



2025-2026 Mission-Based Compact Between the Commonwealth of Australia and MURDOCH 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

Murdoch University's Strategy 2023–2030, titled *Ngala Kwop Biddi: Building a Brighter Future, Together*, lays out a clear direction for the University's future, building on its legacy of inclusive education, impactful research, and meaningful engagement. The plan is guided by a vision to deliver social and environmental good through transformative learning and research, while amplifying the voices and knowledge of First Nations peoples.

Purpose and Vision

Murdoch University's purpose is to change lives and society for the better through accessible education and research, contributing to the solution of societal and environmental challenges and providing an inclusive, caring community in which everyone can realise their potential. Our overarching vision is to be widely recognised as the university of choice for people who care, who value inclusion, curiosity and innovation, and who desire to make a positive social impact. We will be a leading university in inclusivity, sustainability, and First Nations engagement, ensuring that every student and staff member is empowered to make a positive impact.

Three Strategic Themes

Central to the plan are three strategic themes that underpin all University activities:

- **Sustainability:** Murdoch is committed to embedding sustainability across its teaching, research, and operations. This includes climate action, resource management, and promoting innovation that supports the long-term wellbeing of people and the planet.

- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** The University strives to create an environment where everyone has access to opportunity, regardless of background. Removing barriers, promoting fairness, and celebrating diversity are at the heart of Murdoch's culture.
- **First Nations:** Genuine partnership with First Nations communities is a cornerstone. Murdoch prioritises First Nations leadership, integrates Indigenous knowledge across curricula, and actively seeks ways to elevate First Nations participation and success.

Three Core Activities

The plan is delivered through three core activities:

- **Education:** Murdoch provides innovative, industry-informed programs that prepare graduates for the evolving workforce. Future-focused curricula respond directly to national skill shortages, with practical learning experiences and strong links to employers.
- **Research and Innovation:** Interdisciplinary research tackles global and local challenges, especially those aligned with sustainability, equity, and First Nations advancement. The University supports research excellence and impact, engaging with partners to deliver real benefits.
- **Engagement and Partnerships:** Murdoch works closely with industry, community, and government to ensure its teaching and research remain relevant. Partnerships are leveraged to co-create solutions, foster innovation, and amplify the University's social contribution.

Key Outcomes (2023–2030)

Over the compact and strategic plan periods, Murdoch seeks these major outcomes:

- Graduates with skills directly aligned to workforce and sector priorities
- A campus culture that upholds freedom of speech and academic freedom and is safe, inclusive, and supportive for all
- Enhanced cyber and data security to manage emerging risks, including countering foreign interference
- Significantly increased First Nations participation and leadership
- Research contributions that advance sustainability, equity, and First Nations priorities

Achievement and Measurement

Progress will be monitored through:

- Graduate employment outcomes and satisfaction surveys
- Regular safety/wellbeing audits, incident reporting, and review
- Compliance with cyber security standards and regular risk assessments
- Annual reporting on First Nations engagement and leadership progress
- Research output and impact metrics aligned with the strategic themes

National and Sector Priorities

Murdoch University's strategic plan is attuned to national and sector priorities, including addressing skills shortages in STEM, health, and education through responsive program design. The University invests in student and staff safety by fostering a caring environment and

maintaining strong cyber and data security frameworks, while upholding freedom of speech and academic freedom. An important pillar of our cyber security activities is focussed on countering foreign interference. Equity, diversity, inclusion, sustainability, and First Nations engagement are embedded in everything Murdoch does.

Global focus

Murdoch University continues to grow as an internationalised university. Murdoch's Singapore and Dubai campuses aim to ensure that our University continues to be a leader in transnational education, raising our global profile and reputation. Murdoch has operated in Singapore for 25 years and in Dubai for 16 years. Murdoch is the largest international university in Singapore and one of only 3 Australian universities in the UAE.

Our University has also seen a significant increase in international onshore student enrolments, enabling the University to navigate the challenging post-pandemic years financially. Increasing diversification, with a particular focus on our closest neighbours in South East Asia, is a cornerstone of our international recruitment strategy. While our highest priority is a return of domestic students to our campuses, it is pleasing to see that our international students play a significant role in enhancing our reputation across our borders, in South East Asia and beyond.

In summary, [*Ngala Kwop Biddi*](#) sets Murdoch University on an ambitious yet achievable trajectory for the years ahead, ensuring that education, research, and engagement deliver tangible benefits for students, staff, and wider society.

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

Murdoch University demonstrates a strong and long-standing institutional commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, aiming to attract and support students from non-traditional backgrounds. The university's student population includes higher proportions of low socio-economic status (SES) students, students with disability, First Nations students, first-in-family students, those who have delayed enrolment, and mature-age students compared to sector averages. The University has a strong track record in improving outcomes for these students and has made significant progress in closing the gap in student success measures compared with the general student population.

In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, Murdoch University load fell below its MBGA and as a result, we received an HECG grant in 2024. During 2024, Murdoch University delivered equity initiatives and formal targets to support under-represented cohorts as outlined in the 2024 HECG Equity Plan. The University expects to be eligible for an HECG grant again in 2025, and has submitted a subsequent 2024-2025 HECG Equity Plan outlining our continuing activities to promote access and support for these student cohorts.

Targeted Student Equity Support

Murdoch ranks sixth nationally for commencing **low SES students** and first in metropolitan areas. Flexible admission policies and in-school enabling programs (such as TLC Learning for Tomorrow and FlexiTrack High) are designed to increase access for students from disadvantaged areas. These programs are expanded to regional schools and supported by partnerships with WA TAFE for articulation into degree-level studies.

The University has the second-highest proportion of commencing **students with disability** nationally. Support includes peer-led study groups (PASS), individual academic coaching, and tailored learning advisor consultations.

Murdoch has the highest representation of **First Nations students** in Western Australia. Dedicated programs such as Ngoolark and Waardong provide coaching, mentoring, and academic support, facilitated by the Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre. Wellbeing programs and embedded counsellors further support First Nations students.

Outreach includes expanding enabling programs to **regional** schools and providing on-demand academic assistance (Studiosity) for students in **remote** areas.

Student and Community Outreach

Over 1,000 students enrolled in **enabling pathways** in 2024, with significant growth in programs like FlexiTrack High and OnTrack Flex. TLC Learning for Tomorrow is offered free to eligible students in Mandurah and Rockingham.

The **Ngala Kwop Biddi Brighter Futures Scholarship**, launched in 2024, is awarded to students who demonstrate leadership and positive change in their communities, with a focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, First Nations, and sustainability. Participation has grown from 50 recipients in 2024 to 84 in 2025.

PASS and Peer Academic Coaches provide **academic peer support**, with evidence showing improved outcomes for attendees. Studiosity offers 24/7 support for low SES and regional students.

Measurement and Evaluation

The university uses **Key Performance Areas (KPA's)** to measure impact in equity areas, focusing on intersectionality and human rights. Targets include increasing diversity, improving retention and graduation rates, and boosting engagement and enrolment from equity groups.

By 2030, aims include 83% student satisfaction, parity in First Nations student representation with the WA population (3.3%), and an 83% retention rate for domestic bachelor students. Given the demographics of our student body, the majority of these improvements will be made in the equity space, aided by the 2024 and 2025 HECG grants as outlined in our HECG Equity Plans.

The university is further developing systems to track representation and outcomes for diverse groups, using both internal and external data sources (e.g., QILT data for satisfaction and employment outcomes). Reporting is coordinated through the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, with oversight from senior leadership.

Institutional Alignment and Governance

The priorities of Equity, diversity, inclusion; Sustainability; and First Nations priorities are embedded in the University's strategy. The [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Strategy](#) guides actions, measures success, and ensures alignment with institutional and national priorities. The University collaborates with external stakeholders and develops reciprocal initiatives to extend impact beyond campus.

In summary, Murdoch University's approach to supporting under-represented students is multi-faceted, combining targeted programs, outreach, scholarships, peer support, and robust measurement frameworks. It has been temporarily boosted by HECG grants, but is part and parcel of the University's identity. The University's strategic priorities and governance structures ensure that equity initiatives are embedded, tracked, and continuously improved to foster a genuinely inclusive academic community, where every student and staff member can thrive.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

Murdoch University will deliver contemporary, accessible, and inclusive education, with a high-quality and engaging student experience that produces graduates who are adaptable, and have fresh perspectives, and demonstrate a strong social conscience.

Key strategic directions and actions include:

- **Deliver innovative and future-facing programs** that address critical social, scientific, and technological issues, with attention to cultural, political, economic, sustainability, and professional implications. Course design and review are purposeful, responsive to contemporary and emerging opportunities, and incorporate assessment transformation and strategic themes such as sustainability, First Nations, and equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- **Create and provide inclusive and accessible educational programs** that enable success for diverse student cohorts, including local, regional, offshore, and online learners. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles are embedded in teaching and assessment, and course offerings are designed to be “fit for purpose,” accommodating students’ commitments and promoting health and safety across all learning environments.
- **Endow graduates with a strong commitment to academic, professional, and personal ethics, trustworthiness, integrity, and responsibility.** Academic integrity is fostered through targeted professional learning programs, recognition of high-quality teaching, and invest in systems to address emerging concerns.
- **Inspire students to develop their social conscience, embracing equity, diversity, inclusion, global Indigenous knowledges, and sustainability.** Foundational intercultural communication competence (ICC) skills and Indigenous perspectives are integrated into curricula, with a roadmap for culturally responsive learning environments.
- **Produce graduates with analytical, research, professional, and practical skills, and the ability to adapt and respond to societal and technological shifts.** Work-integrated learning (WIL), industry engagement, and digital literacy including the ethical use of emerging technologies such as GenAI, are prioritised to prepare students for dynamic workforce needs.
- **Ensure education is informed by evidence, research, and scholarship, and build staff capacity to enhance teaching knowledge and capabilities.** Continuous improvement is driven by data, feedback, and participation in educational research and scholarship.
- **Leverage the expertise of partners in delivering education,** including industry, technology, and community partners, as well as collaborations with Open Universities Australia and regional/suburban study hubs.
- **Provide education within environments and facilities that support effective teaching and learning and foster innovation,** including campus development, hybrid and flexible study options, and experimentation with next-generation platforms and technologies.

Student retention and support are enhanced through targeted interventions, early identification of at-risk students, and a robust framework of academic and pastoral care. International students benefit from gateway communication skills units and tailored support services. Admissions transparency is maintained through clear pathways and entry requirements for all applicant groups.

Labour market outcomes are strengthened by supporting workforce development through microcredentials, professional development, and employability initiatives. Industry engagement and skill development programs, such as the Students as Change Agents program and Launchpad Academy, empower students to create positive change and develop entrepreneurial skills.

Research, research training, and innovation are advanced by encouraging collaborative research, optimising research support, and aligning with Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles. The Education Strategic Plan emphasises the integration of impactful research and continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

Our objective is to increase the University's impactful and progressive research in areas of strength and excellent research across our disciplines.

Over the last 10 years, Murdoch University has focused its research in the areas of Food, Health, First Nations and the Environment, building on our historic strengths. We have recruited distinguished and early-career researchers in each area to grow research output and grant success. While successful, it has been recognised that there were broader capabilities that have not been adequately supported or developed.

The University's Strategy 2023-2030 commits to maintaining and growing the capabilities of our research institutes and centres, but also support and build a broader research base, ensuring we have quality research being undertaken in teaching areas so that all learning at Murdoch University is research-led.

Key activities to achieve this objective are

- Maintain research focus/support and broaden the base to increase staff engagement
- Promote and support research across our discipline base, both basic and applied
- Provide mentoring and peer support to increase research performance
- Build commercialisation, entrepreneurship, partnership, and consultancy activities
- Enhance support for research project development
- Support the development of the next generation of researchers through excellence in HDR supervision

All learning at Murdoch should be research-led and our research should be accessible, impactful, and collaborative.

At the heart of the Research Strategy is our commitment to research integrity. Murdoch expects the highest standards of integrity in all aspects of research conducted by its staff and HDR students and is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that celebrates integrity above publication counts, citations, grant income and other research metrics. Key commitments include the implementation of FAIR principles for research data management and the CARE principles for Indigenous data governance.

Research inputs and outputs can take multiple forms, from traditional to non-traditional. Murdoch aims to acknowledge research in its many forms and will develop, over time, a series of measures that document the diversity of our research and its outputs. Through our promotions process, Murdoch will also recognise the diversity of outputs and career paths.

Murdoch is well known for its translational, impactful research. To support knowledge transfer, the Murdoch Innovation Framework aims to Educate, Innovate, Incubate and Collaborate to translate research into intellectual property or other knowledge transfers. In 2026 Murdoch will open an innovation hub to support the sign-out of Murdoch technologies.

Murdoch will continue to undertake research that changes lives and society for the better and contributes to solving major societal and environmental challenges by delivering excellence across our disciplines through six key areas:

1. Culture
2. Partnerships
3. Impact
4. Support
5. Graduate Research
6. Infrastructure.

For more detailed information on impact and engagement, industry and partnerships, as well as actions and measures of success of research and innovation at Murdoch University, please see our full [Research Strategic Plan 2024-2030](#).

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

Engagement is one of the strategic portfolios for the university. The Engagement portfolio, through the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Global Engagement, has leadership responsibility for the University's Engagement activities. Global Engagement is also responsible for developing, nurturing and guiding the University's strategic partnerships across industry.

Our university engagement activities build connections with industry by creating mutually beneficial relationships at all levels. These engagement opportunities are to support our teaching by delivering contemporary, accessible and inclusive education with a high quality and engaging student experience, and our research by increasing impactful and progressive research in our areas of strength and across disciplines.

Engagement is defined by Murdoch University as the way in which Murdoch interacts within and outside of our campuses, how we build, maintain and grow values-driven ethical, sustainable and inclusive relationships that are mutually beneficial.

All engagement at Murdoch should be built on shared outcomes that increase the impact of our education and research activities and enhance our contribution to industry.

It is recognised that engagement goes beyond the remit of the Global Engagement portfolio and is embedded into the daily lives of all Murdoch staff, and that the University builds impactful relationships through many forms of engagement. Integral to the success of the University's engagement ambitions with industry is a coordinated and deliberate approach to engagement. The university has initiated the development of an engagement framework to maximise outcomes for all stakeholders.

The Global Engagement sub strategy for the university has initiated the goals:

- Grow university-wide strategic partnerships which drive and support quality in education, research and engagement.

- Contribute to Murdoch’s visibility, institutional reputation and influence locally and internationally
- Actively seek and build strategic partnerships that drive societal benefits, innovation and economic impact.
- Deliver the engagement framework for Murdoch University

Murdoch University maintains strong partnerships with industry across most sectors, including agriculture, environment, mining and energy, indigenous, defence, medical, legal, financial and community.

Specific examples of a few of the many partnerships developed that are continuing to grow are:

- the partnership with Tidal Moon, an indigenous company in the north west of Western Australia that is focussed both on ecological outcomes but also the establishment of a long term sustainable business to support the local community: the partnership covers both educational and research objectives
- a partnership with the WA cricket association that focuses on both education and research along with provision of facilities
- a developing partnership with Rio Tinto to enable better alignment of mutually beneficial capabilities across all disciplines of the university and all divisions of Rio Tinto
- a developing partnership to establish a Defence Research and Education hub at the universities Rockingham campus that will support AUKUS: the partnership includes industry, government (state and federal) and other Western Australian universities
- strong partnerships with rural research and development corporations have long been a foundation of industry engagement: Grains Research and Development Corporation; Horticulture Australia; Meat and Livestock Australia; Fisheries Research and Development Corporation; Australian Pork and Australian Wool Innovation.

SIGNED for and on behalf of
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
by

Jessica Mohr

Full name (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

Position
of the Department of Education

Signature

01/12/2025

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of
MURDOCH UNIVERSITY
by

Professor Andrew J Deeks

Full name (please print)

Vice Chancellor & President

Position

Signature

In the presence of:

Rachel Searl

Witness (please print)

Executive Officer

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

In the presence of:

Gemma Cominelli

Witness (please print)

Executive Officer

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature