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Australian Government

**Department of Education,
Skills and Employment**

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

Drafting instructions: please limit your submission to 5 pages.

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 to specify (Max 250 words):

- *its three key outcomes it will achieve over the length of the compact period, including how they will be achieved and measured*

The University's strategic plan [Sustaining Success 2021-2026](#) presents the mission, values, principles and enablers of the University and provides a strategic roadmap. It defines our goals and the ten measures against which we will evaluate our success, as well as targets against these measures at the mid-cycle point of the strategic plan in 2023.

The University's mission is "Starting in Western Sydney, our students will succeed, our research will have impact and our communities will thrive through our commitment to excellence, sustainability, equity, transformation and connectedness."

Our goals:

1. Through curriculum reform, research and innovation, engagement activities, operational efficiency and development of our built environment, the University will retain THE Impact Rankings within the top 10 globally.
2. As a globally recognised university of and for Western Sydney, we will set the benchmark for diversity, inclusiveness and equity.
3. The University's high-quality research will collaboratively address global challenges and inform our innovative and flexible curriculum, ensuring highly employable graduates are recognised for their ability to create sustainable futures through local and global leadership.
4. Our collaborative delivery of technology-rich, flexible and high amenity facilities for teaching and learning, research and engagement will expand, making a measurable difference to the wellbeing, prosperity, health and culture of the communities within which we are embedded and engaged.

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FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

In this section the University to specify (Max 250 words):

- *its response to the recommendations of the Walker Review on the adoption of the Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom.*
- *links to relevant policies and implementation strategies that demonstrate the formalised adoption of the Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom*

The Walker review found Western Sydney University's policies were 'mostly aligned' with the Model Code. The University responded to the Walker recommendations to strengthen its approach to Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom through a review of the following policies: [Charter of Academic Freedom](#), the [Freedom of Speech Policy](#), and the [Code of Conduct](#).

Academic Senate members were briefed on the outcome of the review and agreed to examine the Charter of Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech policy.

The review of these policies resulted in a consistent approach across these documents as well as a statement that freedom of speech and academic freedom are not to be restricted, or their exercise burdened, except in accordance with the law, Model Code, and the obligations, codes and policies of the University. It also removed terms that were capable of interpretation to limit these freedoms in a manner that was not consistent with the Model Code.

The Charter includes a statement on the adoption of the Principles in Part 2 of the Model Code for the protection of academic freedom and freedom of speech. All instruments have been brought into alignment with the definition of 'academic freedom' presented in the Code. These instruments are now in the policy approval process and set to return to Academic Senate in August after consultation with the Board of Trustees.

The policies will be on the Policy website in their revised no later than September/October 2021.

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS

In this section the University to specify (Max 250 words):

- 1. its three key teaching and learning performance targets, including how they will be achieved and measured. Strategies for engaging with industry must be included and admissions transparency, retention strategies, student and staff mental health policies, labour market outcomes, student return to campus strategy and other relevant areas should be considered. Provide relevant links.*

Our students' learning and success are fundamental to our mission. The University's strategic plan [Sustaining Success 2021-2026](#) extends the University's commitment to a student-centred approach by responding to the challenges and opportunities afforded by the expected disruptions to the future of work. Through the learning experiences the University offers, our students are equipped to shape communities as future thinkers, innovative entrepreneurs, global citizens and sustainability advocates.

The University's technology-rich learning and teaching experience is informed by a research-enhanced curriculum that facilitates employability.

The University is committed to [admission transparency](#). Detailed information about admission requirements and student profiles for undergraduate degrees is available.

The University promotes positive mental health and wellbeing for students and staff as per the University's [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#).

Identified priorities are:

1. Increase the retention of our domestic and international students and the quality and employability of our graduates. This priority is supported by the University's [Transition and Retention Strategy](#).
2. Expand the proportion of curricula and microcredentials that are co-created with industry and community partners. This priority is supported by the 21C Project, which is focused on transforming curriculum, alternative credentials and teaching. Strategies for engaging with industry ([Partnership Pedagogy](#)) include co-credentialling, co-delivery, co-design and co-development.
3. Improve student satisfaction, engagement, support and belongingness (measured by student feedback surveys) by focussing on our [return to campus](#) to create opportunities for an on-campus learning experience for our students.

Measures and targets are specified in Appendix 2 of [Sustaining Success 2021-2026 \[Measures 7, 8 and 10\]](#).

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

In this section the University to specify (Max 250 words):

- *its three key priorities for research and research training and innovation, including how they will be achieved and measured. Include industry engagement strategies and consider research commercialisation, countering foreign interference, including cybersecurity measures and compliance mitigation strategies, and other relevant areas. Provide relevant links.*

Western Sydney University is a strong partner of choice for industry, government and communities, collaborating to optimise translation of the University's research and drive innovation and entrepreneurship for impactful economic, social and environmental change.

Identified priorities for 2021-2023 are:

1. Maximise research excellence and industry connectivity to drive collaboration associated with broader initiatives including the National Industry Linkages and Priorities Fund.
2. Promote the region as a key Innovation Destination contributing to Greater Sydney's standing as a global innovation hub through our "Innovation Futures" Strategy. A focus on research related to this challenge, bringing cross disciplinary expertise, supported through our [research themes](#), to grand and global issues including the [SDGs](#). The University will leverage and foster its capabilities and capacity to achieve impact in a rapidly changing world and grow the University's capacity through equitable [researcher and research development programs](#).
3. Contribute to the innovation ecosystem through the delivery of high-impact entrepreneurship training, including for researchers and HDRs.

Measures and targets for research are specified in Appendix 2 of [Sustaining Success 2021-2026 \[Measures 1 and 6\]](#).

The security of these priorities is supported by our commitment to government requirements on foreign arrangements and cybersecurity. This includes developing our [Foreign Arrangements Portal](#) as well as staff training, knowledge sharing, and collaboration with Universities Australia, IRU, UFIT and other domestic partners.

The University's [Cyber Security Policy](#) and Cyber Security Strategy and Plan 2019-2021 are designed to protect the University's IT systems and services from malicious intrusion or accidental compromise.

IMPROVING STUDENT EQUALITY AND OUTCOMES

In this section the University to specify (Max 250 words):

- *its three key priorities to support students from under-represented backgrounds, including how they will be achieved and measured. Consider student equity, support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, low SES students, students with disability, student and community outreach, and any other relevant areas. Provide relevant links.*

The University will maintain its long-standing commitment to enhancing the lives of our students, people and communities by promoting fairness, social justice and opportunities for success. Identified priorities are:

1. Continuing to enhance support provided through the University's [Wellbeing Services](#). These services provide tailored assistance for students who face a diversity of challenges and require additional support. Services include counselling, disability support, financial assistance, mental health and wellbeing initiatives, welfare service, international student support, parent, carer, Pacifica, HDR and veteran support programs.
2. Indigenous Students remain a priority area for the University as outlined in the [University's 2020-2025 Indigenous Strategy](#). The Strategy outlines actions that will provide opportunities for Indigenous Australian students to learn and succeed in an environment that promotes Indigenous excellence. Notably our [Sustaining Success 2021-2026 Strategic Plan identifies a target of 2.5% Indigenous students by 2023](#) to be achieved through comprehensive programs of academic, pastoral and cultural support.
3. Continuing to deliver and develop our [Widening Participation programs](#) which engage with primary and high schools and community groups to increase the aspirations and access of students from under-represented backgrounds to participate in post-secondary education. Our bespoke participation programs include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, low socio-economic, Pacific Islander, refugee and asylum seeker student cohorts. Our activities target communities and schools identified as disadvantaged by multiple socio-economic indicators.

All program outcomes are measured against program objectives and impact assessment on student wellbeing and success. The University also reports on student participation, retention and progression of specified student cohorts.

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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

28/12/21

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of
WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

In the presence of:

by

Professor Barney Glover

Maree Oliver

Full name (please print)

Witness (please print)

Vice-Chancellor and President

Principal Executive Assistant to the VC

Position

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

Signature