**TITLE** Teaching ‘Design Thinking’ to tomorrow’s assistive technologists: The Swinburne University University Design Factory

**FOCUS AREA 2** Opportunities to learn more - upskill knowledge and skills in hard and soft technologies

**PRESENTATION TYPE** oral presentation15 minutes content and 5 minutes questions

**ABSTRACT**

Technology is rapidly transforming human occupation, presenting new opportunities for participation for people experiencing disability and challenging traditional professional roles. Outcomes for technology users depends upon the calibre of products and services available. Technology availability is influenced by many factors including design ideas, resourcing, manufacturing capability and the supply chain. The World Health Organisation’s Global Priority Research Agenda for assistive technology (2017) call for:

* An increase in the competence and capability of users and professionals to develop high quality and affordable products to meet a diversity of needs;
* Exploration of the way ‘pervasive design principles’ and technological standards can help meet unmet need.

**AIMS** This paper describes the development and preliminary outcomes of the ***Swinburne Design Factory Project***. This inter-professional and problem-based learning course is designed to facilitate technological solutions to authentic problems. Entry-level Masters’ occupational therapy students collaborate with design students in a year-long design project based at Swinburne, Victoria, or Aalto University, Helsinki. The course aims to equip students with transformative knowledge and skills in design and development of information and assistive technologies.

**OUTCOMES**

The Design Factory subject is in its second year. Data from the initial cohorts will be presented to:

* Illustrate how design knowledge and skills can be creatively embedded into curricula
* demonstrate the impacts and outcomes of ‘design thinking’ for occupational therapy and potentially other assistive technology practitioner disciplines.