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# AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES ACCORD

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**Victoria University's Full Response  
to the Australian Universities Accord  
Interim Report**

01 September 2023

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# Executive Summary

Some commentators claim that Australia's university system is too homogeneous.

Others argue that the Vocational Education sector is under constant pressure.

Various reviews have identified a downwards drift in the quality of school teaching, and declining core literacy and numeracy standards.

It is clear that each of our three education sectors – higher education, vocational education and training (VET) and school education – need an uplift. And the federal reviews currently underway are dedicated to identifying the mechanisms to achieve this.

We believe that the blueprint for uplift can be Victoria University (VU) itself.

We propose that VU be the national exemplar of outstanding teaching, learning, research and career preparation in all three sectors. Simply put, we can be **Australia's Triple Sector University**.

There are six key elements to this proposition:

1. **Teaching mode:** The proven success of the VU Block Model® (see accompanying **Attachments 1 and 2**), under the provisions of the *Victoria University Act (2010)*, can be extended to senior secondary, TAFE and university education alike. Our model uniquely offers accredited forms of intensive, professional, group-based learning and teaching, delivered one subject at a time in sequential four week blocks. It is a proven model to enhance the success of student equity cohorts; in essence, students stay at university longer and perform better academically. The Block Model's success does have a funding impact due to the additional resources required to support students. For this approach to best succeed, we also need an equity-based funding system (see element 4 below).
2. **Sectoral co-location:** To supercharge the success of a triple sector approach, open up credit, and guarantee relevance to students, every VU campus would co-locate *all three* sectors – senior secondary, TAFE and university. With government backing, in the medium-term future this would result in shared facilities, infrastructure, staffing and student services, creating outstanding teaching and research collaboration outcomes.

Rather than reforming all sectors, we believe that the government should build a program that acts as a bridge between the higher education, VET and senior secondary school systems – we call this the *triple sector bridge*. The *triple sector bridge* would create a new pathway that teaches employment-relevant skills and has specialisations that address local industry need. This new program would encompass three qualifications: the modern certificate, the modern diploma and the modern degree (see **pages 7-8** of submission for more detail). The Mitchell Institute is working on one manifestation of the triple sector approach that we hope to share with policymakers soon.

3. **Industry at the core of education and research – the Flipped Campus Model:** To fully materialise the skills agenda and optimise access to the universe of work for all students, every VU campus would also feature ethically and practically aligned industry partners *physically situated* on campus. Employers would be *campus neighbours*. Students at all levels would benefit from this co-placement or insertion model, which meaningfully connects VU with industry in terms of course co-design, co-delivery and access to relevant work experience. Not only would co-location empower simultaneous earning and learning, but industry placements and paid employment would occur on the same site as industry-based learning and teaching and research. Physical industry co-location – what we call our Flipped Campus Model – would empower applied and impact-driven research like never before.

VU believes that an important response to the Accord's priority of bringing university education to under-serviced communities is to establish Centres of Excellence as learning, teaching and research specialisation hubs. These centres target the specific needs of local communities – regional, urban and peri-urban – with tailored support to help students succeed. See **page 9** for a case study on VU's Centre of Excellence in Paramedicine.

- 4. An equity-based model of participation and funding:** Access is important, but it is only one part of the picture. Student progress and success through to gainful employment, are equally vital. Our approach embraces all three. We need an equity-rich, needs-based funding model that is student and person-centred. To improve outcomes, VU recommends an equity-based funding model, like the School Resourcing Standard, that gives more funding to students from equity backgrounds. The greatest level of international evidence on the efficacy of equity loadings comes from the secondary school system. Research shows that a targeted 25 per cent increase in school funding would close the average attainment gaps between children from low-income families and children from more affluent families.

Importantly, equity loadings are targeted at institutions. This is crucial because while other policy responses to combating disadvantage also impact educational outcomes – the social security system being an example – they are not designed to support the educational institutions. This approach helps counter disadvantage by meeting the extra needs that occur in a learning context. We recommend such a funding model because of its equality, proven excellence and because it already operates Australia-wide in the school sector. See **pages 11-12** for more detail.

VU is a world leader in researching education funding systems. Our researchers are heavily involved in the creation, analysis and refinement of the needs-based funding model used in Australia's school system. The Mitchell Institute is currently exploring the impact of introducing a similar model in the university system. This includes its impact on overall funding levels and the possible interaction between an international student levy and needs-based funding. We look forward to sharing this research with the Accord Working Group once it is completed.

- 5. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) optimisation:** The Flipped Campus Model would maximise the full use of campus sites, expand public participation and demonstrably reduce energy waste on all campuses. First Nations insights on Protecting Country and People would be maximised in governance and practical terms. Most importantly, the university would thrive because, above all else, it prioritises its students, from those in year 11 of secondary school through to PhD candidates.
- 6. Digital enablement:** This is a necessity. Every profession, trade and skilled occupation in the future will have a profound digital dimension. It is equally clear that working with technology optimally requires working in teams. The experiential, focused and transformative nature of the VU Block Model coupled with the Flipped Campus approach energises this collaboration, from centres of skills and research excellence to Design Boot Camps and commercialisation. Productivity skyrockets when in-person and digital collaboration is optimised – and pervasive digital enablement is the key.

The Universities Accord Interim Report underscores the critical importance of equity, access and participation in higher education reform – and we commend the Government for platforming these imperatives.

The ideas summarised here require a bold cross-government response. To drive meaningful change, collaboration among key ministerial colleagues in Education, Skills, Industry, Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs, will be key. The result will not only amplify priorities for all in government, but will create an Australian tertiary education sector that is equitable and excellent across the continuum of learning.

This is our vision of the university for the coming decades. It is designed with equity at the core, by intertwining innovative teaching methods, industry partnerships, equity-driven funding and a commitment to global sustainability. VU's Interim Report proposal represents a blueprint for the future of higher education in Australia – underpinned by equity, access and excellence.

We support those policy considerations that unlock VU's potential, as a dual sector institution, to deliver on this vision. This is the very definition of a point of difference. And the time is now.

Victoria University – Australia's Triple Sector University – commends our response to you.

# The Triple Sector: Building a bridge between Australia's fragmented education systems

The Interim Report highlights the central importance of equity, access and participation to the national higher education reform agenda. As one of Australia's leading educators of equity students, we support more ambitious equity targets. But access is only one part of the equation. Progress and achievement should also be recognised as important measures of student success.

VU has a deep commitment to progressive inclusivity, offering educational opportunities for all:

- 51 per cent of VU students are the first in their families to go to university.
- 34 per cent are student equity participants (exceeding the national average of 17 per cent and national target of 20 per cent).

Embedded in western Melbourne, VU is keenly aware of the pressures and ambitions experienced by its diverse student cohort and local communities, alongside governments and related industries. This engagement informs how VU designs and delivers its programs. It has also affected how we think about learning, teaching, the importance of equity and student and campus life.

The Accord has grand aims for system-wide reform of the Higher Education sector. To achieve these aims it needs better links to other parts of the education system. We cannot meet the aims of the Accord without involving the vocational education and senior secondary system.

VU nominates six key features of this approach, which would in turn uplift the teaching, learning, research and career preparation of the modern student, no matter their location or background.

## 1.1 Teaching mode – the VU Block Model – our approach to innovative teaching, equity outcomes and the student experience

The Accord presents us with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to put students and their student experience at the heart of higher education reform. VU welcomes the Interim Report's acknowledgement that learning and teaching approaches are undergoing a profound shift worldwide [and that] "greater priority now needs to be given to educational development and experimentation" (Part 2, Section E).

We have experienced first-hand the significant impact of the **VU Block Model**<sup>®</sup>. The model is transforming the lives of the students who we serve, especially our equity cohorts.

The VU Block Model is uniquely designed around the learning needs of our culturally and socially diverse student cohort. Critically, it:

- Focuses on one subject at a time, enabling our students to balance study, work and life.
- Promotes active learning through small classes (rather than lectures), ensuring that every student has plenty of practice in skills-based training, complex decision making, problem solving, and teamwork.
- Builds learning communities, where students work with and support each other in their learning.
- Develops transferable skills across the curriculum with supported co-curricular activities.

### Equity cohorts

Since the introduction of the block learning in 2018, we have been building an evidence base examining the impact of this approach, by monitoring student performance and success. The VU

Block Model has significantly improved educational outcomes for all students, with reduced attrition and increased pass rates, notably for students from equity cohorts.

Key insights from our research reveal:

- Pass rates for non-English speaking students improving by 15.5 per cent.
- Pass rates for low socio-economic status students improving by 18.2 per cent.
- 2023 pass rates for both cohorts tracking at the highest levels since the introduction of the model (at 87.7 per cent and 88.2 per cent respectively).

These results have now persisted over time, see **Attachment 1** for further details.

## First Nations students

The VU Block Model's impact is also evident for the University's First Nations students. While the cohort of students is smaller compared with other institutions, VU has the highest success rate nationally for Indigenous students out of any university, at 86 per cent (2021 Section 16 Equity Performance Data, Australian Government, Department of Education).

This success is also shaped by VU's Indigenous academic unit – Moondani Balluk. As the experts and authority in growing, sharing and connecting Aboriginal perspectives and standpoints at VU, they provide an environment of cultural safety for these students and use de-colonial approaches to learning and teaching.

## VU Block Model® in schools

In implementing the VU Block Model, we have seen its potential application to other sectors, including vocational education and secondary schooling. It is particularly beneficial for students from vulnerable, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) or low socioeconomic communities. With the University of Melbourne, VU prepared a joint proposal to introduce a 'block model' of teaching into secondary schools. It proposes that adapting a block model to secondary schools can help improve student learning and lift student performance.

## The VU Block Model and Funding

Our clear analysis of the efficacy of the VU Block Model is that, while it is approximately 28 per cent more expensive to teach because of its intensity – progression and success rates for students have lifted dramatically – to more than 90 per cent.

It also means VU is seeing a reduction in the Equivalent Full Time Study Load (EFTSL) rate as students take less time to complete their studies. Because universities are currently funded on an EFTSL basis, this is impacting VU's funding. To ensure adequate funding across the sector, VU advocates for an equity-based funding model (see point 1.4 below).

## A New Program: Building the bridge between sectors

Australia's tertiary education system needs to do much more to meet the challenges facing our society and economy. Yet it still operates on a model that has been largely unchanged since the 1950s: three-year degrees, apprenticeships for some occupations and an underperforming VET sector.

VU believes that a new approach is needed to fill a vital missing piece in Australia's education architecture.

Rather than reforming all sectors, we believe that the government should build a program that acts as a bridge between the higher education, VET and senior secondary school systems.

We call this the *triple sector bridge*.

We envisage the bridge as a vital part of Australia's educational architecture that brings out the best of each sector, while enabling each to continue meeting its many other aims.

While Australia's tertiary education system has grown, there remain few high-quality options outside of traditional degrees and apprenticeships. The *triple sector bridge* would create a new pathway that teaches employment-relevant skills and has specialisations that address local industry need.

Most importantly, it would provide more options for young people to make successful transitions from school to the workforce, while meeting industry's evolving workforce demands.

This new program would encompass three qualifications: the modern certificate, the modern diploma and the modern degree. It would be vocationally focused, free (or low-cost) and aimed at young people aged 17 to 20. It would also help mature-aged students wanting to enter the workforce (e.g. recently arrived migrants) and those wanting to re-skill.

The new program would include both general components and specialisations. It would involve work experience in jobs that provide pathways into higher-level positions and enable students to gain broad skills in jobs of interest to them and relevant to local industries.

It would set young people up to transition to the workforce in the best way possible.

TAFEs and universities should be the main providers. The qualifications would be designed to attract high-quality candidates and embed full recognition to further study. It should also be placed on the AQF, to cement its role in Australia's educational architecture.

To ensure such a program attracts a range of students, demand would be encouraged by offering:

- Low or no fees.
- Funding at rates comparable to the School Resourcing Standard – on average, approximately \$20,000 annually.
- Maximum credit, where possible, to take into further study.
- A strong foothold into the workforce and, where possible, paid work experience.
- Courses at “full service” institutions that have wraparound support and student activities.

The degree would be at the associate degree level and have exit points so that students can leave the course with a formal qualification.

Institutions and existing agencies would quality-assure the program and act as intermediaries between students and employers where needed. Organisations such as Industry Skills councils can lead the co-design of courses with industry and employee groups to ensure that courses align with best practice in applied vocational programs.

Like the school system, the funding could use needs-based models (as detailed under Item 1.4) to ensure that priority groups are getting the extra support that they need.

This new program is the structural change Australia needs to make its tertiary education sector fit for future challenges. Achieving it requires a concerted, embedded approach featuring the whole of government, both federally and at the state level. The Mitchell Institute is working on one manifestation of the triple sector approach that we hope to share with policymakers soon.

## 1.2 Sectoral co-location and the Flipped Campus Model

When students determine study options, proximity and connection to a place of learning are two critical decision-making factors, the Interim Report concludes. Acknowledging that this is not restricted to regional areas, the report identifies that students in outer metropolitan and peri-urban areas can face similar access challenges, compounded by long or costly commutes.



VU is committed to accessing excellence *in-place*, by creating education opportunities in areas of major skill demand that are relevant to the regions and communities we serve and where our students live and work.

## **Centres of Excellence: Connecting place-based skills/workforce need and research specialisations**

The growing population in Melbourne's West, highlighted on page 39 of the Interim Report, means growing local jobs in relevant industries is crucial. Centres of Excellence can offer students the full scope of qualifications in relevant skills sets.

VU believes that an important response to the Accord's priority of bringing university education to under-serviced communities is to establish Centres of Excellence as learning, teaching and research specialisation hubs. These centres target the specific needs of local communities – regional, urban and peri-urban – with tailored support to help students succeed. The case study below illustrates this.

### **Case Study: Centre of Excellence in Paramedicine (Sunshine)**

In partnership with Ambulance Victoria, VU is establishing a new national Centre of Excellence to deliver a focused skills and research effort aligned with Ambulance Victoria's strategic commitment to delivering world-class community care.

This Centre of Excellence will be co-located on our Sunshine campus with our already established Australia-first paramedicine Capability Hub, which will use expertise from across VU to support the ongoing skills development of paramedics. This hub contains state-of-the-art virtual reality technology and simulation tools, along with purpose-built spaces.

With more than 1300 paramedics recruited to Ambulance Victoria over the past two years, the Capability Hub and the Centre of Excellence will together support the current and future generations of paramedics to respond to an ever-increasing demand for emergency healthcare services across Victoria.

At VU, this is known as the Flipped Campus Model. It represents the campus of the future and reimagines the role of the university. Addressing the skills shortage, the Flipped Campus approach enables students (for example, those studying paramedicine, early childhood education or mental health) to remain in the workforce while accessing higher education, produce more highly skilled people, and build industry links that enhance future employment opportunities.

Recognising the importance of cutting-edge research that will more easily be absorbed by industry, the government should fund incentives that attract industry leaders into HDR programs (Masters and PhD). VU supports the Interim Report's consideration of establishing a target for the number of HDR candidates employed in industry undertaking a PhD relevant to their employer.

## **1.3 Putting industry at the core of education and research**

The Interim Report indicates that the Accord will consider the creation of stronger links between industry and education, particularly in regional areas and where there are low participation rates. To achieve this, VU recommends a sector-wide adoption of our Flipped Campus Model.

The model sees at least one ethical, aligned industry partner on-site at each university campus. This goes beyond work-integrated learning to industry-engaged and enterprise-centred education,

providing opportunities for students and staff in education, internships and research, and offering synergies that would not otherwise be available.

The Flipped Campus Model also addresses the struggle many PhD graduates experience when seeking work outside academia. The number of academic positions has also shrunk in recent years, and only an estimated 25 per cent of PhD graduates are employed in academic positions.

This is where industry alignment goes further than a simple agreement with a peak body for internships or apprenticeships – we are inviting industry allies to co-locate with us on all our campuses. Our major alliance framework ensures there are aligned values and genuine collaboration.

Put simply, this unlocks the entire chain of employment opportunities for VU students. They can work full-time with a VU partner, while studying via the VU Block Model – which only requires 11 formal (in-person or online) contact hours per week.

So, who is partnering with us already?

- **Sharpe & Abel:** Given VU's innovations in the field of intellectual property, it made sense to partner with a specialist IP law firm. Sharpe and Abel are now co-located in our Law Building – right next door to the Dean's office. For our law students, this means guest lectures from partners in the firm and exposure to professionals in all aspects of the law while studying (from legal secretaries and assistants through to partners). For our staff, this provides the opportunity to co-design and develop experiential learning experiences that grow our graduates' employability.
- **Orygen:** VU is partnering with mental health not-for-profit Orygen to establish services at our Werribee campus and forge a strategic partnership grounded in a shared commitment to boosting youth mental health workforce capability and capacity. In 2023, we will see the launch of the first **Headspace** office on a tertiary campus, which will facilitate work experience placements with Orygen for our psychology, nursing and social work students. Similar commitments have been made with co-located partners at VU's St Albans campus, **Lifeline** and **ASPECT** (Autism Australia). This strategic partnership also provides an opportunity for collaborative applied research.

In our VU City Tower, we have welcomed several strategic partners:

- **Industry Capability Network (ICN) Victoria:** VU students gain industry immersion experiences through placements and research, graduate pathways and connections to ICN Victoria's extensive industry network. VU is also delivering professional training and micro-credentials for ICN Victoria industry members.
- **PEXA:** The world's first digital property exchange platform, connecting home buyers, sellers, government and real-time data insights, will establish a PEXA Learning Academy. The PEXA Agreement will offer VU students access to graduate and internship programs and opportunities to solve real-life business problems through capstone projects.

We are implementing this distinctive jobs and skills-focused approach across all our campuses and across VET, higher education and research, in areas of high skills demand.

This is more than a cooperative education model. It is an *industry-embedded* model spanning the entire duration of degrees and diplomas. It is industry-, employment- and student-focused. It is workforce and skills driven. And it is about equity and excellence – providing opportunities to students in flexible, cost-effective and convenient ways.

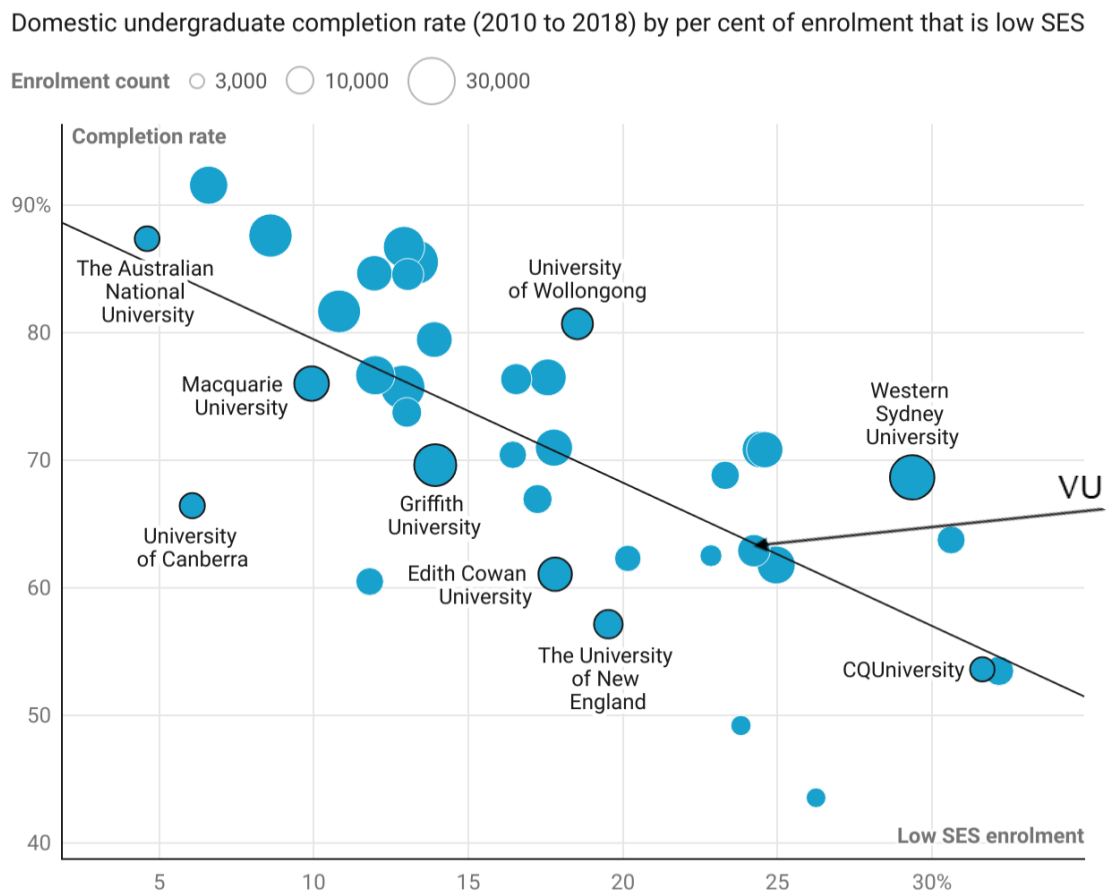
## 1.4 An equity-based model of participation and funding

Outcomes for equity cohorts remain below that of more advantaged cohorts, despite improving student equity being an increasing focus of higher education policy. The Interim Report outlines how the sector is currently funded, excessive debt and rising student costs of living pressures are impacting equity outcomes.

To improve outcomes, VU recommends an equity-based funding model, like the School Resourcing Standard, that gives more funding to students from equity backgrounds. Equity loadings refer to allocating additional resources or funding to address the educational needs of students facing various challenges.

There is significant evidence that funding loadings based on the composition of cohorts can improve educational outcomes. The concentration of need at an institutional level, for instance where there are larger cohorts of students from equity groups, provides a strong rationale for introducing equity.

This is particularly relevant for Australia's higher education sector as it seeks to broaden participation from equity groups. It is well established that students from more disadvantaged backgrounds perform worse on various education measures (see **Figure 1** below).



**Figure 1:** Universities with higher concentrations of disadvantaged groups also have lower completion rates

The above graph demonstrates the impact of disadvantage on completion rates, where universities with greater numbers of students from low-SES backgrounds experience much lower rates of completion. This snapshot is an important reminder to the Accord that paying close attention to the demographics of student cohorts is crucial when making long-term decisions about higher education funding.

This impact of disadvantage on progression starts from an early age and continues throughout young people's journey through the education system. The aim of funding loadings is to minimise this difference by ensuring that resources are allocated where they are needed most.

The greatest level of international evidence on the efficacy of equity loadings comes from the secondary school system. Research shows that a targeted 25 per cent increase in school funding would close the average attainment gaps between children from low-income families and children from more affluent families.

VU recommends that the Accord consider investigating a similar needs-based funding model to the one currently used by our secondary school system. Disadvantage does not stop when students leave the secondary school system and can persist throughout life. However, the measures used to identify and target disadvantage need to reflect the different context. Consideration needs to be given to whether some loadings are targeted at a course, campus or institutional level.

Indeed, disadvantage is a complex problem that manifests itself differently in each student. For this reason, we strongly advocate for the denomination of federal equity funding on a per student (that is, headcount) basis, rather than the traditional EFTSL calculation.

Importantly, equity loadings are targeted at institutions. This is crucial because while other policy responses to combating disadvantage also impact educational outcomes – the social security system being an example – they are not designed to support the educational institutions. This approach helps counter disadvantage by meeting the extra needs that occur in a learning context.

VU is a world leader in researching education funding systems. Our researchers are heavily involved in the creation, analysis and refinement of the needs-based funding model used in Australia's school system. The Mitchell Institute is currently exploring the impact of introducing a similar model in the university system. This includes its impact on overall funding levels and the possible interaction between an international student levy and needs-based funding. We look forward to sharing this research with the Accord Working Group once it is completed.

## 1.5 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) optimisation

With our Flipped Campus partners, we are aligned in working towards the actions contained in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One example addressing several SDGs is the circular economy, which sees resources not as finite, but endlessly recyclable and reusable. VU has several industry partners focused on the circular economy, researching sustainability and using recycled products in building and packaging materials. SDGs addressed with these partners include SDG6 (Energy), SDG8 (Economic Growth), SDG11 (Sustainable Cities) and SDG12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production).

VU also undertakes community-led research, which is co-designed and co-led with our community partners. Pathways in Place (PiP) is an innovative program that draws on the existing strengths, resources and knowledge of our communities to generate transformative research and activate local responses to issues that affect the flourishing of children, young people and families. Work is organised into three interconnected clusters: workforce capacity-building, implementing and evaluating place-based initiatives, and critically reviewing existing resources. These three clusters revolve around two complementary streams that, together, take a life-course approach. VU leads pathways through education to employment (youth aged 15-24), while early learning and development pathways (children and young people aged 0-15) are led by Griffith University.

Such projects address important community needs and provide a means for sustainable change beyond the project's life. Research at VU is aimed at delivering impactful outcomes and this work with our local partners particularly addresses SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Alignment and optimisation of our partnerships around a significant global framework such as the SDGs provides a focal point for providing impactful outcomes arising from the engagement.

## 1.6 Digital enablement

The Interim Report is interested in best practice for digital and hybrid delivery modes and the use of new technologies and structures. Digital skills for the digital economy are an important issue for higher education to grapple with. Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) mean digital enablement is no longer an option, but an imperative.

The experiential, focused and transformative nature of the Flipped Campus Model, blended with our AI Research and innovative Tech Schools (STEM Centre of Excellence), are seeing early successes in addressing this significant challenge. We have a 50:50 male to female ratio of attendance at our Tech Schools (overall 12,000 secondary school students visit each year), we engage industry as co-creators of curriculum, and recent graduates have been employed by our Flipped Campus partners.

However, this is just the beginning. With a more aligned government funding model, the early successes we have made could be exponentially scaled through the creation of a world-leading Digital Centre of Excellence that connects schools, industry, government and research to establish a pipeline of talent that provides the digital skills to ensure the Australian economy thrives.

A key driver of digital enablement is upskilling our educators – from secondary school, TAFE and higher education – as thousands of teachers do not have the appropriate level of digital literacy needed to teach digital skills. This must be our number one priority if we are to tackle the digital skills shortage.

## 1.7 Conclusion

The Universities Accord Interim Report underscores the critical importance of equity, access and participation in higher education reform - and we commend the Government for platforming these imperatives.

Victoria University's commitment to expanding equity targets while emphasising progress, success and inclusivity is exemplified through the VU Block Model. This revolutionary teaching and learning approach are centred on students and their needs, particularly among equity cohorts, and is creating improved outcomes for students.

We firmly believe our proposal for a **Triple Sector University** would result in even better outcomes, enhanced support for equity cohorts, and closer alignment with industry needs. Such a system would foster effective learning pathways and smooth transitions into the workforce.

Victoria University's Flipped Campus Model and Centres of Excellence are an example of how the Triple Sector could come to fruition through industry-integrated education, providing students with practical experience and enhancing employability. This partnership-driven approach, combined with the proposed equity-based funding model, would address disparities and create a more inclusive educational landscape.

Our alignment with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) signifies VU's commitment to global sustainability and social impact, offering a compelling framework for its research and educational initiatives. Digital enablement, as emphasised in the proposal, underscores the importance of preparing students for the digital economy and bridging the skills gap.

In summary, our response resonates strongly with the core principles of equity, access and excellence that underpin higher education reform. By intertwining innovative teaching methods,

industry partnerships, equity-driven funding and a commitment to global sustainability, VU's Interim Report proposal stands as a blueprint for the future of higher education in Australia.

We believe the Accord presents an opportunity not only to address current national and global challenges but also to pave the way for a more inclusive, adaptable and forward-looking education system that is better equipped to meet the evolving needs of students and society.