

CONNECTED

A DECADAL STRATEGY | 2023-2032



acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of Canberra and the region. We also acknowledge all other First Nations Peoples on whose lands we gather.

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I feel honoured to have served as Chancellor of the University of Canberra since January 2014, and to have been part of an exciting evolution that has seen this institution come far, and grow so much.

Faced with huge challenges in recent years, together with all our contemporaries across the Higher Education sector, I've witnessed our staff and students having to dig deep into their reserves of resilience and commitment. Nonetheless, the University of Canberra has risen to meet these challenges with courage and agility, and a strong focus on community.

UC is all about connectedness. UC works within our community to deliver deep and impactful partnerships that grow our student base and enhance its education and research capabilities. Connectedness is woven into UC's DNA and will continue to shape our future.

The University of Canberra is a place that provides opportunity for anyone with the ability and commitment to succeed. It has always been a place of collegiality and respect. Setting a goal of being a global leader in equal opportunity authenticates UC as a student focussed university, and serves as a reminder to not be elite or elitist; rather a diverse, inclusive, culturally safe and accessible institution.

This decadal strategy reframes UC's trajectory and the key challenges in society today by putting a strategic focus on how UC engages with our community to design solutions that are inclusive and sustainable.

Professor Tom Calma AO

Chancellor



MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Connected is a decadal strategy that sets out the long-term ambitions and objectives for our university. It has at its core explicit commitment to our staff and students, to our place in Canberra and the region, and to the Ngunnawal people.

Our academic mission is the reason we exist. The success of this endeavour will be measured by the success of our students, the quality of our education programs, and the impact of our research. This strategy provides the framework for us to deliver the infrastructure, both physical and digital, to connect to and support everyone we work with, to achieve our mission.

Connected sets out our ambition to be a resilient and financially sustainable institution; one that can invest in our staff and students. We will grow to be a university of over 15,000 full-time equivalent students.

Our student profile will reflect the demands of our place and our community. We will have a more balanced and accessible mix of student engagements ensuring highly flexible physical and online educational offerings. Students will be able to study with us in a way that best suits their individual situations.

Connected reasserts our commitment to widening participation in higher education. Our focus on enhanced flexibility will increase opportunities for those with potential. We will consistently be recognised as a global leader in driving equality of opportunity.

Our place-based research will contribute meaningfully to the development of Canberra, the region and the nation and will ensure our students are armed with knowledge and insights at the forefront of their discipline.

Connected is a living strategy. The university will review and adapt the strategy as we evolve and to respond as the world around us changes.

Professor Paddy Nixon

Vice-Chancellor, University of Canberra



WHO WE AREAND WHAT WE DO

We proudly embrace our role as the university of the nation's capital.

The University of Canberra is a research-led university that prides itself on educational excellence and the success of our students.

The University of Canberra has built the foundations of a world class university over our first 32 years. We are recognised both nationally and globally for the quality of our education and our research. We have a strong culture of respect and collegiality that underpins how we achieve everything we do. We have a sector-leading 20-year masterplan for our campus that provides the blueprint for our home – the Bruce campus. We are a world class university committed to our place, as enshrined in the Act that established us, and which gives us our focus. We are the university for Australia's capital region.

We are embedded in our place, one of national and international decision making, delivering the professional skills and knowledge required to bring public policy and government to life. However, we are more than the national capital. Our local community remains at the heart of all we do: providing educational opportunity for our region, delivering the healthcare and education workforce, investing in vital research and infrastructure, and contributing to our region's vibrant cultural and social life – all of which ensure our future economic prosperity.

In recent years, through our previous strategic plan, Distinctive by Design, we have refined and honed our distinctiveness, built our international community, and positioned ourselves to take our place as a leader in higher education in Australia. While our commitment to the Capital region is unwavering, we now need to build an international identity for the University of Canberra that celebrates, and is built upon, the importance of our place. Many of the challenges we face in this place have national and global resonance and it is by sharing our perspectives on these global challenges that we will enhance our international reputation.

The University of Canberra is a relatively small institution, one that is focussed and agile, and ready to become a leader in the sector. To achieve our ambitions, and to be able to invest in our academic excellence, we will need to build a resilient and financially sustainable university through a strategic focus on growth. Growth that is respectful of our small, agile and welcoming character.

Our ongoing commitment to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture of Australia, and the Ngunnawal culture of this place, is comprehensively captured in our Reconciliation Action Plan, the Indigenisation of the curriculum and associated plans. This strategy takes that commitment further; from the outset we have sought to weave Ngunnawal into our values and purpose. This is to ensure that in the construction of our strategy we respect all cultures that make up our university community, while also clearly celebrating and embedding our Ngunnawal heritage and our commitment to reconciliation at its centre.

Founded on this academic excellence we set out three objectives that will encompass our commitment to our place, to our students and to our staff:

1. CONNECTED TO CANBERRA

Driving the socio-economic wellbeing of the region through partnership.

2. CONNECTED FOR LIFE

Partnering with our students to support them throughout their life journeys.

3. CONNECTED UC

Digitally connected experience removing barriers to access and promoting collaboration.

OUR OPPORTUNITY INTHIS PLACE

We will evolve the environment we operate in to benefit our community.



As a young institution, we have pushed boundaries to assert our place in the university sector. We have built the workforce of the ACT through innovation in education and a commitment to the needs of the capital region.

This university has achieved an outstanding reputation for the quality and relevance of our educational offerings. However, as the environment that we operate in continues to evolve, so must we. We must keep pace with and respond to student demand for flexible delivery options, practically focussed, and contemporary educational offerings that align with workforce and industry needs. We need to continue to foster our spirit of innovation and leadership to reimagine how we engage with students throughout their learning journey. This leadership and innovation demands that we renew our partners across government, industry and the third-sector, and collaborate meaningfully for the benefit of our region.

The one thing that has always set the University of Canberra apart is our unwavering commitment to reducing barriers for anyone with the ability to access a university education.

The fact that two in five of our undergraduate students are first in family proves we raise ambitions; our consistent employability outcomes and leadership in work integrated learning shows we provide opportunities and build careers; and our focus on embedding Indigenous practices and ways of knowing into our curriculum demonstrates our connection to our place and culture. This is a spectacular foundation to build from.

OUTCOME

Deep and impactful partnerships that enhance academic excellence and research impact, and encourage campus participation.

MEASURE

Enhancement of UC's partnerships across the three domains of education, research and commercial.

OUTCOME

Broadened access and opportunity for students, staff, alumni, and partners leading to increased participation and accessibility.

MEASURE

Indigenous student and staff participation, women in leadership, and student access and participation.



With 38 per cent of our students first in family, and 10 per cent identifying as students with disabilities, we already embrace diversity in our people and our pathways. This contributes to our distinctiveness and is something we will continue to champion.

We are now setting the foundations for the next phase of our university so that we can enhance the clear sense of purpose and resourcefulness for which we are known.

Our strategy is centred around a strong sense of place and a bold ambition. We confidently assert that we are the university for Australia's capital region.

To achieve this ambition, we will continue to strengthen our core academic excellence without which we cannot innovate and grow. This focus on our place, and our obligations to this place, will ensure that we will direct our resources in the most effective way.

Our ambition is to be the most accessible university in Australia and a global leader in driving equality of opportunity.

Why do we want to be the most accessible university in Australia?

Enabling a diverse range of students to overcome their first hurdle of entering university will also enable them to build their careers. We will work and engage with our students seamlessly throughout their careers, wherever they come from, and at any point in time during their life.

Why assert 'We are the university for Australia's capital region'?

Our commitment and obligation are to Canberra and the region. We are focussed on strengthening our connections here in Canberra and the region, however our impact and reach remain national. We understand our capital region, and we are an outward-looking global institution.

Why aspire to be a global leader in driving equality of opportunity?

Being a global leader in driving equality of opportunity sharpens our focus on the individual, their success and their opportunity. It makes us an authentically student-focussed university, not elite or elitist. We are inclusive and a place of opportunity.

OUR CONTEXT

Now is our chance to become truly distinctive; to be confident and have an ambition that makes sure we assert our leadership in Australia, and beyond, by defining what sets us apart.



The University of Canberra's academic excellence is demonstrated through our achievements in world university rankings; and our recognised leadership in reducing inequalities, gender equity and quality of our education among our peers. Our intent is to leverage our academic excellence to empower our graduates and staff to change the world.

In recent years we have seen dramatic change and demonstrated previously unimagined adaptability. This has driven us to rethink much of what we do, with hybrid methods of engagement now required to respond to the changing needs of our staff, students, and partners. These changes are here to stay and we have to respond. Our explicit focus on our place means our response must be tailored and specific. Three key challenges in society will shape our strategic focus and how we engage with our community to design solutions that are inclusive and sustainable.

OUTCOME

Reimagined educational offerings that meet market demand and drive growth in student numbers.

MEASURE

Growth in student numbers in existing and new markets.

Social and economic inequality is growing.

If established trends in wealth inequality were to continue, the top 0.1 per cent alone will own more wealth than the global middle class by 2050. Access to, and successful completion of, higher education is a critical factor in determining social mobility and socio-economic wellbeing. Because of this there will be an increasing need for higher education to support its communities across the full range of issues confronting modern society.

The workforce is changing.

The new world of work will demand hybrid jobs and hybrid skills. Skills that apply across disciplines, including social and emotional skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and leadership, will be increasingly valued by employers. Providing solutions to difficult problems will be an expected part of all jobs. Attracting and retaining quality people will also be important for our own workforce, as workers will be expecting work-life balance, meaningful work, and a sense of community given the increased focus on employee value proposition across the economy.

Our city, our region and our place is evolving.

The ACT government, through its Wellbeing Framework, is unique in its focus on health and wellbeing of every citizen as a driver of government policy. This shapes how the ACT drives economic growth, builds social coherence, responds to the demand for education, and prepares for the future infrastructure needs of the region. It is critically important that the University of Canberra plays a central role in this evolution through, educating, advising, influencing, and supporting the development of the region. Situated in Canberra, also the seat of Federal government, we have a unique opportunity to become the partner of choice for both national and territory public sectors and the private sector as this region develops.

OUR PURPOSE AND VALUES

We strived to be really inclusive but not pick words that were superficial or arbitrary. It was all about finding words that really define UC, that make people feel represented across the university.

VALUES CHAMPION

A university is defined by its academic disciplines and research specialisations as well as by the values it holds and how those values are demonstrated.

The University of Canberra has always been a place that is inclusive. A place that provides opportunity for anyone with the ability and commitment to succeed. We have always been a place of collegiality and respect. It is because of this deep sense of values in the university that this strategy process started by posing two questions to our staff. What is our purpose as a university and what values do we live every day to achieve that purpose?

Central to our values is the expression of our connection to, and recognition of, Ngunnawal country. We are committed to embedding Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing at each step of implementing and living our values; and committed to weaving this connection and recognition into the everything we do.

This purpose and these values are the heart of this university. They describe our core identity: who we are and how we behave. They were developed by our people for all our people.

OUTCOME

Sense of belonging for students, staff and alumni that supports wellbeing, connection and inclusiveness.

MEASURE

Student sense of belonging to UC and staff engagement at UC.

GALAMBANY

Together we work to empower, connect, and share knowledge with our people, cultures, and places.

OUR VALUES



Everyone's invited

Celebrate differences and embrace similarities. Value unique contributions and promote accessibility and equity for all.



Narragunnawali

Embrace Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing in our work and our culture. Get amongst the conversation. Listen authentically and be a driver of meaningful reconciliation.



Change the world

Don't be afraid to have an impact. Do things differently. Inspire each other to be innovative.



Dare to be curious

Find purpose in learning. Step out of your comfort zone. Be brave, stir curiosity and share ideas and discoveries that shape our future.



Walk together

Connect and collaborate with our community, both near and far. Embody the spirit of Canberra as a meeting place of ideas and creativity. Show what we have to offer.



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

'Academic excellence, as measured by the quality of our education programs, the success of our students and the impact of our research, is at the heart of everything we do.'

Excellence in education, underpinned by world-leading research, is the foundation upon which our university is built.

At the heart of *Connected* is a commitment to enhance academic excellence through our education programs, the success of our students, the employability of our graduates and the impact of our research. *Connected* is focussed on building the best environment for us to excel in this core endeavour and, in so doing, ensure we are fully connected to our students, our staff and our place.

We have a vibrant and respected research community that has established us as a research-led institution. Our research success has come from connection to our core teaching disciplines and commitment to research that has strong links to Canberra and the region.

We will continue to invest and build our research capacity, ensuring we service our community through research that is:

- Multi-disciplinary: Building a community of researchers founded on a culture of individual and disciplinary research excellence and that work together to solve multi-faceted and complex real-world problems;
- Challenge-focussed: Undertaking research that responds to global challenges that are particularly important to the future of the ACT, across the spectrum of health, education, environment, creativity, technology and government; and
- Impact-oriented: Demonstrating the relevance of our research through partnerships with industry and our community, to source our research questions and demonstrate tangible impact.

We must continue to embed our researchers, and their impactful research, in the learning environment to shape and influence the teaching programs of the University and ensure the relevance of our educational offerings. Research-informed teaching is important to our industry partners and this, along with integration of work-based learning, teaching the fundamentals of the discipline and supporting students to develop an understanding

of the future of that profession mean our graduates will be more employable and more adaptable as they develop during their careers.

The University of Canberra has always been a leader and innovator in education. Our approach to education is premised on the provision of an engaging, caring, and supportive learning environment. Our education programs prepare our students to take leading roles in industry, the professions and civil society. Our ambition is to see our students succeed within and outside the university. We will ensure they have the skills to thrive in their careers and commit to being there to support them as they progress through career and life changes. The educational experience we offer will be:

- Diverse: A vibrant and diverse student community that takes pride in the University of Canberra and has a deep sense of belonging. A university community that is there to assist everyone to succeed;
- Place-based: It will reflect our place. It will build an understanding of, and respect for, the Ngunnawal people. Our students will learn from and contribute to our community; and
- Adaptable: Confidence to respond to change.
 Careers are now defined by change and our students will have the foundational skills to enable them to adapt and flourish.

Our university's grand challenge is to deliver this continued academic excellence sustainably in a ruthlessly competitive higher education sector, and in an environment that demands unparalleled flexibility.

We commit to enhancing our culture of individual and disciplinary excellence and providing the necessary supports to attract, retain and develop our staff, both academic and professional, to achieve and promote that excellence.





Connected is centered on building the environment our staff and students need to achieve their full potential. This environment will connect us; connect us to place, connect our students to the university, and connect our staff in a way that enhances their ability to achieve individually and collectively.

The Educated Life has allowed us to envisage a campus which physically connects the University and the community. A campus that will be a global exemplar of 'confluence of living, learning and entrepreneurship'. This strategy provides the complement to this physical connectedness; it provides for our people and community to connect, collaborate and create their own future.

The strategy provides three interconnected elements:

- Connected to Canberra captures our commitment to place and links our success to the social, economic and cultural success of Canberra;
- Connected for Life is our commitment to support our students across their life journeys; and
- Connected UC will deliver the necessary digital and culture change to support our staff more deeply, allow our students and partners to work seamlessly with us, and deliver a truly connected university.

Threaded through each of these elements is explicit commitment to sustainability.

The objectives capture our tangible impact on our research informed educational excellence. These objectives will enhance our ability to:

- **Deliver high quality research** that is externally valued and globally relevant;
- Drive student success at and beyond UC; and
- Reimagine our education offerings to meet market demand and drive growth in student numbers.

The objectives will deliver a transformation in how we partner, how we support staff and students, and how we build our university community. They will:

- Deliver deep and impactful partnerships that enhance academic excellence and research impact and encourage campus participation;
- Broaden access and opportunity for students, staff, alumni and partners to increase participation and accessibility; and
- Create a sense of belonging for students, staff and alumni that supports wellbeing, engagement and inclusiveness.

To secure this future we need to be financially sustainable. Financial security provides the certainty that will allow us to invest in our staff, students and infrastructure. Investment in these objectives is needed for a:

• Financially sustainable UC that enables us to deliver on our mission.



OBJECTIVE 1

CONNECTED TOCANBERRA



Build sustainable communities through deep collaborations that are locally focussed and globally relevant.

'Connected to Canberra' will focus UC on building engaged communities. We will create spaces and opportunities to work together differently – across our university and with government, industry, and community partners – to enable deep collaboration, foster new knowledge, and drive collective impact for the benefit of the communities we serve. We will target our work and research to the key issues our community faces – economic security, environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing – remaining Canberra focussed, and globally relevant.



 Work with local government, industry partners and our community to impact community wellbeing and sustainability.

Sustainability and wellbeing are our civic commitments. We will seek out priority issues that impact sustainability and wellbeing in our community and build programs of work, with our partners.



2. Partner with the public service to become the future workforce provider of choice.

We will establish ourselves as the lead partner in supporting government, connecting with the local community, as well as leveraging our educational offerings to serve the public service. We will be a partner of choice for career development in the ACT Government and Australian Public Service.



Develop sectoral plans for long-term engagements that enhance our research and local impact.

We will build deep sectoral relationships that focus on people, align with our institutional priorities and enhance both our academic excellence and reach, and contribute to the development of our region.

OBJECTIVE 2

CONNECTED FOR LIFE



Partner for life with our students to shape our economic, social and cultural futures.

'Connected for Life' is our commitment to students. It is about walking together with our students, partnering with them, and supporting them seamlessly across their life journeys. We are developing life-ready students who are ready to meet the future, and who are enabled to make a difference and change the world. Our commitment extends beyond the education we provide and the services we deliver. We will cultivate value-aligned partnerships to support our students throughout their life.



Align educational offerings to match the jobs and needs of the future.

We will use data to inform the design and delivery of our educational offerings so that they are future-focussed and aligned with changing workforce needs. Our educational offering will meet domain-specific skills and the broader social and emotional skills required for the future workforce. This will prepare our students to be life-ready graduates.



2. Deliver a dynamic and engaging digital offering.

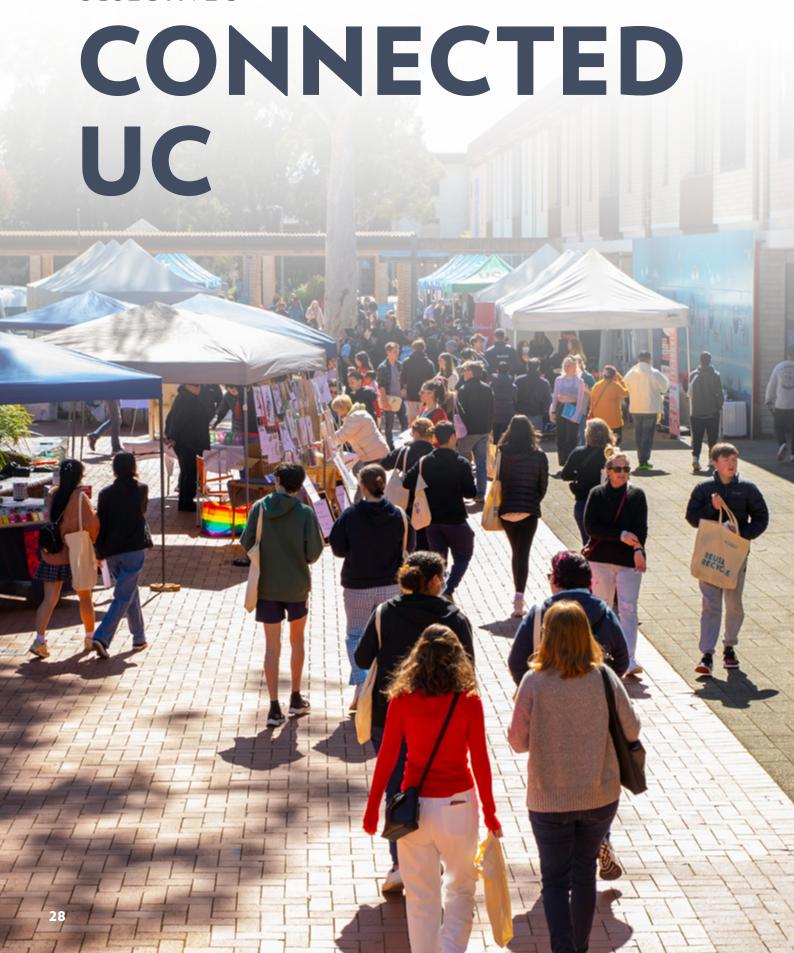
We will deliver a digital experience that will enable staff and students to work and study in a flexible, seamless way. We will combine the best aspects of both physical and digital environments to promote engagement, support community, and to create a flexible and distinctive learning ecosystem. Doing this in a way that is seamless and engaging will set us apart.



3. Become a trusted lifelong partner for our alumni.

We will be a life-long trusted partner for our alumni, supporting them throughout their learning lives and ensuring they are one of our greatest strengths. We will position ourselves as a one-stop shop for our alumni, acting as the broker for the services we may provide or where others are better positioned to provide the service.

OBJECTIVE 3



Deliver an outstanding, digitally connected, experience that removes barriers to access.

We have taken initial steps in the development of a sector leading digital student journey at UC, demonstrating our ability to innovate and laying the groundwork for the future of people-centred digital infrastructure. 'Connected UC' will allow us to drive cultural change and use digital technology to tailor our interactions with students, staff, and partners. We will create an integrated, efficient and highly effective UC by breaking down the barriers across the university; facilitating seamless engagement and collaboration in ways that encompass people, process, digital solutions, and access to real-time data and insights. We will be a learning organisation that adapts as we learn. We will promote accessibility for all.



Create lifelong personalised digital journeys for students and staff.

We will build the digital capabilities to support students through a personalised, lifelong journey, better connecting them to UC and improving their student experience.

We will develop an online staff portal for systems, processes, tools, and information so that our staff can focus on making a difference without unnecessary administrative barriers



2. Deliver new ways of working that enhance our ability to innovate.

We know processes can become barriers to change so we will engage our staff to identify these limitations and improve them. We will re-design our processes to enable personalised digital experiences for students and staff, drawing on input from both. This initiative is not simply about process improvement; it is about fundamental changes to our working environment that enable better interactions. better communication and better outcomes.



Continue to enhance our culture to deliver a deep sense of belonging and an outstanding connected experience.

Our culture will support our objectives. This is fundamental to the success of all our initiatives. We have a brilliant culture of collegiality, respect and belonging at UC. The focus of this initiative is on continual development, which is required to maintain and enhance the strong existing culture and reinforce diversity and accessibility.





This strategy, with each of the three objectives, is designed to connect us more deeply to our students, staff and community.

We are focussed on connection to make it simpler to engage with us, make it more engaging to work with us and to ultimately make us the most accessible university to those who have the ambition and talent to succeed.

This strategy is deliberately targeted at how we need to change to maintain our leadership trajectory in the sector and assumes ongoing commitment to the university's core daily work. This is a strategy that focuses us on where we will invest strategically to secure the future of the university. Investments, both human and financial, that will allow us to continue to be a leader and innovator in the core research and teaching of the university.

Implicit in how we deliver this change is a responsibility to play our part in Australia's commitment to delivering net-zero; a commitment to a sustainable future not just for us but also for our community. As we build out our campus masterplan, as we deliver on *Connected* strategy, and in every aspect of our education and research we will prioritise this sustainable future.

The delivery of this decadal strategy will be informed and supported by other significant institutional strategies and plans. These include the Campus Master Plan and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Plan, as well as future Research, Student, and Digital strategic plans. We will move quickly to scoping and setting out the major programs of work to be undertaken to deliver against our strategic objectives.

We will also build short and long-term plans in the coming years that run alongside our core strategy. Plans that will respond to the needs of the university as they arise. As we develop these supporting plans and build the future of UC it is important to note that we commit to:

- Open and transparent governance and leadership; and
- Playing our part in responding to climate change by embedding sustainability in all our outcomes.



HOW WE WILL KNOW IF WE HAVE SUCCEEDED

The success of *Connected* will be evidenced by measures focussing on seven outcomes linked to strategic and institutional objectives. Together these measures will track our teaching, research, people and financial performance along with progress on connecting to Canberra, connecting for life and building a connected UC.

OUTCOME	MEASURE
High quality research that is externally valued and globally relevant.	Total research income that maintains/grows UC's share of national research income.
Student success at and beyond UC.	Student retention rate, quality of educational experience and graduate employment rate.
Reimagined education offerings that meet market demand and drive growth in student numbers.	Growth in student numbers in existing and new markets.
Deep and impactful partnerships that enhance academic excellence and research impact, and encourage campus participation.	Enhancement of UC's partnerships across the three domains of education, research and commercial.
Broadened access and opportunity for students, staff, alumni, and partners leading to increased participation and accessibility.	Indigenous students and staff participation, women in leadership and student access and participation.
Sense of belonging for students, staff and alumni that supports wellbeing, connection and inclusiveness.	Student sense of belonging to UC and staff engagement at UC.
Financially sustainable enabling us to deliver on our mission	Financial performance including EBITDA* as proportion of revenue.

^{*}Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortisation (EBITDA)



This strategy is the culmination of a highly collaborative process that has drawn from the collective contribution of a broad range of university staff, council members, community representatives and stakeholders. It is a strategy designed to provide the framework against which we build our short, medium and long-term plans. Plans that will be supported by the necessary resources and investments to ensure we are able to realise our ambition.

