



**2017 Mission Based Compact
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Charles Darwin 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 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

Charles Darwin University is somewhat unique. No other single Australian university serves such a large area of the continent, in such a remote location and with such a small population to sustain it. We are a multi-campus, dual sector University and the only university based in the Northern Territory. CDU is one of the largest employers in the Northern Territory and has a local economic impact of more than \$559 million to the NT Gross State Product (GSP).

The Northern Territory is also the focus of one of the nation's most ambitious plans for future development, to unlock the North's vast potential and to establish it as the trade gateway to Asia for all of Australia. As the Australian university closest to Asia, with a strong and distinctive commitment to Indigenous knowledges, achievement and wellbeing, CDU is ideally placed to prepare graduates for success in an increasingly complex, diverse and connected world.

In 2017, CDU will move into the implementation phase of its new ten year strategic plan, Connect, Discover, Grow. Through this plan CDU will make a difference in areas of importance to the region, including Indigenous and tropical health, environmental science, public policy, engineering, IT, Indigenous affairs, knowledges and education and cognate disciplines. Specifically CDU will aim to be:

1. A provider of transformative skills and learning

At Charles Darwin University we recognise the transformative value of skills and learning to change people's lives, giving them the choice to seek rewarding and productive employment and lead prosperous and fulfilling lives. Our aim is to provide this through an accessible and high-quality learning experience for all our students and to create an organisational culture that places the quality of the student learning experience at the forefront of everything we do.

2. Globally recognised for Indigenous leadership

CDU places the highest priority on, and is committed to providing, effective and transformative leadership in Indigenous tertiary education in Australia. We acknowledge the imperative of Indigenous recognition, inclusion and achievement in the Northern Territory's and the nation's future prosperity and the role that education plays in empowering Indigenous people to achieve their aspirations and in addressing Indigenous disadvantage. Through the Australian Centre of Indigenous Knowledges and Education and throughout all our programs, we will deliver transformative and innovative teaching and learning, research and community engagement for and with Indigenous Australians, emphasising measures of equivalence and parity of esteem in developing intercultural communication, decision making, governance and ways of doing business that will benefit Indigenous communities both in the NT and nationally.

3. A truly international university

CDU is committed to internationalisation and to building and enhancing our profile and engagement within Asia in particular. We are uniquely placed both geographically, and in terms of our expertise, to deliver a range of education, training and research services to this region and to build lasting, beneficial partnerships that will enable our neighbouring international communities to prosper. We will implement our comprehensive international strategy to strengthen our international reputation and impact through excellence and innovation in our international policies and programs, with the aim of achieving sustained growth in international student numbers and sustainable mutually beneficial international partnerships and engagement in the coming decade.

4. A critically engaged university of the region.

CDU's place in the Northern Territory, in Australia and in the Asian region, is strategically important and comes with unique responsibilities, opportunities and challenges compared with other Australian universities. We are and will remain strongly committed to and focused on meeting the tertiary education and research needs and expectations of the Northern Territory community so that our region can develop and prosper, while continuing to develop our outreach to students and communities across Australia and internationally.

We believe we have something unique and important to offer those we engage with in all our spheres of operation, an understanding and capability born out of our sense of place in the Northern Territory that fosters new ideas and innovative approaches.

We will engage with governments, other education and research organisations, industry and the community to form mutually beneficial partnerships and relationships so that we can continue to provide the best possible educational services and research outcomes for the people and regions we serve. As the only university based in the Northern Territory, CDU has a unique partnership, and a strong alignment in focus, with the Northern Territory Government to provide the skills and knowledge the Territory needs to prosper.

5. A strong, research intensive university

CDU has established a breadth and depth of research expertise and advanced scholarship intimately linked to the needs of the Northern Territory and the Territory's Asian neighbours. Although one of the smallest universities in Australia, we are one of the most research intensive, with outstanding performance and recognised excellence in a small but highly relevant suite of research fields related to where we operate, in particular Indigenous and tropical health, environmental science and indigenous affairs, knowledge and public policy.

CDU is positioned to develop additional world-class fields of research and scholarship to meet the emerging requirements of Northern and Central Australia and our immediate region. We will continue to build on already successful national and international research partnerships, including with research end users, to ensure our research continues to be relevant and has a strong positive impact on the communities we serve.

Our strategic activity will be underpinned by major improvements to University operations, structure and culture that will be implemented throughout 2017.

INNOVATION

CDU believes that successful innovation requires direct and frequent connections between university staff and the broader community of innovators. Accordingly, CDU has developed rich and effective links with the Innovation community in the Northern Territory through sponsorship and leadership of innovation training and social events, close liaison with the developers of the Darwin Innovation Hub, alignment with Territory government innovation objectives and programs, and direct alliances with Territory innovators such as the 3D additive manufacturing firm Spee3D Pty Ltd.

CDU has a number of effective industry partnerships, and aims to develop more. The North Australia Centre of Oil and Gas provides skills training and engineering education for the emerging Oil and Gas industry in the Territory. Recent developments at CDU include the launch of new programs in maintenance engineering and emergency preparation and disaster recovery studies. CDU has a strong track record of success through the application of evidence-based methods to the improvement of service delivery to remote communities, in health, education, IT and other service areas.

CDU has developed eSpace, a digital repository for research publications and research data. eSpace may be searched to discover most recent outputs of CDU's research and where copyright restriction permit (this is the norm) to provide an open-access copy of the work. The repository is supported by new and clear policies and well-attended training sessions. Research staff and research students at CDU are generally well versed in the benefits of open communication of their work, and appreciate the community and personal benefits that follow from open access publication. CDU aims to continue to promote the benefits of open access, and to support the publication of an even larger proportion of research data.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

CDU recognises that the quality of its teaching and the overall student experience, whether on campus, online or in the workplace, are critical to our ability to impart transformative learning and enable student success. We want our students to emerge as professional and ethical members of society who are adaptable and creative, technically and culturally capable, and committed to the sustainability of our world. These distinctive graduate qualities were developed during 2016 and will be implemented in 2017 through curriculum reforms including, inter alia, the following:

- introducing a fuller range of "authentic" assessment activities that require students in all courses to apply their theories, knowledges and skill sets to real world and as yet unsolved challenges;
- a refresh of our suite of common units, ensuring students have awareness of a sufficient breadth of theoretical perspectives to support the depth of their particular disciplinary studies; and
- expanded work integrated learning programs.

CDU we will enhance teaching quality by recruiting and supporting high-quality people, and leveraging world-leading learning technologies. Specific strategies for 2017 include:

- re-organising the academic structures of the University to better align with the strategic requirements of Connect Discover Grow;
- refreshing and expanding the professional development opportunities provided online and face to face;
- continuing to develop the technology-enabled learning environment, through a collegial approach to governance of the environment, and an exceptional relationship with product developers. Particular emphasis in 2017 will be on magnifying the student presence and facilitating dynamic learning communities; and
- Target Indigenous staffing recruitment and retention strategies, enhance Indigenous participation in University governance and improve the incorporation of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into University core business;
- Develop general staffing recruitment and retention strategies that will enhance Indigenous participation in University governance and improve the incorporation of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into University core business;
- Provide courses to non-Indigenous students to enhance their capacity to work in cross cultural environments and which will raise the level of understanding and of Indigenous policy issues which will assist in the development of new models of leadership and management; and
- Work in partnership with other tertiary education providers, particularly BIITE, relevant organisations and stakeholders to build collaboration and enhance opportunity in Indigenous education, training and research.

A new *Education and Student Success* executive portfolio was introduced in the latter half of 2016 to provide a fresh focus on the overall student experience and improve student retention and progression through to successful completion. Initial strategies emerging from this portfolio to be introduced during 2017 include the following:

- a technology-enabled system of ePortfolios and peer to peer engagement, designed to maximise student "membership" of the University and its many learning communities, a lifelong account connection to the University, and tangible and reflective representations of student achievement over time;
- periodic student impact reports for all areas of the University, providing strong focus for each area through measurable evidence of the impact of that area's work on the student experience; and
- undertaking an international benchmarking exercise of effective strategies for student retention and success, particularly in universities with a similarly rich diversity of students.

The quality of our learning and teaching activities will be assured through, inter alia, the following strategies:

- implementing a systematic approach to proactively addressing student feedback collected through the University's new MyView survey;
- progressing from a pilot to full implementation of the IRU's academic calibration program, which facilitates a form of inter-university moderation of capstone and other significant units in each coursework degree;
- introducing a refreshed system of internal course accreditation and review; and
- applying to TEQSA for re-registration by the end of the year.

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING

CDU has achieved impressive world class rankings due in large part to its research intensity, knowledge transfer and international outlook. CDU is recognised domestically and internationally as having research strengths in the areas of:

- Indigenous and tropical health,
- Environment and natural resource management, and
- Social and public policy, contemporary Indigenous affairs, knowledge and governance; demography and growth planning, and regional economic and workforce development; specifically within the context our region.

CDU recognises that further enhancing our major areas of research strength is a high priority if we are to build on this existing base to continue to improve our research performance.

To do this we will strengthen our three major research areas of research through targeted resourcing and succession planning, as well as developing selected emerging areas of research excellence, such as in engineering and technology, in order to broaden our scope and capacity for diversification.

Engagement with industry, whether public or private sector, is key to ensuring our research outputs have impact and meet the needs of our region. We will strengthen our engagement with industry across all areas of research activity, with an added focus on enhancing engagement related to entrepreneurship and potential commercialisation of research outcomes.

CDU recognises that in order for our researchers to excel, we need to create a research environment that supports and facilitates high-quality research. Within the context of the Institute of Advanced Studies, we will ensure that our researchers – staff and students alike – have the opportunity to excel by providing resources, equipment and facilities, and professional support and development, in an environment where cross disciplinary research can flourish. To this end we will also develop a research administration environment that is efficient and effective and supports our staff to perform to the best of their abilities.

EQUITY

In meeting the challenge of becoming the University of Choice for Indigenous students and staff, CDU will build on its strong ties to Indigenous communities to lead national change in Indigenous tertiary education and achieve successful Indigenous outcomes by developing best practice in access, education and support, recruitment practices and professional development of staff. The embedding of Indigenous perspectives in learning and teaching practice is essential for parity to be achieved.

An important part of CDU's Indigenous education engagement is the partnership with the Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) under the auspices of the Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education (ACIKE) partnership agreement. The current focus is on developing a sustainable model of Higher Education for BIITE for the broad benefit of Indigenous education in the Northern Territory. However, over the course of this Compact the partnership will see a rationalisation of offerings, a continued increase in quality and strengthened engagement with the Indigenous student cohort in remote, urban and national settings.

In 2017, CDU expects to rank highest in the sector for access and participation rates of Indigenous Higher Education students (600+) in addition to the provision of formal training to around 4000 Indigenous students through the University's VET programs.

Priorities for CDU in the area of Indigenous Education include:

1. Consolidating the active engagement and involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in educational decision making.
2. Improve Indigenous student participation and outcomes in tertiary education through better access to innovative and flexible post-secondary education programs.
3. Create and maintain culturally enriched spaces within which students can achieve success.
4. Learn in partnership with Indigenous students, staff and communities to ensure cultural relevance and knowledge, cultural affirmation and cultural safety are embedded in programs to maximise student engagement, learning and skills development.

5. Improve general staffing recruitment and retention strategies that will enhance Indigenous participation in University governance and improve the incorporation of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into University core business.
6. Provide courses to non-Indigenous students to enhance their capacity to work in cross cultural environments and which will raise the level of understanding of Indigenous policy issues which will assist in the development of new models of leadership and management.

More than half of all CDU higher education students belong to one or more of the identified equity groups. Therefore, CDU aims to deliver a broad range of access, support and engagement programs delivered to all CDU students. These programs aim to improve access, participation and success for the significant body of students from equity backgrounds at CDU. In addition the Indigenous student engagement and success programs outlined above, in 2017 CDU will continue its commitment to a range of programs including, inter alia, the following:

- the *CDU Aspire Program*, a partnership initiative between CDU and the NT secondary schools aiming to help students from diverse backgrounds achieve their best results in secondary school to raise their aspirations of young people to pursue tertiary study.
- the *Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)* aimed at improving unit outcomes for student, by providing training to successful past students and facilitating student led study sessions with these successful past students;
- the *Academic Language and Learning Success Program (ALLSP)*, which assists students with academic skills development tailored to their specific units; and
- ongoing commitment to the *yoututor* service providing free tutorial support services for all first year (100 level) units online and after hours.

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

18/12/2017
Date

In the presence of:

Cate Hutchinson
Witness (please print)

Policy Officer
Position or profession of witness (please print)

C B Hutcheon
Signature

SIGNED for and on behalf of

CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY

Professor Simon Maddocks
Full name (please print)
Vice-Chancellor

Position

Simon Maddocks
Signature

In the presence of:

Penny Szybiak
Witness (please print)

Head of Planning
Position or profession of witness (please print)

[Signature]
Signature