

# Deakin 2030 Ideas to Impact

Strategic Plan | Refreshed November 2022

Originally released December 2020



**DEAKIN**  
UNIVERSITY





We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians  
of our lands and waterways.

We pay respects to Elders past, present  
and emerging.

Deakin campuses are built on the traditional  
lands of the Wadawurrung people of the  
Geelong region, the Wurundjeri and Boon  
Wurrung people of the greater Melbourne  
region, and the Gundiṯjmarra people of  
Western Victoria.

# What makes us Deakin

Deakin University was born of a powerful idea: ‘to provide tertiary education at university level to all qualified persons whether within or outside Victoria by means of distance education programs’ (Deakin University Act 1974). Ever since, our ideas have shaped our University and made a positive difference to our graduates and communities.

The impact we create, and the progress we support, all stem from great ideas. We are known as creators and innovators, developing our ideas through exploration, testing and challenge, and translating and applying them to deliver impact.

Deakin is an environment where ideas are pursued with passion and where they can be challenged freely. One of our most important roles is as critic and conscience: academic freedom must remain a foundation principle to ensure we can explore ideas without fear or intellectual or political constraint.

As we look to the next ten years, we will continue to harness the power of our ideas to help transform the way we live and think, to enhance the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of our communities. We will build on the strengths that have enabled our success and that of our students and partners.

Deakin University aims to be a catalyst  
for positive change for the individuals  
and the communities it serves. It aspires  
to be recognised as Australia’s most  
progressive university.

Preamble to the Deakin University Act 2009



## **We excel in both education and research**

We are ranked well above average in the sector for both education and research – a dual strength that is rare among Australian universities. This ‘balanced excellence’ is central to our identity.

## **We value both excellence and equity**

Our pursuit of excellence in education and research is accompanied by a commitment to greater access for aspiring students who face additional barriers. We deliver progress across society, prioritising equity and opportunity; we are not defined by those we exclude, but by the opportunities we create.

## **We are leaders in digital capability**

Deakin is a leader in the innovative use of digital technology – digital is in our DNA. Our investment in digital capabilities has amplified our reputation and extended our reach. These capabilities will become even more important as students expect greater personalisation in their courses and as data-enriched technologies become the background to all our lives. We will continue to be human-centric and ethical in creating and managing our digital platforms.

## **We are agile and responsive to community need**

Deakin is responsive to changes outside the University. We address the evolving educational and career needs of our students, our research and innovation portfolio meets demand and creates opportunities, and our campuses are open to partnerships to deliver social, cultural and economic benefits. We excel in fusing the capabilities of our digital and physical campuses to achieve the best possible outcomes.

### **Indigenous Knowledges and ideas inform our future**

Deakin is committed to Reconciliation and Treaty, advancing the educational aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and ensuring Indigenous Knowledges are widely recognised and woven into the fabric of Australian life. All our endeavours will reflect on Australia's full history and seek to build an inclusive future.

### **We deliver impact locally and globally**

Great universities build bridges; they strive for connection and broaden their understanding of diverse peoples and places. Our social contract with Australia extends to our ability to teach, learn from and collaborate with the best minds in the world. Our ability to influence at a local level is shaped by longstanding international networks and partnerships, especially in the Indo-Pacific region, giving us a globally informed perspective. We will sustain our networks and build new ones to remain an internationally connected university.

### **We seek new opportunities that align with our community commitments**

We will pursue new opportunities for improvement and growth that align with our values and the commitments we have made to our communities, ensuring we best meet the needs of Victoria and Australia.

# Ambition

Our innovation and excellence in both education and research generate ideas that transform lives and communities. We will be Australia's most progressive and responsive university, leading in blending digital capability with our distinctive campus precincts. We will leverage strong partnerships to maximise the social, cultural and economic impact we deliver regionally, nationally and globally.

# Values

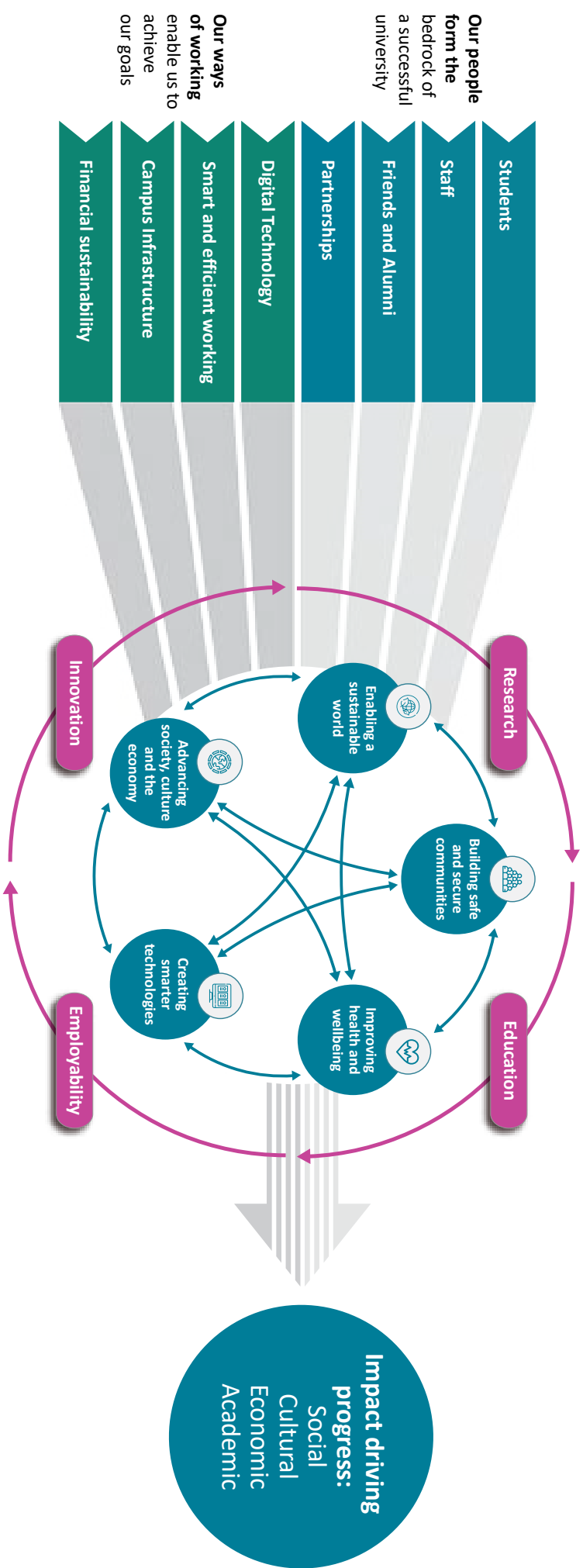
Our values guide our actions and decisions, shaping how we act, collectively and individually.

- **Excellent** - We strive for excellence in all aspects of our work
- **Inclusive** - We value diversity, embrace difference, respect and welcome all
- **Brave** - We make bold decisions, demonstrate courage and ambition, and we support personal responsibility and accountability
- **Dynamic** - We are innovative and entrepreneurial, solving problems with creativity and flexibility
- **Sustainable** - We care about our shared future, integrating economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainability in all we do
- **Ethical** - We conduct our business with the highest standards of professional behaviour and integrity

**Deakin 2030 — Strategic Plan on a Page**

**AMBITION**

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# What we do — nurturing a vibrant ideas ecosystem

Our education, research and innovation activities combine to create a rich and complex ideas ecosystem that delivers lasting value for our students and communities.

Our students thrive in an environment where creativity and ideas are valued. Our learning and teaching and student experiences prepare graduates with the skills and creative mindset they need to succeed in their lives and careers.

The ideas we generate through our research and creative endeavours, and the innovative application of those ideas, ensure that Deakin is at the forefront of solving some of the world's greatest social, economic and environmental challenges. Addressing these challenges requires effective transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teams and our ability to build and sustain such teams gives us an advantage.

Innovation – the ability to identify, adapt and sustainably implement great ideas that make a difference – is a defining characteristic of Deakin and one that benefits all our students and staff. We will use our strength in innovation to build entrepreneurship skills into our core education and research training programs.

All our activities will be framed by five Impact Themes that will define our priorities and guide our decisions. We will make the most of our campus precincts and our digital capabilities to maximise our impact.

Painting opposite:  
'Cultural Tree of Knowledge' by Deanne Gilson







# Education and Employability

## **Students will always be the heart of our University**

We offer outstanding education founded on the experience we create for our learners and guided by graduate outcomes for successful lives and careers. Deakin is an educational leader – a status confirmed by national rankings for good teaching, generic skills development, graduate qualities and student satisfaction. We will continue to innovate by reshaping our approach to courses, learning and teaching and enhancing the experience of our students.

## **Deakin offers education relevant to contemporary learners**

Whether a career starter, career advancer or career changer, Deakin will offer learning experiences that challenge, inspire and equip students to achieve their goals. The quality and variety of opportunities our students enjoy draw on our strengths in education and research and are informed by partnerships with industry, governments, community groups and our alumni.

## **Employability is embedded in all our programs**

Employability describes the set of understandings and capabilities that equips graduates to excel in their chosen careers and to contribute widely to the life of their community. We help our students to realise their goals in a rapidly changing and increasingly digital world that requires a combination of specialist and transferable skills, entrepreneurialism and a recognition of the importance of lifelong learning.

## **Deakin is an inclusive educator**

We welcome learners from diverse backgrounds who broaden our horizons and enrich our learning. We support our students to be globally connected, contributing to Australia and the world. We work with partners, both local and international, to enable flexible and non-traditional pathways into a Deakin education.

To achieve our aspiration we will focus on six areas:

- ▶ **Employability and career-relevant skills.** We will co-design courses with industry partners, integrating workplace experiences, ensuring relevance and adaptability in a world of changing needs and opportunities.
- ▶ **Digital delivery and innovation.** We will lead in the delivery of outstanding online education and integrated courses that seamlessly blend modes of learning and experiences on-campus, online and in workplaces.
- ▶ **Continuous development of new and revised courses.** Our curriculum will anticipate changing social and economic needs for excellent university education.
- ▶ **Stackable short courses.** We will lead the design and delivery of high-quality, short programs that can build into full-length qualifications from undergraduate level through to postgraduate.
- ▶ **Personalised and accessible education.** We will enable greater access for aspiring, talented students from all backgrounds, helping to remove barriers to a Deakin education.
- ▶ **Innovative international education partnerships.** We will design and implement distinctive, hybrid transnational education partnerships that provide lasting value for students, partners and Deakin.

# Research and Innovation

**We undertake globally significant discovery research that benefits our communities through the innovative translation of our ideas into new services, products, policies and capabilities**

Building on our growing capability and capacity, we will create an environment where our researchers can flourish, and ideas can be rapidly translated into social, economic and wider impact. We have significant success to build on. Since 2010 we have substantially increased the quality and scale of our research and creative endeavours. In parallel, we have grown our innovation and commercialisation outcomes to be among the leading universities nationally.

**Partnerships are vital for our success**

We will enhance both our research quality and its translation to impact through mutually beneficial partnerships with industry, government and communities. We will make sure we are easy and transparent to work with.

**We need balanced capability in both discovery and the innovative application of ideas**

We will pursue both discovery-driven research and the application of its results. Overall, we will emphasise the translation, application and commercialisation of our ideas to create positive impact for our partners and society. Deakin aims to generate greater social and economic benefits as rapidly as possible, including through new businesses and jobs.



To achieve our aspiration we will focus on six areas:

- ▶ **Excellence in research and innovation.** Distinctive, quality discovery and applied research, scholarship and creative endeavours, generating globally recognised and highly visible new knowledge, thinking and products for impact.
- ▶ **Realising talent.** Tailored and targeted researcher development and creating more opportunities for success across discovery, innovation and industry pathways.
- ▶ **Partnerships for impact.** Prioritise strategic local and global academic and industry partnerships to grow a vibrant ideas ecosystem that extends our capability and capacity for delivering mutual benefits.
- ▶ **Industry precincts.** Strengthen our industry precincts by increasing the number of co-located partners, the output of our industrial pilot and scale-up production and world-class research and development facilities and leverage the opportunities our diverse campuses provide.
- ▶ **Innovation to impact.** Accelerate the translation of discoveries and ideas into new policy, knowledge, products and services via strengthened and streamlined pathways, including for commercialisation and industry engagement.
- ▶ **Research transformation.** Transform support, systems and connectivity for a new way of working that enables researchers to focus on research and innovation that delivers demonstrable impact.

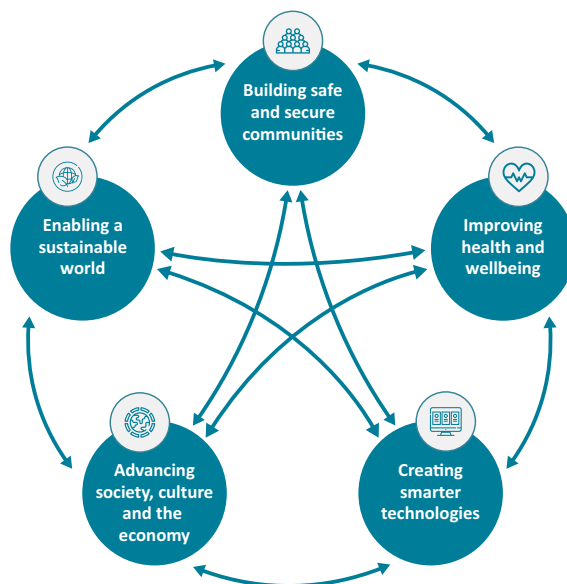


# Impact Themes

Our core activities of Education and Employability and Research and Innovation define what we do. Our Impact Themes focus our activities to where our ideas will make the biggest difference. Joining capabilities across the University, and with our partners, we pursue transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches that address five interconnected themes.

The themes are important to society, reflect the greatest and most urgent challenges and align with our strengths in education and research across all our disciplines. They provide opportunities to build strategic local and international partnerships for the common good and will shape our education programs to ensure we adapt to future workforce needs.

These five Impact Themes are our compass, helping us navigate opportunities and decisions.



## Interconnected Impact Themes



## **Advancing society, culture and the economy**

- ▶ Inform and shape the development of a more effective and resilient education system.
- ▶ Build the business capabilities necessary for a strong, sustainable, diverse and resilient economy.
- ▶ Strengthen democratic and civil society through the application of critical ideas and the cultural and economic inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalised groups in society.
- ▶ Engage with Australia's rich heritage, including Indigenous knowledges, and support the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- ▶ Support and develop Australia's cultural, artistic, creative and sporting industries.



## **Building safe and secure communities**

- ▶ Deliver innovative technological, social and community-based solutions that support community resilience, safety and wellbeing.
- ▶ Develop and apply innovative technology to enhance safety and security, including intelligent systems, cyber security and human-centric digital solutions.
- ▶ Design solutions to secure supply chains and transportation.
- ▶ Develop innovative solutions that support Australia's security and defence.



## **Creating smarter technologies**

- ▶ Advance the sophistication, capability and ethical use of technologies such as artificial intelligence, sensing systems, robotics and automation and new materials.
- ▶ Develop the skills and technologies to underpin a sustainable economic future for Australia in which new technologies align creative problem-solving and productivity to deliver progress, not just change.
- ▶ Use smart technology capabilities to support progress in each of the other Impact Themes.





## **Enabling a sustainable world**

- ▶ Understand, protect and manage land, air and marine ecosystems.
- ▶ Advance the circular economy through innovative resource management technologies that are sustainable and scalable.
- ▶ Support organisations and communities to be more socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.
- ▶ Support the transition to sustainable energy solutions by developing and applying new technologies for energy generation, storage and transport.



## **Improving health and wellbeing**

- ▶ Develop and deliver solutions that improve health care for our communities, focusing on:
  - ▶ sustainable models of health care delivery
  - ▶ integrated and sustainable models of prevention
  - ▶ whole-of-population health care outcomes that reduce health disparities.
- ▶ Enhance the capabilities required for sustainable health care reform through:
  - ▶ participant-centred approaches to health care evaluation and delivery
  - ▶ evidence-led and transformed practice
  - ▶ innovative digital and technological solutions.
- ▶ Work with global partners to leverage our capabilities and to adapt approaches to support the delivery of sustainable health care internationally.

# Our communities

Deakin is defined by the people who make up our University community: our students, our staff and our friends, alumni and partners. We are inclusive and value diversity. Our progressive culture will encourage individuals and organisations to choose Deakin for study, for their career, or as a trusted partner. We understand the importance of working closely with the communities located alongside and near our campuses, delivering tangible benefits to local residents and businesses.

## **Students are the heart of Deakin**

We welcome our students as our partners to create successful learning, rewarding experiences and engaging and inclusive communities. Our students develop effective participation and leadership through formal and informal learning, peer support and university life.

## **Our staff can build successful and fulfilling careers**

We invest in our people, building our capacity to learn, adapt and grow. A priority is developing our digital fluency and boosting cross-university collaboration. We will:

- ▶ build a culture of trust and transparency with high levels of personal integrity
- ▶ empower staff to learn, develop, excel and inspire others
- ▶ understand and support the different career stages, providing opportunities for staff to raise their professional or academic profile
- ▶ value and support sessional, part-time and casual staff
- ▶ support our early and mid-career academics, which will in turn improve our performance, diversity and inclusion, and our recruitment and retention
- ▶ provide a flexible working environment that is inclusive and supportive of individual circumstances, and that promotes a sustainable work and life blend.

## **Our friends, alumni and partners are integral to our success**

Deakin works in partnership to achieve its ambition. Through collaboration and engagement, we will continue building a strong sense of community with our students, staff, alumni and supporters, as well as our industry, government and community partners. We are known as a highly connected and collaborative institution and we must enhance these qualities. Our friends and alumni value their ongoing engagement with Deakin and see benefit in contributing time, influence and money to our University.

To succeed we must:

- ▶ build and foster partnerships with clear mutual benefit and the potential to endure, using a distinctive place and partnership model focussed on our five Impact Themes
- ▶ build connections with place that emphasise our links with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, their communities and organisations
- ▶ continue to build global linkages and partnerships; a focus on the Indo-Pacific region will be central to our future during the next decade
- ▶ deliver an effective and sustainable community engagement strategy attuned to regional and national priorities, which brings community, industry and alumni onto our campuses.

# The way we work

Deakin is a large and multifaceted organisation. Our success depends on optimising our infrastructure and enterprise capabilities, which encompass our digital platforms, built environment, services and financial resources. Our processes and how we work enable our students and staff to achieve their best and support our partnerships. We prioritise efficiency, effectiveness and consistency, and everything we do will align with our ambition and our Impact Themes. We will:

## **Deploy innovative digital technology**

- ▶ Deliver outstanding digital capabilities that seamlessly blend online and on-campus activities.
- ▶ Ensure our cyber security is human-centric, ethical and robust, protecting the data privacy of our people and our partners.
- ▶ Integrate our online platforms across Deakin, leading to:
  - ▶ new possibilities in our education, research and innovation portfolios
  - ▶ greater inclusion, effectiveness and efficiency across the University
  - ▶ improved engagement beyond the University
  - ▶ more versatility and responsiveness to support core activities in times of disruption
  - ▶ opportunities for strategic growth.

## **Implement smart and effective ways of working**

- ▶ Maximise the time and resources available for our core activities by improving our systems and processes, including our data usage.
- ▶ Automate all that can and should be, while personalising processes and services when it matters, allowing staff to focus on high-value activities.



## **Provide contemporary and sustainable campuses**

- ▶ Provide welcoming, safe and accessible physical environments that are shaped by local contexts and create distinctive student experiences.
- ▶ Develop innovation precincts that support collaboration and sustainable job growth and leverage the distinctive locations to support our ambitions.
- ▶ Allocate resources to optimise space and advance environmental, economic and social sustainability.
- ▶ Make our campuses a demonstration of sustainable living laboratories to become carbon neutral by 2025 and carbon negative by 2030.
- ▶ Integrate sustainability principles in our planning and governance across all aspects of the University, and lead the sector in regenerative design and circular economy principles.
- ▶ Repurpose and redesign our buildings and campuses to best suit a blended and digitally integrated university.

## **Ensure sustained financial security**

- ▶ Ensure the efficient and effective management of our operations, resources, assets and investments.
- ▶ Build financial resilience, revenue growth and the diversification of income sources including philanthropy and commercialisation.
- ▶ Balance current versus future investment.
- ▶ Incorporate environmental and social considerations into our investment decisions.

# Realising our best future

This Strategic Plan was developed in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had far-reaching consequences across the world, including on institutions of higher education. For many people this is the most disruptive and difficult experience of their lives. Yet the pandemic is just one of many significant external conditions which affect our University including climate change, demographic shifts, changing social attitudes and rapid transformation via technology.

Universities have faced turbulent conditions before, from war to financial crises, to revolutions and political suppression. They are some of the most resilient organisations in history, having responded to each challenge by adapting – sometimes reinventing themselves – and emerging stronger and more important to their communities. Deakin University is no exception; we will be an institution vital for the rebuilding of the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of our localities, state and country.

We benefit from the freedoms we have to operate as an autonomous institution and are provided with direct support from governments and the community. We can only be successful if we live up to our social contract to drive change for the better and champion academic freedom. By doing so, we will play an essential role in rebuilding the economy and supporting the community post-COVID-19. Through our actions, we build trust and demonstrate our many positive contributions.

One of the biggest risks in developing a strategy is attempting to cover too many activities given finite resources and time. We cannot do everything; no university can. We must balance our ambitions with a considered assessment of what we may need to stop doing to achieve our goals.

While external conditions change, our strategy provides the stability to guide our decisions. If we succeed, Deakin will remain Australia's most progressive university, working to realise the best future for its communities.



Deakin is committed to becoming a truly accessible and inclusive organisation by embedding accessibility across our online platforms, digital communications and marketing.

By ensuring our Strategic Plan is accessible, we provide equal access and equal opportunity to people with diverse abilities.