



**2017 Mission Based Compact
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Victoria 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

Victoria University's (VU's) *Strategic Plan, 2016-2020* establishes the vision of VU being the *University of Opportunity and Success* – one that is open, excellent, and creates exceptional value for students from any background and enhances the communities in which it operates, Melbourne's west and beyond. This is in the context of a highly competitive tertiary education market, both at home and abroad, which places a premium on innovation, value for money and leading edge performance.

VU's strategy is encapsulated in the following three key elements

1. Position ourselves as an open and excellent university (multiple pathways, personalised support for students and research with impact).
2. Pursue a transformational agenda (enhancing the student experience, developing new markets and business models, investing in underpinning capabilities)
3. Ensure financial sustainability (revenue growth, cost management, productivity improvements).

VU will realise its Vision more specifically through:

- **Education** – high quality, engaging career-based tertiary education at all levels of vocational and higher education with flexible entry and exit points, appropriate pathways and engaging and rigorous curriculum and contemporary delivery, while maintaining rigorous standards and ensuring all students are supported. Improving academic performance, revitalizing the TAFE offer through Victoria Polytechnic, implementing VU systems change to drive productivity and staff development and strengthening flagship programs are keys.
- **Research and Engagement** – undertaking high quality applied research which results in healthier, smarter and sustainable communities in the west of Melbourne and beyond, and connecting deeply with industry.
- **Financial Sustainability**- implementing prudent cost management and revenue enhancement, VU will seek to generate a \$20m surplus by 2020, and break even financial result in 2018.

VU's Strategic Plan is underpinned by seven design aspirations:

- Dedicated to student success, employment and entrepreneurship
- Offer quality, contemporary learning experiences with a unique VU blend
- Connect deeply with industry
- Conduct research with community impact and be renowned for excellence in flagship areas
- Champion our heartland and uplifting communities in the West of Melbourne and beyond
- Engage internationally, especially in Asia
- A future focused workforce in a dynamic and sustainable organisation.

VU will implement its Strategic Plan in a consistent and orderly manner which seeks to develop capability and capacity. Three phases of implementation are:

- Phase 1: Firmly establish foundations for growth and productivity improvement (2016-2018)
- Phase 2: Major innovation (2017-2019)
- Phase 3: Strong growth and productivity improvement (2018-2020)

INNOVATION

VU is directing its investment to its the flagship areas of:

- *Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities Sport, Health and Active Living* and
- *Sport, Health and Active Living* and

Within these areas, VU will continue to build strong research collaborations and apply cutting edge innovation to address community needs and develop practical solutions to industry challenges.

For the *Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities* flagship world class innovative practice includes the applied and translational *Institute for Sustainability and Innovation*, where VU provides industry and community solutions in water treatment technology and resources, resource management, social and behavioural research, environment, packaging, and smart and alternative energies.

VU works collaboratively with other institutions to jointly develop solutions to complex problems. For example, VU has strategic partnerships with the University of Melbourne, Deakin University, Edith Cowan and the CSIRO in areas such as water management, education and clinical exercise and active living. These partnerships will continue in 2017.

For the flagship of *Sport, Health and Active Living*, VU's partnerships include:

- Western Bulldogs Football Club
- Australian Sports Commission
- Australian Institute of Sport
- Western Health.

VU's research in a wide range of areas, from psychology to machine learning and data analytics, drives greater performance, as exemplified by the significant contribution VU made to the Western Bulldogs' 2016 grand final win. This partnership is based on a shared commitment to sport, human movement and recreation, and to the economic and social wellbeing of Melbourne's west.

Related to our 'opportunity' agenda, has been an ongoing commitment to ensuring the economic and social wellbeing of our heartland, the west of Melbourne. Working in partnership with significant regional organisations, VU is coordinating the West of Melbourne Economic Development Alliance (WoMEDA), which is leading the development of an economic development strategy for the West. In concert with State and Federal Governments, WoMEDA will drive the new strategy, investigating ways to boost existing industries, such as transport, logistics and construction, and attracting new digital and e-commerce investment.

Entrepreneurship

In 2016, VU initiated an entrepreneurial ecosystem to meet the needs of start-ups and emerging industries. VU has appointed three entrepreneurs-in-residence to embed an entrepreneurial mindset to:

- Produce graduates of the future with the capability to establish their own businesses and realise commercial ideas
- Identify potential opportunities for commercialisation or collaboration
- Assist businesses and students, staff and others by providing expertise, networks and access to world class design services in the form of *The Hanger*, VU's latest endeavor in the startup space.

Broader Engagement

VU will continue to provide a broad range of services to address the needs of industry through collaborative partnerships, including specialised consultancies and multidisciplinary contract research and industry training solutions. VU's partners across industry, business, government and the not-for-profit sector, include the Department of Human Services, CSIRO,

Sustainability Victoria, Veolia Water Australia, Linfox and SAP.

Within the context of the new Strategic Plan and part of our 'opportunity' agenda Victoria University continues to provide an ongoing commitment to ensuring the economic and social wellbeing of our heartland, the west of Melbourne. Working in partnership with significant regional organisations, VU is coordinating the West of Melbourne Economic Development Alliance (WoMEDA), which is leading the development of an economic development strategy for the West. Working closely with the State and Federal Governments, WoMEDA will drive the new strategy, investigating ways to boost existing industries, such as transport, logistics and construction, and attracting new digital and e-commerce investment.

Opportunity based activities

Blended Learning

A key element of VU's vision for enhancing the student experience and outcomes is technology-enhanced blended learning. VU's *Blended Learning Strategy* aims to enhance student access, experience, engagement and outcomes through an effective blend of face to face problem and inquiry centred learning and digitally enabled learning opportunities.

VU aims to increase blended learning strategies across VU with over 100 units in blended mode by 2017 and all units in blended mode by 2020. The VU Blend will provide students with:

- a learning experience that reflects contemporary teaching practices and applies technology
- the ability to access interactive, networked and creative learning opportunities on and off campus
- digital literacies, and
- Enhanced student engagement.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Victoria University has significant plans to be at the forefront of the 'opportunity' agenda. VU is positioning itself as a leading institution in the provision of tertiary education to low SES, NESB and "first in family". In 2016, approximately 65% of commencing VU students with ATARs have an ATAR below 55, and 55% of commencing VU students with ATARs have an ATAR below 50, compared to 25% and 15% respectively in 2010. A consequence of this approach is that these students often lack the necessary academic preparedness for university study but through significant student support often are successful in their studies. VU is in a unique position to help these students succeed who otherwise may not have the opportunity to engage in higher education.

VU is developing a strong program of student support to ensure that with opportunity comes a path to success for our students. Utilising the unique strengths of a dual sector provider, VU is planning to reshape its delivery of first-year higher education by understand students' individual needs, including preparedness for higher education study, career goals, level of motivation and time available alongside work and family commitments. This will lead to tailored education, guidance and resources, ensuring greater support for underprepared students, while allowing high performers to extend themselves.

Key to this future direction will be the provision of engaging career-based tertiary education at all levels of vocational and higher education. VU will offer flexible entry and exit points, appropriate pathways, and engaging and rigorous curriculum and contemporary delivery.

In 2017, VU will build on current pathway, transition and student peer mentoring initiatives to support retention of at-risk students and further develop work integrated learning programs and graduate employability.

Strategies to ensure quality in teaching and learning

VU is committed to systemic quality assurance and quality improvement strategies in relation to course delivery and the student learning experience for commencing, middle-years, graduate-ready and future students.

VU's approach is underpinned by its *Learning and Teaching Quality and Standards Framework*, which was adopted in March 2016. The Framework is a tool for assuring quality and standards in learning and teaching, establishing principles

around student participation and success and taking a whole of Institution approach to learning and teaching.

The Framework's key elements are:

- Course design and delivery standards
- Student and teacher standards
- Evidence of Impact of standards on quality and outcomes

The Course Design, Support and Course Delivery components specify the minimum standards of quality, learning and teaching activity. Impact considers student outcomes – as learners and graduates – and provides a broad view of mechanisms to measure the Framework's effectiveness across VU. VU will continue to implement the Framework through 2017.

VU has established a network of Directors of Learning and Teaching, Blended Learning Coordinators and Technology and Enhanced Learning Designers that both build capability and monitor the quality of learning and teaching.

In 2017, the newly established Learning Innovation and Quality (LIQ) portfolio is being strengthened to establish an Academic Quality and Standards office to provide an evidence-based approach to course life-cycle - including design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation. This office, together with the appropriate central and local governance structures, will continue to ensure a standardised approach to approving and monitoring units and courses for internal curriculum alignment, assessment and monitoring, and for meeting the requirements of relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING

Strategies to ensure excellence in research and the strengthening of research capability

VU was ranked in the top 400 of the world's universities in the prestigious Times Higher Education rankings for 2016-2017, to which research contributed significantly (approximately 70 per cent).

A new Research Strategic Plan (2017-2020) is in train. It will focus on the two flagships outlined previously.

Six multidisciplinary research areas will underpin the Flagships:

- **effective teaching and learning practices for diverse populations** – identifying, validating and implementing effective teaching and learning systems, policies and practices which empower individuals from diverse backgrounds to achieve success in life
- **supporting industry growth and responses to change** – providing key partner industries with the required systems, policies, practices and technologies to grow and effectively respond to constantly changing political, economic, social and technological landscapes
- **building resilient, inclusive and creative communities** – working with community and government partners to explore the complex relationships between diverse people and communities, built infrastructure and natural environments, and identifying actions to build more resilient, inclusive and creative communities
- **enabling healthy and active populations** – developing evidence-based interventions to promote positive population health outcomes.
- **enhancing high performance in sport** – advancing and translating our understanding of bio-physical and psycho-social processes and theories to improve sport systems, policies and practices
- **enhancing the evidence base for public policy development** – identifying and applying advanced evidence based analysis to public policy challenges.

The research focus areas highlight VU's distinctive research capability. They will drive the strategic investment of effort and money, and enable the development of critical mass and excellence.

In addition to its flagship projects, VU will invest in:

- embedding research programs with industry, government and communities to solve problems relevant to them, and enhance the experience of HDR students through, for example, collaborative industry scholarships and industry placements
- implementing the recommendations of the ACOLA Review of research training, including the further development

and evidencing of generic and transferable skills through researcher development programs, improvement of pathways into research training, and the enhancement of indigenous HDR participation and outcomes

- fostering a vibrant research culture that embraces, supports and sustains creativity, critical enquiry, excellence and integrity by academic staff and students
- growing its capability and reputation through research and research training in areas of research focus to world standard or above.

Public Good Research

VU is strongly committed to public good research, including public policy that is evidence based and actionable. To this end, Victoria University Research Repository showcases the research and scholarly outputs of VU staff and higher degree research students, such as refereed scholarly and research articles, theses and discussion papers and Government submissions.

The Mitchell Institute and Australian Health Policy Collaboration are examples of VU's work in the public policy arena.

VU will also continue its leadership role with the *Mitchell Institute*, which VU established in 2013, to provide access to research on the benefits of access to education (early childhood to secondary) for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Australian Health Policy Collaboration, auspiced by VU, promotes a national agenda for the prevention of chronic disease.

In 2017 the university will look to incorporate a 'find an expert' search function on its website, to enable researchers and other professionals to connect with experts in their field, thus promoting open access to knowledge and research.

EQUITY

VU's *Indigenous Participation Strategy 2012–2016* (IPS) adopts a whole of university approach to improving Indigenous outcomes for education, research and employment. The implementation of the Strategy is the responsibility of the Senior Executive, working in conjunction with Moondani Balluk, the Indigenous Academic Unit. **In 2017 VU will refresh the Strategy's objectives and targets for its next phase.**

The Strategy commits Victoria University to three resolutions:

First, the desire to remove and address barriers to Indigenous entry and participation; second, to create a welcoming, culturally aware and rich environment that recognises and celebrates Indigenous people; and third, to ensure that Victoria University is embedded within and engaged with Indigenous communities and people.

The aims of the Indigenous policy and strategy are to ensure that indigenous student and staff participation at VU are commensurate with national representation, and that indigenous staff and students achieve outcomes on a par with non indigenous counterparts.

IPS achievements include:

- A suite of Indigenous Global Challenge units, developed as part of VU's Curriculum Reform, as well as a series of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education core units, that are offered as electives to other programs. VU will further identify opportunities to include Indigenous knowledge and culture in degree programs
- Specific research appointments and grants – the appointment of an Indigenous Research Fellow, the Lisa Belleair Indigenous Research Scholarship, mentoring for Indigenous staff and annual VU Central Research Grants funding
- Incorporating key objectives *Yannoneit*, VU's Indigenous Employment Strategy, and employment policies, have been progressively reviewed to include Indigenous specific roles, representation, practices and cultural support. VU has instituted an online Indigenous cultural awareness training for staff, *Yulendj Wurrung*, meaning 'knowledge of the language', the first of its kind in the sector.
- As part of the 2016 Centenary Celebrations, the *Moondani Balluk 10th Anniversary* booklet, highlights the achievements in Indigenous research, learning, teaching and engagement.

Other Equity Groups

VU has instituted formal commitments to achieving equality in access and outcomes for educationally disadvantaged social groups, detailed in the University's Equity statements.

The *VU Disability Action Plan 2011-2015* advanced the principle that: "students with a disability are able to gain access, be selected for courses and enrol and succeed in Victoria University courses on the same basis as students without a disability and in proportion to the national population of people with a disability."

The *Student Participation and Success Framework 2014 – 2016* commits VU to continue to attract and support low socio-economic status students and to improve their course completion rates.

VU implements a series of strategies for achieving these equity outcomes - including outreach to secondary schools – to build aspiration and academic capability for success at university. To achieve these equity strategies, VU has formed partnerships, collaborations and offers scholarships, to engage educationally disadvantaged secondary students from schools in the west of Melbourne. Collaborations involve schools, councils, university sector access programs, and high profile, influential organisations, such as the Western Bulldogs AFL football club.

VU will continue to build on these achievements, and tailor its initiatives in the years ahead to emerging needs and opportunities.

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.

Signature

Dom English

Date

19/12/2017

Cate Hutchinson

Witness (please print)

Policy Officer

Position or profession of witness (please print)

CG Hutchinson

Signature

SIGNED for and on behalf of

In the presence of:

UNIVERSITY

PROF PETER DAWGINS

Full name (please print)

NIKY POPOSKI

Witness (please print)

VICE-CHANCELLOR + PRESIDENT

Position

EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

P Dawgins

Signature

N Poposki