



2024 Mission-Based Compact Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Charles Sturt 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 and Strategic Planning

Charles Sturt University's [Strategic Plan 2023-25](#) focuses activity on enhancing our core operations, building on our emerging strengths, and planning for the future. Across four strategic pillars (Students, Research, People, Social Responsibility) we are implementing a range of initiatives in pursuit of our [2030 Vision and Strategic Goals](#). We will measure our performance through achievement against Level 1 and Level 2 Key Performance Indicators. (Level 2 KPIs provided in Appendix 1).

2024 Key Performance Indicators (Level 1)

	2024 Target	2030 Target
Commencing Student Progress	88%	89.1%
QILT Overall Satisfaction	76.4%	79.6%
Cost Effective Teaching Delivery*	12.9%/21.3%	21.1%/25.7%
HERDC Income	\$51m	\$100m
Research Quality	4 of 9 FoE => Level 3	5 of 9 => Level 3
Staff Net Promotor Score	> 0	> 10
Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate	<2.6	< Education Industry Standard
Net Operating Margin	-2.4%	3-5% goal
Stakeholders Net Promotor Score	>30	>35

* Cost effectiveness of teaching is calculated as the Weighted Net Margin (Student Revenue minus Teaching Costs) divided by Student Revenue.

National and sector priorities

Workforce and skill need: While our course profile is already weighted towards professional degrees that support regional workforce needs, we are undertaking a forward-looking labour market analysis in 2024 (refer to the Future Market Scan initiative in the Education Strategy). Our analysis will focus on understanding emerging workforce needs within our footprint, while identifying opportunities to contribute to wider labour market needs and trajectories.

Ensuring student and staff safety: We prioritise safety for staff and students through vigilant security, emergency response protocols, and ongoing safety training. We maintain secure campus environments, foster inclusivity, implement wellbeing frameworks, and provide accessible mental health resources. We have an Accessibility Action Plan, outlining our university-wide strategy to prevent and address disability discrimination for current and prospective students and staff. These initiatives aim to create an environment where everyone feels valued, supported, and secure, aligning with our goal to ensure the holistic wellbeing of our university community. Based on an external review we have developed a 3-year (2023-2025) safety roadmap and associated program plan which seeks to integrate health, safety and wellbeing for staff and students into our operations and decision making.

Countering foreign interference: We employ a comprehensive approach to counter foreign interference. We secure supply chains, vet partnerships, and prioritise staff and researcher education on potential risks. Clear policy guidelines ensure transparency and compliance. Regular communication across university peers, government, and security agencies fosters collaboration and intelligence sharing. These efforts underscore our commitment to a secure and resilient academic environment.

Cyber and data security: Charles Sturt prioritises cyber and data security through continued investment in robust measures to safeguard sensitive information. Aligning with our goal to comprehensively secure and enhance the wellbeing of our University's digital ecosystem, our efforts are closely monitored through the Audit and Risk Committee and undergo regular audit/best practice reviews. We have implemented industry-recognised cybersecurity protocols and prioritise ongoing training to foster a security-conscious culture.

Upholding freedom of speech and academic freedom: Our [Statement on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech](#) affirms the rights of students, staff and visitors of lawful free speech and academic freedom. Promotion of free inquiry was integrated into our Enterprise Agreement 2018-2021 through the inclusion of intellectual freedom provisions. In the [2023-2025 Enterprise Agreement](#) the Intellectual Freedom provisions have been expanded to also cover Academic Freedom (refer clause 55).

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

Charles Sturt University is committed to achieving equitable opportunity in education for all students and seeks to create a study environment that is responsive to, and inclusive of, the social and cultural diversity of the communities the University serves.

72.3% of Charles Sturt's domestic student cohort is made up of students from under-represented backgrounds, including First Nations students, students from regional and remote areas and low socio-economic backgrounds, students with a disability, women in non-traditional study areas, and students from non-English speaking backgrounds. The *University Strategy 2030* and associated [Students Strategy](#) and [First Nations Strategy](#) outline the University's priorities to support students from under-represented backgrounds to access, participate, and succeed in their studies.

In 2024, our key priorities are:

To widen participation through aspiration raising, alternative entry pathways and enabling courses. The University has a focus on building aspiration for university study through a high school engagement program that focuses on STEMM, and a partnership with Country University Centres (CUCs) to deliver face-to-face engagements with primary school students. Channels for prospective students from under-represented backgrounds to secure a place at Charles Sturt include our Charles Sturt Advantage early offer program, special consideration access schemes,

enabling courses, First Nations Direct Entry Program, and a new Science, Technology and Health Direct Entry Program.

Investment in increasing First Nations peoples' success in higher education. The University has a strong commitment to learn from and work with Australia's First Nations staff, students and stakeholders and to provide meaningful opportunities in higher education to First Nations peoples. We have consistently maintained one of the highest First Nations student loads among Australia's universities and are proud to be a university of choice for First Nations students. The University has a range of specific programs and support in place for First Nations students, including culturally safe options for students to access support, connect with other First Nations students, and First Nations Student Centres available on seven campuses, as well as online support.

Financial Support for students from identified equity groups. Charles Sturt understands that the costs of higher education are a significant barrier for students. The University provides more than \$10 million in scholarships annually, with more than 85% of that funding going to students who fall into one or more equity groups. Scholarship support includes accommodation and living costs, professional placement and workplace learning costs, and emergency funding to help those most in need to maintain their enrolment.

Specialist Support for Students. The University provides a wide range of specialist support services designed to support the success and retention of students. These services include learning and study skills support, careers support, safety and wellbeing – including counselling and Accessibility and Inclusion support – and other services including financial advice, LGBTIQ+ Ally program, special consideration, technical support, review and appeals, advocacy, and student representation.

Our success will be demonstrated through: Continued high levels of enrolments from students from equity groups; Improved student retention; Maintained levels of high student satisfaction; High levels of student completion; Maintaining sector-leading graduate employment rates.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

Charles Sturt's key teaching and learning performance strategies for 2024 include embedding the [Education Strategy Vision](#), *Educating for modern regional Australia*.

Our key priorities are:

High-quality learning and teaching: In 2024 we have increased the workload allocation to academic staff for scholarly activity, with 5% of teaching allocation dedicated to scholarly activity for Teaching/ Research, Teaching/ Professional, and Scholarly Teaching Fellows; and 10% of teaching allocation dedicated to scholarly activity for Teaching focused and Research focused staff. These provisions are included in our [2023-2025 Enterprise Agreement](#) (refer clause 30).

We have prioritised professional educational development for teaching. Our commitment will be realised via our investment in the [Charles Sturt Teaching Academy](#) launched in 2023. In 2024 we will further embed Teaching Academy processes, grants, awards, and professional development opportunities into everyday business. Our measures of success include schools actively engaged in scholarship, the [Teaching Capability Self-Assessment Tool](#) (developed in 2023) embedded into the academic promotions process, and employee development and review processes. We also expect to see an increase of 10% of teaching staff attending [CSEdX](#) our whole of institution teaching development and scholarship conference.

In 2024 we will finalise implementation of our new [Learning Management System \(Brightspace\)](#) which will provide students with seamless and adaptive access to their digital content.

Retention strategies: Our student retention framework is focused on identifying whole-of-university approaches to improving student retention and success. Our [Student Retention](#) activity embeds best practice transition pedagogy, including embedded support, into key first-year subjects. A Student Journey Map has identified key areas of focus and informed the development of the [Support for Students Policy](#) and a Students at Risk Procedure (in development). This procedure will identify students with low or no engagement and provide targeted, early interventions and appropriate support, such as prioritised embedded tutors. These programs have proven to be supportive for all students, however, are most impactful for students from equity backgrounds and VET pathways. Our [Support Services Directory](#) lists the range of support available to students who study at Charles Sturt. This includes support available to [international students](#) who can now access face-to-face support on all of our internationally focused campuses (Bathurst, Dubbo, Port Macquarie, Albury, Wagga Wagga).

Micro-credentials development and delivery: To support our ranking as number one in Australia for undergraduate full time employment ([The Good University Guide](#)), we will expand our existing suite of [micro-credentials](#) to provide more opportunities for students to gain industry-relevant skills. With a rolling development process that draws on industry experts, prospective and past students' expectations, and in-depth market analysis, we will deliver 20 new micro-credentials to market in 2024. Our design process includes engaging with industry partners to inform and co-create our courses. Recently this has included partners such as IBM and ANSTO. We will launch the **Digital Learning & Teaching Precinct** in the Charles Sturt Bathurst Library, which will provide a modern, new space for building and embedding innovation in teaching and learning. This year we will build the space, define the model and engagement strategy, and develop the professional development required to deliver our vision for the Precinct - the use of Artificial Intelligence in teaching and learning, simulation technologies for enhanced student learning experiences, and the strategic use of AR/VR in subject delivery.

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

Charles Sturt has a documented [Research Strategy](#) which sets out a plan for producing quality research, supporting researchers through training, fostering innovation, and commercialising research outcomes. Key performance indicators (KPIs) have been set to measure achievement in these areas.

In terms of undertaking quality research, a key pillar in Charles Sturt's Research Strategy is the investment in three new Research Institutes in key focus areas: [Gulbali Institute for Agriculture, Water and Environment](#), [Rural Health Research Institute](#), and [Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Futures Institute](#). These Institutes are newly established and are already producing strong results in terms of grant capture and research outputs and citations. Outside of the Research Institutes, Charles Sturt is building on other areas of strength by developing Research Centres in areas such as regional education, regional policy and practice, and applied health. Charles Sturt is further investing in these areas by attracting new talent to the university through the Distinguished Professors Scheme, which is aimed at securing professors and their teams who are already performing at world standard in the focus Fields of Education and Research.

In terms of measuring success in producing quality research, Charles Sturt monitors and sets annual targets for a range of KPIs, including:

- Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) scores in focus Fields of Education and Research, noting that ERA may be replaced by a new research quality assessment moving forward.
- Field-Weighted Citation Impact, overall and in focus subject areas through SciVal.
- Publications by Journal Quartile (Q1 and Q2), overall and by Subject Area through SciVal.
- Scholarly Output, overall and by Subject Area through SciVal.

- World University Rankings and focus subject and impact rankings through Times Higher Education (THE) and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS).
- Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) income through the Department of Education.
- Higher Degree by Research completions which forms part of HERDC reporting.
- An in-house measure of research activity known as the Research Productivity Index, which is used in performance management and determining eligibility for research supervision.

Charles Sturt provides an extensive program of research training for both qualified and student researchers. This includes induction and introductory modules, academic writing, ethics and research compliance, research methods, researcher wellbeing, supervision, publishing, applying for grants, etc. Detailed information is available through the [Research Training Calendar](#).

In terms of innovation and commercialisation, Charles Sturt, through the [Gulbali-AgriPark](#), aims to be the premier regional collaboration and commercialisation hub supporting the growth of Australian agriculture to [\\$100bn by 2030](#). The Gulbali-AgriPark is host to a community of researchers and demonstration facilities, education faculties and schools, and government and industry partners dedicated to generating high-quality research, education and commercial products and services for the market. The AgriPark provides the commercial infrastructure and coordination to enable the seamless and efficient functioning of the innovation ecosystem and the commercialisation of collaborative research.

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

A key priority of our 2030 strategy involves identifying broader societal challenges and actively working with colleagues across sectors and industries on solutions – whether that solution relates to filling workforce shortages, advances in research and development, or via place-based precinct and service delivery.

During 2023, Charles Sturt led more than 735 business and industry discussions in regional NSW and facilitated 62 thought leadership and industry engagement events. Our community and industry stakeholder Net Promoter Score is 53, with feedback on the frequency and strength of our connections notably strong. More than 20 service delivery contracts are under management, with significantly higher numbers of MoUs in place for the purposes of co-design, sector advocacy and regional development.

Charles Sturt will continue to invest in partnerships with industry, government and community including local employers; national and international firms, including IBM, Transgrid, Telstra, Amazon web Services and Marathon Health (to name a few); and with government agencies, including the CSIRO, NSW Policing, NSW Department of Education and the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Partnership collaboration includes [co-location](#) at our regional university campuses, the co-design of short courses and micro-credentials that fill workforce shortages; and skills and training industry events and activities delivered in partnership with [Business NSW](#). We work with a broad range of industry and government networks at local, state and commonwealth levels – as there is such strong connection between our goals and those of our partners, particularly as it relates to regional prosperity and sustainability.

The University's broader industry engagement and partnerships support the transfer of new knowledge and techniques in a wide range of contexts, including education, through regional GPs, hospitals and other health facilities; aged care, through partnerships with public and private healthcare providers; agricultural producers and processors through the [Gulbali Institute](#), the [AgriPark](#) and the [Southern NSW Drought Hub](#); front-line border security through the [Biosecurity](#)

[Training Centre](#), and the [Australian Graduate School of Police and Security's](#) partnerships with the AFP and state and Asia-Pacific forces, and through Australian Government funded [Biosecurity Training Centres](#), among others.

Charles Sturt's three newly established Research Institutes – the [Gulbali Institute](#) (focussed on agriculture, water and the environment), [Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Future Institute](#), and [Rural and Regional Health Institute](#) – focus on major societal and community development. In addition, the [AgriPark](#) brings industry partners and the university sector together to drive R&D solutions linked to the national goal of a [\\$100bn agriculture sector by 2030](#). The Research Institutes are founded on co-design with industry and community partnerships, and are located in strategic, regional locations to maximise place-based innovation and development.

A full summary of Charles Sturt's industry and community engagement is articulated in the [2023 Government Relations and Engagement Report](#).

SIGNED for and on behalf of
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

Madonna Morton

Full name (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

Position

of the Department of Education



Signature

29/05/2024

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of

<PROVIDER NAME>

by

Renée Leon

Full name (please print)

Vice-Chancellor & President

Position



Signature

Date

6/05/2024

In the presence of:

Michelle Hession

Witness (please print)

Executive Assistant

Position or profession of witness (please print)



Signature

Date

6/05/2024

Appendix 1: Charles Sturt Level 2 KPIs (previously hyperlinked to access-restricted material, Mission and Strategic Planning, page 1)

Level 2 Key Performance Indicators

Level 2 KPIs are currently being developed to support the 2030 Strategy.

Proposed Level 2 KPIs are listed below, but may be subject to change prior to being finalised.

Students	Research	People	Social Responsibility
First Year Attrition (On-Campus)	Research Quality in Q1 and Q2 Journals	Staff Confidence in Leadership	Annual Lease Revenue
First Year Attrition (Online)	Number of Research Outputs	Percentage of First Nations Identified Staff	Philanthropic Revenue
Timely Completions (On-Campus)	Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI)	Workplace Inspections Completion Rate	Community NPS
Timely Completions (Online)	Times Higher Education World University Rankings	Successful Return to Work for Psychological Claims	Commerical and Industry Partnerships Income
Teaching Quality Experience	QS World University Rankings	Critical Cyber-Security Breaches	Overdue High Risk and Very High Risk Audit Items
Satisfaction With Support Services	HERDC Income by Category		Overdue Corrective Action Plans
Effectiveness of Support Services	Consultancy Income		Repeat External or Internal Audit Findings
Year on Year Total EFTSL Change	Commercialisation Income		
Year on Year Commencing EFTSL Change	HDR Completions		
Total International Revenue	Percent of Academic Staff with PhDs		