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Australian Government

**Department of Education,
Skills and Employment**

2021-2023 MISSION BASED COMPACT BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA AND CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

PURPOSE

This compact is an agreement between the Commonwealth and the University. Entering into a compact is one of the quality and accountability requirements, which a higher education provider must meet under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA) as a condition of receiving a grant. Specifically, subsection 19-110(1) of HESA requires that Table A and Table B providers must, in respect of each year for which a grant is paid to the provider under HESA, enter into a mission-based compact with the Commonwealth for a period that includes that year.

All strategies should provide qualitative and/or quantitative measures of assessment.

MISSION

Charles Sturt University's Vision is to be Australia's leading regional university advancing the careers of our students, inspiring research excellence and driving regional outcomes with global impact.

Acknowledging the culture and insight of Indigenous Australians, Charles Sturt's ethos is described by this phrase from the Wiradjuri, the traditional custodians of the land of our original campuses:

*'Yindyamarra Winhanganha' – the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well
in a world worth living in.*

Derived from our ethos, our values are to be insightful, inclusive, impactful and inspiring, to create a world worth living in.

From our courses and student experience, our research and industry partnerships to our community engagement, social responsibility and sustainability initiatives, we strive to make a difference.

We empower the leaders of tomorrow through innovative education and applied research and we have a strong commitment to learning from and working with Australia's First Nations peoples.

We aim to achieve our Vision with the following three key outcomes over the length of the compact period:

1. We will maintain the University's position in the top five Australian universities for graduate outcomes based on employment and salary.
2. We will embed a culture of excellence across all aspects of the University's operations.
3. There will be growth in research, development and innovation income in our chosen areas, delivering positive outcomes for Regional Australia and generating global impact.

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FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Charles Sturt University is committed to upholding the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech. Along with all Australian universities, we agreed to fully implement the Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom (the Model Code).

Following the recommendations arising from the Walker Review on the adoption of the Model Code, Charles Sturt introduced its [Statement on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech](#).

The University has completed a project to review all policies, to ensure alignment and consistency with the Model Code, and has adopted the definition of “academic freedom” as now legislated in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth).

On 1 July 2021, the University Council approved updates to Charles Sturt’s [Statement on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech](#), following an internal review and feedback provided by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

The University believes it is fully aligned with the Model Code.

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

Charles Sturt University will connect its students with the knowledge and wisdom to shape the world. We will deliver this through a sector-leading course profile, leading edge learning experiences, excellence in teaching and graduate outcomes, and supporting student pathways.

Our three key teaching and learning performance targets will be:

1. Commencing student progress rate.
2. Student net promoter score.
3. First year student attrition.

We will engage with industry via course co-design, research partnerships, and work-integrated learning. Co-location with industry on our campuses will also be an important aspect, as demonstrated by our [Agripark](#) on our Wagga Wagga campus, an innovation precinct where industry and university work side-by-side to tackle complex global issues.

Charles Sturt University will ensure admissions transparency through the application of its [Admissions Policy](#). Our [Assessment Policy](#) and [Academic Progress Procedure](#) will be used to identify students at academic risk, who will be offered a range of [supports and interventions](#) to ensure they have the best opportunity of completing their studies. We will continue to implement strategies to improve progress and attrition.

We have established an [Office of Student Safety and Wellbeing](#), offering student mental health resources and support. Our [Employee Assistance Program](#) delivers independent and confidential counselling to all employees and their immediate families and comprehensive [staff wellbeing resources](#) are available.

A key focus of the University is the market-orientation of courses. Our course development process addresses prospective students, industry, professional and community needs. Our graduates continue to supply labour market demand with graduate employment rates and salaries being among the highest in the sector according to the [2021 Graduate Outcome Survey](#).

As a result of careful COVID-19 recovery planning in 2020, staff and students returned to campus at the beginning of 2021 under COVID safe principles.

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RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Charles Sturt's research will be underpinned by collaboration with government, industry and community partners to deliver applied research with regional, national and global impact. In line with the National Science and Research Priorities, the needs of our regional communities, and inherent University research strengths, we will invest in three new research institutes in agriculture, water and environment; rural health; and cyber, data and security.

Our three key priorities for research, innovation and research training will be:

1. Growth in partnerships with industry and government.
2. Develop our strategic areas of research.
3. Support key community research needs.

We will measure our success through a variety of quantitative and qualitative metrics including research income, research quality, higher degree by research (HDR) completions and global rankings. Our Office of Research Services and Graduate Studies will continue offering [training](#) for researchers and candidates.

We will also engage industry through the establishment of our Business Development Office, our Directors of External Engagement located across our footprint, and via Regional Consultative Committees in each of our campus regions. Our [AgriPark](#), leadership of the [Southern NSW Drought Hub](#), our [global digital farm](#), and [partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment](#) are examples of how we tackle complex global issues. Research to improve the health trajectories for First Nations peoples, and rural and regional communities will be central to the establishment of our new Rural Health and Medical Research Institute in collaboration with Western Sydney University. This Institute will be a leader in digital rural health through the use of big data and translational applications. We will further invest in our research training programs to expand industry placements and professional development courses for HDR students and supervisors to improve the student experience.

Charles Sturt reports all notifiable foreign arrangements to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as required by the *Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020* (Cth). The University aims for compliance with the NSW Government Cyber Security Policy (the Policy). We have and will continue to manage cyber security risks consistent with the Core Requirements of the Policy. The University has implemented both Australian Security and Cyber Centre and NSW Government strategies to mitigate cyber security risk. A Chief Security Officer position was established in 2020.

IMPROVING STUDENT EQUALITY AND OUTCOMES

Charles Sturt has high levels of participation of regional, low SES and Indigenous students. The University's three key priorities to support students from under-represented backgrounds will be:

1. To widen participation of students from under-represented backgrounds through alternative entry pathways and sub-bachelor courses.
2. To provide specialist academic assistance and support for students from under-represented backgrounds.
3. To increase engagement with First Nations ways of knowing, being and doing, including by embedding Indigenous knowledges and content into our curriculum.

We will measure our success through a variety of qualitative and quantitative metrics including under-represented student enrolments, retention, attrition, completions and satisfaction. We will also aim to have a student profile that is broadly aligned to the population demographics of the regions where we are located.

Charles Sturt offers a large array of specialist [support services](#) to under-represented students, including [disability services](#), [First Nations support](#) and [LGBTIQA+ support](#), as well as personal support services provided to all students, such as [counselling](#), [career development](#) and [parental support](#).

We will establish a First Nations Governance Circle, an Australian first, to drive and inform our decision-making in regards to Indigenous issues. We will review our dedicated cultural spaces on-campus, facilitating community access to our campuses and providing an additional resource to ensure our environment is culturally safe for all. We will expand our sector-leading work to further embed First Nations ways of knowing, being and doing into our curriculum.

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SIGNED for and on behalf of
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

In the presence of:

by

Dom English

Ryan Kinder

Full name (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

Witness (please print)

A/g Director

Position

**of the Department of Education, Skills and
Employment as delegate of the Minister for
Education and Youth**

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

28/12/2021

Signature

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of
CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

In the presence of:

by

Professor Renée Leon

Mr Trent Pohlmann

Full name (please print)

Vice-Chancellor and President

Position

Witness (please print)

Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature



Signature

