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Australian Government

**Department of Education,
Skills and Employment**

2021-2023 MISSION BASED COMPACT BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA AND [INSERT UNIVERSITY NAME]

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

The University of Newcastle's Strategic Plan '[Looking Ahead](#)' makes three over-arching commitments:

1. Be a leading advocate and driving force for excellence and equity in higher education

Achieved: Strengthen our existing sector-leading equity programs, including enabling and undergraduate certificate pathways, and grow our Indigenous support programs through the Wollotuka Institute.

Measured: Maintain our position as a top University in the country for Indigenous, first-in-family, Low-SES and regional enrolments, retention, and success.

2. Deliver an outstanding student experience, to ensure our students develop life and career skills that will make them competitive in the workforce, and are strongly supported in their physical and mental wellbeing

Achieved: We will ensure that every student has a Work Integrated Learning opportunity embedded within their degree, and that Graduate Attributes are woven throughout all elements of University life.

Measured: To be in the top 5 Universities in the country for Satisfaction with Overall Experience in the annual Student Experience Survey by 2025.

3. To bring the world to our regions, and take our regions to the world through relevant research solutions to local, national and global problems

Achieved: We will establish four Engagement Priorities that reflect the issues and opportunities relevant to the future of our regions and our world. The four priorities reflect the mission-driven issues we have the capacity, expertise and civic responsibility to address.

Measured: We will continuously increase the proportion of our research that is partner-led to deliver real world outcomes.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

- Following the release of the Model Code, the Vice-Chancellor established the Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Working Group, chaired by the President of Academic Senate and including representation from across the University to adopt the model Code.
- The University has implemented a [Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom](#) that reflects the model code in full.
- To ensure University business is conducted without fear or influence that suppresses academic freedom, exploits academics and researchers for sensitive information or exposes the University to cyber intrusion the University has a number of other statutory and non-statutory rules, policies and guidelines which include reference to principles of:
 - [Academic and intellectual freedom](#)
 - [Academic and research integrity](#)
 - [Conduct of students, staff and research](#)
 - [Information Security](#) and [Data Handling](#)
- The University has robust processes to ensure the safety of data against cyber attack and ensure business continuity including [Business Continuity Management Policy](#) and [Business Continuity Management Framework](#) as well as the and [Information Technology Conditions of Use Policy](#).
- Addressing the "Essential Eight" mitigation strategies identified by the Australian Cyber Security Centre for improvement of cyber resilience is a critical component of the University's Information Security framework. In addition to the technical strategies below, an ongoing [training](#) and [awareness](#) program for staff and [students](#) also exists, which centred on the ACSC Essential Eight strategies to create a cyber-security-conscious culture across the University.
- Strategies to prevent malware delivery and execution:
 - Application whitelisting
 - Application patching
 - Configuration of Microsoft Office macro settings
- User application hardening:
 - Strategies to limit the extent of cyber security incidents
 - Restricting administration privileges
 - Multi-factor authentication
 - Operating System patching

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

1. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) for All: Graduates develop a portfolio of experiences that demonstrate essential workplace skills and build on the knowledge of their degree. Our programs challenge and inspire students to acquire practical, real-world workplace skills, enriching their theoretical learning and enhancing employability.

Achieved: Our comprehensive ‘[Life Ready Graduates](#)’ initiative (employability strategy), incorporating a new suite of Graduate Attributes and the Career Connect program, will ensure that every undergraduate student will graduate with a [meaningful work-based experience](#) as part of their degree and an understanding of how their education links with career opportunities.

Measured: Increased proportion of students who engage in WIL based activities and improved Graduate Outcomes.

2. [Celebrating](#) excellence: The [Student Success Strategy](#) and related [resources](#), build on educators with the capability, capacity and enthusiasm to deliver teaching and learning that inspires excellence and creates excitement among students and education partners at all of our campuses and locations.

Achieved: Enabling our educators [places the continued professional development](#) of staff at the heart of the education transformation agenda. Strategic groupings such as the Educator Network (tEN) are a key part of our program of education excellence. **Measured:** Progressive improvement in Teaching Quality and overall educational experience in the QILT Student Experience Survey.

3. Student Centred Wellbeing: Our Student-Centred [Wellbeing Framework](#) supports wellbeing throughout the student journey and includes a comprehensive care infrastructure that supports social, mental and physical wellbeing.

Achieved: We have a range of initiatives organised under the [Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) to guide students to understand [themselves and build self-help](#)

[strategies](#)

Measured: Improved outcomes on Student Healthy Lifestyle Survey year on year

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

1. Higher Degree Research student training incorporating:
 - An innovative [Indigenous Priority Scheme](#) designed to support the retention and success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PhD candidates.
 - Industry Engaged PhD pathway with three components: an internship; professional skills development; and career mentorship.
 - Expanded [Doctoral Training Centres](#)
 - Industry-sponsored students through collaborative industry centres (e.g. [Centre of Excellence for Enabling Eco-Efficient Beneficiation of Minerals](#)).

Achieved through [community and industry engagement](#) and promotion of schemes.

Measured through [annual student retention and completions](#).

2. Research translation and commercialisation with a focus on real world impact of research:
 - The [Knowledge Exchange & Enterprise Unit](#) which coordinates industry-university engagement; provides IP and commercial advice to researchers.
 - The [Integrated Innovation Network \(I2N\)](#) that supports entrepreneurship.
 - The [Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources](#) has a unique engagement model that [connects academia and industry to support sectors of national and global significance](#).

Achieved and measured: funding, number of patents, and businesses accelerated and incubated.

3. Excellence in Research: The University actively ensures compliance with legislative requirements related to foreign influence and foreign interference and provides university-wide oversight in terms of governance and management; policies, compliance and due diligence; culture, communication and education; knowledge sharing; and cyber security. The University website publishes information and resources on individual and organisational responsibilities, as well as the [University's response to the Foreign Interference Taskforce Guidelines](#). Key initiatives include:
 - [Research Advantage](#) fosters research capacity and excellence, including via
 - The [NEWstar](#) Program for Mid-Career Researchers
 - The [Women in Research](#) Fellowships

Measured: HERDC and ERA/EI and existing compliance reporting.

IMPROVING STUDENT EQUALITY AND OUTCOMES

1. Composing equity structures to coordinate collaboration across institution

Achieved:

- Key roles/units facilitating [equity](#) and [Indigenous-led](#) research, evaluation, [pathways](#) and programs.
- Co-developing strategy with stakeholders to support excellence in equity.
- Clear reporting lines between institutional governing bodies for accountability.

Measured:

- [Investment](#) in roles/units to develop and sustain fit-for-purpose and research-informed equity initiatives.
- Participation in evaluative research processes that builds institutionalised capacity to deliver on student equity.
- Institutional policy reviews using equity lens and influence on [University strategy](#).

2. Embedding equity expertise across the University through [Maligagu](#)

Achieved:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge [woven into teaching](#), learning and research.
- Field-leading equity research influencing change by [challenging](#) intersectional inequalities.
- Building capacity for excellence in equity research, pedagogy and practice.

Measured:

- Development of initiatives/approaches that demonstrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, relationships, cultural and community work.
- Awareness of and responsibility to what equity means in different contexts, roles, responsibilities, and programs.
- Growth in research and innovative practice that builds student equity outcomes.

3. Responding to diverse communities in line with our [Student Equity Framework](#)

Achieved:

- Research and programs co-designed to challenge the intersecting and accumulating disadvantages that prevent access, participation, and success of students from under-represented backgrounds.
- Insights gained about pathways into and through award programs via ongoing participant and educator feedback, with reviews by panels with equity expertise.
- Research led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Chief Investigators, in partnership with communities and representative organisations.

Measured:

- Field-leading equity research [working in concert with practice](#).
- Sustained investment in pathways with evaluation provided via students and experts, comprised of practitioners and researchers.
- Valued Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community partnerships [with policies and practices](#) that embed culturally responsive ways of working.

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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
<UNIVERSITY NAME>
University of Newcastle
by

In the presence of:

Professor Alex Zelinsky AO

ELDA HOLMES

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

Vice-Chancellor & President

Executive Assistant

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

Signature