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Australian Government

**Department of Education,
Skills and Employment**

2021-2023 MISSION BASED COMPACT BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

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

The University's strategic purpose is *to create and sustain a university in which, for the benefit of both Australia and the wider world, the brightest researchers and the most promising students, whatever their social or cultural background, can thrive and realise their full potential.*

In the years 2021-23, we will continue to navigate [the challenges faced as a result of COVID-19](#) and its impact on the international higher education market. As well as challenges, the pandemic has also provided an opportunity to seek creative solutions – to accelerate our move to online learning, and to sharpen our focus on improving the experience of both our domestic and international students. We anticipate this will remain an important focus for the next three years.

The pandemic has also underlined the significant contribution our academic expertise makes to Australian society, from understanding COVID-19's genetic origins to assisting in economic recovery, from informing government policy to improving community understanding. In the next three years, we intend to **expand our capacity to use our academic expertise to benefit the wider world**, in areas in which we are acknowledged global leaders.

We will also be designing and planning our next **institutional strategy**, developed under our new leadership. The next institutional strategy will continue to build on the significant achievements of our [2016-20 Strategic Plan](#), as well as ensuring we understand what is needed to sustain a great university in the 21st century. This will require answers to questions around how we best prepare our students for successful and rewarding careers, and how and what we teach and research in a post-COVID world.

In 2016 our University Executive established – and Senate endorsed – a comprehensive Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Framework to monitor progress towards achievement of our goals. The framework includes both internal metrics and a range of measures against which we benchmark our performance with peer institutions in Australia and internationally. This performance framework will be updated once the University's new strategy is finalised.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The report of the *Independent Review of the Adoption of the Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom* (Walker Review) evaluated the University's approach as exemplary in December 2020. Professor Walker separately provided the University with a small number of recommendations that she believed would further strengthen our approach to protecting freedom of speech and academic freedom.

The University's Senate moved promptly in response to key recommendations of the Walker Review. Our 2020 Annual Report included a [Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Attestation Statement](#) (see pages 23-24), while we have reinstated a question in our student life survey to gauge students' views about the degree to which the University is a place where diverse ideas and views can be freely expressed. We will respond to the Review's other recommendations by the end of 2021.

The University adopted the *Model Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers* through its [Charter of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom](#), which took effect on 1 January 2020. Our Senate has committed to progressively reviewing the University's policies to ensure they are aligned with the provisions of the *Charter*. That review is ongoing and to date the following key policies have been made or updated to align with the *Charter*: *Student Charter 2020*, *Student Associations Policy 2020*, *Open Access to University Research Policy 2015*, *Research Data Management Policy 2014*, *Gift Acceptance Policy 2013* and *Research Agreements Policy 2011*.

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

We will consolidate and further develop our program of **industry engagement opportunities**, by building on our program of placements in accredited programs to include [industry and community projects](#), which allow students to work on authentic issues that matter to an industry partner and provide expanded opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship. This will mean that every undergraduate student has the opportunity for sustained and meaningful industry engagement. Success is measured through increasing uptake, improved graduate employment outcomes and metrics in national surveys.

We are implementing strategies designed to **ensure student success**, beginning with pre-enrolment. [A suite of activities](#) has been designed to identify and nurture vulnerable students, including peer mentoring, collaboration with student societies, and co-curricular programs of engagement. We have identified areas where student success can be enhanced with targeted advising to extend the richness of curricular study. We are implementing new strategies to promote early intervention to address student progression issues.

Two operating models to support an **improved student experience** are being implemented. The first for learning support provides greater reach, employing [a range of digital resources](#). The second is a [new model for student health and wellbeing](#), academic and career advising, and student life. These models provide more navigable, accessible and personalised support, with effective early triage, a proactive and evidence-based approach to interventions, access to informed, one-on-one advice and support, and case management support for complex issues.

The success of these strategies is measured through a combination of improved retention, fewer students remaining on the annual progression register, and improvement in metrics in annual surveys.

Other links: [COVID-19 support](#); [Study arrangements and return to campus](#); [Admissions transparency](#)

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Our key [research](#) priorities are:

1. Forming strategic and lasting [partnerships](#) with industry, government and community partners in areas of demonstrated national and [global](#) research strengths, especially in those with the greatest potential for advancing human understanding and societal impact.
2. Developing a larger cohort of researchers across the University who are [engaged](#) in and being supported to translate and [commercialise](#) their research where possible and appropriate.
3. Improving opportunities for our HDR student cohort to develop broader skills, in addition to their disciplinary training, which will enable them to work effectively in a variety of settings – including in industry, civil society, government and academia.

Links: [Core Research Facilities](#); [Charles Perkins Centre](#); [Brain and Mind Centre](#); [Sydney Nano Hub](#); [Sydney Policy Lab](#); [Indigenous Research Strategy](#); [Student Entrepreneurship](#).

The University has a comprehensive set of research performance metrics linked to our strategic plan and enterprise risk matrix to measure progress against these goals, which are collected and reported regularly to the University's Senate.

We detailed our approach to cybersecurity and other foreign interference (FI) risks in our submission to a major [Federal Parliamentary inquiry](#) in December 2020. We have an integrated FI plan in place, refreshed annually, which complies or aligns with the Australian Government's various relevant laws and guidelines. We report regularly on our mitigation priorities, approach, incidents and emerging issues to the University's Senate Risk and Audit Committee.

Links: [International collaboration principles](#); [Cyber security](#)

IMPROVING STUDENT EQUALITY AND OUTCOMES

Since our inception we have believed in education for all and leadership that improves lives in the communities that we serve. We work with students from low socio-economic backgrounds, rural, regional and remote areas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds to [encourage participation in higher education](#).

We are focused on offering extensive [pre-tertiary outreach programs](#) to build academic and cultural capacity, and we advocate for inclusive equity-related policy, admissions pathways (our E12 Entry and Gadigal Entry schemes provide entry on a significantly reduced ATAR) and inclusive practices that support increased higher education access. Another key focus is providing [equity scholarships](#) for students who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, experiencing financial hardship, living with a disability, or from rural or regional areas.

Under our [One Sydney, Many People 2021-2024](#) Indigenous strategy, we are prioritising support that aims to enable the brightest and most promising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and students to realise their potential. Our range of initiatives includes [admission pathways](#), and our [services and facilities](#) include study spaces, academic workshops, ongoing tuition and accommodation support, as well as mentoring and other networks for new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The commencement of the strategy in early 2021 coincided with the opening of a new dedicated and bespoke Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student centre, the [Gadigal Centre](#).

The success of these strategies is measured through offers made in the E12 and Gadigal scheme, the number of equity scholarships and improvement in metrics in annual student support surveys.

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SIGNED for and on behalf of
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

In the presence of:

by

Dom English

Ryan Kinder

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

A/g Director

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)

of the Department of Education, Skills and
Employment as delegate of the Minister for
Education and Youth

Signature

Signature

28/12/2021

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of
The University of Sydney

In the presence of:

by

Professor Mark Scott AO

Donna Bennett

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Executive Officer

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)





Signature

Signature