



**2020 Mission Based Compact
Between the Commonwealth of Australia and La Trobe 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 that 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 that includes that year.

All strategies should provide qualitative and/or quantitative measures of assessment.

MISSION

In this section the University should refer to information on:

- *its primary focus over the term of this compact*
- *its values and aspirations, what it does and how it can best serve the interests of its students, staff and key stakeholders*
- *how the university has responded to the French Review recommendations to adopt the Model Code on free speech and academic freedom.*

The purpose of La Trobe University is outlined in the [La Trobe University Act, 2009](#):

'To serve the community of Victoria for the purposes of higher education, for the education, economic, social and cultural benefit of Victorians and for wider Australian and international communities... providing access to quality higher education to those from disadvantaged communities.'

Our mission: Advancing knowledge and learning to shape the future of our students and communities.

Our vision: To promote positive change and address the major issues of our time through being connected, inclusive and excellent.

The La Trobe University Strategic Plan 2020 – 2030 (published September 2020) was written in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. That event has shaken the world, and its tremors have extended to Australia's higher education system, including La Trobe. We need to respond comprehensively and positively, ensuring that our actions equip our university to surmount current difficulties and remain sustainable, valued and relevant as the world returns to normalcy. This Plan sets out the University's vision and strategies for the coming ten years. La Trobe is a university known for making a positive difference in the lives of our students, partners and communities. We will become an even more valued and relevant university because of the way we respond to their needs in this time of great local and national crisis. Our aim is to emerge as a more resilient, future focused and necessarily more efficient institution that will thrive in a post-COVID world by being more sharply focused on the needs of our community, and by playing to our strengths in teaching and research.

The Plan is available at <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/about/at-a-glance/plans>

The University is the only State-wide higher education provider in Victoria. The delivery of education and training outcomes for rural and regional Australians is central to La Trobe's mission, and La Trobe serves close to 9,000 students from rural and regional areas at our campuses in Albury-Wodonga, Bendigo, Shepparton, Mildura and Melbourne. La Trobe's Rural Health School is Australia's newest University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) and, among the four Victoria UDRHs, has the largest share of rural and regional origin students enrolled in nursing, dentistry and allied health.

A key instrument of making a positive difference in the lives of our communities is La Trobe's signature 'University City of The Future' project, which reimagines what it means to be a university in the 21st century. By turning our campus inside out, and inviting community and industry in, we are transforming the way we work with and serve our communities. As Victoria's only truly State-wide university, we will connect with local issues and apply our world-class research strengths to industry and community needs across regional Victoria. Our partnership with the public and private sectors will see A\$5 billion invested in the creation of a vibrant and sustainable new city with a significant residential population. This new city in Melbourne's north will include a world-class research and innovation precinct, health and community services, new student and residential accommodation, retail and cultural spaces, sport and recreation facilities, and improved transport connections. This will establish the 235-hectare Melbourne campus in Bundoora as a new knowledge community and a place to work, live, learn, socialise and stay healthy.

RESPONSE TO THE FRENCH REVIEW

For more than 50 years La Trobe has been an institution which has embraced free speech and enabled a robust diversity of views. The *La Trobe University Act 2009* requires that the University serve the public interest by "promoting critical and free enquiry, informed intellectual discourse and public debate" and the *La Trobe University Collective Agreement 2018* expressly addresses academic freedom and intellectual freedom. In March 2019, the Vice-Chancellor established the Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom Working Group, co- convened by the Chair, Academic Board and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and comprised of staff from relevant areas across the University, including staff and student nominees of Academic Board. The Working Group reviewed how La Trobe might best adopt the French Review Model Code, particularly in light of the University's current staff Collective Agreement and its internal policies and procedures. Against this background, the Working Group made recommendations for new and revised policies to be implemented at the University to enable adoption the French Review Model Code without modification. Following the usual process of University-wide consultation the University formally adopted the Code in December 2019. La Trobe's approach was commended by the 2020 Walker review as an exemplar in the sector. See <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/about/at-a-glance/freedom-of-speech>.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

In this section the University should refer to:

- *its objectives and/or priorities for teaching and learning*
- *its strategies to ensure quality in teaching and learning*

UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS TRANSPARENCY

- *how the University selects students for offers without an ATAR score, as part of its admissions process*
- *what evaluation strategies are in place for ensuring that students admitted without an ATAR are likely to succeed in their studies.*

UNIVERSITY RETENTION STRATEGIES

- *strategies to reduce the proportion of students that do not complete their course (including for students from regional and remote areas)*
- *evaluation of these strategies, including follow-up with students who do not continue with their studies to better understand the reasons for this decision.*

As outlined in our new Strategic Plan, our main Teaching and Learning objective is to significantly improve the quality and flexibility of our qualifications through changes to our course architecture and through extending our online offering to meet market demand. To do this, we are:

- streamlining the course and subject portfolio with current and likely future student demand;
- simplifying our course architecture to reduce the burden of administration for our staff and increase flexibility and choice for our students;
- increasing the use of online and mixed modes of delivery and support (through our Online Only, StudyFlex and Regional Connect programs);
- ensuring our staff have the capabilities and resources they need to develop quality online courses and measure student experience and satisfaction to drive continuous improvement;
- expanding our range of short courses (award and non-award) to support those seeking to retrain and upskill, with bundling options that encourage lifelong engagement;
- co-designing our curriculum in partnership with industry and alumni and include industry-based experiences across all courses; and
- continuing our efforts to decolonise the curriculum and support embedding of indigenous knowledge and perspectives across our courses

Clever Learning

The actions which will help the University reach these goals are set out in detail in the *Learning and Teaching Plan 2018-2022*, and its related *Student Success and Retention Plan* and are being further advanced through strategic initiatives under *Clever Learning* -our strategic educational transformational program. Started in late 2019, the three-year program is our ambitious plan to deliver educational transformation across our course portfolio and student experience activities. The program integrates and builds on projects and work already underway to meet our strategic objectives of Outstanding Student Experience, Student Employability, One University, Operational Excellence and Revenue Growth. Organised around two clusters of activity – Course Offer and a Student Digital Experience Platform, *Clever Learning* has been integrated into our new Strategic Plan and has five main components:

- Course management reform: Delivering a strong digital foundation for agile governance, management and publication of course and subject information.
- Course portfolio and architecture: Delivering an efficient and robust course architecture that encourages strong interdisciplinary connectedness, simplified transition points, value add experiences for students and high academic standards

- Short courses: Renewing our approach to short course and executive education delivery, as well as setting out the structural and policy context for these diverse offerings
- Online and StudyFlex: Both expanding our partnerships for online offerings and building our internal capacity through planned systems, development and support programs
- Student Digital experience platform: A fully integrated digital experience for students which will include a student engagement interface while also delivering streamlined and online-friendly services and supports for students navigating the University environment.



The University's Performance Indicator framework allows for management, academic governance and corporate governance oversight of performance improvement and the effectiveness of strategy implementation.

UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS TRANSPARENCY

La Trobe University has diligently engaged with the admissions transparency initiative, to the extent that it was recognised in the TEQSA Good Practice Note *Making Higher Education Admissions Transparent for Prospective Students* (July 2019).

Entry requirements for prospective students are listed in the University's web pages for each public facing course profile, including those without an ATAR. This practice applies to all courses on offer at La Trobe. Examples of non-ATAR admissions pathways include: the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT); Work Recognition Program, and via previous higher education participation.

La Trobe is also moving toward offering accredited and/or approved delivery within selected senior secondary education institutions. This reform will include provision of both enabling curriculum and Higher Education in VCE Studies (HEVS) and will ensure predictive validity sits alongside equity for non ATAR admissions, by focussing on higher education preparedness.

After admission, the University actively monitors the performance of students by basis of entry. All non ATAR students are contacted by Succeed@LaTrobe to ensure they have a supportive transition to university. All students also have access to all key services at each of our campuses: Student Success; Engagement and

Employment advisors including transition support; Indigenous student support; health and counselling; library, and industry engagement support. The University is committed to delivery of core services locally, going beyond student welfare to ensure achievement.

UNIVERSITY RETENTION AND SUCCESS STRATEGIES

La Trobe's [Student Success and Retention Plan 2018-2022](#) supports our student success mission to provide an enriched and supportive experience to facilitate every student to achieve their unique version of success, regardless of previous educational attainment, personal background, campus location and mode of delivery.

The *Student Success and Retention Plan* is underpinned by five objectives:

- 1. Outstanding Student Experience**
Placing the student experience at the heart of everything we do, to ensure that our students come first as we strengthen our university community. Fundamental to this is the essential role that all La Trobe staff play in enriching the experience of students.
- 2. Student Employability**
Working in partnership with University staff, industry and community, we will design and deliver activities and experiences that support the development of knowledge, professional skills and personal capabilities that will enhance a student's lifelong professional success.
- 3. Targeted Information and Advice**
Transforming the way we connect students to our services while providing a seamless experience that is meaningful and meets their learning and support needs.
- 4. Supportive Transition**
Providing a holistic transition experience which enables students to connect, engage and succeed at all stages of their studies through multiple entry points, pathways and study modes.
- 5. Inspiring Excellence**
Recognising and nurturing the unique, outstanding abilities and attributes of our students through community, sporting, cultural, academic and entrepreneurial endeavours, enabling them to explore their passions, expand their horizons and extend their capabilities.

Together, these five strategic priorities will focus staff effort, forge an exchange of knowledge and position La Trobe to successfully navigate changes in the higher education landscape.

To assist us in understanding our progress against these goals, the University has developed predictive analytics modelling capability that provides live updates of student engagement and progress across a range of indicators. This has enabled projects such as the trial 'Ghost student' program, that identifies inactive and disengaged students so that staff can make personal contact with the student. Students are offered help to catch up with their coursework (where appropriate) and advised of how to withdraw prior to census if they no longer wish to continue in the subject. In pilot testing around 30-40 per cent of students re-engaged. Following census, the program tutors contacted disengaged students again offering support. This program has provided good evidence for practice that can be extended across the University. Planning is also underway for exit interviews for students leaving the institution or taking Leave of Absence to provide a better understanding of the extent to which life circumstances contribute to attrition and, conversely, the extent to which the institution can act to address circumstances within its control.

Further information on our strategies to support student retention are outlined in our recent submission to the Minister, *Improving Retention, Completion and Success: A response to the HESP Report*.

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING AND INNOVATION

In this section the University should refer to or provide information on:

- strategies to ensure excellence in research and the strengthening of research capability
- strategies for the provision of high quality research training, including measures to encourage PhD industry placements. This information should identify the expected number of industry placements.
- strategies to encourage research translation and commercialisation, including collaboration and engagement with industry and other end users, and the measures of success that the university monitors in this area
- strategies to promote open access to research publications and data.

Research 2030: Research and Industry Engagement Plan 2020-2024 is a five-year plan to focus support and build on the University's achievements in areas of capability and societal need. It will position our researchers to make world-leading contributions to addressing challenges the world will face in 2030 and beyond.

Research 2030 brings new momentum and an accelerated trajectory to improving research performance at La Trobe by focussing support and investment in five interdisciplinary research themes. These themes will magnify and focus the University's research effort and prioritise research investment in a challenging and competitive research funding environment. *Research 2030* reflects new opportunities for innovation and collaboration in the *University City of the Future* and *Research and Innovation Precinct* developments, as well as in the evolution of international higher education and the wider research environment.

Research 2030 will deliver significant improvements over the next ten years to sustain research excellence and bolster:

- The reach and impact of La Trobe research
- Research collaboration and deep research partnerships
- The experience and outcomes for our graduate researchers

Improvements in research excellence will be integrated with the University's strategies relating to regional, global and industry engagement and will be supported by world-leading research infrastructure, a high-performing workforce and an innovative research management system (PRIME).

The *Research 2030* plan outlines the key goals and strategies to implement the research objectives set out in La Trobe University's *Strategic Plan*.

The core objectives are:

- Focusing on our strengths, impact and global challenges through five research themes:
 - Production of high-quality foods and medicines for improved health, reduced environmental impact and enhanced economies
 - Protection and restoration of vulnerable ecosystems and community resilience in the face of environmental and climate threat
 - A healthy, safe and equitable life course for everyone
 - Application of discoveries in the fundamental sciences and developments in technology to understand and prevent disease – especially at the intersection of cancer, immunity, cardiovascular and infectious disease research
 - More just and equitable societies
- Meeting graduate researcher needs in a changing environment
- Becoming the Strategic Partner of Choice
- Transforming our Communities
- Internationalisation in everything we do
- An empowered research community inspired by our values
- Improving efficiency and productivity

Further detail is available in the University's [Research 2030: Research and Industry Engagement Plan 2020-2024](#).

Strategies La Trobe has recently implemented to ensure research excellence include:

- Strengthening research capability through targeted support and development programs for external grants, industry engagement, and inter-and multi-disciplinary research focus areas;
- A Research Education and Development support program for researchers at all stages of career; including an extensive and targeted program for graduate researchers and their supervisors, an Accelerated Completions Program, career-planning, and research communications;
- In a landmark achievement, La Trobe University has received an Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional Award from Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE), and is working towards a Silver award as part of its new Equality and Inclusivity plan;
- To retain research capability and redress the impact of care responsibility on research careers, La Trobe has also established the Tracey Banivanua Mar Fellowships, a three-year research fellowship to support emerging research leaders who have had significant career interruptions due to care giving responsibilities;
- A Graduate Researcher Experience and Wellbeing Implementation Plan that emphasises the importance of wellbeing and employability, with consideration of each candidate's academic and social wellbeing, employment and studies, complex identities and career aspirations;
- An Indigenous Research Strategy is in development to support Indigenous graduate researchers, support partnerships between First Nations communities and La Trobe researchers and to build and sustain a network of Indigenous researchers across La Trobe;
- A *Research Impact Strategy 2019-2022* is being implemented to ensure La Trobe research has maximum impact and benefit for our communities;
- A rapidly-expanding co-funded Industry PhD, which includes a period in which the student is embedded in the partner organisation (rising from 39 in 2017 to 85 in 2020 and aiming for over 100 by 2022).
- Industry internships of approximately 4-5 months are also available through our collaboration with APR Intern (eight in the past two years);
- Within the portfolio of La Trobe's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Industry Engagement) oversees the dedicated Commercialisation Team; and La Trobe's Research Education and Development (RED) team also provides support and capacity-building in engagement and knowledge exchange with industry and other end-users;
- A Research and Innovation Framework is in development to support researchers in translation and commercialisation, through an IP policy to support commercialisation and a range of entrepreneurship, incubator and accelerator programs to increase the opportunities for our researchers to be able to secure investment in their inventions, aligned with appropriate risk management of potential foreign interference;

As part of the broader University City of the Future Program (see above under **Mission**), a new strategy for the Research and Innovation Precinct has been devised. This will build on our deep expertise and capability in agriculture and food, health and wellbeing and digital capability, to provide an ecosystem for start-ups, entrepreneurs, researchers and industry thought leaders; and

- In 2020, the University launched a new open access repository (OPAL) to ensure all eligible research outputs and data are accessible and promoted through a globally recognised platform. Training, support, marketing and financial incentives will be provided to ensure open access outputs have global reach and impact across the communities they serve.

EQUITY

In this section the University should refer to information on:

- strategies for improving Indigenous outcomes and related targets
- strategies for achieving equity for regional and remote students, for low socio economic students and students from other equity groups
- strategies for reducing unemployment in the regions serviced by institutions, including youth unemployment rates
- strategies for increasing student support for relocating students (potentially including specialised on-boarding programs)
- strategies to increase community access to university facilities
- strategies to increase aspirations and advice to school students on study options.

La Trobe was founded half a century ago with a mission to broaden participation in higher education in Melbourne's north and, later, in regional Victoria. We have succeeded for many thousands of students who would otherwise have been excluded from the opportunities provided by a university education. Strategies for achieving outcomes for people from low SES backgrounds in our [Student Success and Retention Plan 2018-2022](#) and the [Student Equity and Diversity Plan 2020-2022](#).

- Maintaining the University's outreach programs and School Partnerships Program;
- Maintaining and enhancing the university-wide approach to peer mentoring and academic advising;
- Continuing the University's commitment to core first year curricula;
- Ensuring that equity is embedded within the La Trobe Graduate Capabilities including 'innovation and enterprise', and
- Continuing to raise participation through expansion of alternative entry pathways, including the 'Aspire' program.

The University actively measures and monitors its performance on equity measures. In addition to student equity, the University's commitment to equity and diversity is demonstrated through the significant work being undertaken as part of the *Diversity and Inclusion Plan* and *Gender Equality Blueprint*.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING INDIGENOUS OUTCOMES AND FOR ACHIEVING EQUITY FOR REGIONAL AND REMOTE STUDENTS, FOR LOW SOCIO ECONOMIC STUDENTS AND STUDENTS FROM OTHER EQUITY GROUPS

The student-related equity strategies are realised in numerous ways including outreach programs to low SES schools; student mentoring and academic support programs; bursaries for outbound mobility and employability experiences; equity scholarships, a dedicated Indigenous PhD Scholarship named in memory of the University's inaugural Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) Professor Dennis McDermott, and support for students from refugee and out-of-home care backgrounds.

La Trobe University is committed to providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, both as individuals and communities, through teaching & learning, research and community partnerships across all of our campuses. Through its Indigenous Academic Enrichment Program (IAEP), La Trobe provides one-to-one tuition, group tuition and exam preparation support for Indigenous Australian students. Further information about our support for Indigenous Australian students is available in [our Indigenous Support Strategy](#) and at our Indigenous Students Services [page](#)

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE COMMUNITY ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY FACILITIES

La Trobe invites the community to utilise the facilities and assets across the campus network, with a wide array of community organisations attending campuses each week. All campuses based in regional Victoria have deep and rich connections to the communities they serve, with the University intellectual and physical assets enriching those communities.

As noted above, the University City of the Future program will turn the Bundoora campus inside out, inviting community and industry in, and transforming the way we work with and serve our communities. This new city in Melbourne's north will include a world-class research and innovation precinct, health and community services, new student and residential accommodation, retail and cultural spaces, sport and recreation facilities, and improved transport connections. The Melbourne campus at Bundoora provides a unique setting for learning, research, employment and community infrastructure. With its substantial landholdings and location at the gateway to Melbourne's growing north, it provides unparalleled opportunities for the University and the wider community to create an innovative and connected city. Key elements of this bold program are outlined below.

- **Research and Innovation Precinct:** While our research strengths are more extensive, we will build on our deep expertise and capability in agriculture and food, health and wellbeing, and digital capability by attracting innovative industry partners aligned to co-locate at La Trobe's Bundoora campus. The Precinct will promote economic and jobs growth through industry collaboration, joint investment and programs that support collaboration between small and large enterprises. The Precinct will be globally recognised as an exciting ecosystem for start-ups, entrepreneurs, researchers and industry thought leaders, and we will facilitate the creation of new postgraduate courses in response to industry needs. It will foster the application of new technologies and research to regional circumstances and will include industry-sponsored PhD programs and research designed to address local issues, support social enterprises, and encourage collaboration with community- focused not-for-profit groups through our regional campuses. We will also build close connections to the Heidelberg West Business Park to create opportunities to share and apply our capability and expertise for mutual benefit.
- **Educational Opportunities:** We will support educational and learning opportunities for our students and for the community. We will work with schools on site to foster connectedness and innovation, so that they are truly part of our community. We will work with industry partners to identify opportunities for our students to gain real life work experience while studying, to move into employment on graduation, and to continue to develop their knowledge and skills throughout their careers.
- **A major Health and Wellbeing Hub:** Due to population growth in Melbourne's north, access to health and human services is under increasing pressure. La Trobe's Health and Wellbeing Hub will provide the community with new health services including hospital and primary health services, aged care facilities, and childcare. The Hub will provide Work Integrated Learning opportunities for our students and sites for research that improves the evidence-base for health care, health promotion, aged care, disability

services, family support services, nutrition and associated social services. Our close connection with service providers across the State will allow us to conduct unique implementation studies and service evaluation programs. We will also ensure that our clinics, where our students learn their professions, are accessible and integrated into community service provision.

- **World-class Sports Park in the north:** The La Trobe Sports Park is a significant regional asset that benefits our students, staff and the local community. It is a platform for our world-leading research on fitness, health and wellbeing for elite and community athletes. The Park includes state-of-the-art sport science, biomechanics and analytics laboratories that are uniquely co-located with elite and community teams training and playing on international-standard high ball courts and pitches. With conference and office facilities, it is a hub for community activity, professional sport and world-class research that will be used by 10,000 community members per week, as well as large numbers of students and staff.
- **New town centre:** Attracting thousands of visitors and residents, the University City of the Future will have a thriving town centre featuring housing, retail, cultural and entertainment facilities. Forming the heart of La Trobe and providing a variety of housing options, this new neighbourhood will attract significant private investment and provide amenity and opportunity for students, staff and neighbouring communities. It will enliven the arts and cultural life of Melbourne's north, taking advantage of the La Trobe Art Institute's collection and curatorial expertise, and our strategic partnerships with major cultural institutions such as the National Gallery of Victoria, State Library of Victoria and The Australian Ballet. Commercial returns from the Town Centre development will support the University's research and teaching programs.
- **A sustainable community:** The University City of the Future will be a sustainable and environmentally responsible community. La Trobe embeds sustainability in all of its activities, and we will be carbon neutral by 2029 – the first university in Victoria to achieve this target. Our site is home to a regionally significant community eco-corridor (Nangak Tamboree) that includes native parklands, waterways and a wildlife sanctuary. The University is committed to protecting and improving the environment and providing opportunities for the community to enjoy the natural bushland setting by creating walkways and cycle paths through the campus. This will establish a site for environmental learning and research, and for citizen science initiatives in water quality and conservation of local flora and fauna. As part of our commitment to sustainability, we will seek to develop and innovate with digital technologies across our city that support community connectivity, safety and efficiency.
- **Better transport links:** Our vision is to create better transport options for high frequency access to our Melbourne Campus. This will support economic activity within the campus and across Melbourne's northern suburbs. We will work with Government to ensure the best possible access options for our community.
- **Civic contribution:** We will continue to identify opportunities to contribute to the civic development of Melbourne's north and across our wider regional footprint by sharing our knowledge and research, and by providing opportunities for industry and community partners to engage with us. We will promote active and engaged citizenship through thought-provoking public lectures, cultural activities and community events and activities that will encourage our local communities to participate in campus/city life.

The University City of the Future is a long-term plan with progress well underway in all areas.

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE ASPIRATION, AND ADVICE TO SCHOOL STUDENTS ON STUDY OPTIONS AND FOR REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE REGIONS

La Trobe's outreach activities all support our efforts to raise academic preparedness and provide advice to students on study options. For example, we deliver sequential, scaffolded outreach activities to equity partner schools across regional and metropolitan Victoria. In 2019 our equity outreach connected with 13,163 (increase of 943 from 2018), through 270 events delivered in 37 partner schools. This program is a highly successful outreach program for the university, and 34.3% of participants considering higher education preference La Trobe. In 2020, Student Success, in partnership with the University's Colleges and Regional Campuses, considered options to improve the conversion of students interacting with LTU outreach and conversion to undergraduate programs. Similarly, in Albury-Wodonga we have pioneered a unique pathway program for year 11 students, which is driving aspiration for and participation in higher education. We work closely with four schools on both sides of the border to support over 100 students. We have now extended this program to Shepparton, with around 80 students.

La Trobe has strong relationships with school, employer and community groups across the regions the University serves. These connections enable students and graduates to build the networks that lead to employment outcomes. For example, the University works closely with Goulburn Valley Health (GVH) at our Shepparton campus, and many of our health students undertake placements with GVH.

In Bendigo, the University has a strong and long-standing partnership with the Bendigo Art Gallery as its Higher Education Partner, providing unique opportunities for research. La Trobe Mildura has a long and shared history with SuniTAFE. Together we have developed innovative models for student enrolment to improve the rate of participation in higher education. We will continue to innovate through our partnership with SuniTAFE to provide unique education programs that meet the needs of under-served communities. Through our location, partnerships and programs we offer access to higher education to students who may never have considered this possible.

LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

In this section the University should refer to information on:

- *strategies for identifying skills gaps within the relevant student and business catchments*
- *strategies for meeting labour market priorities at a local, regional and/or national level*
- *strategies to address employability and graduate attribute skills gaps to ensure students are work-ready*
- *the application of these strategies to admissions and enrolments*
- *how labour market strategies are taken into account in developing course offerings.*

SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Student employability is a core feature of the University's *Strategic Plan 2020-2030*. A key strategy to achieve these ambitious goals is the Career Ready program. Developed in consultation

with students and employers, the program supports employability through an employer engagement team, internships and Work Integrated Learning (WIL), 'in house' recruitment, and embedding employability into the curriculum.

The centrepiece of Career Ready is the [Career Ready Advantage](#), developed in consultation with employers in order to understand the skills and attributes they value in graduates. Career Ready Advantage allows students to take control of developing their capabilities. As students build on experiences such as part-time work, internships, volunteering and international experiences, they are rewarded with priority access to internships, mentoring, consultations, and networking opportunities. The capabilities students develop are compiled into a personalised Career Ready Portfolio, which demonstrates to future employers the skills and attributes they have developed, and the experiential learning activities they have undertaken.

We continue to prioritise the embedding of employability skills and experiences in the curriculum. Intensive support is provided to academics to connect with industry and alumni, develop employability based curriculum experiences and the Employability Champions Network supports academics to share good practice.

RESPONSIVENESS TO LABOUR MARKET

La Trobe works with business, industry and the professions to identify and address areas of emerging skills requirements. The Market Strategy Unit within the Marketing and Recruitment Division plays a key role in supporting the Colleges and Schools in course portfolio planning decisions – providing real time analytics and insights to inform product development and student acquisition strategies. Thorough market research (including insights from current and future industry needs) informs the course development and approval processes. Academic schools have advisory committees to seek input from employers and the professions on current and emerging business needs.

Examples of recent industry-informed course innovation include:

- The Optus La Trobe Cyber Security Research Hub, established in 2018 in response to shortages in the cyber workforce. The Research Hub has a multi-disciplinary research agenda in Cyber Security. Its purpose is to enable the University to become a thought leader in cyber-security from research, teaching and socio-technical development perspectives.
- Our engineering degrees at our Bendigo campus provide expertise for Bendigo and regional Victoria's advanced manufacturers, civil engineering, water management and construction industries.
- The University is launching a Crime, Justice and Legal Studies major in our Bachelor of Arts in response to demand from the justice and corrections sector in regional Victoria.
- The Master of Mental Health/ Mental Health Nursing; Nursing (Clinical Specialty) and Nursing (Nurse Practitioner), deliver nursing skills that are in short supply in metropolitan and regional communities, including Acute/critical care, Cardiac care, Emergency care, Intensive care, Mental health, Neonatal care and Perioperative practices.
- The Master of Special Education delivers high level knowledge and skills in all areas of special education. Such skills are particularly needed in the schools of regional Victoria.
- The University's Master of Internet of Things (Bendigo) has deep relationships with major international technology organisations, local government and industry. This program targets the international market, bringing regional Victoria talented and committed students who can contribute to regional development in an emerging knowledge.
- Development of the Industry PhD program which embeds graduate researchers within partners' organisations, and prepare doctoral graduates for a range of careers that use their expertise and skills.
- Our TAFE pathways into courses at our Melbourne, Mildura, Shepparton, Albury-Wodonga and Bendigo campuses are planned with local workforce needs in mind.
- Each of our Schools and degrees has an advisory board regularly including local business representatives, and our professional degrees receive input from the professional bodies who accredit them.

SECURITY MEASURES

In this section the University should refer to information on:

- *actions being taken to ensure the safety of data against cyber attack*
- *mitigation strategies in the case of a breach of security*
- *how the University complies with the Australian Cyber Security Centre's "Strategies to mitigate cyber security incidents" document (<https://www.cyber.gov.au/publications/strategies-to-mitigate-cyber-security-incidents-mitigation-details>)*
- *measures in place to enhance the identification and deterrence of foreign interference activities including actions to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.*

La Trobe University is committed to an Enterprise Risk Management approach that effectively mitigates risks and increases organisational resilience. La Trobe's risk program is dynamic, pragmatic and agile, allowing for rapid responses in an increasingly changing environment. La Trobe's Enterprise Risk Management is overseen by a robust system of Corporate Governance and supported by a number of practical and contemporary frameworks, policies and tools – enabling the timely implementation and management of risk University-wide. This includes arrangements for

- Cyber Risk Management
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Due Diligence Framework
- Security and Critical Incident Management
- Risk Management
- Fraud and Corruption Prevention
- Compliance and Assurance
- Child Safety
- Staff recruitment and Employee Onboarding

The Campus Safety Group, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, oversees security-related matters from a management perspective. The Corporate Governance, Audit and Risk Committee of University Council has responsibility for governance oversight. Further details of these broad risk-management and security-related measures can be provided upon request.

MITIGATION OF RISK OF CYBER ATTACK

La Trobe's Information Services (IS) Division actively works to create and maintain a secure information technology network that reduces institutional exposure to cybersecurity threats. The University's Cybersecurity Strategy includes a prioritised list of mitigation strategies to protect University systems against cyber threats. The University's strategy is based on the 'Essential Eight Maturity Model', which the Australian Cyber Security Centre has advised is the most effective approach to mitigate cyber security incidents. Implementation of the University's Cybersecurity Strategy is monitored quarterly by Council's Corporate Governance, Audit and Risk Committee.

La Trobe University resources and tools include:

- Information Security Policy

- Cyber Risk Strategy (aligned with Australian Signals Directorate Essential8)
- Cyber Risk Dashboard
- Optus Cybersecurity Improvement Program:
 - Cyber Security Risk Management Framework (in consultation phase)
 - Cyber Incident Management Plan Framework (in consultation phase)
 - Cyber Security Blueprint (in consultation phase)

MITIGATION OF RISK OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE AND INFLUENCE

Since introduction of the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme in December 2018, La Trobe has instituted a number of procedures to ensure ongoing compliance with all issues relating to foreign interference and foreign influence. In 2020, we strengthened our response by allocating responsibility to a member of the University's Senior Executive Group (SEG) to ensure that the University is compliant with all legislative and other regulatory requirements. In addition, our compliance in this field is overseen by our Council through CGARC.

All La Trobe employees have access to a number of resources including FITS training and a Foreign Influence, Interference and Sanctions Risk Management tool. The latter is a prerequisite for all international partnerships prior to any agreement being allowed to proceed. Through a series of questions, the tool provides users with a risk-based pathway and if the agreement is flagged as higher risk, users are guided to the Risk Management Office for independent risk assessment and further due diligence. In addition, the tool assesses compliance against current sanctions regimes being implemented by Australia and specific foreign interference- related legislation such as the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme. Any compliance concerns are then further explored via due diligence and risk assessments and unless they are resolved, proceedings are terminated. In fact, as a result of these complementary processes, there have been instances where the university did not proceed with proposed partnerships with international partners because these rigorous tests were not satisfactorily met.

To mitigate against these risks, La Trobe is also putting in place a number of legal protections. We are currently in the process of making changes to existing standard contract clauses such as Intellectual Property (IP) clauses and clauses have been introduced to our standard contracts to meet the requirements emanating from the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (2018).

From the outset, the University has been an active contributor to the University Foreign Interference Taskforce and is working to implement the UFIT Guidelines. More recently, in line with the passage of the Foreign Relations Bill through Parliament, we are updating our business processes to ensure we are able to comply with these requirements as soon as they become operative (subject to the Commonwealth's finalisation of transition timelines). As mentioned earlier, a SEG member has been assigned responsibility to ensure implementation.

SIGNED for and on behalf of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by Danielle Donegan, Acting First Assistant Secretary,
Higher Education Division of the Department of
Education, Skills and Employment as delegate of the
Minister for Education.

Signed by

Danielle Donegan

Date: 17 December 2020

In the presence of:

Signed by

Sabrina Kim

Position of witness

Policy Officer

**SIGNED for and on behalf of
La Trobe University**

Signed by

Professor John Dewar AO

Position

Vice-Chancellor

In the presence of:

Signed by

Rosemary Nanev

Position or profession of witness

Executive Assistant
