



2025-2026 Mission-Based Compact Between the Commonwealth of Australia and The Australian National 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

ANU was established in 1946 to provide Australia with the research and education capacity to accelerate national prosperity, develop national unity and identity and to deepen our engagement with an understanding of our neighbours across Asia and the Pacific.

ANU is a unique entity in the Australian higher education landscape, the only university established by an Act of Federal Parliament, the [Australian National University Act 1991](#) (the Act). The Act sets out the University's functions and these are enshrined in the [University's Funding Agreement](#) with the Commonwealth of Australia where its unique purpose as the National University is set out, including but not limited to:

- maintaining and enhancing distinctive concentrations of excellence in research and education, particularly in areas of national importance to Australia;
- supporting the development of Australia's national unity and identity, including by improving Australia's understanding of itself and the history and culture of its Indigenous peoples, its Asia-Pacific neighbours, and its place in the international community;
- maintaining and further developing the University's strong focus on research and the University's educational philosophy that its students are part of a community of scholars;
- enhancing Australia's prosperity through supporting sustainable economic development, innovation and creativity, and research and education (particularly research and education in areas of national importance to Australia);
- providing a national, regional, and international public policy resource to address major issues confronting governments, business and communities;
- aspiring to the highest international standards of scholarship; and
- maintaining and further developing long-term strategic relationships with government, business, other universities and institutions and the public, both within Australia and internationally.

The University enacts this Mission and its functions through [ANU by 2025](#), our strategic plan, and our operational plan [ANU Corporate Plan 2025-2028](#), which as a Corporate Commonwealth entity we are required to produce under the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 \(PGPA Act\)](#).

Beyond our legislative environment, as the University nears the end of its current strategic planning cycle and emerges out of a period of intensive change, the University has defined a number of transitional institutional priorities for the 2025 and 2026 period. In this next cycle, ANU will:

- Finalise and launch the University's next Strategic Plan which will be co-designed with our community.
- Align our educational offerings with national skills needs, particularly in cybersecurity, nuclear science, and public policy, through our new College of Systems and Society and refreshed curriculum and the University's [Policy Brief](#).
- Fully implement the recommendations of the Nixon Review and our Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2024-2026, with progress reported to Council.
- Maintain a robust Foreign Interference Taskforce and enhance our cyber resilience through significant investment in our Digital Master Plan and mandatory staff training.
- Uphold the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech through our Policy.
- Respond to and comply with new legislative and regulatory requirements stemming from government inquiries and regulatory agencies.

Strategies for Improving Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education

ANU has strong outcome performance for under-represented cohorts, including one of the lowest attritions (18.9%) and highest success rates (85.2%) for First Nations students. ANU students with a Disability or identifying as First Nations also have a higher average Personal Wellbeing Index than their sector counterparts which are a testament to our strong support services, and which underpin this strategy.

In alignment with the Australian Universities Accord processes, ANU will:

- Increase the enrolment share of First Nations students through the Kambri Scholars Program and tailored pathway initiatives.
- Grow the proportion of students from low-SES, rural, and remote backgrounds through our partnership with the Country Universities Centre network and the ANU Educational Access Scheme. The University has also requested fifty fee free HELP places which if received will be used as part of a pilot program to welcome more low SES students to the University.
- Enhance the education access plans for students with disability through the appointment of allied health professionals to the Accessibility Team.
- Through the ANU Tuckwell Scholarship Program, continue to identify and nurture talented students from across the country.

The above will be achieved through a combination of outreach, financial support, and tailored academic success programs, and will be measured via enrolment and retention data.

The University provides a number of support services for students in under-represented groups including:

- Flagship [Kambri Indigenous Undergraduate Scholarship](#) and [Changing Futures Scholarships](#);
- The [Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre](#) which provides a support base for ANU Indigenous students, offering pastoral care, tuition and links students into other on campus programs;
- [First Year Experience Program](#) – a ten-month program to help students build community and connect with peers and support services. Using peer leadership approaches the program helps students integrate into university life, enhance sense of belonging and increase retention rates;
- [Set4ANU Mentoring](#) – provides eight weeks of free mentoring to new ANU students by existing students. Mentors help the new students by welcoming them to campus and giving them the confidence to succeed at ANU;
- [ANU Accessibility Program](#) – supports students with a disability from their time as a prospective student preparing to attend University right through their studies. They also provide support to students with caring responsibilities;
- [Basic Needs Support Program](#) – provides financial and in-kind support to reduce the barriers faced by students on transition to university. In 2025, the University supported 325 students with financial help with textbooks, parking, health services and other hardships;
- [Community Connect](#) – provides students experiencing food insecurity with access to pantry staples, frozen foods and personal supplies;
- The University has set a KPI, detailed in our [Corporate Plan 2025-2028](#), to increase participation and access for students from low socio-economic, First Nations and Regional and Remote backgrounds.

In addition, students in under-represented groups at the University can benefit from health, wellbeing and support services available to all our students including:

- Access to the medical centre, counselling and case management services;

- Sector leading [Accommodation Guarantee](#) to all students enrolled in its enabling programs. Enabling students will benefit from the additional [wellbeing and academic support services](#) offered as part of the ANU residential experience;
- [Set4ANU Mentoring](#) – provides eight weeks of free mentoring to new ANU students by existing students. Mentors help the new students by welcoming them to campus and giving them the confidence to succeed at ANU.

Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning

Within our [current strategic plan](#), the University has committed to delivering a student experience that includes disciplinary depth and transdisciplinary breadth, provokes critical thinking and problem solving, and allows students to join academic and experiential learning.

Importantly, over the course of this compact, the University will seek to deliver on the agreed Department of Education Glidepath for its student numbers as part of our transition to Managed Growth. This will ensure the University is contributing to the priority established by the Minister to ensure universities transition to fully funded student load.

The University remains committed to diversifying its international student cohort and delivering on the Government's objectives regarding the National Planning Level and the quality parameters outlined in its managed system for international education. The University will continue work to meet our indicative 2026 New Overseas Student Commencement (NOSC) higher education allocation (3750 in 2026) and to diversify our international student cohort with a focus on attracting students from Southeast Asia. Delivering on these strategies will support the quality of education and experience of our students.

Across 2022/23 the University has committed to an [ANU Curriculum Framework and Graduate Attribute Implementation](#). The framework embeds three unique attributes into our curriculum and ensures that every student graduates the University with:

- Insight into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Knowledges and Indigenous Peoples' Perspectives;
- Capability to employ discipline-based knowledge in transdisciplinary problem solving
- Expertise for critical thinking.

Across the period of this compact we will continue to embed, monitor and evaluate this significant change. In particular, we will ensure that the transdisciplinary learning is enabled through our new [ANU McCusker Institute](#) which will foster a vibrant transdisciplinary learning community that connects, engages and inspires students to create positive social impact.

The University continues to focus on the deliverables within our [ANU Learning & Teaching Strategy](#). During the course of this Compact the University will see a refresh of this strategy to ensure its continued alignment to our new academic strategy. In line with its strategy, in 2025, the University has delivered the first phase of its new [Learning Management System](#), and this will continue through 2026 until all courses are transitioned to the new system. This is a significant investment by the University directly based on feedback from our student community and we believe this will materially improve their satisfaction with their student experiences, particularly their Learning Resources which we measure via the [2024 Student Experience Survey](#).

In response to the [Nixon Review of ANU Culture](#) and the [TEQSA Statement of Regulatory Expectations on Student grievance and complaint mechanisms](#), the University will over the course of this compact review and improve its student support and complaints handling processes. We have also expanded the governance scope of our [Safety and Wellbeing Committee](#), the subcommittee of Council that ensures ANU discharges our responsibilities in relation to the safety and wellbeing of our community and throughout the course of this compact they not only oversee the delivery of the University's [Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2024 – 2026](#), but will ensure our accountability of the broader improvements we need to make. This will materially improve our student experience and make our campus a safer place that better supports their wellbeing. Monitoring of these initiatives are conducted in line with KPIs listed in under the ANU Corporate Plan.

Strategies for Improving Research, Research Training, and Innovation

Within our [current strategic plan](#) the University has committed to delivering research that transforms society and creates national capability. To achieve this the University is implementing [Enabling Impact: The ANU Research Strategy 2024+](#).

As Australia's national university we have a unique and important role in relation to the custodianship of [nationally significant research infrastructure](#) and [collections](#). The University has more than 40 national facilities and our research infrastructure has an estimated replacement value of more than \$2 Billion. Through this compact the University is elevating our focus on national research infrastructure and has recently published a [catalogue of its research infrastructure](#) that is available to the nation.

Research undertaken at ANU plays a critical role as a public policy resource to address major issues confronting Australia and its neighbours. It is critical to capture this information to help the Government demonstrate the impact of its investment in ANU research. To address this the University has launched multiple new mechanisms through which our research community can capture these activities and prizes and make these contributions public in a more timely manner.

Following an extensive University wide consultation since mid-2024 the University has committed to implement [a range of improvements](#) to the delivery of services that support Research, Research Training and Innovation. The implementation of these new ways of supporting our researchers and research students will be a key activity across the life of this compact.

The University has this year established a [Graduate Research School](#) (GRS) which will enhance the delivery of services to support our research students across the whole HDR candidate lifecycle. Across the life of this Compact the GRS will be focused on streamlining processes, better defining the services offered to HDR Candidates and establishing better systems for HDR Candidates. This is directly aimed at delivering a more consistent and improved student experience and we anticipate that we will observe our successes through improved outcomes in the research student satisfaction surveys. These new policies will also seek to drive our on-time completions.

To support our researchers and to assist the University in ensuring we meet compliance requirements relating to [foreign interference](#), [defence export controls](#) and [research integrity](#) as part of our transformation of research services we have invested in additional resourcing across our compliance activities. Over the life of this Compact these teams will focus on the development of our workforce's capacity in these important areas of research compliance and assurance.

This year the University has also established an Academic Performance and Productivity Analytics Team who will analyse, interpret and drive continuous improvement across our academic performance outcomes and in particular work with our Colleges and Schools to help them with their academic strategies and evidence-based decision making about their academic performance. Across the life of this compact the team will drive strategies in relation to improving our rankings performance, academic workload reform and research productivity.

Monitoring of these initiatives are conducted in line with KPIs listed in under the ANU Corporate Plan.

Strategies for Engaging with Industry

ANU is committed to translating research into tangible economic and societal benefits through strategic industry partnerships. Our key priorities and strategies for the compact period are outlined below:

- **Research Commercialisation and Industry Partnerships** – Through the [ANU Research Strategy 2024+](#), ANU is executing our comprehensive research strategy to support both fundamental research and enhanced impact and commercialisation activities. A key initiative is our focus on non-Award learning experiences which provide an effective mechanism for disseminating our research outcomes whilst support the establishment of long-term research and development relationships with industry and government partners.
- **Major Strategic Partnerships** – deep, long-term partnerships with global industry leaders are being established. A flagship example is the University's role in establishing The Rio Tinto Centre for Future Materials, a 10-year, \$240 million partnership. As the only Australian university in this global initiative, the partnership will integrate First Nations knowledge with the global energy transition and serve as a cornerstone of our industry engagement.
- **Translation and Commercialisation Mechanisms through:**
 1. **Innovation Institutes:** ANU will continue to develop unique models like the [Agrifood Innovation Institute](#), which co-locates businesses and researchers, creating impact opportunities for our research and start-up career pathways for our staff and students.
 2. **ANU Research and Innovation Funding:** This [funding](#) supports our staff and students undertake highly impactful research and innovation. A focus of our funding support is to ensure that translational, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary activities are well supported as these are critical to driving collaboration and impact with our industry and government partners.
- **Work-Integrated Learning and Employability** – The University is strengthening the alignment between the ANU Employability Framework with our Learning and Teaching Strategy, thereby strengthening the connection between education and industry needs. Through enhanced systems for placement management and student support through our new Careers Central hub, ANU aims to improve the discoverability of work-integrated learning opportunities for students in 2025, and expand the volume and variety of these opportunities across all disciplines in 2026.

Monitoring progress against these initiatives will be measured and reported through the Key Performance Indicators established in the ANU Corporate Plan, ensuring transparency and accountability for our industry engagement outcomes.

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
The Australian National University
by

Rebekah Brown

Full name (please print)

Interim Vice-Chancellor

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:

Cassandra Peisley

Witness (please print)

Executive Assistant

Position or profession of witness (please print)

Signature