



**2017 Mission Based Compact  
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Federation University Australia**

**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 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 which includes that year.

**MISSION**

Federation University Australia (FedUni) was established on 1 January 2014. The University is based on a federated network of campuses and partner-provider institutions across Australia and overseas, and national and international education and research collaborations. The core business of the University — higher education, vocational education and training, and research — is delivered across this federation.

Federation University Australia is an open access university. It welcomes all, provides high-quality teaching, extensive learning support, smooth pathways between the sectors, and work-ready qualifications. In so doing, it teaches students of all ages and backgrounds, to learn to succeed. This endeavour is informed by the legacy and history of more than 140 years of regional education experience. It is also enriched by the many domestic and international alliances, partnerships and relationships formed by the University.

Federation University Australia has established a clear mission, vision and strategic priorities in its Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

**By 2020 Federation University Australia will be renowned for being accessible, inclusive, supportive and empathetic in its connection to its students, its staff, and the communities it serves.**

The implementation of the Strategic Plan is guided by five principles:

1. Excellence. Our passion for teaching and research, student support and welfare, and staff development, drives our quest for excellence.
2. Responsibility. Ethical practice, student care and effective stewardship of our environment and resources are immutable qualities of Federation University Australia.
3. Access. We welcome and celebrate diversity and inclusion to create educational experiences that are equitable, inspirational and transformative.
4. Respect. Respect for our staff, our students and our communities provides an educational culture in which all realise their full potential.
5. Engagement. We are committed to local, national and international partnerships that are innovative, professional and mutually beneficial.

Through 2017, the University will be pursuing the following objectives:

- To be regional in focus, national in scope and international in reach.
- To be comprehensive in its offerings, student-centred in its approach and providing access to effective and high quality learning.
- To be strategic in fostering world-class research.
- To be productive and effective in forming partnerships and engaging with its communities and regions.
- Innovative, responsible, and transparent in outlook, performances and outcomes.

## INNOVATION

Federation University Australia actively pursues partnerships to enhance access to its education and training, research, knowledge mobilisation and commercial activities. The University takes full advantage of the expertise and capability of its staff and the talents and abilities of its students and graduates to enhance its community engagement to the mutual benefit of the University and partners alike.

Specifically, the University has a long history of industry collaboration and research translation through its Technology Parks and Research Centres.

The spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship at the Ballarat Technology Park (BTP) enables technology-driven businesses to thrive and prosper, in a dynamic and supportive environment. This fast evolving precinct is designed to encourage and support the development of both emerging and existing technology-oriented enterprises. The Ballarat Technology Park has successfully operated for the past two decades, attracting business investment, creating quality jobs for University graduates and positively impacting the regional economy. Ballarat Technology Park:

- Employs approximately 1400 people
- Contributes \$100 million per annum to regional household income
- Contributes \$300 million per annum in regional economic outputs.

Federation University Australia is strongly committed to developing its commercial research and innovation to local, national and global clients through a diverse range of industry-focused services and expertise. Specifically, the University brings together groups and teams of researchers from multi-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary backgrounds into highly- focused centres of research endeavour. These centres and collaborations include:

- Australian Collaboration for Research into Injury in Sport and its Prevention (ACRISP)
- Australian Retirement Research Institute (ARRI)
- Australia-China Wetland Network Research Partnership
- Centre for Biopsychosocial and eHealth Research and Innovation (CBeRI)
- Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation (CeDI)
- Centre for Environmental Management (CEM)
- Centre for Informatics and Applied Optimisation (CIAO)
- Centre for Multimedia Computing, Communications, and Artificial Intelligence Research (MCCAIR)
- Centre for Regional Innovation and Competitiveness (CRIC)
- Collaborative Research Centre in Australian History (CRAH)
- Collaborative Research Network (CRN)
- Geotechnical and Hydrogeological Engineering Research Group (GHERG)
- Nanya Station
- Researching Adult and Vocational Education (RAVE)
- Water Research Network
- Wimmera Research Group

In 2017, the University will continue to enhance innovation through:

- \$10 million expansion of the Ballarat Technology Park through joint funding with the State Government to develop further commercial space for business incubation at the SMB campus.
- Development of a new Innovation Precinct in Gippsland, for which \$25 million has already been committed by the State Government.
- Continued development and implementation of focus research through its research centres and collaborations.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Federation University Australia has a strong tradition of innovative, progressive and high quality education, providing outstanding learning opportunities across a wide range of disciplines. Consistently recognised as a leader in teaching quality having consistently achieved 5 stars for Teaching Quality in the Good University Guide for the past 8 years. The University provides a student experience that encourages inquiry, analysis and self-reliance and promotes the development of social responsibility and engaged citizenship.

The Learning and Quality Portfolio is an institutional focal point for the University's approach to integrating learning, teaching and quality improvement. The Portfolio has responsibility for the oversight of quality management, staff and organisational development and enhancement of the University's learning and teaching strategies and priorities. The Portfolio plays a key role in ensuring that FedUni policies and procedures relating to learning and teaching are effectively and consistently implemented within the context of Commonwealth and State quality and regulatory frameworks.

The University guides its Learning and Teaching practice through its triennial Learning and Teaching Plan. The current Learning and Teaching Plan 2015-2017 has set the University direction to "Enable BOLD Learning" -Blended On-Line and Digital. This reflects the University's acknowledgement of the changing nature of learning and teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the learning requirements and needs of its students.

As part of the 2020 Strategic Plan, BOLD Learning will be an integral part of learning and teaching at Federation University Australia. Incorporating the University's core values, the BOLD strategy will make accessible, supported and attainable education available to the University's regional, national and international students. Combining contemporary pedagogy, digital resources, and committed support, the BOLD strategy will drive learning and teaching by -

- Implementing and enabling BOLD Learning initiatives
- Recognising and highlighting the need for BOLD Learning and Teaching across all our programs of study

An integrated part of the University's Learning and Quality Portfolio is the Centre for Learning, Innovation and Professional Practice (CLIPP). CLIPP's purpose is to focus on professional development, learning and teaching embedded in BOLD Learning principles and a focus on student support throughout the life cycle in a dual sector institution. CLIPP is future focused on the following key strategies :

- Teaching Futures: To provide opportunities for academic and professional staff to engage with diverse learners and provide positive, sustainable learning experiences beyond program interaction.
- Online Futures: To continually foster model and support technology enhanced learning, teaching and pedagogy.
- Learning Futures: To provide technology , resources, support and training, to enable effective, accessible and sustainable BOLD learning teaching approaches that engage, develop and support contemporary learners, educators and professional staff.
- Student Futures: Supporting students throughout their University experience with a range of student-focused academic and peer support programs and services.

In 2017, the University will continue to implement the BOLD strategy and review and update the strategy for the next triennium 2018-2020.

## **RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING**

Federation University Australia's 2020 Strategy identifies that its research will be regionally, nationally and internationally recognised for its excellence.

Federation University Australia is committed to implementing a carefully targeted number of outstanding research programs that deliver real outcomes and tangible benefits for our regional sustainability and our shared future. We

pursue research collaborations with leading international institutions - including those with whom we establish educational partnership - and use these to the benefit of industries, businesses and organisations in regional Victoria seeking to access global exposure, interest and investment.

In October 2016, Federation University Australia approved its 2017-20 Research Plan and announced its research priority areas (RPA), supported by RPA scholarships to provide resources through funded research training and supervision.

Research priority areas and scholarship topics include:

- Information forensics and security comprising:
  - Cyber security:* Involving research in: cyber security; optimal and adaptive security; healthcare privacy, Internet of Things and software defined network security; and analytics for cyber security attribution.
  - Multimedia signal processing and machine learning:* Covers research in computer science and technical intelligence including machine intelligence for the advanced and automated management, as well as analyses of the growing volume of crime scene and evidence-related data embedded in various digital multimedia and communications forms.
- Transformative and preventative health comprising:
  - Discovery to recovery: Translating basic and applied research to improve healthcare:* Employs a multi-disciplinary approach that translates basic and applied research that also utilises big data analytics including machine learning to develop into new solutions that improve knowledge in mental health and physical disease for the betterment of healthcare.
  - Injury prevention in active populations:* Uses public health and epidemiological approaches in data-driven research to provide new information to underpin the development and evaluation of injury prevention measures for the benefit of all active populations.
- Sport and recreation: Undertakes research on sport and recreation participation, facilities and health outcomes, to support evidence-based planning and decision making in the sport and recreation sector.
- History and heritage: Explores Australian history and heritage using a humanities approach, as well as undertaking research in the allied areas of historical justice and community regional engagement.
- Improving policy and practice in vocational education and training (VET): Employs a multi-disciplinary approach to examine and improve major policy and practice issues in the VET sector, which covers learning and training in TAFE and private Registered Training Organisations, in community organisations and in workplaces.
- Dynamic landscapes: Delivers environmental knowledge and management tools for landscapes in transition including the rehabilitation of lands and waterscapes damaged through human activities, such as mining and agriculture, and through the impacts of fire and a changing climate.

Through focused research the University aims to attract the best researchers in their respective fields to our campuses from around Australia and globally, so that we are better able to understand and address the challenges that face regional communities here and abroad.

Federation University Australia provides resources and support to our research programs so that they demonstrate the national and international prestige required to attract and retain the best researchers in their fields. The University fosters research development of staff and students, and provides outstanding research training opportunities for our Higher Degree by Research (HOR) students. The HOR program is supported by:

- RPA scholarships
- A comprehensive HOR scholarship program
- Industry funded scholarships
- Support for applying for external funded scholarships

In 2017 the University will pursue its Research Priority Areas and achieve excellence in research by -

- Having highly focused research programs led by highly active researchers.

- Increasing research revenue.
- Developing and sustaining a number of strategically important research areas that are aligned to the Government's research priority areas and acknowledged in the Excellence Research Australia (ERA) exercise as being at or above world class standard.
- Developing a strong research culture through research academic leadership and the concentration of research activity in designated research areas.

## **EQUITY**

### **An open accessible university**

Federation University Australia's strategic plan sets as a commitment that the University will be renowned for being accessible, inclusive, supportive and empathetic in its connection to its students, its staff, and the communities it serves. This commitment will be reflected in the University's reputation for welcoming, teaching and supporting students of all backgrounds and ages

### **Supporting retention and success**

'Creating equitable educational opportunities based on inclusion and diversity' is a key principle of the Federation University Australia Act 2010. The corollary of open access is comprehensive, proactive student support, an undertaking gladly accepted by the University. By 2020 the University will enjoy strong rates of student retention and attainment. This will be achieved by –

- Implementing a Student Retention and Success Strategy that is student-centred, evidence-based and whole-of-University
- Ensuring that the Student Retention and Success Strategy focuses on achieving outcomes for students especially those at higher risk of attrition.

The University has developed a 2015-2017 Student Retention and Success Plan and is implementing initiatives that are improving outcomes for students' year on year. The plan implements a number of initiatives focused around achieving the following objectives –

1. Ensure the use of reliable and valid attrition, retention and success data.
2. Develop and maintain a proactive, student-centred culture throughout the University.
3. Develop and implement targeted intervention and support, starting with high attrition 'hot spots'.
4. Ensure strategic, proactive and continuous communication around student retention and success
5. Facilitate the highest quality of learning possible for each and every student.

In 2017, the University will continue to implement initiatives that support the Student Retention and Success Plan and review and update the plan for the next triennium 2018-2020.

### **Commitment to indigenous education**

The legal objects of the Federation University Australia Act (Section 5) commit the University:

*(f) to use its expertise and resources to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia in its teaching, learning, research and advancement of knowledge activities and therefore contribute to –*

*(i) realising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations; and*

*(ii) the safeguarding of the ancient and rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage.*

Through the triennial Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2017 the University commits to and reports in implementation of actions that meet its statutory objectives. With respect to learning and teaching the plan provides for:

- embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, insights and knowledge in education planning, programs, events, teaching, learning, and research;
- delivering cultural awareness training to our staff and students;
- increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander University participation, retention and attainment;
- supporting employment opportunities and career development ;
- improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander post-graduate research opportunities.

Specific actions that are in place and will continue in 2017 include:

1. Providing effective support to Indigenous students through : providing access to Aboriginal Education Liaison Officers, Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme, Individual Learning Plans and learning support through Mentoring and Leadership programs such as Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS), Foundation Access Studies (FAST) and roll out of the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) program; providing access to dedicated facilities and resources; facilitating involvement with local Aboriginal communities; assistance with diverse social and economic support, including accommodation .
2. Providing specific financial assistance to Indigenous students through : assistance with purchasing books and a specific Book Bursary Scheme; Year 10-12 Scholarship program; Dr. Mary Atkinson (Indigenous Students only) scholarship program in addition to normal Indigenous Commonwealth scholarships for Education Costs, Accommodation and Access; and specific school based scholarship programs for Year 12 students
3. Offering annually one Indigenous Higher Degree by Research scholarship for Indigenous researchers to undertake full-time Higher Degrees by Research studies and offer HE Contribution Scheme exempt places to suitably qualified indigenous staff to undertake part-time higher degree by research studies.

#### **Building aspiration for students from a low SES background**

The University is committed to providing opportunity to students from a low SES background to attain higher education qualifications . As a regional university we understand the challenges faced by communities that do not have access to the resources available to our city cousins.

The University has in place a number of programs that are designed to increase higher education participation of current and prospective domestic students from low SES backgrounds in accredited undergraduate qualifications.

Examples of Participation activities include the following :

- developing and implementing appropriate support services and programs;
- administering application and selection processes for Commonwealth Scholarships;
- offering institutional equity scholarships to low SES students;
- undertaking research and monitoring the impact and effectiveness of activities aimed at improving the participation of low SES students, and
- developing and implementing partnership activities for the purpose of encouraging aspirations and building capacity among people from low SES backgrounds .

These programs will continue to be implemented in 2017

SIGNED for and on behalf of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

Dom English  
Full name (please print)

Group Manager  
Position

of the Department of Education and Training as  
delegate of the Minister for Education and  
Training.

Dom English  
Signature

19/12/2017  
Date

In the presence of:

Cate Hutchinson  
Witness (please print)

Policy Officer  
Position or profession of witness (please print)

Cate Hutchinson  
Signature

SIGNED for and on behalf of

UNIVERSITY  
**Andrew Smith**

Andrew Smith  
Full name (please print)

Acting Vice-Chancellor  
Position

Andrew Smith  
Signature

In the presence of:

Susan Scott  
Witness (please print)

Executive Assistant  
Position or profession of witness (please print)

Susan Scott  
Signature