

Tamika Heiden, Impact Consultancy Founder, (Research Adjacent Episode 75)

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[00:00:28] **Tamika Heiden:** I'm seeing that good work is being dismissed or not funded purely because of the system, not because of the work in itself. And for me, that is really heartbreaking

[00:00:42] **Sarah McLusky:** Hello there. I'm Sarah McLusky and this is Research Adjacent.

[00:00:51] **Sarah McLusky:** Each episode I talk to amazing research adjacent professionals about what they do and why it makes a difference. Keep listening to find out why we think the research adjacent space is where the real magic happens.

[00:01:06] **Sarah McLusky:** Welcome one and all to today's *Research Adjacent* podcast. I'm your host, Sarah McLusky, and before I welcome our guest, I just wanted to thank you for taking the time to listen. I know that your time and attention are precious, so it means a lot that you're choosing to spend that time with this podcast.

[00:01:21] **Sarah McLusky:** If you want to show your appreciation, the most impactful thing you can do is subscribe to the show and leave a rating or review in whichever podcast app you are

listening in. It really does make a big difference. Also, if you're listening around the time of release, I'll be taking a short summer break after this episode, but we'll be back in September, 2025 with some new guests.

[00:01:42] **Sarah McLusky:** But back to today's guest. So Tamika Heiden is the founder of the Research Impact Academy, a consultancy based in Melbourne, Australia, serving clients all over the world. That global perspective on impact is something that we really dig into, including the perhaps controversial tale of how the UK stole the idea of impact from Australia.

[00:02:02] **Sarah McLusky:** We also talk about how Tamika's career in business has evolved as the funding landscape and research priorities have changed, from researcher to research management to knowledge translation, and now impact. We also talk about the challenges of stepping out of her comfort zone and starting a business that has grown from a one woman band into an international team.

[00:02:22] **Sarah McLusky:** If you are listening to this episode around the time of release, which is in August, 2025, make sure that you register for Tamika's free online Research Impact Summit. Now in its 10th year this event, which will be on the 1st and 2nd of September, will look back at 10 years of progress in research impact.

[00:02:38] **Sarah McLusky:** You can register at researchimpactsommit.com or follow the link in the show notes, but don't go there just yet. Listen on for Tamika's story.

[00:02:48] **Sarah McLusky:** Welcome to the podcast, Tamika. It is fantastic to have you here. I wonder if we could start by hearing a bit about who you are and what it is that you do.

[00:02:58] **Tamika Heiden:** Yeah, that's a great question, Sarah. I ask myself some of that every day, but so I am the director of the Research Impact Academy, that's a consulting agency in Australia. And as part of that I get to work with a lot of academics all over the world, and obviously mostly in Australia as well, to help them have an impact.

[00:03:18] **Tamika Heiden:** So that looks like, you know, training, coaching, providing other types of services to support them in grant writing, those types of activities. We do some stuff with government and things as well, but I guess my day job is a balance between running a business and being a business owner and operationally serving my clients as well.

[00:03:39] **Tamika Heiden:** So a bit of both of those things.

[00:03:42] **Sarah McLusky:** Yeah. I think anybody who's listening, who is a, a, either a business owner themselves or is something like a project manager will understand that it's that, you know, little bits and pieces of this and sometimes delivering things. So yeah, it's interesting that you work on impact.

[00:03:58] **Sarah McLusky:** And I think from what I've seen, the only places that people are really using the language of impact seem to be the UK and Australia. So how did you come into working in this sort of thing and, and is this impact agenda a big thing in Australia as well?

[00:04:18] **Tamika Heiden:** It's an interesting point. There are other places in the world that look at it, I think Australia definitely started talking about it. There's all sorts of little fun facts about how the UK stole Australia's idea on impact and started doing it before we did it.

[00:04:34] **Sarah McLusky:** Oh

[00:04:35] **Tamika Heiden:** Well well that was really because one of our governments had decided we were gonna have an impact assessment. And a lot of people listening probably are aware of the UK Research Excellence Framework Impact Assessment. Well before it became the UK's. Research impact the assessment as part of the REF, they had decided they were gonna do it in Australia. Then we had a, a sort of a government reshuffle, somebody boosted out the current sitting Prime minister and they changed their tack and we didn't do it, but the UK ran with it.

[00:05:10] **Tamika Heiden:** And so that was kind of an interesting development that happened with Impact. So Australia, we gave up that opportunity to do impact a little bit. We did try it a little bit later. But generally speaking, to kind of circle to your question, originally before I got you all excited about how you stole something from us, 'cause you know, I know you sent all the convicts to Australia.

[00:05:32] **Sarah McLusky:** Oh.

[00:05:32] **Tamika Heiden:** It, it I fell into it a little bit by accident, I guess. My, my passion was as a researcher, so I did a PhD and I, I really loved research and I wanted to stay in research, but it's very hard to have a career in that space. So I started to, I moved into sort of managing other people's research projects, and as part of doing that, I, I became a bit more administrative I guess. And then one day I went to this talk by somebody who had started working at our institute who was talking about research management. And I had never heard of that as a profession. And I was like, I think I've found my thing. It's like this mix of research. 'cause you're, you're working with researchers and a mix of, you know, admin and all the other types of activities go with that. So that's perfect for me, I think. I think this is what I wanna do. So finally, I thought I knew what I wanted to do and I grew up, but in fact I then sought out jobs in that space and I managed to get a job managing a National Center of Excellence.

[00:06:35] **Tamika Heiden:** And in doing that, they started talking about something called knowledge translation. I was fascinated. I was like, what's this knowledge translation thing? And so I started Googling. I found some people who knew all about it in Canada, in fact, and then I found a course in Canada that I went and did.

[00:06:53] **Tamika Heiden:** And I thought this was gonna be my thing. I found my people, I was very excited. This was my forever job. Came back to Australia after my training, all very excited and started really bringing that aspect into my work. And then I, through doing that, I started to wanna do more. I was like, more people should be doing translation. I can help more people.

[00:07:20] **Tamika Heiden:** And then 11 years ago I decided that maybe I could help more people if I consulted. So I left my nice cozy job and became a consultant and hanging out that shingle was very, very scary. So yeah, I guess I fell into it because of a passion. I became incredibly passionate about it, and it was over a number of years doing knowledge translation to start in my consultancy that then that morphed into impact because it turned out that what I was talking about was, was impact, but not end of line impact. I was talking about impact creation rather than impact measurement. In fact, I had said to everyone, I don't wanna do impact, impact's too hard. But it came, came about because really that's what the sector wanted. It's what everyone was discussing and I realised it's, it's all just words, it's terminology.

[00:08:12] **Sarah McLusky:** I think yeah, really interesting that, about the terminology because I, I've, I've said this often in conversation, I can't remember if I've ever said it on the podcast, but

that we, we talk about, yeah, knowledge translation, knowledge transfer. We talk about public engagement, we talk about, you know, public involvement, patient involvement.

[00:08:30] **Sarah McLusky:** It's, and it's almost like. they're all, as you say, slightly different words for kind of the same thing for all sort of working in collaboration with partners to help get the research out into the world. And then all of those can be these routes impact and it's almost like impact's the end of the line no matter what the process that you're doing to get there. But yes, the language, what's your take on the, the language, the terminology around this?

[00:09:01] **Tamika Heiden:** Yeah, it's, it's a huge area and you talk to different people. They have different ways of talking about it. Exactly as you said, you know, engagement, exchange, commercialization, dissemination, communication. There's so much about it, and it was quite fascinating when I first got into this space. I remember one of my early conferences, where they were talking about knowledge translation and there was an entire day dedicated to what we should call it. And I realised pretty quickly at first I was really clinging on to, which should be knowledge translation because that's what I'm used to. And you kind of, we love to hold on to things that we're used to.

[00:09:38] **Tamika Heiden:** But what I realised really quickly is it doesn't matter what we call it, what it matters is that we make the difference we're trying to, and I like how you sort of mentioned that really they're all routes to the same thing. It's all about getting to change, to improving things, and to having that impact.

[00:09:55] **Sarah McLusky:** So yeah, it makes sense how you've gathered all that knowledge, that experience together and decided to focus on impact.

[00:10:02] **Sarah McLusky:** And what's really interesting is you're saying there that you did your training initially in Canada and then took that back to Australia and now you do a lot of work around the world, don't you? I know you do a lot of work in the UK so what is it like having that international perspective on impact and what we mean by impact?

[00:10:21] **Tamika Heiden:** Yeah, Look, I learn so much from the UK. In fact, I really think what we thought for a long time in Australia and, and I still believe it, is that the UK had it all together. You guys were doing impact. You're all experts in impact because you're all doing it. We realised pretty quickly that that's kind of a generalisation, but we definitely learn from other things, and I'm learning a lot from the UK. I'm also learning a lot from our experiences growing here in Australia, but definitely in the early days it was looking at those international sectors, whether it's Canada and all the translation mobilisation work, whether it's the UK and the impact work, and even whether it's places like Hong Kong does impact stuff. There's a bit in Asia and different ways of looking at it. Even New Zealand was doing things slightly differently. Ireland was looking at impact in different ways. So there was a number of countries that when you started to delve into it, you found all these little pieces, and it was really a great way to learn, was to say, what are others doing?

[00:11:26] **Tamika Heiden:** In fact, one of the very first things, and the reason I kind of started my business, I guess, was because I kind of saw on the horizon that this was coming.

[00:11:35] **Sarah McLusky:** Mm-hmm.

[00:11:36] **Tamika Heiden:** Even though in Australia we had. Put our, our little impact agenda on the, on the back shelf. I realised that the UK had run with this pretty big time and other countries like Canada were talking about translation. And in fact, they'd been talking about it since I think

the year 2000 in that stage. And, and this was, you know, I was saying we're still gonna be 20 years behind if we don't do something. So I kind of thought it was worth a risk. I think it's coming. Surely Australia has to keep up and meet the other requirements of other countries when it comes to funding and things like that as well.

[00:12:13] **Sarah McLusky:** Yeah. Well, it sounds like certainly in terms of what I've seen happen in the UK in the last 11 years, that's definitely been the direction of travel and, and increasingly this focus more on impact as, as, as you say that the, the kind of end of the line, the thing that we're aiming for. So tell us a bit more about, you said that in your business you do sort of training, coaching. I know you organize events and conferences. Tell us a little bit, bit more about some of those things that you do.

[00:12:40] **Tamika Heiden:** Yeah well the training used to be the biggest component, but these days the consulting has become one of the biggest components. So it's really interesting how things flip around. We now work a lot on grants, and I'm right in the middle of grant season at the moment, so we help academics to write their impact pathways, to write their track records.

[00:13:01] **Tamika Heiden:** A lot of it's around language, it's around communication. But one of the other things I do, as you mentioned, I, I have a, a summit each year, so that's a big part of our business that we, that we produce each year and, and share. It's a, if I'm really honest, it's my way of learning 'cause I get to tap into all these experts and interview them. And so I'm kind of just sharing my own professional development, but don't tell everyone. And,

[00:13:26] **Sarah McLusky:** That's exactly what I'm doing with the podcast.

[00:13:29] **Tamika Heiden:** Excellent. Well, you know, it's a great way we get to meet people, we get to connect, we get to build great connections and relationships with people. We learn as we do it. I think it's a really, it underpins everything we do now, communication and learning from others.

[00:13:45] **Tamika Heiden:** So yeah, they're the things that. I do mostly in my business. I mean, from time to time I like to dabble in other things. You know, someone will say to me, Hey, can you do an evaluation of a research center? And I'll say, oh. Yeah, okay. It might not be a standard thing that we do, but yeah, we'll definitely do that work.

[00:14:01] **Tamika Heiden:** And we've done some big ones of those. We've done some reports for organisations in other countries. I'm doing some case studies for Hong Kong right now, so it's a lot of different pieces. And I guess what I love about that is it never gets boring, never gets boring.

[00:14:19] **Sarah McLusky:** Yeah, it is definitely when you're always working on a slightly different area of research or a slightly different you know, country, different context that, yeah, definitely that sort of thing keeps it really interesting for me as well. Yeah.

[00:14:32] **Tamika Heiden:** I like the variety.

[00:14:35] **Sarah McLusky:** Excellent. Oh, well, within that variety, I'm sure you've done a few things that really stand out as things that you're proud of or things that were really memorable. Tell us maybe about a couple of those.

[00:14:46] **Tamika Heiden:** Yeah, well there are a few, and in listening to other speakers on your podcast, I was kind of listening to what other people have done and you know, you kind of have that imposter syndrome thing that comes through sometimes. But I really, in thinking through,

you know, what am I really proud of? And I do this quite often, in fact, and I found it to be a good practice to do, is to not just reflect on the things that aren't working, but to reflect on those things that maybe have been really successful because it's easy to put them aside.

[00:15:17] **Tamika Heiden:** One of the things that I did very early on maybe so around 10 years ago, is that I had lobbied a little bit, if you like but helped to shape one of our major research funding sources here in Australia in the medical area, and it's called the Medical Research Future Fund. And they were starting up this new fund, one of the biggest medical funds in the world. And, so I kind of lobbied around how I thought very passionately that knowledge translation should definitely be part of it.

[00:15:49] **Tamika Heiden:** And I ended up presenting evidence to a senate committee inquiry. And then I guess my proudest moment of that is that they named me when they passed the bill in the in the parliament. So I was kinda like, oh, my, my claim to fame. That's my impact, right?

[00:16:03] **Tamika Heiden:** So I, I think other things though, I think I'm, I'm really proud of. I guess my own bravery in starting a business. I mean, that's a, it's a pretty big leap to go from academic to business owner. And I realise that might sound a bit strange, but one of the reasons I left academia was actually because I used to get really scared presenting.

[00:16:23] **Sarah McLusky:** Hmm.

[00:16:23] **Tamika Heiden:** I couldn't stand in front of people. I couldn't run lectures and so. I had to have the bravery to stand up and start doing that. And I, you know, I remember my husband saying, you're gonna do what? He said, don't you hate that? And I was like yeah, but I'm really passionate about this, so it's different.

[00:16:41] **Sarah McLusky:** Yeah.

[00:16:42] **Tamika Heiden:** I think that's, you know, that was the, the good thing. So I guess you know, I'm. I feel quite proud of the fact that I've become a bit more comfortable being uncomfortable, if you like. I love that saying. I'm, I guess I'm also kind of proud that I took a really niche area and built it into a business. I, people say to me, what do you do? And then I meet them again later. They go, I'm still not sure what you do. And people who are in academia and. And that area, they know what I do. But when I meet other business owners, they sort of say, I don't really get what you do. And so it's quite an, it's quite an interesting one, trying to explain what that is. So yeah, there're some of the things that I'm, that I'm proud of and, and one of the most successful things I think I've ever done is the summit, the Research Impact Summit, you know, it's in its 10th year.

[00:17:30] **Tamika Heiden:** Every year I get. Around 1200 people register for the summit. And I'm, I think I'm really proud that it's free. I, I love that it has such a good following now. And you know, like we said before, it's how we get to meet people and learn things. And it's my professional development, but I think the fact that it's gone for 10 years and I now get people saying, when's the next summit?

[00:17:51] **Tamika Heiden:** When's the next summit? Can I be a speaker on the summit? Is a really nice thing. And I'm sure that you kind of have that same feeling about the work that you are doing as well.

[00:17:59] **Sarah McLusky:** Yeah. Yeah. Oh, that's it is, I mean, 10, keeping an event going for 10 years is a remarkable achievement as you know, I've done in the past regular events and, and to

keep that energy going, it can be a real challenge. So, yeah, that is an achievement. But I love what you said there, I've written it down on my notes, but being, getting comfortable, being uncomfortable, and certainly I think, that step out to start your own business is always, feels like a big risk, but also it's that opportunity, isn't it? And it, and it is about pushing yourself out of your comfort zone, but it's remarkable to have almost deliberately leaned into the thing that scared you, scared you the most.

[00:18:42] **Tamika Heiden:** I dunno if it's remarkable or just stupid, but I'll take it.

[00:18:49] **Sarah McLusky:** Yeah, well, I think it is always, these are the places where we grow the most, aren't they? The places where we just really push ourselves out of our comfort zones. So yeah, a fantastic role model in that respect. But I'm sure that it hasn't all been plain sailing. So what are some of the, been some of the biggest hurdles along the way in what you've been doing?

[00:19:10] **Tamika Heiden:** Yeah, there, there are quite a number of of hurdles. I think. When I think back originally and I started in my business, I think the biggest hurdle really was around my identity. My identity was no longer as an academic. My, my identity was no longer as being employed by someone else. Moving from that world, one of the things that happened is that most of my clients knew me as an academic. So here I was now coming back saying, I can help you to do better research. But they knew me as somebody they work next to. So,

[00:19:44] **Sarah McLusky:** Mm-hmm.

[00:19:44] **Tamika Heiden:** Seeing me in that different capacity, I think was difficult to start with. I mean, that's changed now, but at that first piece, it took a lot to convince people that I knew what I was talking about and knew what I was doing. But I think the, yeah, the identity of taking a risk, the identity of not having a job that someone pays you to go to of having to make your own living. There's this, the fear that you're not gonna survive and that people are gonna say, oh, you tried it, but it didn't work out. So you're constantly kind of carrying that with you.

[00:20:19] **Tamika Heiden:** I think, the other challenge was that the first few years are really hard. You're on your own. You're wondering if it's gonna work. You're trying to convince everyone that you know what you're doing and you're trying to convince yourself that you know what you're doing. Imposter syndrome is a massive challenge to overcome because it just sits on your shoulder and says, really? You think you can do that? You think, who are you to do that?

[00:20:42] **Sarah McLusky:** Yeah.

[00:20:43] **Tamika Heiden:** so there are all of those elements that come, but I think really the biggest challenge is working well they say working in the business and working on the business. And so growing a business while you are the person doing the business, and that's probably the biggest challenge.

[00:21:01] **Tamika Heiden:** And growing and being able to make enough money to bring on staff and to grow and to, you know, constantly realising that you, you're responsible for someone else's food on the table. Those types of things are actually very scary and very challenging and you know, it's taken a long time to get comfortable with that as well, I guess.

[00:21:23] **Tamika Heiden:** But they have been the challenges. I think there's been other challenges around changes to the sector. I think when COVID hit, I thought, oh no, what's gonna

happen? Because universities suddenly said, we don't have any money and people were, were a bit fearful about what was gonna happen that didn't end up eventuating.

[00:21:43] **Tamika Heiden:** I'm still here that in, in fact, it turned out to be quite a positive thing in the end even though it was a challenge. I think I've been kind of lucky 'cause when I think about it now and as I talk about it, I feel like those challenges are so, like little. I'm sure there's been others. I just, maybe I've just buried them so deep.

[00:22:03] **Sarah McLusky:** I think though you say little challenges, but I actually, the more I do this kind of work and the more people I talk to, I think the, the stuff that we've got going on in our own head is often by far the biggest challenge. So when you see those issues you had around imposter syndrome, around this sense of identity. You know, who am I if I don't do this thing, if I go and do something different?

[00:22:29] **Sarah McLusky:** I think those for, for everybody. I mean, the people that I, that I often do talks and things for, you know, PhD students who are thinking about doing something different and, and not continuing in academia and, and they're like, well, who am I if I'm not a researcher in this, you know, an expert in this philosopher or whatever it is. And so I think that identity piece is really huge. Absolutely huge. So it can seem like from the outside that it's not a huge challenge, but actually those are exactly the sorts of things that keep people stuck. And so the fact that you've worked through them I think is, is again, that's overcoming a big challenge. Very definitely. Yeah.

[00:23:14] **Tamika Heiden:** I think, and I think there are definitely things that are attached to time. I think now. If I think about my identity, I refer to myself as an academic in some circles, but it's definitely not tied to my identity. I think now my identity is definitely tied to running a business. So it's the next step or being a consultant, however you wanna pitch it.

[00:23:35] **Tamika Heiden:** But it's the next step now. And, and it's quite funny, I dunno if you have it in, in the UK, but when we arrive back in Australia, when we've been overseas, we have to fill in these forms and the form always says, what's your occupation? And I always grapple with what is my occupation. And I used to put researcher back in the day and, and then they would ask you questions at the, at the border, like, oh, what do you research?

[00:24:01] **Tamika Heiden:** And now I've often been putting entrepreneur, I figure it'll ask a different question. I don't know if that's what my occupation is. Business owner, jack of all trades, who knows? But it's an interesting one to think about. What is my occupation, I guess when you kind of do all these things?

[00:24:19] **Sarah McLusky:** Yeah. And how do all this almost like, well, I think all of us are a bit of a Venn diagram, aren't we? Of all these different overlapping parts of who we are and what we do. But no, I have faced exactly the same problem where I'm like, yes, what do I do? What do I do? I don't know, but yeah.

[00:24:35] **Tamika Heiden:** You work it out when you grow up. I'm still working it out.

[00:24:37] **Sarah McLusky:** That's exactly one day when I grow up, I'll figure it out. So speaking of all those things that you've gone through and, and forming this new identity as a business owner, if there was anybody else either listening to this who's either thinking about, just thinking about making a big change in what they do, you know, whether that's moving from academia into something completely different, whether it's starting their own business, is there any advice that you would give them?

[00:25:07] **Tamika Heiden:** Yeah, they might not wanna hear it then. No. There's lots of advice. There's lots of advice, but I, I do like to laugh about it. I think I would say be patient.

[00:25:18] **Sarah McLusky:** Mm-hmm.

[00:25:19] **Tamika Heiden:** Things do not happen instantly. Maybe start something as a side hustle before you take a leap. I was fortunate I had support of, my husband has a job, so I had a capability to be able to take a leap.

[00:25:32] **Tamika Heiden:** But if you don't have that backing, then start as a side hustle and be patient. Grow things slowly. I think finding your people, that's a big one. So for me, as I said to you when I did knowledge translation, I thought I found my people, which was great. But when I started my business, I started on my own again, and what I realised is I had to find my people in business.

[00:25:54] **Tamika Heiden:** And so I found mentors and coaches and really seeking out, as you grow and you do new things, who are your raving fans? Who are the people who are your cheerleaders that are cheering you on? So whatever it is you choose to do, whether it's business or something else, get training and surround yourself with other people who maybe have been there.

[00:26:16] **Tamika Heiden:** People who pull you up. We have this saying in business that you are, you are the sum of the five closest people to you. So you need to make sure that those five people are pulling you up, not pushing you down.

[00:26:27] **Tamika Heiden:** The other one is be generous. The more you give people, the more you get in return. When I started this, I was, a bit green. I really thought that you shouldn't share anything because if you give away all your secrets, no one will pay you for your help. And what I realised, and this is again speaking of, you know, webinars and summits and things that, that I do that I don't charge for. The more of that that I do, the more people who come and speak to me because they wanna hear more. And it's that opportunity, but I also think be genuine. I, I used to think, you know, we would say fake it till you make it. And it's a really interesting thing to do it. And I think we do that a little bit to hide that imposter syndrome, you know, let's fake it.

[00:27:11] **Tamika Heiden:** But what I have realised, very, maybe slowly, or maybe as I've gotten older, I've just gotten a bit more reflective on all of this stuff, is that it turns out that really being authentic is the most attractive quality, people are looking for that.

[00:27:27] **Sarah McLusky:** Mm-hmm.

[00:27:28] **Tamika Heiden:** attract people to you, you you, that helps you to surround yourself with those right people and find, other people who can support you. If you're just really authentic, if things aren't going well, you need people. You can say it's really not going well. If things are going well, you need people you can jump up and down and celebrate with. But it shouldn't just be a, I have to be okay all the time. We have this saying in business, you know, every time you meet a fairly new business owner, you'll say, how's it going? And they'll say, oh yeah, it's great. Really great. But you know, that. You know, they're not being honest with you necessarily. And it's great when you meet people and they can go, well, it's okay, but I wish it was better. Or, well, they can say, actually, it's been really bad, so I think, surrounding yourself with the right people will allow you to be more genuine.

[00:28:16] **Tamika Heiden:** But yeah, be, be open and willing to learn and to do things differently and to self-reflect and to find people you can reflect with and take on all of those challenges, I think is probably the, the number one thing I'd suggest to anyone who wants to change their career.

[00:28:33] **Sarah McLusky:** Oh, that sounds like really good advice. Thank you for that. And then speaking of, of changing things, I do like to ask all my guests, if they had a magic wand, what would they change about the world that they in? So what would you like to do with your magic wand?

[00:28:49] **Tamika Heiden:** Oh, I would like to create more hours in a day. More weeks in a year. More minutes in an hour.

[00:28:56] **Sarah McLusky:** What would you do with them?

[00:28:57] **Tamika Heiden:** Oh. I'd probably still just work, which is very, very sad. I feel like I would like to do and achieve so much more, and I think that's a really bad hangover from being that A type personality that you know, wants to, is driven.

[00:29:14] **Tamika Heiden:** I, I think, but to be, I guess, a bit more serious. One of the things, if I think about it, that I'd really love to change in the world that I'm working in and in my sector. I'd really like to change funding and the success landscape of academics and researchers. I'd like to make it a bit easier. So I guess I'd, I'd like to have more influence on how the funders are structuring what they're asking for, managing peer review.

[00:29:43] **Tamika Heiden:** Because in an ideal world, I'd really like to see a bit more of a, a better or a more fair system that is helpful to the sector, and I guess I'm speaking really specifically in the Australian context on this because that's where most of our work on that is. But really I'm seeing that good work is being dismissed or not funded purely because of the system, not because of the work in itself. And for me, that is really heartbreaking because my entire purpose and reason for being as a business owner in this space is to make sure that those academics can have an impact. And the only way they can do that is to remain in academia and do great work.

[00:30:29] **Sarah McLusky:** Yeah. I think that it is interesting to see the conversation around this and to see some of the experiments that, that people are trying around how you distribute funding. But I think it's an ongoing challenge isn't it? So.

[00:30:45] **Tamika Heiden:** It really is. And I, I, you know, I often joke, and every now and again, someone agrees with me, but I do just think, you know, once we decide that something is a, a good application and it's fundable, it should just be a lottery because we've gotta remove the bias out of these things. We, I think there's so much change.

[00:31:04] **Tamika Heiden:** And that's the other thing, and we see this a lot, is all the changes that happen every time there's a new grant or the same grant, but the next year, the changes, they're always moving the goalposts for people. And I feel like people are spending so much time writing these grants that they could be using, doing the work.

[00:31:24] **Sarah McLusky:** Yeah,

[00:31:25] **Tamika Heiden:** that's where I start to get frustrated. So, you know, it's, something's gotta change. I don't know it, it probably won't in in my time, but

[00:31:34] **Sarah McLusky:** I think there is a couple, I've seen a couple of reports recently where people are trialing a lottery system and it does seem to be, you know, where you have to meet a certain quality threshold, and then after that it's a lottery because there is this challenge. I mean, again, in the UK all the research funding is concentrated. You know, it's, it's like create a system where the people who are good at it then are, get better at it, get more money, get more money. You know what I mean? And it kind of snowballs whereas the other stuff just gets a bit lost. So, yeah. So it's interesting we shall see what's happened, but I mean, that's something that I've seen people talking about for or maybe five years and now it's actually starting to happen. So yeah, maybe with our, in our lifetimes, we might see some of it come to fruition

[00:32:17] **Tamika Heiden:** Fingers crossed, fingers crossed, and before all the great researchers just give up and I don't know, go start a business.

[00:32:24] **Sarah McLusky:** Yeah, maybe just everybody be doing private research or something, I don't know. But anyway, thank you so much for your time. We should think about wrapping up, especially because we are recording this on a Friday evening, which is very good of you, Tamika, because of the time difference. It's a Friday evening for you. So if people want to find out more about you, your events, get in touch, where are the best places for them to go and look?

[00:32:49] **Tamika Heiden:** Well, we are on X now, I guess it's called rather than Twitter. We are on BlueSky. You can just put in Research Impact Academy across any of these channels. I'm on LinkedIn under Tamika Heiden. We have our company page as well, Research Impact Academy. We're on Instagram, I believe. We're on Facebook.

[00:33:09] **Sarah McLusky:** All the places.

[00:33:10] **Tamika Heiden:** We are in all the places. We do have a YouTube channel, so maybe that's a nice place to start as well. But I don't know if you give any little links with the the notes, but

[00:33:21] **Sarah McLusky:** the links in the, I'll put all those links in the show notes so people can

[00:33:24] **Tamika Heiden:** yeah, and if anyone wants to reach out, we can put email there as well.

[00:33:28] **Sarah McLusky:** Perfect. Thank you so much. It's been great to hear about all the stuff that you're doing and yeah, good luck with the Summit and all the other things you've got coming up.

[00:33:39] **Tamika Heiden:** Thank you so much, Sarah. It's been wonderful to talk to you.

[00:33:43] **Sarah McLusky:** Thanks for listening to Research Adjacent. If you're listening in a podcast app, please check your subscribed and then use the links in the episode description to find full show notes and to follow the podcast on LinkedIn or Instagram. You can also find all the links and other episodes at www.researchadjacent.com.

[00:34:00] **Sarah McLusky:** Research Adjacent is presented and produced by Sarah McLusky, and the theme music is by Lemon Music Studios on Pixabay. And you, yes you, get a big gold star for listening right to the end. See you next time.