2025-2026 Mission-Based Compact Between the Commonwealth of Australia and Swinburne University of Technology

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

At Swinburne University of Technology, we bring people and technology together for a better world. Our purpose is to create tomorrow's technology and to develop and nurture the human capital and talent required to thrive in a tech-rich future. Our Ad Astra_2030 Strategy is comprised of four key Quantum Leaps, they are:

Quantum Leap 1: Tailored and innovative pathways to success

Quantum Leap 2: Leading and leveraging technology for purpose

Quantum Leap 3: Co-creating industries of the future

Quantum Leap 4: The world is our campus

Our Quantum Leaps are comprehensively aligned with the Universities Accord. They echo the Government's commitment to providing an equitable and inclusive system of education to meet Australia's future skills needs by enabling higher participation rates in tertiary education through the provision of qualifications that are seamlessly modular and stackable. We will provide a tech-infused curricula and credentials designed to meet existing and emerging industry needs.

Ad Astra_2030, which builds on Horizon 2025 is being delivered with a particular focus in 2025-2026 on Our Learner Experience and Our Digital Capabilities. We will assess our progress using national and international benchmarked measures, such as the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching Student Experience Survey, Graduate Outcomes Survey and Employer Satisfaction Survey, the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research Student Outcomes Survey, the Department of Education's Higher Education Statistics Collection, the Times Higher Education Word University Rankings, the Academic Ranking of World Universities.

As a public sector entity, we must maintain our social licence to operate. We are committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment where freedom of speech and academic freedom are respectfully upheld. Our People, Culture and Integrity Policy sets clear expectations and accountability for responsible working, acceptable behaviours and sustainable practices, supported by guidelines and procedures such as Artificial Intelligence, the acceptable use of IT, privacy, complaints management, improper conduct and whistleblowing and the prevention of, and response to sexual harm.

We also recognise that as a STEM University, we have a responsibility to apply our expertise and champion the responsible uptake of technology. Closing the digital gap and ensuring that education opportunities for under-represented groups translate into success in a digital, tech-rich future. This is being enabled through our intersection approach to diversity and inclusion. Current initiatives include our 2025-2028 Disabled Equity Action Plan, Science in Australia Gender Equity, Charter to Cultural Diversity and our Moondani Toombadool Centre.

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

Swinburne aspires to being the most inclusive and diverse university in Australia. To achieve this our learner profile will need to exceed We will measure our progress towards this by benchmarking ourselves against other Australian Universities, as well as through comparing our learner profile with the representation of priority groups (low SES, Indigenous and regional and remote backgrounds and learners with a disability etc) as a proportion of Victoria and Australia's total population (as measured by the Australian Bureau of Statistics). Our focus on these priority groups is reflected in key policy documents, including our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Framework.

To support an accessible, inclusive and diverse study and work environment where everyone can reach their full potential, Swinburne has six guiding pillars for action, they are: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters, Accessibility and disability, Cultural and faith diversity, Diverse genders, sexes, and sexualities, Gender equity and Intergeneration: youth and ageing.

To support the success and retention of equity students, Swinburne has a range of scholarships, bursaries and grants in place, for example: Access Scholarship for First year Undergraduates (who have relocated from remote or regional areas); Access Scholarship for Students who are Care Leavers from Australian State of Foster Care; Indigenous Relocation Scholarship etc. A component of our HEPPP funding is also allocated to providing Study and Living Grants to equity students to enable them to meet basic living and study costs.

Swinburne provides special consideration under all four categories of the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS), and success is monitored and evidenced via regular key performance indicator reporting on applications and conversion rates from target groups, including low-SES, regional and remote, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and women studying STEM subjects.

Success of equity initiatives is measured through regular comparison against university and sectoral benchmarks to measure access to education i.e. the proportion of our learner cohort that live in regional and remote Australia, are low SES, have declared a disability, identify as Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander etc, as well as monitoring their successful outcomes through unit and course enrolment and completion rates. Both measures (enrolment and completion) are tracked to monitor that we have the right personalised pathways to success to ensure that increased participation delivers the right outcomes for each of these priority groups.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

In 2025-2026 Swinburne will deliver significant uplift in the learner experience and teaching quality. This is being delivered through two key programs of work: The first-year refresh and Student Retention Analytics.

The first-year refresh builds on work undertaken between March 2024 and February 2025 to enhance 71 first-year high-fail and low-retention units guided by a blended learning template and now extends this approach to all first-year units. The project emphasises consistency, active learning, accessibility, and inclusivity, while providing educators with new tools, professional development, and structured support. In the scaling of these improvements, there will be a rollout of a customised template, a dedicated handbook for first-year educators, embedded career development, peer observation frameworks, and targeted training. These efforts are underpinned by ongoing evaluation and are designed to ensure every first-year student begins with confidence and clarity, while educators are empowered to deliver impactful teaching. Success of the first-year refresh is measured by consistent delivery of blended learning, increased educator capability and engagement, and effective implementation of new tools and innovations. Progress will be tracked through student and educator feedback, participation rates, and achievement of project milestones and quality benchmarks.

The student retention analytics initiative use student background, behaviour and academic indicators to identify students who are likely to need extra support to be successful, with early intervention programs designed to provide targeted outreach from our Student HQ and Student Success teams to these students. At the core of this initiative is the student success propensity model, which uses artificial intelligence to model the likelihood of student success for every Swinburne student. Success is then measured progressively throughout the year by monitoring movements to the student SSPM score, enabling us to assess and modify our targeted intervention and support outreach programs for the next teaching period. For those students who do end up at risk we have proactive interventions to provide coaching, advice and guidance to get the student back on track.

In 2025 we will introduce "The Swinburne Difference: supporting every student's personal journey to success". This provides students with cultural experience throughout their course, including orientation, work integrated learning and dedicated placements, cultural and community experiences and an entrepreneurial experience.

We will also make our student support services easier to find and access through a new integrated website and mobile app, personalised to each student, and with services sorted using a student lens rather than a corporate structure. Services will be delivered centrally or through a hub and spoke model, taking the service to where the students are, with multiple services models provided, including supported and moderated peer-to-peer systems, pro-active targeted models (using data and student self-identification), drop-in support locations, specialist on-demand services, and increasingly through 24/7 online AI-driven supports.

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

To further progress our research, research training and innovations outcomes, Swinburne's strategy is based on the following three priorities:

Reinforcing our focus on areas where we have strength and capability as a university of technology: Our focus areas are: Space and Aerospace; Innovative and Sustainable Planet; Health Innovation and Medical Technology;, Digital Capabilities; and Advanced Manufacturing. We also support "Detect and Protect" defence engagement. Our focus areas make significant contributions to Research and Development (R&D) that assists productivity, transformation and the development of emerging industries.

Training of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students: Our goal is for HDR students to undertake quality research programs, with an increased focus on industry internships . Our suite of industry engaged PhD programs ensure HDR students are actively engaged with industry partners, contributing to Australia's future workforce through work-ready graduates who understand the challenges of business and industry.

Responsible engagement, partnership and collaboration: We are redefining our engagement model to work with industry such that our expertise is directed towards solving real-world challenges. This includes developing new work-integrated learning models focused on value creation, PhD internships and continuing high-impact collaborations through programs such as CRCs and ARC Industrial Transformation and Linkage Projects. We also recognise the importance of appropriate due diligence in all interactions to support collaborations and partnerships, both Australian and international

Our performance against the above priorities is assessed through metrics such as HERDC research income, the measure of partner-associated research income, and the number of HDR students that are industry engaged.

Strategies for Research Commercialisation:
Swinburne Innovation Studio is now home to a full-stack research commercialisation and entrepreneurship ecosystem where Swinburne staff, students, alumni and entrepreneurs are provided with the expertise, support, services and investment that they need to build the next generation of future industries. These include our suite of accelerator programs (Initiate, Luminate and Elevate), our industry engagement programs, intellectual property and commercialisation facilitators, the Swinburne start-up incubation hub, and Swinburne Ventures Limited, our flagship world-class in-house venture investment fund that spans the full spectrum from pre-investment through to pre-seed, series A and beyond. Our commitment to commercialisation is evident in the number and value of the start-up and spin-out companies created at Swinburne, the intellectual property we develop and deploy, and the work we do with our startups and industry partners to help them create value for the economy. We will continue to scale these programs and launch entirely new prototypes of how a university can engage deeply with applied research and commercialisation.

Our Design Factory enables us to engage with [businesses looking to grow their innovation capability](#), as well as providing our students with the opportunity to [study innovation](#), and gain experience working directly with industry partners and real-world problems.

We will also adopt a global partnership approach to co-fund large research and innovation projects. Working with partners and governments across the world, we will pioneer resilient collaboration models that support global and local solutions.

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

As an industry-responsive university, Swinburne already provides every undergraduate student with a work integrated learning experience. Under Ad Astra_2030, we will go beyond work integrated learning to initiate the next evolution of learner-powered industry innovation, where every Swinburne learner's journey will include an interdisciplinary project, co-created and supported by industry. Our pilot, launching in 2026 will see learners take on a real-world challenge, engage with diverse teams and pitch their industry solutions to a panel of industry experts.

We will champion the talent, technology and business models to create sustainable business ventures at scale. Through our engagement with industry, our learners will qualify at all levels with an entrepreneurial mindset and practical experience in testing, establishing, managing and scaling small businesses. We will further open our innovation ecosystem to emerging ventures globally and expand our commercial innovation engine to empower the creation of all types of businesses, not just ventures.

We will establish an international pipeline for entrepreneurship skill development and exchange programs with established innovation hubs that can strengthen Australian industries and enhance the quality of life for all Australians. This two-way approach to industry engagement will foster the exchange of knowledge, enhance Australia's economic prospects, improve productivity and support sustainable progress around the world - by connecting learners, staff, research, technology and innovation across locations worldwide, Swinburne aims to become a hub for a collaborative ecosystem of global innovation and industry engagement.

In our academic workload model we will allocate specific time to every academic to spend on innovation and engagement activities. Our academic promotions process will recognise innovation and engagement as a separate category, allowing improved pathways for highly industry engaged academics to grow their careers. We will reshape our industry engagement support function to directly support our Schools with embedded resources, and we will reshape our School leadership structures and leadership capabilities to account for greater innovation and engagement.

SIGNED for and on behalf of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

by

In the presence of:

Jessica Mohr

Full name (please print)

First Assistant Secretary

Position

of the Department of Education

Signature

01/12/2025

Date

Rachel Searl

Witness (please print)

Executive Officer

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature

SIGNED for and on behalf of

Swinburne University of Technology

by

In the presence of:

Professor Pascale Quester

Full name (please print)

Vice Chancellor and President

Position

Signature

Lucy Rollinson

Witness (please print)

Chief of Staff

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature