In this paper we report on progress to date on a project designed to investigate supervision and training needs in Australian Universities.

In 2007, the Carrick Institute provided funding for a project to investigate current practices and future needs in research supervision and training across Australian universities. The significance of the project lies in the fact that it will provide, for the first time, a coordinated and systematic overview of current practices, needs and priorities for higher degree research supervision in Australian Universities. It will also provide recommendations for future directions in higher degree research supervision training, and thus, hopefully, will assist universities in their future planning in this area.

The project is being conducted in two stages: a symposium of key academics in the field of higher education, and a wider scoping exercise where information is sought from individuals and groups across Australian universities about existing practices and perceived needs. To date we have completed the symposium and we are about to begin the scoping exercise.

The symposium brought together key academics to address current and future needs of research supervisor training, as well as the broader contexts of research education and supervision. The symposium also addressed the impact of increasing accountability of universities on doctoral education. In this paper, we report on outcomes from the symposium of key academics. We also seek feedback on ways in which we have drawn on symposium outcomes in our design of the scoping exercise (Stage 2) of the project.