



**2017 Mission Based Compact
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Southern Cross 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

Southern Cross University aspires to be Australia's most progressive and connected regional research university. This aspiration is reflected across the Vision, Mission and Values of the University's 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan.

The primary focus over the term of the 2017 Compact is the finalisation and subsequent implementation of actions flowing from the FutureSCU project. FutureSCU was launched by the incoming Vice Chancellor Professor Adam Shoemaker in October 2016, with a focus on articulating the specific strategic priorities for the future growth and development of Southern Cross University. Increasing reputation and revenue is critical. This project includes a broad analysis of the University's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats across the following themes:

1. Education, courses and pathways;
2. Students, student outcomes and quality of teaching and learning;
3. Research and knowledge transfer, with a specific focus on research collaborations and partnerships;
4. Engagement and connectivity with industry, government, community groups, universities and other identified stakeholder groups;
5. Internationalisation, including international education and research partnerships;
6. Human resources, workforce planning and the development of people and culture;
7. Finances;
8. Capital and campus development in Coffs Harbour, Lismore and the Gold Coast;
9. Management structure and function of a distributed multi-campus university;
10. Role and function of branch campuses, study centres and learning sites;
11. Reputation and rankings.

The project will be completed in the first quarter 2017, setting the direction and targets over a 12/24/36 month timeframes. In conjunction with University Council, key performance indicators will be developed to guide and monitor performance for 2017 and beyond.

The analysis flowing from FutureSCU will allow the University to strengthen its capacity to serve the interests of our diverse student profile (with high enrolments of students from one or more equity groups – see Equity section), staff and stakeholders. In this context, the University faces particular issues in servicing students and communities across the Mid-North Coast and Northern Rivers regions of New South Wales and the southern Gold Coast, coupled with student expectations of a strong online presence.

As a specific initiative during 2016/2017, an Indigenous Elders Advisory Group, with participation from 18 Indigenous representatives from across the northern NSW and southern Gold Coast footprint, is being established and will advise the VC.

- Activate industry clusters around co-operative and collaborative business practices in agriculture through the national 'Farming Together' (www.farmingtogether.com.au) pilot program;
- Co-locate industry within University facilities to foster greater interaction and collaboration, such as the existing arrangements to locate NSW Fisheries staff within facilities at the National Marine Science Centre;
- Further expand the application of citizen science to enable greater participation of communities as co-researchers;
- Expand implementation of the 'Live Ideas' (www.liveideas.org.au) strategy and platform to enable industry and community initiated projects;
- Review relevant policies relating to Intellectual Property to enable greater pathways to enhance the uptake, application and impact of research.

The University's commercialisation strategy is to provide commercialisation access to our research outcomes to our industry collaborators and research staff. SCU is in the process of adjusting its Intellectual Property policy to provide such pathways ensuring the best possible opportunity to bring research outcomes to market.

The University actively promotes Open Access initiatives and supports Australian Government initiatives and mandates that advocate the improvement of access to publicly funded scholarly information without economic restriction via institutional repositories.

Open Access to research publications and data is provided through:

- Ensuring SCU outputs are available in full text through the institutional repository wherever copyright, intellectual property and publisher agreements permit.
- Providing training and support to SCU authors and researchers on local, national and international Open Access initiatives.
- Supporting submission to open access repositories and open access publishing.
- Providing formal guidance to SCU authors and researchers via the SCU Open Access Policy which outlines SCU authors' and researchers' responsibilities and compliance.
- Providing access to research data discovery and access via the institutional repository.
- Provision of information through meetings and workshops around increasing best practice with respect to Open Access for research publications and data.

During 2017 the University is further upgrading its Research Data Management policy, guidelines and facilities to ensure enduring, secure and defined repositories and access for research data.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Two of the University's four goals in the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan relate to teaching and learning, placing this activity at the centre of our thinking. The context of each goal reflects SCU's current objectives within teaching and learning, namely:

Goal 1: We aim to equip our students for diverse futures and global careers that enrich society. SCU understands that in the 21st century, effective higher education is facilitating and co-creating learning rather than simply delivering content. We work side-by-side with our students to ensure they develop skills to be life-long learners who are agile in adjusting to futures and technologies they never imagined, and the values to be responsible global citizens. We aim to inspire our students by being nimble and innovative and this includes adopting radically new ways of facilitating learning including digital and interactive content delivery, as well as pursuing authentic and more relevant forms of assessment.

Goal 4: We will create distinctive opportunities for engaged learning and research, as a hallmark of the SCU experience. SCU fosters great connectivity with its communities and enterprise partners. We are harnessing this connectivity to create and grow distinctive, mutually beneficial learning and research opportunities. This, for example, is partly being facilitated through our creation of an 'enterprise lab' to foster ingenuity, entrepreneurship and talent which will come on-line in 2017.

- Improved retention of Higher Degree Research students and timely completions to be fostered through the provision of high quality commencement, progression and completion programs and processes.
- Improve communication with Higher Degree Research students in order to prioritise and encourage student research publication, study exchange, wider engagement, professional development and awards that enhance employability and career prospects.
- Increase the industry readiness of our Higher Degree Research Students by developing specific workshops and development opportunities which will ensure they have additional skills that will be valued by Industry e.g. project management.
- To develop and enhance the scheduled program of research supervision workshops, training and mentoring events to support Higher Degree Research supervision practice and investigation of non-traditional supervision models e.g. cohort model.

EQUITY

The University currently exceeds the sector average for the participation rates of students from low SES, regional and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. The University has around 57% of its student cohort from a regional or remote area, 25% from a low socio-economic background and 4.3% of students have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island background. Over 60% of SCU's students are first in their family to come to university. Many students are from two or more equity backgrounds.

The University's enrolments of Indigenous students has almost doubled in recent years, highlighting the continuing importance of the Indigenous Student Success Programme to support strategies for improving outcomes for these students. In particular, the tutorial assistance scheme provides eligible Indigenous students with a valuable range of strategies to improve study skills including understanding course content, developing assessment, time management and exam preparation.

The University's Equity and Diversity Plan 2016-2020 contains specific goals and objectives which outline strategies for increasing the access, participation, retention and success of students from low SES backgrounds. Actions from the SCU Equity and Diversity Plan 2016-2020 and the 2015-2017 Access and Participation Plan include:

- Continue to improve and enhance targeted school and community outreach programs working in partnership with regional and local schools, the VET sector and communities.
- Develop and Implement an SCU College access program for culturally and linguistically diverse students.
- Increase the number of Equity Scholarships available to students in equity groups.
- Enhance and expand academic and non-academic support for students including first in family to attend university.
- Increase the number of commencing students from equity groups participating in the UniMentor Program. First year students who have a mentor continue on to their second year of study at a higher rate (5%) than the general student population, a trend that has been recorded since 2009.
- Focus on regional & remote students particularly those studying at a distance from our campuses to improve their retention and success.

Strategies to improve retention and success for all students are anticipated to assist in improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the longer term. Given the University's high equity profile, all Equity programs are inclusive, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students forming a key focus in these projects. In 2017, cuts to the Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program (HEPPP) will impact the University's capacity to expand equity initiatives.

A specific strategy of the UniMentor program is to increase the number of commencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students accessing support through the program each year. In 2014 14 (4.8%) commencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students accessed the program expanding to 45 (16%) in 2016.

SIGNED for and on behalf of

In the presence 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

Cate Hutchinson

Witness (please print)

Policy Officer

Position or profession of witness (please print)

CB Hutchison

Signature

SIGNED for and on behalf of

In the presence of:

UNIVERSITY

PROF ADAM SHOEMAKER
Full name (please print)

VICE CHANCELLOR
Position

Adam Shoemaker
Signature

NICOLA BERT
Witness (please print)

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Position or profession of witness (please print)

Nicola Bert
Signature