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Australian Government

**Department of Education,
Skills and Employment**

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

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

Our mission, as outlined in our [University of Tasmania Strategic Plan 2019-2024](#), is two-fold: as the only University in the State, we have a place-based mission to serve our State and its people; and equally, it is to progress in a sustainable way, socially, economically and culturally. Over the next three years, we will deliver three objectives outlined in our strategic plan: influencing Tasmania's long-term challenges; creating a distinctive and place-based curriculum that creates access for our students; and transforming our campuses to suit the needs of our regions.

Our university is deeply committed to solving complex threshold problems and questions with our community and partners, and we are developing an approach that allows us to organize our thinking for how we amplify and measure impact. Over the next few years, we will rigorously test and evolve the approach to create measurable initiatives for delivering impact.

We will create access to education for our community and beyond, and between 2021-2023 will deliver key initiatives to achieve this. These include enhanced undergraduate and postgraduate offerings that emphasise our distinctive strengths to better meet the needs of our Tasmanian and interstate students. We are attracting a new cohort of Tasmanians into higher education through our Schools Recommendation Program, so we also need to continue to improve the retention of our students through refined processes, conversion outcomes and enhanced student experiences and student success.

We will transform our campuses to support our strategies of differentiation, access, impact and efficient operations. This will be achieved through campus design that supports distinctive offerings in each region; enhancing access through locating campuses where Tasmanians need them; enhanced impact by co-locating with teaching and research partners and to accelerate commercialisation and new enterprise creation; and efficient sustainable operations through a reduced footprint and lower energy buildings with high utilisation.

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FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The University of Tasmania fully subscribes to the principles of the Model Code. The University's entire policy suite was revised in 2020, and the University meets and, in some cases, exceeded the Model Code through its new policies.

The primary instrument for guiding our University community in relation to academic freedom and freedom of speech is the University's new [Academic Freedom and Free Speech Policy](#) which commenced on 25 September 2020. The policy aligns in coverage and language with the Model Code including adopting the Australian Government's definition of academic freedom. Academic freedom and freedom of speech are clearly identified as defining values of the University, and the policy also asserts the University's institutional autonomy. The policy appropriately balances academic freedom and freedom of speech with the University's legal but, more importantly, ethical obligation to protect staff and student wellbeing.

Policies and procedures in addition to the *Academic Freedom and Free Speech Policy* that are directly relevant to the intent of the code and are aligned with it are:

- [Facilities, Infrastructure and Asset Management Policy](#) (in relation to events held at the University)
- [Behaviour Policy](#) and [Behaviour Procedure](#) (in relation to expectations of behaviour and impacts on safety and wellbeing)
- [Compliance Policy](#) and [Conflicts of Interest Procedure](#) (in relation to conflicts of interest, foreign interference and foreign influence)
- [Admission, Enrolment and Credit Policy](#) (in terms of students receiving appropriate information)
- [Entities and Affiliated Organisations Policy](#)

The University has been assessed by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment as fully aligned with the code.

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

Performance Targets

As outlined in Learning 2025, the University's teaching and learning roadmap (pending publication), our three critical performance targets are:

- Student Retention rates above national averages by 2025
- Overall Satisfaction (SES) rates above national averages by 2025
- Teaching Quality (SES) satisfaction rates above national averages by 2025

Industry Engagement

Per [published procedure](#), all the University's course advisory committees must include external representatives such as industry leaders, professional associations, or employer groups. Industry is involved in course design, such as in the Graduate Diploma in Technology and Innovation. This course for elite ICT graduates was codesigned by the local start-up industry.

The University also engages with industry through compulsory and non-compulsory work-integrated learning. The latter includes [I-PREP](#), which matches international students with local employers for elective placements.

Retention

Improving retention is a key focus area of Learning 2025. Strategies to improve institutional performance include:

- Introducing 24/7 student learning support services;
- Implementing a Student Advice and Mentoring model for commencing students;
- Expanding diploma pathways to support less qualified students in transition to university
- Embedding critical learning and literacy skills into the curriculum.

Additional Information

- Information on the [University Admissions](#) is published in line with admissions transparency requirements.
- Several published [policies](#) and [procedures](#) support student and staff health and safety. Mental health support is available to all students and staff.
- The University's [COVID-Safety plan](#) includes strategies for return to campus
- Per the [GOS National Report 2020](#) UTAS had above average employment rates and median salaries, which is an outcome we will continue to pursue.

Mental Health Strategy

The [University of Tasmania's strategic plan](#) places students' health and wellbeing at the forefront of everything we do. Aligned with this commitment, the University of Tasmania was one of a number of Universities that contributed to the development of the [Australian University Mental Health Framework](#). This framework was released in late 2020 and is now forming the basis for us to develop our own mental health strategic plan. This work is currently underway, and we expect this to be finalised in 2022.

We also offer a range of [support and wellbeing services](#) to enable the safety and wellness of our community.

Labour Market Outcomes Strategy

The [University of Tasmania's strategic plan](#) outlines our intention to help address Tasmania's economic, social and health challenges. We are committed to provide the education students need to participate in and help create those parts of the economy that provide good incomes and secure employment and provide it to as large a proportion of the population as possible. As the state with the lowest productivity and greatest welfare dependency in Australia, improving labour market outcomes and ensuring our graduates complete with the skills needed to support the state is embedded in all the work we do.

To support the delivery of our strategy we have developed a number of tools that enable us to understand and meet the needs of industry. These include examples such as our [Industry Demand model](#) and Tasmanian Market Analytics. These tools are used across the institution to develop and enhance our offerings to align with what industry and our communities need most.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Excellence and Impact for and from Tasmania

We will conduct demand-driven and supply-informed research, serving the needs of Tasmania and making national and global contributions. A new Research Model embeds impact to address Tasmania's educational, economic, health, social, cultural, and environmental challenges. We will measure success through the delivery of measurable impact initiatives, outcomes of ERA 2023, the number, success rate and size of grant applications by category and income received and HDR performance.

Encourage research translation and commercialisation

We seek to enable industry and new enterprises in areas of competitive advantage and opportunity for Tasmania, and will achieve this through an innovation ecosystem, including a new incubator/accelerator facility and diverse pathways to raise finance and spinout/start-up new companies. We will also translate our research to commercialisation through strategic partnering, and engaging with industry and end users through the Industry 4.0 Testlab, Launceston Institute and Tasmanian Collaboration for Health Improvement.

Research training initiatives

The University of Tasmania is committed to fostering research endeavour and excellence through supporting the researcher development of candidates and supervisory teams. At the commencement of their masters or doctoral candidature, each University of Tasmania Higher Degree Research student enrolls in the unit 'Introduction to Higher Degree Research'.

Upon enrolment into this unit, [a range of additional training resources](#) and professional development courses are available to students via the student portal.

Countering foreign interference

The University has developed a three-year cyber security maturity capability uplift program, after an assessment by an external party. The capability uplift program embeds control procedures that allow for the management of incident prevention, which aligns with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner best-practice and with ASIO on due diligence processes. The process also allows implementation of the principle of least privilege, deployment process for critical operating systems and the identification of research and IP likely to be of value to foreign partners. This capability uplift program has been endorsed by the University Audit & Risk Committee. A number of deliverables associated with this program have already been implemented.

Due to the sensitive nature of this information, this roadmap and associated procedural documentation are not publicly available, nor available through the University staff Intranet.

IMPROVING STUDENT EQUALITY AND OUTCOMES

The [University of Tasmania's strategic plan](#) articulates our mission to improve student equality and outcomes through all that we do. Both the Peter Underwood Centre and the Schools Recommendation Program are examples of how we are delivering on this mission, through increasing regional access, eliminating barriers, broadening our offerings, improving student success and deepening our collaboration with schools.

[Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Engagement \(SPAE\)](#)

The new SPAE, to be released in late-2021, provides the University's platform for the University's [Aboriginal business](#), building strong relationships with Tasmanian Aboriginal students, scholars, and community. The plan will include targets for participation and success, as well incorporating Aboriginal knowledge, perspectives and history into our curriculum and research.

SPAE's implementation is led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Aboriginal Leadership.

SPAE is currently in its final stages of community consultation and will be published shortly. We expect this to be publicly available by November 2021, via our [website](#).

[The Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment \(Underwood Centre\)](#)

The Underwood Centre conducts research, builds partnerships, and delivers Programs that contribute to positive and sustained change in educational outcomes for children and young people. The Underwood Centre is a major recipient of the University's Higher Educational Participation and Partnerships Program investment each year.

The Peter Underwood Centre's mission of increasing educational participation rates among young people necessarily requires a targeting of effort in areas where participation is lower. In Tasmania, our most underserved communities are in low socioeconomic areas characterised by intergenerational and multifactorial disadvantage. This includes several of the nation's most disadvantaged statistical areas outside of the Northern Territory. While the initiatives of the Underwood Centre (such as the Children's University) are widely available to all Tasmanian children and young people, their design and consequent impact are centred on those populations of greatest need.

Programs include the [Children's University Tasmania](#) which engages children aged 7-14 with extracurricular activities that build confidence and engagement with learning. These rich learning experiences help build self-confidence and resilience and positively impact education attainment.

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Schools Recommendation Program (SRP)

The SRP is an alternative entry pathway for school leavers to provide access for students who might otherwise not have considered University study. Early offers are made for undergraduate admissions using criteria other than ATAR which can help reduce the stress and anxiety students associate with finishing year 12.

Since 2020, areas of Tasmania that were historically under-represented in first-year study, such as the North and North-West of Tasmania, experienced notable increases in enrolment. For example, applications from the North-West of Tasmania went up by 24% in the first year of the SRP.

Entry is assessed using a rubric completed by the relevant school, validated against Year 11 results and Year 12 subject data. Students must still complete Year 12 and satisfy pre-requisite requirements to gain entry.

While the Schools Recommendation Program is open to all Tasmanian High School students, its success has been through its engagement of people that may not have considered university before. It has significantly reduced the dependence on students getting an ATAR, a known barrier to participation in disadvantaged areas, by using their teachers' recommendations for their preparedness for future study. There are very significant disparities in educational attainment across Tasmanian senior secondary institutions. Students in private schools and inner-urban Colleges are far more likely to receive an ATAR than their counterparts in other Colleges or public high schools. For example, only about 10% of Year 12 students at Claremont College in Hobart's disadvantaged northern suburbs have historically received an ATAR.

The Schools Recommendation Program is changing how Tasmanian year 12 students, and many from interstate, access university. **The attached slides, which are not available publicly due to their sensitive nature,** provides clear evidence that Program is working to improve equity and outcomes for those that need it most.

Following its positive impact, we are continuing and improving the program in 2021 and will become a key feature of our recruitment and outreach activities. We have set targets to lift higher education attainment in Tasmania to current national averages by 2030 and with programs like the SRP, Children's University and other outreach engagement we remain on track to achieve that objective.

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SIGNED for and on behalf of

In the presence of:

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

Dom English

Ryan Kinder

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

A/g Director

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)

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

Signature

Signature

28/12/21

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of

In the presence of:

<UNIVERSITY NAME>

by

PROFESSOR RUFUS BLACK

DR KIEREN RIX

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

VICE - CHANCELLOR

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)



Signature

Signature