests and our values and so forth, first and foremost.

So we want to do this in a really open way, and so as part of our I guess call to action, we're going to be sending you all a link to tell us a bit about your own interests and what you'd like to see in future forums. And to really join us, as we try and cut down the silos and work across disciplines, work across sectors, work across interest groups, and to try and realise a distinctly Australian form of public interest technology. So with that, thank you, everyone. Have a great day, and thanks for joining us in this first of our Public Interest Technology programmes.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]