



**2017 Mission Based Compact
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Western Sydney 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

Western Sydney University's mission is to be a university of international standing and outlook, achieving excellence through scholarship, teaching, learning, research and service to local and international communities, beginning with the people of Greater Western Sydney.

Our vision is to secure success for our students and the Greater Western Sydney region through innovation and discovery in a dynamic and technology-enabled world.

In 2015, Western Sydney University established a clear, compelling and resolute vision for the future with the release of the *Securing Success: 2015-2020* strategic plan following endorsement by the University's Board of Trustees. The five-year strategic plan encapsulates the rationale and provides the framework for the strategic imperatives to shape the University for a competitive and successful future. The strategic plan articulates the aspirations to focus on internationalisation to create global citizens and produce globally-competitive research with regional impact and relevance. The University aims to strengthen partnerships with the local community to help drive the social and economic development of the region for which we remain a strong advocate. Critically, the University will become a distinctively student-centred university, placing students at the forefront of all our decisions.

INNOVATION

Western Sydney University is student-centred and research-led. Our research makes a difference regionally, nationally and globally. We are committed to collaboration with our regional, national and international communities to contribute to their economic, social and environmental well-being. Diversifying research income, increasing the impact of our research and improving research quality are the goals of our research strategy.

The University will translate rigorous research into meaningful outcomes for industry, business, government, community, and education partner within four interdisciplinary research themes. The themes align the University's research strengths with national priorities and community challenges. The University's research themes are:

- **Urban Living and Society: People, Culture Economy and the Built Environment** – seeking to understand and guide economic, social and infrastructure change through the lens of urban living.
- **Health and Wellbeing: Translation, Service and Innovation** – exploring health initiatives that prevent disease and illness, encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce the cost and impact of illness.
- **Environmental Sustainability: Climate, Agriculture and Resources** – recognising that local environments are connected to global problems such as food security, resource scarcity and climate change.
- **Education: Access, Equity, Pathways and Aspirational Change** – exploring educational access on a global scale, respecting and supporting individuals and communities in their economic, social and cultural aspirations.

In 2016, the University appointed seven theme champions to its four Research Theme areas. The research theme

champions model evolved from an identified need to increase collaborative research at the University. Champions have been selected as research leaders in their fields to build collaborative interdisciplinary research with their theme areas. In particular, the champions will work with colleagues within the Schools to form flexible research teams to undertake impact-orientated research.

Western Sydney University has built its research capacity through strategic investments in research Institutes, Centres and Groups. The University will continue to adopt a selective and concentrated approach to building research capacity at Institute and School level, but with a diversified mix of funding including a greater proportion of Category 3 income.

In late 2015, the University Board of Trustees approved the establishment of a new health-focused research institute: the Translational Health Research Institute (THRI). THRI is building external partnerships and developing collaborative research relationships among Western Sydney University health-focused researchers. THRI's strong point of difference is a model that focuses on the community and supports seamless healthcare from primary and population health through to acute hospital treatment. THRI's research will overlay health research and strong epidemiological and data analysis with a deep understanding of broader social and economic factors. THRI has been instrumental in working with various parts of the University and University partners to form an Academic Health Science Partnership (AHSP). The AHSP is a co-funded collaborative research initiative that involves three universities, two local area health networks and seven medical research institutes. The involvement of Western Sydney University's researchers in AHSP projects will build the capacity and recognition of THRI.

The Research Development Initiative (RDI), in its second year of operation, supports the following crucial areas of research development: early career; gender equity; career interruption and research leadership. In 2016, 50 academics were supported by the Scheme.

The University has also committed to the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) pilot. This involves collecting relevant data on policies and practices and engaging in a process of continuous improvement to meet and internationally accepted accreditation standard.

The creation of REDI (Research Engagement, Development and Innovation) Business in 2014 has been instrumental in facilitating business to academic contacts and increasing overall research revenue. REDI Business is responsible for the management of Intellectual Property (IP) generated by University staff. The REDI Business team delivers professional services to protect and commercialise IP following an invention disclosure. The team also engages with the University community to deliver IP training and develop awareness of IP. In doing this, they proactively encourage the commercial development of Intellectual Property for the benefit of the University, inventors and the wider community.

The University has implemented Easy Access IP (EAIP) as the preferred model for the commercialization of IP. Under EAIP, certain IP is offered to industry partners for free, using quick, simple and voluntary agreements. The EAIP model provides a mechanism for Western Sydney University to release a proportion of our technology portfolios for free to those who can develop it and put it to use. In offering our IP to selected partners for free, we plan to increase the take-up of our IP, accelerate the development of the invention, and encourage new collaborations and research engagement opportunities with industry partners. It is a pre-condition of any agreement that the partner demonstrate the social and economic benefit that will occur as a result of the license and their progress against that plan will be monitored annually.

The Western Sydney University Library manages an Institutional Repository for research publications. Western Sydney University research is made searchable and accessible to the global research community via the Institutional Repository. Open access compliant records can be harvested by major search engines such as Google Scholar, increasing the visibility of research outputs. Metadata is also accessible through TROVE, hosted by the National Library of Australia. Access to the full text of the publication or output is made available where possible.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Western Sydney University strives to be distinctively student-centred and committed to ensuring any student with the willingness and potential to succeed at university is given every opportunity to do so.

A central principle of the University's student-centred approach is the integration of academic and personal support at all stages of the student lifecycle, from initial enrolment to graduation and beyond as a member of our Alumni. This commitment to enhancing the student experience enriches the learning and research experience, provides students with the opportunity to realise their full potential, and recognises that the university experience shapes students' ability to

contribute as ethical, compassionate and global citizens.

The Learning Futures portfolio at Western Sydney University supports the University's commitment to be distinctively student-centred, and to offering life-enriching educational opportunities for all students with the capability and desire to succeed. The expertise of the staff within the portfolio is focused on supporting a student-centred curriculum and teaching in today's digitally rich learning environments. Learning Futures is part of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) portfolio and is collaboratively led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning Transformations and the Pro-Vice Chancellor Digital Futures.

The portfolio's activities enable learning transformation and digital innovation initiatives in Schools and across the University. The work of the portfolio is research-based and data driven and its strategies are developed and collaboratively led with colleagues across the University community. The portfolio's work includes:

- Working with Schools and Programs on Curriculum Transformation initiatives and to facilitate flexible and successful Academic Transition to the University.
- Supporting Teaching Transformations through the development of staff expertise as teachers and curriculum innovators in technology rich learning environments.
- Supporting the University's Innovation in Digital Education with a toolkit of teaching resources and expertise.
- Collaborating to facilitate Leadership of learning transformation and to ensure Western Sydney University maintains a vibrant Teaching Community.

In 2016, the University developed and endorsed the Western Sydney University *Learning Futures Plan 2016-2020*. This plan aligns with the new Higher Education Standards and positions the University for its next phase of learning transformation as part of the *Securing Success* strategy.

The plan places the student at the centre of teaching and learning supported by the following:

- Student-centred learning designs, which are flexible, accessible and inclusive. They encourage learning as an open-ended, integrative, life-long process developed through engaging meaningfully with diverse experiences and ideas.
- Student-centred learning experiences, which are active, collaborative and reciprocal experiences. They engage learners and teachers cognitively, affectively and operatively in co-creating meaningful knowledge.
- Student-centred learning environments, which embody the contemporary qualities of the world our teachers and students live and work in. They are technology-enabled, participant-shaped, industry-engaged and, increasingly, industry and community co-located.
- Student-centred learning enablers, which effectively support, encourage and reward learners and teachers to succeed and excel in student-centred teaching and learning.

In 2016, as one of the initiatives from the *Learning Futures Plan*, a new series of benchmarked trend reports on key Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) data, as well as university teaching and learning performance data, were prepared for the Senate Education Committee and the Executive Committee. These reports were provided to support Schools and the University's senior leadership in planning and monitoring the implementation of strategies to improve the quality of the teaching and learning experiences and outcomes. In 2017, as part of the introduction of a revised student feedback survey strategy, additional accountability mechanisms will be proposed to support Schools and Committees in responding to data to improve students' experience of teaching and learning quality as reported in the national QILT data.

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING

Western Sydney University has built its research capacity through strategic investments in research Institutes, Centres and Groups. The University will continue to adopt a selective and concentrated approach to building research capacity at Institute and School level, but with a diversified mix of funding including a greater proportion of external income. A higher proportion of our staff will secure external research income. Researchers are supported to access external networks, respond to research opportunities and develop impact through an alignment of resources, processes and outcomes. The Research Theme Champions commenced in August 2016. Their role is to lead and promote cross-disciplinary research

teams and practices across the University's research themes to build research capacity.

Western Sydney University's results in the 2015 Excellence in Research Australia (ERA 3) assessment of Australian research were the University's best since the assessment began. These results continue a trend of steady improvement for the University across the three ERA rounds. Over one third of the units of evaluation assessed in ERA 3 improved from ERA 2 in 2012.

The University increased its number of Fields of Research (FORs) rated 'well above world standard': from three such rating in both ERA 1 and ERA 2 to 11 in ERA 3. At the same time, the University reduced its number of disciplines ranked below world standard results at either two digit or four digit level FORs. The University was assessed in 20 of the 22 two digit FORs, placing it equal 12th in the sector for number of two digit FORs assessed.

The University established the Graduate Research School (GRS) in February 2015. The School is now the single point of contact for all higher degree matters and training. The structure and administration of Higher Degree Research (HDR) was reorganised and centralised in the School, thereby increasing the quality and consistency of support for research students across Western Sydney University and will be important in the University's support for its growing international research student cohort. The GRS launched a suite of academic literacy support programs, including a campus-based Graduate Research Academic Development (GRADs) program and online peer and academic support.

All postgraduate research candidates are provided with numerous opportunities to gain superior skills and training through coursework options, seminars and workshops to ensure they are career-ready and highly competitive for a future in academia, community or industry. The University encourages candidates to participate in national and international conferences and to publish the results of their work as they progress. We also offer practical support including funds for expenses directly related to research, a conference support scheme, regular free workshops, online workshop resources, and expert assistance on mathematical and statistical techniques.

Western Sydney University is transforming research education by developing a frontier research training program. The Master of Research aligns with degrees from around the world ensuring students will have an internationally recognised qualification that makes them competitive in their educational and career aspirations. In addition, the Master of Research is a pathway to PhD study. It provides students with the necessary educational experiences and expert knowledge to enable a confident approach to PhD studies.

EQUITY

Western Sydney University is located in Australia's third largest economic region. It draws on students from more than 160 ethnic backgrounds, the great majority of whom are the first in their family to attend university. The University will expand opportunities for all students with the capability and commitment to attend university, irrespective of their economic circumstances or background. Greater Western Sydney has one of the most significant urban populations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and the campuses of the University are located on the traditional lands of the Darug, Tharawal, Gandangarra and Wiradjuri nations.

In January 2016, the University appointed a Pro Vice-Chancellor, Engagement and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership. This position is key to leading the Western Sydney University's initiatives relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes as identified in the Securing Success Strategy and will continue to make the Western Sydney University the university of first choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the University has been increasing steadily since 2012. The Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education ("Badanami") continues to provide programs, services and facilities to encourage and support the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in all aspects of tertiary education. Badanami connects students with a range of services, from study skills courses, career advice, medical assistance and counselling referrals through to studying abroad opportunities. Badanami continues to administer the government funded Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) and Away from Base (AFB) programs. Badanami also provides access to computers, study space, Academic Literacy and Learning support, as well as pastoral and cultural support to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled at Western Sydney University. Badanami has centres operating on six

campuses, and will have a presence at the new Parramatta City Campus from January 2017.

The Office of Widening Participation undertakes activities that contribute towards the participation targets set by the Federal Government: that by 2020, twenty per cent of higher education (HE) enrolments at undergraduate level should be from people from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds. This aim is achieved by targeting students from non-traditional backgrounds in local schools and is a fundamentally important initiative contributing to the ideals of social justice and the wider financial and economic health of Australia in providing well-qualified and motivated entrants into the workforce.

Widening participation in higher education is a crucial part of our mission. Our aim is to promote and provide to all potential students the opportunity of access to, and successful participation in, higher education and to assist and support them to successfully complete their course of study. To achieve these objectives we remove barriers to higher education, whether these are financial, physical, emotional, social, or cultural. We also strive to provide:

Interactive experiences both on and off the university campus in order to raise awareness and aspirations and to contribute towards achievement levels.

- Targeted outreach activities to meet the needs of a wide range of learners and prospective higher education students in primary and secondary schools, colleges, employer and community settings.
- Information, support and link activities for education facilitators including teachers, lecturers, career and pastoral guidance staff, training providers, community workers and parents/careers.

Widening participation programs aim to maintain the increase in Low SES students gaining places in higher education by enhancing their aspirations, self-awareness and confidence so that they can successfully study at university and gain all the advantages and opportunities that tertiary education offers to them, their family, their community and their country.

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.

Doyle
Signature

19/12/2017
Date

Cate Hutchinson
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In the presence of:

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