



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education,  
Skills and Employment**

**2021-2023 MISSION BASED COMPACT BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
AND JAMES COOK 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**

James Cook University's [Strategic Intent](#) is to *create a brighter future for life in the tropics world-wide through graduates* and discoveries that make a difference. The [University Plan 2018-22](#) builds upon our Strategic Intent and expresses how we will provide value in learning and teaching, research and engagement for the region, nation and global tropics. A new University Plan will be developed in 2022 to address the current challenges and set the priorities for 2023–2027.

**Key outcomes for 2021-23:**

1. **Job ready graduates** – our primary focus is to develop graduates who have the knowledge, skills and disposition to meet the needs of tropical communities and succeed in a global workforce through our focus on authentic learning experiences, global citizenship, Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and innovation. Our intent is to maintain or improve our already outstanding track record in developing work-ready graduates and our success will be measured through Graduate Outcomes Surveys.
2. **Sustainable research workforce catering to priorities for Northern Australia** – JCU is building a sustainable regional research workforce by robust management of equity and Indigenous issues, research education, staff training and development, recruitment and succession. Our programs will overcome regional challenges, building capacity for the research that underpins sustainable and resilient communities, with emphasis on areas of priority to Northern Australia. Our success will be measured through our performance in ERA, I&E, global rankings in areas of research strength and the strengths of our industry engagement.
3. **Community/industry engagement** – By investing in community/industry engagement, WIL, internships, new business development, innovation and commercial capabilities, we will strengthen our industry-university engagement and mobility, knowledge gain and IP generation across all sectors. Our success will be measured by increased co-location and sharing of facilities with industry, increased opportunities for WIL and increases in industry-engaged research.

## OFFICIAL

### FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

1. **JCU's Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy** has been amended to reflect the recommendations of the Walker Review and Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom. It has been made clear that 'academic staff' will encompass all of those envisaged by the definition of 'academic staff' in the Model Code (i.e. all staff associated with academic activity, including professional or support staff) by including a definition in the Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy.
2. **JCU's Visiting Speaker and Event Policy** has been amended to reflect the adoption of the above policy, further clarifying the intent that the right of refusal is on the basis of safety in the main and not on the content.
3. **JCU has undertaken a substantive revision of the Staff Code of Conduct** to reflect the above policy changes, significantly reducing duplication within the policy and removing ambiguity and 'relative judgement' on matters which may restrict academic freedom and freedom of speech unduly.
4. **The Negotiation of a new JCU Enterprise Agreement** will seek to ensure that there is no ambiguity between the EA, the HESA definition, nor the University's Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy.

## IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

- 1. Implementation of JCU Model** – The [JCU Model](#) celebrates what JCU learning and teaching espouses for our students and identifies attributes that characterise our academic courses. The Model reflects JCU's operating context and the communities we serve with courses and subjects designed to be more accessible, offer flexibility to study online or blended, and to build digital literacies relative to workplaces and job readiness. JCU has 50-60% of students back on campus for face-to-face teaching activities and processes in place to monitor online delivery where face-to-face isn't possible. Our students are the future and current workforce and undertake WIL in placements, fieldwork and projects. We are establishing learning communities in collaboration with complementary agencies, creating knowledge and innovation precincts. Student success is critical and enabled through inclusive, student-centred approaches such as [Peer Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\)](#), inclusive learning design, the [Engaged Curriculum and Course Review Processes](#), and coordinated approach to student feedback. [Student support](#) is also key to success and the JCU Mental Health Strategy is under development as a whole of Institution student and staff strategy. Further, the [JCU Respect](#) modules and training maintain a continued focus on student safety and wellbeing. Domestic and international student admission to all coursework courses, and cross-institutional and miscellaneous admission adheres to the university's [Admission Policy](#).
- 2. Enhanced Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)** – JCU is increasing the visibility of WIL with WIL credit bearing subjects highlighted within the Course and Subject Database, development of a WIL specific policy, and a [WIL Community of Practice](#). The JCU National Priorities Industry Linkage Fund (NPILF) program will demonstrate our achievements in WIL, co-location with industry to benefit our students' employability and graduate outcomes.
- 3. Integrated pathways** – In 2020, further integration of our [Pathways Program](#) was identified as a priority to enhance educational participation in the region. The revised Program expands enabling offerings via the [Tertiary Access Program](#), Sprint, [Certificate of Higher Education](#), and the [Diploma of Higher Education](#). The University has introduced a process where applicants who do not meet the published academic or English Language proficiency entrance requirements are made a packaged offer, requiring the completion of a pathway program. JCU uses learning analytics and our student data reporting system (COGNOS) to monitor and evaluate the success rates of students who enrol and complete the diploma and then enrol in a degree program.
- 4. Indigenous education** - JCU will provide courses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to ensure they have the right preparations for their future professions, as well as courses about Indigenous Australians to all students. This is to prepare future graduates with the right knowledge and skills set for professional careers that help their engagement with Indigenous Australians. Our success is measured through our performance in attracting, retaining, and graduating Indigenous students and also the number of enrolments in Indigenous focused (IA) subjects.

**RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST**

- 1. Developing a sustainable regional research workforce** - JCU provides opportunities for internships, mentoring and other industry engagement for candidates and advisors; increasing the capabilities of JCU HDR graduates for research which is community and industry engaged. We are heavily engaged in regionally based collaborative programs e.g. [CRCNA](#), [ARC Research Hub for Advanced Prawn Breeding](#), [Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub](#) and establishment of a Northern Australian Digital Health Platform (SURF). Our success is measured through our involvement in place-based and industry-led research initiatives and HDR completions.
- 2. Diversifying the research portfolio to enhance research impact** - JCU is building its capability for demand-driven research while maintaining a focus on scholarly excellence, by investing in new business development, innovation, IP generation and commercial capabilities. Research innovation impact and industry engagement are being supported through the [Sandpit 2 Seed program](#) and [Strategic Industry Innovation Program](#). Aspiring entrepreneurs and start-ups are supported through the [JCU Ideas Lab's StartupOnramp pre-accelerator and Entrepreneur in Residence \(EiR\) Programs](#). Our success will be measured through increased Cat 2-4 research income and performance in E&I.
- 3. Effective Research Management and Governance** - JCU has refreshed its strategic and capital planning processes for support of high-quality research infrastructure. JCU has adopted the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018*, including mandatory research integrity training. JCU has developed guidelines on [research data management](#) to support staff compliance with the NHMRC Code. JCU is also introducing a Data Governance Policy and Procedure which includes research data, and supports the work on the [Management of Data and Information in Research Procedure](#). JCU has implemented a [Compliance Action Plan](#) and [Foreign Interference Policy](#) to comply with the *UFIT Countering Foreign Interference Guideline*. JCU is actively working to reduce and mitigate risks in *Cybersecurity* and continually improve our security posture and maturity. Our success will be measured through the age, condition and use of research infrastructure and staff compliance with policies and codes.

## IMPROVING STUDENT EQUALITY AND OUTCOMES

JCU serves a highly diverse community and student population and has an enduring and visible commitment to equity and meeting the needs of our region. JCU's Equity Strategy is outlined in the latest HEPPP Activity Plan 2021.

### Key Priorities:

- 1. Ensuring the success and retention of Indigenous students** - Indigenous students comprise approximately 6% of JCU's domestic students. According to DESE data, this is more than triple the sector average for Indigenous student participation (currently 1.8%) and nearly double the Indigenous participation rate at other regional universities (3.7%). Ensuring Indigenous students succeed and complete their study is of paramount importance and the [JCU Indigenous Education and Research Centre](#) has developed an evidence-based model to achieve this. JCU will target progression and completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that are equivalent to those achieved by other students.
- 2. Providing access for regional, rural and remote (RRR) communities and low SES students** - Four of every five students at JCU's Townsville and Cairns campuses come from a RRR areas. JCU actively works in RRR communities to raise aspirations and make university study an accessible option for school students. As part of a Queensland Consortium targeted at raising aspiration levels of low SES students, JCU conducts school visits to selected schools throughout north and far north Queensland, as well as schools in the Mount Isa and Gulf regions to raise awareness and aspiration to attend university. Under the consortia agreement, JCU serves the greatest number of RRR schools in Queensland.
- 3. Inclusive learning design aligned to JCU student demographic.** Our learning design reflects student demand for accessible learning, achieved through the use of [ALLY software](#) and a variety of attendance modes (internal, external, intensive and multimodal), all with elements of blended or hybrid models of teaching, and support services.

Our success will be measured by our performance against government equity measures including access, participation and attainment rates.

OFFICIAL

SIGNED for and on behalf of  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
by

In the presence of:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Full name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of  
James Cook University  
by

In the presence of:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Professor Sandra Harding AO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mr Russ Parker

\_\_\_\_\_  
Full name (please print)  
Vice Chancellor and President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness (please print)  
Executive Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position or profession of witness (please print)

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Signature

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Signature