

Strategy Codesign

June 2026

Codesign feedback summary

1. What the feedback supported

There was broad support for the strategic intent and direction of the draft v1, and several elements were consistently identified for retention.

The candour of the draft was repeatedly singled out. Acknowledging that ANU has not always provided a safe and stable environment was described as giving the Strategy credibility after the Nixon Review; several respondents asked only that this candour be matched by concrete commitments. Others took the opposite view, cautioning that an outward-facing document should not dwell on past failures.

Foregrounding people was welcomed across surveys and sessions. The placement of 'Our People' as a dedicated area, the recognition that systems have impeded staff in doing their jobs, and the commitments to insourcing expertise, leadership accountability and reasonable workloads were all named as content to carry forward.

The First Nations commitments drew strong support, particularly their position within the Identity section rather than as an afterthought, the framing around self-determination and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the specific possible actions. Submissions asked that this prominence be retained and not diluted into generic diversity language.

Other elements consistently endorsed included: research and education positioned as the two primary means of impact; the equal prominence given to education; the recognition of enablers as essential; the document's relative brevity; the three-column structure (context / direction / possible actions), which some found clearer and more accountable than past strategies; and the codesign process itself, which many contrasted favourably with previous consultations – with the caveat that participants now expect to see how their input was used.

2. The most consistent critique: specificity, prioritisation and trade-offs

By a clear margin, the most frequent feedback across every channel was that the draft is too general. Respondents variously described it as 'vanilla', 'generic', a document that 'could be from any other university', 'a values-and-aspirations brochure', and 'more of the same'. This critique took several connected forms:

- **No defining ambition.** The New York alumni roundtable called this the missing 'North Star': a single, unifying ambition with a clear point of arrival, timeframe and measurable outcomes. University Leadership Group's (ULG) own prioritisation workshop placed 'articulating a North Star' first among 2026 priorities. Multiple sessions asked: 'ANU will be known for what? For whom?'
- **Absent trade-offs.** What ANU will stop, shrink or deprioritise was the most repeated single question. The draft's commitment to 'reshaping or reducing activity in areas that are lower priority' attracted particular attention: respondents asked against what criteria, decided by whom, with what consequences – noting that community experience of Renew ANU makes this clause especially sensitive without that detail.
- **Unmeasurable commitments.** The 2030 statements were described as lacking baselines, targets, KPIs and named accountabilities. 'Possible actions' were widely read as objectives rather than actions; several groups asked for feasibility assessment, owners, timelines, and reporting commitments – or, at minimum, explicit foreshadowing that these will sit in an implementation plan.
- **Internal misalignment.** Several sessions observed that the front matter signals change while the possible actions read as business-as-usual, and that items which should be normal operations (for example, developmental reviews of academic units) sit oddly at strategy level.
- **Tone.** Many described the draft as defensive, inward-looking, reactive and insufficiently inspiring – 'competent but not inspiring'. Participants asked for a

document that gives each person a reason to recognise themselves in it, and that is future-oriented rather than primarily responsive to recent reviews. Others noted a tension here: the draft's grounded realism was itself praised by some (particularly relative to the previous strategy), and a few cautioned against over-promising.

3. Distinctiveness and the national mission

Closely related to the specificity critique was a widespread view that the draft under-articulates what makes ANU distinctive. The assets named repeatedly were: the founding Act and the National Institutes Grant (NIG); proximity to government and the public service; national convening power; stewardship of national research infrastructure (with a request to name and value it, including collections); the Asia and the Pacific mandate; the residential, human-scale campus; languages (described as a capability unmatched in the Southern Hemisphere); and transdisciplinary breadth. Respondents asked that these be leant into explicitly rather than gestured at.

Several refinements to the national-mission framing recurred:

- **The 'partner of choice' language attracted sustained comment.** Many wanted the relationship with government characterised as 'critical friend' – evidence-based, independent, willing to contest – rather than an easy partnership; one session put it as 'we are here to hold the government to account and tell truth to power'. Survey respondents also flagged the absence of the critic-and-conscience role and of academic freedom from the values as significant omissions.
- **Questions of definition:** who defines the national interest, and how ANU balances alignment with government priorities against institutional independence. ULG discussion framed the same question as whether ANU is the government's university or the people of Australia's university.
- **Region:** 'Asia-Pacific' as a generic label was challenged from several directions – requests to name China, Southeast Asia and the Pacific explicitly; to write 'Asia and the Pacific'; and to reflect a genuinely international orientation beyond the region (a strong theme of the Shanghai roundtable, which also emphasised rankings, belonging and multicultural identity as decisive in international markets).
- **The civic-university framing for the ACT drew mixed responses:** welcomed by some as an opening to genuine local engagement (including with non-elite Canberra communities), questioned by others as sitting awkwardly with the federal legislative mandate.
- **Engagement as a third pillar:** a substantial body of feedback – the ERI Working Group, the engaged research session, the IDEA submission and others – argued that engagement and capability-building (executive education, policy labs, advisory work, convening) is a core mode of impact alongside research and education, and is currently framed only as an enabler. Related submissions asked that impact itself be defined, that non-traditional research outputs be recognised, and that value not be outsourced to rankings alone.

4. Our people

This was the largest single body of feedback by volume. Recurring themes:

- **Insecure work and casualisation.** Described in multiple sessions as the most significant absence in the draft: 'a Strategy that depends on its workforce cannot keep that workforce on insecure contracts'. Specific points included soft-money dependence and the lack of bridging mechanisms between grants; structural disparities in contract types between schools; post-DECRA employment certainty; de-casualisation targets; and, conversely, a practical need for a fast, pre-vetted casual register for genuine surge work.

- **Career stages.** E/MCRs appear once in the document (in the First Nations actions); mid-career academics are not named at all and objected to being folded into ‘emerging leaders’ – ‘we are not emerging, we are delivering’. ULG’s own pipeline work reached similar findings, including that MCR attrition is the most acute. Requested responses included structured pathways, protected research time, mentoring, seed and bridging funding, and recognition of supervision, convening and service in promotion.
- **Professional, technical and third-space staff.** Professional staff noted they are not mentioned once in the draft. Multiple submissions asked for explicit recognition of professional expertise, development investment, clear progression pathways, and recognition of ‘third space’ roles bridging academic and professional work – including the research-infrastructure point that ‘infrastructure is people’, and unresolved issues around hybrid contracts and the specialist stream.
- **Workload, wellbeing and morale.** Consistent accounts of administrative burden, under-resourced support functions following recent reductions, demoralisation and loss of institutional knowledge after Renew ANU, and a request that the Strategy acknowledge this openly and treat restoring trust, capability and psychological safety as a strategic priority rather than a parallel workstream. Salary competitiveness (particularly for technical and professional roles) was raised repeatedly, as was leadership stability and executive accountability.
- **Specific staff cohorts.** Hybrid and remote staff (largely invisible in the draft, including the equity of hybrid town halls and training); staff with disability and caring responsibilities; and First Nations staff across the institution.

5. Governance, trust and accountability

Feedback consistently distinguished between the draft’s language of accountability and the governance reform several groups consider necessary to deliver it. Specific asks included: a clear role for Academic Board; sharper distinctions between the roles of Council, management and academic bodies (‘the current language blurs responsibility’); transparent decision rights and criteria – especially for prioritisation, investment and divestment decisions; formal staff and student participation in decision-making, with HDR representation described in one session as having been tokenistic; financial transparency, including budget-model visibility and clarity on how the NIG is allocated and reported; and a recognition that consultation, however good, is not itself governance reform.

Trust was framed as both precondition and test: low trust in senior leadership relative to local levels was reported directly, and several sessions argued that rebuilding trust – internally and externally – should be named as a central strategic goal. Implementation credibility was a connected theme: ANU’s track record on implementing strategies was raised in several rooms, with requests for stage gates, named accountabilities, performance reporting, and post-implementation review. Participants in one session also asked why outcomes of the 2021–2025 plan were not evaluated before drafting began.

6. Systems, services and ways of working

Near-universal across professional and academic sessions: current systems and processes are a critical constraint, and the draft’s treatment of them is welcome but insufficiently developed. Recurring content included fragmented and legacy platforms (e.g. PeopleSoft), duplicated data entry and shadow systems, slow HR and recruitment processes, ticketing without transparency, cybersecurity under-investment, the absence of a unified CRM, and the ANU website. The ITS session’s investment priorities, voted by staff, ranked workforce stability first, followed by core business systems, cybersecurity, AI infrastructure and literacy, student experience, culture and leadership, and campus experience.

Centralisation versus local autonomy was a live tension throughout. Sessions reported that centralisation of services (including GRS, research support and residential management) has in places slowed work, lengthened response times and removed face-to-face connection; the consistent ask was not wholesale reversal but a rebalancing – retaining the benefits of

coordination while restoring local agility, with service level agreements, clear ownership, and consultation with the staff who use the systems.

Insourcing before consultants was endorsed in almost every room in which it arose, with suggestions including an internal register of expertise.

7. Education and the student experience

The strongest structural point was that education should sit as a genuine peer of research rather than downstream of it: 'research-led education only works if the education side is genuinely resourced'. Connected asks included investment in teaching capability and training (several groups asked for the return of central learning-and-teaching support), recognition and reward for high-quality teaching, resourcing for in-person and small-group learning, securing assessment in line with TEQSA expectations, and attention to staff–student ratios as a competitive strength.

On students, recurring themes included: defining what student success and the 'holistic student experience' actually mean; embedding careers and employability across the curriculum rather than as an add-on (with graduate attributes, currently absent, restored to visibility); support – not just access – for equity cohorts, First Nations students and first-in-family students; the experience of online and remote postgraduate students, who described feeling detached from the institution; HDR-specific needs, including replacing the reimbursement model with up-front funding and standardising minimum support; and safety, wellbeing and prevention-focused approaches, words that participants noted barely appear in the draft.

The residential dimension generated two substantial inputs. Residents and Residential Division staff argued the Halls are a defining national asset – a third of students, the highest residential proportion in the Go8 – currently near-invisible in the draft; that affordability is becoming a barrier inconsistent with the diversity ambitions; and that student voice in residential governance has regressed, with proposals including a residential committee to Council. Alumni roundtables independently identified the residential, college-style experience as a core differentiator.

8. Research, infrastructure and translation

Research feedback clustered around five areas:

- **Excellence:** several groups felt the word and the ambition are under-present, and asked for named research strengths, confident articulation of where ANU leads, and support for both fundamental and applied work (with protection for basic research explicitly requested).
- **Infrastructure:** stewardship of national facilities was affirmed as a genuine strength, with requests to connect it to national data systems and compliance regimes, to recognise expertise alongside assets, to address collections, and to make the infrastructure investment action meaningful – 'without a dollar figure or mechanism it is meaningless'. The HASS counterpart was put sharply by CASS Anthropology: fieldwork funding is research infrastructure ('the field is the lab'), and a costed case was made for modest discipline-level research and seminar funding, benchmarked against global peers.
- **Funding and the NIG:** requests for transparency and rigorous tests of national interest in NIG allocation were common, alongside support for researchers seeking external funding and concerns about reliance on volatile grant cycles.
- **Transdisciplinarity:** a professorial working group and several sessions argued that mutual strengthening of disciplinary and transdisciplinary work is ANU's distinctive contribution, naming specific disincentives (notably budget arrangements that deter cross-campus teaching) and opportunities (mission-led research, the Grand Challenge model, institutes as front doors and conveners).

- **Translation and commercialisation:** the CIP submission documented rising momentum (returns, disclosures, ventures) and recommended an evergreen proof-of-concept fund, expanded translation support across all disciplines, an entrepreneurial ecosystem built with CBRIN, and an Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protocol; ANU Enterprise positioned itself as a strategic delivery enabler; and CBRIN itself wrote that the mechanisms of engagement, translation and entrepreneurship are a key gap in the draft.

9. First Nations commitments

The prominence and placement of the First Nations commitments were strongly endorsed across channels, and submissions were explicit that they should not be diluted. The substantive feedback was about delivery and reach:

- **Implementation.** The session with First Nations staff described the current draft as feeling symbolic without resources, coordination and clear pathways, and called for a separate Indigenous Strategy Implementation Plan designed by a First Nations implementation group, supported by data (FNP to collate staff, student and research data) and ongoing engagement with First Nations staff across the University.
- **Recognition beyond named units.** Indigenous researchers noted that institutional support currently reaches only parts of the University – ‘I don’t feel seen in the strategy as it only speaks to certain parts of the university that work in First Nations research’. Yardhura Walani and NCIG asked that ANU’s national leadership in First Nations health research and Indigenous data sovereignty be recognised as an established strength rather than ‘emerging’ work, with sustained investment in Indigenous HDR and early-career pathways.
- **Governance and UNDRIP.** Multiple submissions argued that UNDRIP implementation must be structural – shaping governance, decision-making authority, research design, ethics and data governance – not aspirational language; questions raised included whether ANU should establish a DVC (First Nations) and how Indigenous-led centres are reflected in institutional governance.
- **Language.** Requested refinements included ‘First Nations matters/priorities’ rather than ‘issues’, partnership rather than paternalistic framings of leadership, agenda-setting that is Indigenous-led rather than co-designed, and explicit reference to languages, including language revival.

10. Equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility

Several gaps were identified consistently and across independent channels. Gender does not appear in the draft; this was described as a significant regression given the Nixon Review’s origins, and Gender Institute for Women’s Leadership (GIWL) and Wiyi Yani U Thangani argued for gender equality and intersectionality to be restored as core, cross-cutting commitments spanning research, education and policy – not solely workforce matters – and for ANU’s nationally distinctive gender-policy institutes to be visible in the Strategy’s narrative.

Disability is similarly unnamed; respondents pointed to obligations under the DDA and the Accord’s equity emphasis, and asked for universal design approaches, accessibility commitments, and recognition of disabled staff and researchers.

The IDEA submission proposed embedding inclusion as a system-wide design principle across every pillar with governance, targets and accountability, using explicit language for under-named groups, and re-examining how ‘excellence’ is framed so that it does not read as reinforcing exclusivity – while preserving, undiluted, the distinct First Nations commitments.

Related survey feedback asked for population-parity ambitions for under-represented students, supported by genuine success and retention measures rather than entry alone.

11. AI, technology, sustainability and the external environment

Views on AI divided into two camps that agreed on one thing: the current treatment is unsatisfying. One camp argued the draft is superficial and under-ambitious – no institutional AI strategy, investment, governance, curriculum and assessment redesign, or secure infrastructure – and that ANU is behind peers; ULG identified sector-leading AI policy as an immediate priority. The other camp argued the AI references are too specific and time-bound – that ‘our graduates will be AI-ready’ risks dating badly, and should be reframed around readiness for emerging technologies generally, with a critical, research-informed stance, attention to staff capability, and (from creative arts and humanities) resistance to language of inevitability. Several submissions noted both can be accommodated: a general framing in the Strategy with a substantive AI program beneath it.

Sustainability was identified as a clear gap. The dedicated submission set out the compliance case (mandatory climate disclosure for Commonwealth entities, with nature-related disclosure expected), the competitive case, and recommendations: embed sustainability across research, teaching, operations and governance; reinstate the environment as a University value (its removal was noticed); reference the Environmental Sustainability Plan and net-zero pathway; and consider Sustainable Development Goals commitments. ICEDS argued ANU should claim global leadership in climate and energy, noting the loss of physical climate science capability. Connected feedback asked for a position on fossil-fuel and harm-linked funding and investment.

More broadly, multiple submissions asked the Strategy to engage seriously with the external environment – geopolitics (including a principled framework for China engagement, academic freedom and research integrity in contested contexts), democratic fragility, inequality, demographic shifts, and the changing perceived value of a university education – and to take a longer, intergenerational view.

12. Language and terminology

A practical set of drafting points recurred often enough to record together. Terms questioned or opposed: ‘enablers’ (noted by several respondents for its association with the intimate partner violence literature); ‘spheres of influence’ (read as passive or as carrying geopolitical connotations; alternatives offered included ‘spheres of action’ and service-oriented framings); ‘program architecture’ and similar higher-education jargon; ‘human-scale’ (ambiguous to some); ‘sovereign capabilities’ (not understood or liked in one session); ‘the challenges that matter’ (read as dismissive of other scholarship); and ‘growing university’ in the purpose statement.

Words noted as absent: creative/creativity, critical, curiosity, gender, disability, safety, wellbeing, teaching (in one session’s reading), graduate attributes, academic freedom. The values drew divided comment: endorsed by many as grounded in the Nixon Review and behavioural rather than empty, but described by others as generic (‘are we selling shoes?’), behavioural rather than institutional, and lacking values such as curiosity, collaboration, ambition, academic freedom and care for the environment; the number of values and the coexistence of multiple value sets across the University were also raised.

13. Where views diverged

Most feedback pointed in compatible directions but there was also disagreement, including:

- **Level of detail:** some want measurable actions in the Strategy itself; others hold that detail belongs in an implementation plan, provided the Strategy clearly commits to one.
- **Growth and scale:** the draft’s combination of ‘growing university’, judicious growth preserving human scale, and cost pressures was identified as an unresolved tension; alumni asked directly whether ANU should grow significantly or remain deliberately small, and several asked for a specified growth vector.

- **Values:** retain the Nixon-derived values versus reframe around enduring academic and institutional principles.
- **AI:** a major institutional program versus more general, technology-neutral language (and, beneath both, divergent views about AI itself).
- **Candour about past failures:** credibility-building versus inappropriate in an outward-facing document.
- **Rankings:** a strategic priority and decisive in key markets (Shanghai roundtable; anthropology's revenue case) versus 'someone else's ranking' and a poor proxy for value (engaged research and creative arts sessions).
- **Centralisation:** a true enterprise model with consolidation of duplicated systems (ITS session) versus restored local autonomy and devolved decision-making (academic and residential sessions). Most positions converged on 'centralise what makes sense, with service standards' but the emphasis differed markedly.

14. Expectations of the process

Finally, participants were direct about what they expect next. The codesign process itself earned goodwill – and that goodwill was consistently described as conditional on visible follow-through.

The 'hopes and fears' exercise in one session captured the spread: hopes that the draft changes substantially, that diverse voices are incorporated, and that the Strategy becomes a guiding document for decisions; fears of business-as-usual, of a tick-box exercise, and that 'if done badly, it might be the last straw for some people'.

Several groups asked specifically to be shown how feedback shaped version 2, to be re-engaged when it is released, and for the Strategy to commit to regular reporting on delivery.

Contents

The purpose of this document	10
The Strategy codesign.....	11
Appendices:.....	17
Appendix 1 Community survey.....	18
Appendix 2 Facilitated sessions.....	35
Appendix 3 Other submissions.....	144
Strengthening alignment between the Draft ANU Strategy (v1) and the ANU Engaged Research and Impact Strategy	145
How can disciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education mutually strengthen each other at ANU?	149
New York Alumni Roundtable	153
Shanghai Alumni Roundtable.....	159
Integrating sustainability into the University Strategy	163
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) / Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA)	166
Halls of Residence.....	175
Commercialisation and Intellectual Property (CIP)	181
ANU Enterprise.....	197
Workshop Input from the Global Institute for Women's Leadership and Wiyi Yani U Thangani First Nations Gender Justice Institute.....	198
Yardhura Walani and National Centre for Indigenous Genomics	202
ANU Institute for Space – InSpace.....	204
Creative Arts and Humanities	205
CASS Anthropology Response to Draft Strategy V1.....	207
Positioning ANU as a National Leader in Health and Care Workforce Research, Policy and Training.....	212
Australian Centre on China in the World	215
Appendix 4 University Leadership Group	216
ULG Workshop Summary 4 May 2026.....	216
ULG Workshop Summary 31 March – 1 April 2026	217
ULG Workshop Summary 10 March.....	223
Appendix 5 Strategy documents	229
Draft Strategy v1.0 April 2026.....	229
Strategic Directions March 2026.....	239

The purpose of this document

This document aims to do the following:

1. Provide a description of the Strategy codesign process including the context, trade-offs, tensions and compromises involved in producing the draft University Strategy;
2. Share a synthesis of the contributions made to the codesign process to give a summary of the extensive materials;
3. Present raw material generated through the process;
4. Be a record of where the University is today, and by that act as a baseline for understanding the impact of the Strategy in the future;
5. Offer advice for future Strategy processes.

Authorship

This document was prepared by Dr Ant Bagshaw, Director, Strategy in the Office of the Interim Vice-Chancellor. Generative AI has been used to support initial drafts of the synthesis; all AI text has been reviewed and edited prior to publication.

Acknowledgements

The Strategy codesign process would not have been possible without the diligent, thoughtful and constructive input from the University community. For all those contributions – in written responses, and through dialogue – thank you. You asked for that input to be honoured, and this document attempts to support that.

Particular thanks are due to the volunteer facilitators who contributed their time and energies to holding workshops in support of the Strategy development. They did this at short notice and with limited guidance. You will see from the notes included in this document how valuable that exercise has been.

The Strategy process has been co-sponsored by Interim Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Rebekah Brown and the Dean of the College of Asia and the Pacific, Professor Helen Sullivan. Both have provided exceptional leadership for the process and – through the codesign process that they have championed – they have shown trust in staff and students as partners in strategy development.

The members of the University Leadership Group and University Executive Committee gave serious, detailed and passionate contributions throughout the process.

The Strategy process has also been supported by a brilliant group of colleagues who provided a working group offering advice, practical support and encouragement. Thank you: Adam Lambert, Bhavani Balakishnan, Jill Mowbray-Tsutsumi, Liza Flanagan, Pam Lourandos and Sandi Towle. Eva Medcalf and Karen Sandercock provided valuable strategic advice. And the process would not have been possible without Cassii Peisley, Courtney De Costa and Kim Harris to keep us on track.

Many other colleagues provided essential information, context and perspectives during the Strategy process. Thank you all for your support for this important process.

The Strategy codesign

As outlined in the Strategic Directions document (see Appendix 5), which was shared with the University community in March 2026, the intention was to conduct an iterative process with multiple rounds of input.

The nature of the codesign process means that not all input could be used in the final Strategy, not least because some of it is directly contradictory. This document is part of a process for showing where – and what – decisions have been made.

Strategic Directions |What does it mean to codesign the University Strategy?



Participation

The facilitated sessions attracted 400+ participants.

The community survey produced 147 responses (shared – where permitted – alongside demographics in Appendix 1).

At the end of 2025 and beginning of 2026, hundreds of staff engaged locally in discussions about the future direction of the University. A summary of the that work is enclosed in Appendix 4 as the ULG workshop summary from 10 March.

Additional meetings were held with many individuals and groups throughout the process.

While the engagement has been broad, the exercise was not designed to be fully representative. Some comments may, therefore, reflect the views of individuals or small groups and not a broader sentiment.

The Strategy context

The University Strategy sits within specific institutional and external contexts. These factors were not explored – in detail – in the materials supporting the Strategy codesign, but they have influenced the interpretation of the codesign input and the construction of the draft materials.

The general university strategy problem

There are general issues which influence the genre of the university strategy. These documents are, typically, presented – in their public form, at least – at a high level without significant detail. The Draft Strategy did this, and it was not well received by everyone.

Universities also have a limited number of purposes – at the core, research and education. It is, largely, for that reason that “all university strategies look the same”. The ANU Strategy, however, offers an opportunity for a genuinely unique exploration of our purpose even if the fundamental activities of the institution have overlap with others. The University’s position is doubly unique: first, as the only national university in Australia; and second, as the only university which is a Commonwealth entity. Each of these unique positions offers us ongoing challenges and opportunities. The codesign process sought a better expression of the University’s distinctiveness, and this has been attempted in v2.

There is also a tendency in university strategies to present the additive and ambitious/optimistic view of the institution. The documents do not typically say which could be reconsidered, reduced or stopped. The pressure here is to have a document which, in part, serves as a *positive* public statement and not the full detailed representation of a university’s plans. Again, the Draft Strategy operated at this level, though it was not as ambitious as many people would have liked.

The reconciliation of the importance of the public-facing and positive document with the detail of what needs to be done for the University to thrive will be attempted through a separate Implementation Plan. While this approach will not please everyone, it is a practical way of achieving the rhetorical power of the outward-facing strategy with the strategic work of a plan to undertake actions. The Strategy v2 offers guidelines for the Implementation Plan and an ongoing commitment to transparency.

The ANU-specific context

The Strategy did not start from a blank page. The roadmap and stocktakes initiated in 2025 provide important context. The University has a Corporate Plan including performance indicators. The Nixon Review and post-review implementation working groups represent significant work on the part of hundreds of people from across the University; the Strategy process should honour that work and play its part in establishing the safer, fairer and more inclusive future for ANU.

As is well-known to the University community at the time of writing, the internal context is one of significant and complex challenge. The University community was informed by the Acting Chancellor on 22 May that:

[Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency] has appointed Ms Lynelle Briggs AO to examine aspects of the University’s governance, and we expect that report soon. These inquiries have mainly examined how the University’s most senior leadership group made decisions, and how leadership responsibilities were exercised. We believe that TEQSA is justified in its concerns about the quality of governance at the ANU.

Further, the Acting Chancellor and Interim Vice-Chancellor & President wrote on 5 June that:

The [Australian National Audit Office] detailed analysis identified a deterioration in recent years of the financial position faced by the ANU. Further, it found that the

urgency and scale of the Renew ANU expenditure reduction target was disproportionate to the financial challenge. The report documents concerns about a deficiency in the information relied upon and documentation of key decisions. ANU Council acknowledges the Report's findings and has committed the University to its three recommendations.

As reflected in the feedback in this document, the criticisms of governance, leadership and management at the University are significant. Strategy v2 offers a new ambition over v1 in its ambition for exemplary governance at the University.

There is a tension in the codesign process about the desire to lay out – in full – the challenges facing the University, and a desire to offer a point of reset and looking ahead. Strategy v2 errs on the side of the positive with a limited reference to the challenges facing the institution. Hopefully, by the time the document is read in future years, the acute internal challenges facing the University will have been addressed.

The external environment

Student demand for education is changing, as are students' needs. Equally, the research landscape is changing. There are also policy developments and reviews which we need to take into account:

- The Australian Universities Accord of 2024 set the most ambitious reform agenda for the sector in a generation. It includes doubling domestic enrolments across the sector by 2050, introducing mission-based compacts through the Australian Tertiary Education Commission, and reshaping funding around institutional distinctiveness and national priorities.
- Alongside the Accord, the government is now responding to Ambitious Australia: Strategic Examination of Research and Development (SERD). The report's vision is that "Australia's research, development and innovation (RD&I) will underpin a knowledge-based, productive and differentiated economy that leads to a more prosperous, healthier, safer and more equitable Australia."
- A third review published in 2025 by the Australian Academy of Science reveals substantial risks to Australia because of a decline in Australian scientific capability, actual and potential. That review makes clear that science supports a community that will understand itself and its future because of contributions from the humanities, arts and social sciences.

The Strategy has also aimed to provide a response to the recently-published priorities of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission and, within that, the stated aims of the Australian Capital Territory. References to our work supporting innovation locally, and to our contribution to ACT through our education and research, reflect the importance of demonstrating our willingness to engage with these agendas to support our Mission-Based Compact with ATEC. They are also, of course, direct public goods and an expression of our statutory duty to contribute to the ACT and locality alongside our distinctive national mission.

The internal bias

The operating context of the University crowded out a more expansive exploration of the external context, for example a more considered treatment of the climate emergency, technology developments, students' needs and wants, the dynamics of Asia and the Pacific, or Australia's broader geopolitical present and future.

While it will remain a disappointment to some readers, the ambition for the University to align better its decision-making and resourcing should enable the institution to serve the nation as the context further evolves.

The Strategy codesign and Strategy v2

Many of the matters raised during the codesign were carried forward into v2 of the Strategy as shared with the University community in June 2026. The proposed Implementation Plan (see below) should also take up specific matters raised during the codesign but not published – for the sake of clarity/brevity or because they have not been as fully developed – in the Strategy document.

Updates made between v1 and v2 included:

- A clearer articulation of the University’s distinctiveness and purpose.
- Statements on the importance of the University having the highest standards of governance;
- A clearer articulation of the difference between strategic actions and business-as-usual activities;
- Revised language around the First Nations commitment following feedback and discussion with Indigenous leaders;
- A revised position on University values reflecting the opportunity to work with the community of staff and students to explore, establish and embed these in the University;
- A statement of the importance of academic freedom, framed as a principle rather than a value;
- Recognition of the importance of inclusion, diversity, equity and access;
- Specific naming of the role of professional staff;
- Replacing “enablers” with “enabling capabilities”, consistent with the University’s Corporate Plan.
- Inclusion of further points on environmental sustainability;
- Inclusion of transdisciplinarity and engaged research in the research section;
- Inclusion of graduate attributes in the education section.

On artificial intelligence, while some respondents were against explicit inclusion, the weight of feedback warranted its representation as an action.

Workforce matters have not been referenced; these will be considered in the Enterprise Agreement negotiations.

There were many other matters which were not at the level of institutional strategy. The full feedback was presented to the University Executive Committee for members’ consideration of the whole and points relevant to their domains.

The Implementation Plan

The Strategy v2 states:

The value of the Strategy lies in the actions that we will take. This document reflects *why* we exist, *who* we are, and *what* we will prioritise. *How* we do that is the work of the Implementation Plan.

The University Council and Executive commit to transparency in the approach to implementation, including:

- Publishing detailed actions associated with the aspirations and commitments in the Strategy, including named ownership and accountability;
- Committing the resources required to deliver the activities, and to realistic published timelines;
- Codesign of concepts, options, solutions and delivery with staff and students;
- Regular community updates on progress, including transparency when there are setbacks;
- Honesty when the evidence demonstrates that priorities should change.

The full Implementation Plan will be shared with the University community by December 2026.

The proposed Implementation Plan will align with existing work streams (e.g. Nixon Review implementation) and the plans of portfolios and divisions. There is also a need to work on prioritisation, sequencing, dependencies and capacity for implementation.

The University's Corporate Plan will be updated in the light of the final Strategy and Implementation Plan. The Corporate Plan is the place of record for the University's key performance indicators.

In the codesign process, and in addition to the strategic initiatives and aspirations in the Strategy, the following actions were identified for exploration in the development of the Implementation Plan:

- Promote our values across the University, and embed them in our policies, and in our leadership, management and governance practices.
- Establish a Student Codesign Framework – in partnership with ANUSA and recognising student-led organisations as central to a vibrant university community – that moves beyond conventional consultation and embeds student voice and representation as a structural feature of University decision-making.
- Implement an integrated People Strategy including investment in our academic and professional staff through development opportunities, succession planning, and communities of practice, and ensuring that workloads are transparent, reasonable and sustainable.
- Partner with the ACT Government, industry, and others to use our physical spaces to support innovation, business growth and investment, and improve access to publicly-funded research facilities and infrastructure.
- Invest in our campuses to provide a more consistently high-quality learning, research and work environment, and to be attractive to partners and visitors.
- Work in partnership with Traditional Owners to respect and celebrate Indigenous cultures across all our sites.
- Integrate sustainability into procurement, partnerships, investments and external engagement so the University's work beyond campus helps drive positive environmental and social change.
- Improve our internal and external communications in ways that build trust through consistency, transparency and timeliness.
- Build our alumni, supporter and donor engagement activities to build our network of advocates for the University.
- Demonstrate trust in our internal capabilities through insourcing expertise before outsourcing.
- Replace legacy systems and find ways to deploy new technologies to provide the infrastructure for effective research, education and operations.

Reflections for the next University Strategy

Some improvements to the Strategy development process could be:

1. Taking more time, ideally around 12-18 months, to give the space for more considered iterative development while remaining constrained;
2. Providing more overall clarity about the process and multiple opportunities for engagement;
3. Issuing 'think pieces'/green papers to stimulate debate on specific topics and – through that – to support deeper engagement with critical issues (e.g. areas of research priority, student needs, or technology developments);
4. Using the University's expertise in both content and methods to support codesign approaches and broader strategic thinking (e.g. the National Security College has prepared future reports on higher education);
5. Tasking the University's existing committees and working groups to explore – in detail – key questions contributing to the Strategy.

Appendices

1. Community survey summary and responses
2. Facilitated sessions summary, sessions list and workshop notes
3. Other submissions received, summary and details
4. University Leadership Group workshop notes
5. Strategy documents shared during the codesign process

Appendix 1 | Community survey

Demographics

Relationship to ANU (multiple options possible)

Academic Staff Member	40
Professional Staff (College, School, Institute or Centre)	34
Professional Staff (Service Division)	30
Alumni	7
Current Student (UG)	6
Current Student (HDR)	4
Professional Staff (Other)	4
Current Student (PG Coursework)	1
Emeritus or Honorary	1
Other	1

Gender

Woman or female	68
Man or male	38
I prefer not to answer	7
Non-binary	4

Two respondents identified as Aboriginal. None identified as Torres Strait Islander.

Responses

Question	Total responses	Did not give consent to publication
Considering the Draft Strategy, what would you like to be carried forward to the final University Strategy?	58	8
Considering the Draft Strategy, what should be dropped from this draft?	37	4
Considering the Draft Strategy, what is missing from this draft that should be considered in the final Strategy?	52	6

Considering the Draft Strategy, what would you like to be carried forward to the final University Strategy?

The recognition that research and education are the two primary purposes of the university

Accountability as a key value

1. Overarching concern: lack of clarity, substance and credibility

The draft strategy relies heavily on generic 'strategy speak', vague commitments and managerial language which obscures its intellectual meaning, value and merit. Phrases like 'efficiency', 'impact' and 'alignment' are ambiguous and demand better clarity and detail. The strategy needs to be much clearer, more specific and use accessible language grounded in evidence and reality, rather than aspirational or deadening corporate rhetoric.

The current draft, as a statement of intent, could be from any other university. There is little distinctive in it that makes it unique to ANU: the national university of Australia. It needs to be much more focused on what the big social, political, economic and ecological problems are and how ANU intends to address them through supporting disciplinary excellence and transdisciplinary collaboration in research, teaching and community-making.

2. Problematic AI framing

The draft strategy is overly optimistic about the introduction and use of AI and other new technologies, underestimating their disruptive implications for teaching, research, and academic labour and student learning and research practice. We need a more critical, research-informed approach, including:

- recognition that 'AI-ready graduates' is ill-defined and potentially misleading
- greater reliance on internal academic expertise rather than outsourcing external or commercial solutions
- awareness that 'efficiency' gains may come at the cost of staff workload, job security and educational quality

3. Governance, transparency and academic oversight

We have significant concerns about how poorly defined governance mechanisms and processes are in the draft strategy, including:

- the lack of clear role for ANU's Academic Board despite its statutory importance
- lack of academic oversight in resource allocation and restructuring decisions
- repairing community distrust following previous restructuring initiatives that were egregiously fabricated and implemented e.g. Renew ANU
- the utterly essential need for transparent decision-making, accountability and strengthened collegial governance structures to rebuild institutional trust which is a significant community issue at present.

4. Ambiguity around impact and resource allocation processes

The draft strategy emphasises 'impact' and 'growth' but fails to define how these will be measured and operationalised. We call for explicit criteria and alignment between stated priorities and funding decisions. Smaller disciplines that are consistently world-leading need to be rewarded with investment/growth, not stagnation.

5. Clearer statement of core academic values and mission

The strategy reads like a corporate or government-oriented manifesto, rather than as a distinctive university mission for a public institution like the ANU. There is an underplaying of core university principles in the draft strategy, namely:

- academic freedom is not explicitly recognised and valued
- there is an insufficient emphasis on basic/pure research alongside impact-driven work
- there should be a clear acknowledgment of the world class social sciences as being central to ANU's national role

6. Growing workforce pressures and professional staff capacity

A major operational concern is the continuing erosion of professional staff support, leading to:

- increased administrative burden on academics
- reduced capacity for research funding applications and hiring
- risks to teaching quality and research performance

We need reinvestment in professional staff to support academic excellence (technology is not capable of replacing these roles/personnel) and operating systems that are fit for purpose.

7. Education and student strategy

We support expanded access pathways and equity initiatives, but with key caveats:

- they need to be properly resourced (e.g. through scholarships, recruitment support, learning support and counselling systems, good professional systems)
 - we need to guard against poorly coordinated postgraduate expansion
-

Considering the Draft Strategy, what would you like to be carried forward to the final University Strategy?

- we must maintain small-scale, high-quality teaching environments that prioritise in-person learning and critical dialogue
- AI-driven teaching models are likely to erode pedagogical quality and student learning experience

8. Research strategy

Suggestions include:

- Broader distribution of research funding (e.g. seed funding for early career researchers)
- Availability of strategic funds and simpler application processes for building disciplinary and research capacity on strategic topics

9. Institutional direction and identity

A recurring issue is the absence of a clear, coherent vision of:

- ANU's intellectual priorities
- its national role and distinctiveness
- how commitments to 'human-scale experience' will be sustained during growth
- how ANU plans to embed itself more in the local ACT regional community. At present 'community' is read as staff and students at ANU and then jumps to 'governments, civil society and industry' as if in a bubble/removed from where we are situated. It is important that the university give back, is connected to, and supported by the community in which it is situated and serves

In summary, the draft strategy is presently:

- Too vague and managerial
- Places too much weight on technologies rather than the ANU community
- Insufficiently grounded in academic values and expertise
- Lacking transparency about trade-offs and implementation

A central recommendation is to rewrite the strategy with clearer language, stronger academic governance commitments, more explicit strategic priorities for research that are shaped and driven by our world leading disciplinary areas, and more meaningful investment in people and high-performing disciplines.

a focus on remote working & online study

A human-centric approach that focuses on culture, norms and behaviours for individual and collective success
Recognition of expertise on Asian and Pacific societies as a specific mandate critical to fulfilling our national mission for research, education, and impact and engagement
Human-centric education, where diverse students thrive through high quality, relevant and purposeful research-led education supported by a holistic student experience

A strong focus on enablers. If the enablers aren't prioritised, nothing else will be achievable.

All listed 'Possible Actions' on page 12 'Our People' of the Draft Strategy V1. Particularly with an emphasis on leadership committing to integrity, transparency, and prioritising internal expertise and capabilities before considering the use of consultants.

All of the key areas that are included in the current Draft. It is important to keep it succinct so that it is a document that people actually engage with. Gone are the days of strategy documents the length of the yellow pages. The length now is probably about right.

Commitment to excellence, to community engagement, to our students, to the human scale, to respect.

Commitment to First Nations communities and impact; placing people at the centre and foregrounding human impact; distribution of NIG transparently according to national mission. Improvement of processes and systems.

Education goals

Examples of our impact through research and education

First Nations Commitment - and should aligned to the RAP
Values - these are good and should be included in the Code of Conduct
Asia Pacific - ATM, the strategy is very Australia Focused and understandably, but the University's strength is the cohort of students, researchers and alumni from the Asia Pacific Region and the impact they have in their communities.

First Nations support, celebration and all of us learning from First Nations knowledge and experience.

Honestly, not a lot. I find the purpose/direction long and unclear and as a result, the rest of the document doesn't have much of an anchor point. I fail to see how implementation could be measured as a result. There are a lot of generic corporate-style initiatives/actions in it which don't feel appropriately tailored to the the ANU. The 'growth-focused budget' in 'Enablers' is one example. I don't see how this has learned from recent issues.

Considering the Draft Strategy, what would you like to be carried forward to the final University Strategy?

human-centred elements of education in context and direction. Strategy structure with identity and impact, equal valuing of education and research, and highlighting First Nations Commitments.

I greatly appreciate the Draft Strategy's priority focus on values, culture and people.

I have just reviewed the draft strategy and am overall impressed, especially by the candid acknowledgment of where the University has not done well and the need for systems that enable us to do our jobs better. This is vital - currently, I feel like ANU's processes actively impede my ability to do the job I was hired for, love and am good at - research, teaching and engagement.

I support the intent to create a "human scale" university with steady, focussed growth. The recognition that ANU is it's people is great and i am looking forward to seeing this carried through to action.

I think all of it should be carried forward, I just think there are some key elements missing and some changes that should be made.

I think it is all really good and the content reflects the role of ANU, its staff and students very well. The sections that seemed the most thought out to me, and won't need many updates, were: First Nationals commitments & Our values

I want to see a dedicated commitment to disability inclusion. I am worried that there is nothing in here to indicate that the univeristy is committed to fixing the wrongs disabled students face.

I would also carry forward its emphasis on accountability, transparency, integrity and inclusion, as well as its recognition that staff and student voice matters. These are the right commitments, but in the final Strategy they should be tied more clearly to ongoing institutional mechanisms, not only consultation exercises or broad statements of intent. I would also carry forward the draft Strategy's clear articulation of ANU's public purpose, especially its commitment to producing and disseminating knowledge in the public interest and contributing to national capability.

The draft's gesture towards governance reform is welcome and should be retained, but it is still too cautious. The final Strategy should move beyond broad references to accountability and good management and make concrete commitments to stronger internal scrutiny, more independent academic governance, and structured staff and student participation in university decision making.

I would carry forward and strengthen the commitment to First Nations self-determination through university-wide adoption of UNDRIP. That should be treated as a core organising principle of the final Strategy, shaping governance and decision making across the institution, not only particular programs or portfolios.

I would like a greater emphasis placed on the development of delivery models to better enable working professionals who are living remote from Canberra to access postgraduate programs. Central to this is continual improvement of online learning systems, more support to academic staff through resourcing to deliver a seamless teaching experience, and more effort to improve the student experience.

Most working professionals who want to access ANU post-graduate programs cannot uproot their lives and careers and relocate to Canberra to attend in-person campus based learning. As an online remote student, I have felt detached and isolated from ANU as my academic institution and the student cohort. I feel that the majority of the focus on student experience is towards on-campus programs, facilities, activities and support. It would be revolutionary if ANU could extend it's view of "campus" to other parts of Australia and facilitate increased connection and interaction between remote student cohorts and extend some of the on-campus benefits and experiences to remote students.

I would like the final strategy to maintain a strong focus on our values and our people, as they are essential to rebuilding our community.

In recent years, our institutional values have been undermined by poor leadership at various levels, often resulting in a workplace culture that assigns blame, discourages dissenting voices, and avoids accountability.

This, combined with a lack of trust in staff capabilities and an overreliance on external consultants and agencies, is contributing to declining motivation, engagement, productivity and innovation.

I would like ANU to once again be a workplace that stands for what is right and actively supports the development of its people.

I would like to see ANU's Residential community better reflected in the next draft of the University Strategy. ANU's ResHalls are one of ANU's best offerings that is highly competitive amongst Australian Universities. Currently, the word 'residents' is mentioned once.

I'd like to see the ANU intentionally create positive experiences that stay with people for life. Long after specific course content is forgotten, what endures are the moments that shaped identity, belonging, curiosity and confidence. Through distinctive campus-based and place-based experiences such as immersive retreats, field learning and shared time away from the everyday students and staff build deep connections with each other, with learning, and with the University. Experiences like a writing retreat at the ANU Kioloa Coastal Campus create powerful, lifelong memories that anchor a lasting sense of belonging to ANU.

I'm interested in the example of planetary health and planetary systems as an area of research impact. In my opinion, ANU has many strengths in this area that could work together to build a compelling narrative - e.g. plant health in

Considering the Draft Strategy, what would you like to be carried forward to the final University Strategy?

RSB, agriculture in AFII, planetary health equity in RegNet, One Health in NCEPH. I'd like ANU to consider alignment with the Australian Government's Science priorities. Specifically, could planetary health be aligned to the Government priority of Building a secure and resilient nation? This could assist with being competitive for ARC grants.

Internal AI Infrastructure, Salary Revision for Staff, Student Digital Modernized Experience.

Overall, I believe most of what is included in the draft strategy is promising and appropriate to be carried forward. I particularly hope that the specific items set out in 'possible actions' for First Nation commitments are maintained.

P.10: As a non-Indigenous person, I don't feel it is appropriate for me to comment on these components. But I do endorse ANU facilitating spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to determine their own vision for ANU and their role in it, and connections between ANU and communities.

P.11: The values. But additionally, need clarity on how the values will be achieved.

p.12: Leadership accountability is crucial.

P.12: Commitment to insourcing before outsourcing.

P.12: Commitment to reasonable workloads. Implementation needs to include assisting senior staff to understand what is reasonable when they are recruiting and working with junior staff.

P.12: Improving systems. E.g., ATP1 is a letdown because we got the cheapest version. It is slow and clunky, has so many errors/crashes. We waste so much time waiting for it to load.

P.13: Planetary health. This will be one of the greatest challenges of our time. How can society learn to function in ways that are not detrimental to human and planetary health, and secure a stable future for generations to come? ANU must use its expertise in research and training to develop the next generation(s) of researchers, communicators, advocates, activists, administrative support staff, etc. who will need to tackle this issue.

P.15: Directions for Research. The pipeline is particularly important.

possible actions in all the section although some items need more details

Possible actions of Our people, Research, Education, Spheres of influence and Enablers

respect and mental security for staff

Support and response systems across the University are relatively well established. However, I would like to see a stronger and more explicit emphasis on prevention-based approaches, particularly recognising the role that student culture and peer influence play in shaping behaviour.

There is an opportunity to deepen collaboration with students and student leaders through structured, practical models of engagement that build on the diversity of student experiences. This could include strengthening capacity within existing teams (e.g. IARC) and empowering students in leadership or scholarship roles to take a more active role in delivering peer-led prevention initiatives. This needs to be practical. I believe we are working towards this but there needs to be more of it.

For example, while initiatives such as the ANUSA roadshow are valuable, their impact could be strengthened through more consistent, embedded engagement within residential communities, where students live and socialise. This could involve facilitated, interactive sessions led by trained student representatives that focus on real-life scenarios, respectful relationships, and community expectations, rather than one-off or information-heavy approaches.

It is also important to acknowledge that some students may disengage from initiatives perceived as overly political. Therefore, engagement should be framed around shared values such as respect, safety, and being a good community member, with a focus on practical behaviours and everyday interactions, rather than abstract or policy-driven messaging.

Overall, I would like to see a stronger connection between strategy and the lived student experience, particularly through scalable, peer-led, and prevention-focused approaches that shape culture at the community level.

The current draft reads like an elaborate vision and mission statement than a strategic plan. The next version of the Strategic Plan should give more space to articulating priority goals and identifying concrete steps. This would have the affect of promoting University staff ownership and University leaders' accountability for implementing the plan. The current draft could very well have been ANU's plan for the past five years. So what? Why should anyone care about it?

The draft strategy is very high-level at the moment, so there's not much I can say beyond that it is all vaguely agreeable. The suggestion to "implement rigorous developmental reviews" is one thing that stood out to me. If done well, that could have a big impact on staff development. I would also add that some thought should be given to dovetailing that into developing other career pathways to support staff in insecure work, as this is a major issue across the university sector.

The other thing that stood out to me was the call to "Review, refresh and reinvent programs". We're actually in the middle of a major overhaul of the ANU curriculum to implement the graduate attributes, so it's interesting that there is a call to reinvent programs now when we reinvented them all very recently (first implemented in 2025). Even so, it is worth reviewing this process and whether the curriculum directions we are moving in are fit for purpose in what is a rapidly evolving landscape. The ANU Graduate Attributes were devised before ChatGPT hit the news in 2022, and while the attributes themselves are still highly relevant, some of the other initiatives at the time (particularly around the push away from exams) haven't aged nearly as well.

Considering the Draft Strategy, what would you like to be carried forward to the final University Strategy?

The emphasis on community, belonging, and a 'community of scholars' remains a strong foundation and should be maintained. The Strategy would benefit from clearer articulation of how it will be implemented in practice, particularly through shared environments, structured opportunities for connection, and integration among staff, students, and partners. Viewing community as a deliberate capability rather than an implicit outcome would enhance trust, collaboration, and consistency, and reinforce ANU's role as a convenor of both national and international engagement.

- the focus on research and teaching excellence as our primary focus as an institution
 - the introduction of a new budget model that reflects local income and costs, and rewards growth
 - a focus on reducing friction in academic workloads
-

The focus on the distinctive mission of the University and on the humans who support it

The following Possible actions require greater emphasis and importance:

1. Under Our People: Investment in all staff (not just leaders). Investment in professional development of professional staff has greatly deteriorated. We are at a critical point of losing even more of our best staff if we do not address this immediately. Action on workloads and investment in improved systems must be an immediate priority.
 2. Under Research: Develop our approach to distribution of the National Institutes Grant including rigorous tests of what best serves the national interest. Expand this action, or include elsewhere a commitment to include improved and robust reporting of the NIG.
 3. Under Education: Emphasis on Relevance of program offerings.
 4. Under Spheres of Influence: Stress the importance of holding/hosting conferences and events that showcase the ANU and its campus and activities that engage alumni and supporters.
-

The goals articulated are laudable and worth pursuing. The question is how the university will achieve them, not whether they should be carried forward.

The strategy acknowledges past harm.

Values are good and linked to the Nixon review. They are behavioural and not empty aspirations.

I like that First Nations are in the identity section - not an afterthought.

The First Nations commitments are prominent.

The strategy conveys a strong sense of shared purpose. It reflects values of openness, trust, and ambition. It is also encouraging to see that education is given due prominence.

It is good to see that TNE is included in the strategy, as we are currently behind in this area and have considerable ground to make up. In the broader context of international student recruitment and transnational collaboration in education, this feels like an urgent priority.

The strong focus on People and Values - these underpin everything we do.

The values work is really important but it needs to also have how we actually embed in every day practice so staff are reminded regularly of these being core to our university. I think of how APS uses values in their recruitment, KPI and Focus, service delivery, etc.

First Nations commitment is essential.

This draft reads like a values-and-aspirations brochure, not a strategy. It is not sufficiently intellectual. It also avoids hard choices, avoids trade-offs, and substitutes "be known as..." statements for operational commitments and measurable outcomes.

The 2030 statements are largely unmeasurable (no benchmarking, targets, KPIs, or named accountabilities), which makes delivery non-binding and risks business-as-usual -- which would be unacceptable in current context.

The draft also fails to engage seriously with the external environment. A national, globally-connected university should be the institution with its finger on the pulse -- not the last to know the nature of things. Yet there is no credible treatment of major geopolitical, social, economic and technological shifts shaping the next decade (e.g., democratic fragility/populism, inequality and cost-of-living pressures, accelerating conflict and hybrid/fifth-domain threats, and widening mental health crises).

AI is referenced, but superficially: "AI-ready" graduates, generic mentions of AI as an external force, and a broad intention to support researchers to deploy technologies "including AI". Where is the investment? Where is the operating model? Where is the curriculum and assessment redesign? Where is the secure infrastructure and governance? There is no institutional AI strategy: curriculum/assessment redesign, workforce capability uplift, research governance, secure compute/data environments, data/knowledge protections (including First Nations), or the operating model changes AI will force across the University. Our strategy should include a concrete AI transformation program, potentially anchored by a distinctive "Institute/Centre/College of AI".

What's needed is a real strategy that: (1) makes explicit choices (what we stop, shrink and double-down on), (2) sets measurable outcomes with transparent reporting and global benchmarking, (3) links priorities to resource allocation (including the National Institutes Grant), and (4) includes serious scenario planning for the decade ahead with a view to our enduring national mission and retention of our social license.

Considering the Draft Strategy, what would you like to be carried forward to the final University Strategy?

This is my proper input, please ignore my first attempt, I didn't realise this was the only box:

* Commit to a campus-wide integration of First Nations epistemologies. This requires sustained structural support for Indigenous staff and the creation of culturally safe spaces where Indigenous knowledge is not just 'shared' but respected as a foundational pillar of the university's research and teaching excellence.

* Prioritise the de-casualisation of the workforce by implementing concrete targets to reduce reliance on 'precarious' roles. The university must provide job security and pathways to permanency, ensuring that the staff who drive our core missions are not marginalised by systemic employment instability.

* Formalise and champion 'Third Space' identities, particularly for Research Officers who bridge the gap between academic and professional spheres. We need a fairer inclusion model that recognises the unique hybridity of these roles, ensuring they have access to bespoke career development and merit-based recognition that reflects their dual contributions.

* Develop robust, transparent transition frameworks for Early Career Researchers (ECRs). The university should bridge the 'PhD-to-Academic' gap through structured mentorship, dedicated funding streams for emerging investigators and clear, non-contingent career trajectories that retain talent within the institution. Furthermore, establish robust, transparent transition frameworks for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) that look beyond internal retention. The university should actively facilitate inter-institutional cross-fertilisation through formal exchange programs and collaborative fellowships. By providing structured pathways for PhDs to branch out into the wider academic ecosystem, the university fosters a more resilient, well-networked research workforce and strengthens our collective impact through external knowledge exchange.

* Adopt a Restorative Justice framework to address institutional harms and conflict. Moving beyond punitive or purely bureaucratic processes, the university should strive to build a restorative culture that infuses empathy, accountability, and active listening into every level of campus life, prioritising the repair of relationships and the well-being of the community.

* Transform the campus into a 'Living Laboratory' by integrating environmental care into our core operations. This includes rigorous protection for on-campus wildlife and native vegetation, enabling composting and more attenuated repurposing and recycling widely across campus and fostering a culture of environmental guardianship where the physical landscape is treated as a vital asset for both ecological health and student/staff well-being

* To remain a world-class institution, the university must move from aspirational statements to structural accountability. This means centring the voices of First Nations people, providing security for our most vulnerable staff and fostering a restorative culture that values the human element of our academic mission.

This particular line from the "Our purpose" section: "A place where diverse students thrive through high quality, relevant and purposeful research-led education supported by a holistic student experience". Teaching is too often the first to suffer during cost-cutting. Our student numbers have expanded far beyond expectations, staff-student ratios have totally blown out, and the student experience right now is worse than it has ever been.

Value of care

First Nations Sovereignty

Physical permeability of campus

Very keen on establishing the university as a first choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders. Keen on the uni being a safe place to work

Considering the Draft Strategy, what should be dropped from this draft?

All the corporate and managerial rhetoric and the over-reliance that is placed on technology to address deficits in operational practice and academic excellence.

All vague language that does not communicate a concrete objective or plan, such as:
"Implement an integrated People Strategy" -- this is vacant PR-speak. We can see through this and it disillusion us.

The term "enablers." Please find a term/concept that does not kindle parallels with the intimate partner violence literature.

As I said, there is nothing really objectionable in the strategy. The devil will be in the detail.

Back to Campus

Cant think of anything to be dropped

First Nations knowledge and experience - support for and all of us learning from across campus.

Focus on past problems. Should be future looking.

P.9: Modify language about relationship with government ('partner of choice'). Yes, we want governments to listen to what our research says about how they should formulate and implement policy, but we should be not be seen as an easy friend. Our role is to provide evidence and contest, where contest is warranted. 'Partner' lacks nuance, and could be misunderstood.

Specific focus on AI (e.g., 'Our graduates will be AI-ready' p.16). The 'AI bubble' might not last long. Either because something terrible happens with it and the world agrees to shut it down, or because some other technology supersedes it. If you want to include something in the strategy along these lines, be more general about graduates being 'future technology-ready'. On this note, you need to commit to assisting existing staff to develop alongside these technologies. It's no use saying graduates will be ready if the people teaching them have no guidance on how to critically assess the utility and ethical trade-offs of emerging technologies. Staff and student readiness for technology-induced career change.

I have thought more about what is missing than what should be dropped.

I think is all relevant to what we need to move forward.

I think the elements of the strategy are generally good. Of course it's only as good as its follow through, so i'll reserve judgement for actions.

I think the key opportunity is to refine the Strategy to make it more practical and clearly implementable. This currently reads as high-level or abstract, without a clear pathway for how commitments will translate into action.

There is significant emphasis on consultation and engagement, however this can feel repetitive to previous initiatives which often aren't connected to outcomes. Without clear feedback loops or visible impact, these processes can become demoralising for staff. Strengthening the link between engagement, action, and tangible benefit for the ANU community would improve both trust and effectiveness.

There is also an opportunity to place greater emphasis on long-term impact and sustainability of the strategy. It would be valuable to outline how initiatives will be embedded, reinforced, and maintained over time, rather than remaining as one-off or short-term efforts. Again, this can feel demoralising, repetitive and reinforce distrust.

The Strategy would benefit from more explicit connections between its priorities and how they will contribute to creating and sustaining a respectful, safe ANU community environment. This includes recognising the role of everyday interactions and influence in shaping culture.

I think the People part undersells ANU as an employer - for one, working in diverse teams tackling globally significant topics and providing world services and educational opportunities for the next generations of leaders. Clearly, I am new to the University but it is also important to note there is often great opportunities that follow a period of rapid change and reform. The challenge is to rebuild better, focused making the student experience the best it can be. In the context part of the section, the community being high trust dot point is a bit vague and difficult to live up to - globally and nationally, a lot of institutions are being disrupted and finding trust is fickle. Yes, it is well documented that ANU fell short over its recent history, but the strategy is an opportunity to reset and strive for better.

Asia Pacific - ATM, the strategy is very Australia Focused and understandably, but the University's strength is the cohort of students, researchers and alumni from the Asia Pacific Region and the impact they have in their communities.

Considering the Draft Strategy, what should be dropped from this draft?

I was concerned by the following, especially in view of the evident removal of 'academic freedom' from the statement of the University's values:

'We will focus our effort and investment on the areas of greatest impact in alignment with our purpose while progressively reshaping or reducing activity in areas that are lower priority or no longer sustainable.' Given the somewhat platitudinous nature of the statements on purpose, it is important to get a sense of how areas of low priority/unsustainability are going to be determined.

Related to this, what is the status of the 'examples of our impact through research and education'? Are these examples of impact or the themes under which impact is going to be determined?

It is essential that the university invest in professional staff as a crucial element of the integrated People Strategy. The document as it stands does not seem very encouraging in this regard, in view of the focus on 'new technologies that deliver efficient solutions' and the suggestion that 'operating costs' have been an historical burden vis a vis revenue growth (a notion that recent information about the University's financial situation does not support).

On the question of the implementation of a growth focused budget - if, for example, increasing access to students from across Australia is part of the growth strategy (as well as our commitment to increasing student equity), will there be investment to support recruitment efforts or will this fall to academics?

I would drop the tendency to collapse the distinction between governance, leadership and management. The current language blurs responsibility and weakens accountability by obscuring who is meant to decide, who is meant to implement, and who is meant to scrutinise. If governance reform is to be taken seriously, the final Strategy should draw much clearer distinctions between the role of Council, the role of management, and the role of academic bodies, rather than treating them as interchangeable.

I would drop some of the managerial boilerplate. Phrases such as 'partner of choice', 'well-run university', 'human-centric', 'mutual benefit', and the repeated invocation of 'impact' and 'capability' add little precision and do little to clarify priorities or obligations. They give the document the feel of a generic corporate strategy rather than a serious statement of a university's mission, and purpose.

I would drop the implication that consultation and codesign are, by themselves, an adequate answer to institutional trust and accountability problems. The survey and facilitated sessions are useful, but they are not governance reform. The final Strategy should not rely on the language of consultation as a substitute for concrete institutional commitments.

I'd like to see a clear a coherent purpose and direction for the ANU which would then require re-framing of much of the rest of it. So, that's not really about dropping individual elements of it: it needs to be re-written.

In Research, Possible Actions, I was unsure about what implementing rigorous developmental reviews of academic units was aiming to achieve. Could that be removed or refined to explain the purpose of those reviews?

Meaningless management speak - e.g., "We focus on our people as central to the Strategy, and how success for ANU relies on our ability to support all staff, students, alumni, partners and other stakeholders."

Mentions of AI other than in the guiding questions part as an external force. In particular, the sentence "Our Graduates will be ready for AI" needs to go. Our graduates should be ready for *whatever the future may hold*. This may include AI. A singular focus on AI at this point in time when it happens to be the popular thing sets the university up for embarrassment in the future, like if we had written "Our graduates will be ready for the Metaverse/Cloud/Blockchain" a few years back.

Nothing

nothing I could see

Nothing that I have noticed

Nothing to note

Nothing.

On page 15 'Our People' of the Draft Strategy V1 - 'Support researchers to deploy technologies "including AI" where appropriate to their disciplines.' should exclude generative AI, especially tools that have not been built for purpose internally e.g ChatGPT, Copilot etc.

Phrasing such as "program architecture" in favour of standard academic language (ex. degree and program structures).

Purpose and direction: the statement that we will be 'growing university' the adjective of 'growing' seems out of place with the rest of the statement, maybe changing that to adaptive, responsive or evolving might be more in line with the intent.

First Nations commitments Direction: the statement 'we will provide leadership' makes it sounds as though we will be the leaders, as opposed to our work to uplift, enhance and give space for the voices of First Nations leaders, which I believe is what was intended. I think the statement could be reworked to be clear that we (as a predominately white institution) are not providing leadership but we are doing things to support current and future leaders in this space.

Considering the Draft Strategy, what should be dropped from this draft?

Remove the bulk of the "Possible actions" under Our People

Page 6 presents a visual framework Identity, Impact, Research, Education, Spheres of Influence, Enablers that looks like a strategy architecture but is actually just a table of contents.

Page 9. "We will make the most ..." This sentence could appear in any university's strategy anywhere in the world. It contains no information about what ANU will specifically do with its campus, what investment that requires, or what trade-offs are involved. Cut it or replace it with the actual campus and infrastructure investment decisions the Enablers section (p.18) gestures at but never makes.

Page 12 states ANU will "grow the size of our community of staff and students judiciously... not to lose the human-scale experience." Page 9 commits to being "a growing university." The Enablers section (p.18) acknowledges operating costs have historically outpaced revenue. These three things are in tension and the document never resolves that tension it just states all three. One of them needs to give, or a clear growth vector needs to be specified (grow HDR but cap undergrad? grow international but cap domestic?). Until that choice is made, the "growth" language should be cut.

Page 15. This is the Research section's entire treatment of AI. The parenthetical "including AI" is doing no strategic work. It should either be replaced with a substantive AI research and infrastructure program, or removed because as written it implies AI has been considered when it clearly has not been.

Page 18. This is a restatement of an existing commitment, not a new strategic action. Listing it here implies it is being counted as strategic work when it is not. Either attach it to a specific capital and infrastructure plan (what does it cost, what gets changed, what gets decommissioned?) or remove it.

The draft strategy would benefit from greater prioritisation, fewer repetitive high-level statements or vague language (e.g., engagement, high quality, excellence, impact, and partnerships), and clearer articulation of priorities and delivery strategies. Linking statements to actions and accountabilities will strengthen the strategy's impact. We need to define who we are, who we want to be, and what metrics or KPIs will indicate we are progressing towards our desired outcome.

The number of Values. It is terrific that Values are included in the Strategy and they should remain. Contemporary research on Values indicates that any more than 3 or 4 is too many. They are not remembered and become the background not the foreground. For Values to stick they need to be easily recalled, not consistently googled to locate.

This is my proper input, please ignore my first attempt, I didn't realise this was the only box:

- * Commit to a campus-wide integration of First Nations epistemologies. This requires sustained structural support for Indigenous staff and the creation of culturally safe spaces where Indigenous knowledge is not just 'shared' but respected as a foundational pillar of the university's research and teaching excellence.

- * Prioritise the de-casualisation of the workforce by implementing concrete targets to reduce reliance on 'precarious' roles. The university must provide job security and pathways to permanency, ensuring that the staff who drive our core missions are not marginalised by systemic employment instability.

- * Formalise and champion 'Third Space' identities, particularly for Research Officers who bridge the gap between academic and professional spheres. We need a fairer inclusion model that recognises the unique hybridity of these roles, ensuring they have access to bespoke career development and merit-based recognition that reflects their dual contributions.

- * Develop robust, transparent transition frameworks for Early Career Researchers (ECRs). The university should bridge the 'PhD-to-Academic' gap through structured mentorship, dedicated funding streams for emerging investigators and clear, non-contingent career trajectories that retain talent within the institution. Furthermore, establish robust, transparent transition frameworks for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) that look beyond internal retention. The university should actively facilitate inter-institutional cross-fertilisation through formal exchange programs and collaborative fellowships. By providing structured pathways for PhDs to branch out into the wider academic ecosystem, the university fosters a more resilient, well-networked research workforce and strengthens our collective impact through external knowledge exchange.

- * Adopt a Restorative Justice framework to address institutional harms and conflict. Moving beyond punitive or purely bureaucratic processes, the university should strive to build a restorative culture that infuses empathy, accountability, and active listening into every level of campus life, prioritising the repair of relationships and the well-being of the community.

- * Transform the campus into a 'Living Laboratory' by integrating environmental care into our core operations. This includes rigorous protection for on-campus wildlife and native vegetation, enabling composting and more attuned repurposing and recycling widely across campus and fostering a culture of environmental guardianship where the physical landscape is treated as a vital asset for both ecological health and student/staff well-being

- * To remain a world-class institution, the university must move from aspirational statements to structural accountability. This means centring the voices of First Nations people, providing security for our most vulnerable staff and fostering a restorative culture that values the human element of our academic mission.

This sort of language: "The University is a permeable institution with myriad connections across governments, civil society and industry. We operate simultaneously in multiple spheres of influence: local, national, the Asia-Pacific region, and internationally." This kind of grandiose, vague language does nothing to restore trust in the university leadership.

Considering the Draft Strategy, what should be dropped from this draft?

transnational campuses - watering down the ANU brand by allowing external partners based overseas to teach "anu" degrees diminishes what we do. Very few of these satellite campuses hosted by other universities have been successful and those that are have universities of much larger scale behind them.

While it's useful for internal purposes to note our current or historical weaknesses, a final version of this document that is outward-facing should not include these.

Considering the Draft Strategy, what is missing from this draft that should be considered in the final Strategy?

- Inclusion appears in the values section but doesn't translate into a named strategic commitment in the Direction or Possible Actions across the main pillars. The draft defines inclusion as designing environments, not just representation but the strategy's actual actions don't reflect this depth. I'd like to see a DEI action plan or set of targets embedded within each pillar (Research, Education, People, and Enablers) not just in values or being token. We could add actions to the Our people section.

- I may have missed it but I feel that Disability is not included at all. The draft has diverse students, gender, first Nations and international students but not disability. This is not acceptable given our obligation under Disability Discrimination Act and the Universities Accord's equity emphasis. I think this is a problem. Let's not forget that Disabled staff and students face specific barriers in research-intensive environments, around assessment flexibility, physical access, workload, and career progression.

- Maybe add something around undertaking a universal design audit of new and reviewed programs and commit to accessibility standards in digital and physical environments. Thinking about Disability and universal design may also help others. Not sure if we have this anywhere but we need to ensure research support and HDR pathways accounts for the needs of researchers with disabilities, caregiving responsibilities and chronic illness.

- I believe gender equity has not been included. This strategy was shaped by the Nixon Review, which was explicitly about gender and culture. Yet the word 'gender' does not appear once in the draft strategy. The Living Document addresses sexism and gender directly; the strategy does not. Given the Review's findings, this feels like a significant regression. The community will if not already notice. Could add something around achieving gender equity at all levels of leadership and academia, with transparent targets and reporting?

-While there is mention of intersectionality which is crucial, recognising people have multiple identities. However the strategy treats diversity categories as separate and discrete. An intersectional lens needs to occur. A truly inclusive strategy would acknowledge that someone can be, for example, a First Nations woman with a disability, and that their experience cannot be understood by addressing each identity in isolation. A truly inclusive strategy acknowledges that someone can be, for example, a First Nations woman with a disability, and that their experience cannot be understood by addressing each identity in isolation.

- I may have missed but great things are happening in Colleges. The draft strategy should be at least as ambitious as the colleges are and have already committed to.

Thinking about recruitment, a lot is needed in this space. The purpose section says ANU will 'attract diverse and accomplished academics and students.' This framing unintentionally implies that diversity and accomplishment are separate qualities. The Living Document's value of Excellence for Purpose pushes back against exclusivity and hierarchy. We could look at something like 'We attract accomplished academics and students from diverse backgrounds and experiences' or something that makes clear diversity strengthens excellence.

-As a professional staff member, I feel that casual and professional staff are invisible in our people. The Living Document specifically calls out the need to recognise professional staff expertise and avoid treating administrative work as invisible. The strategy's 'Our People' section mentions staff generally but doesn't acknowledge the very different experiences of casual academic staff, professional staff, and HDR students, who often bear disproportionate service loads and lack job security. These are equity issues. I have been in meetings where professional staff are only here because not good enough to get a job elsewhere and at times completely disvalued. I have also seen Senior Academic Staff tell everyone they could not do what they do with the professional staff. Professional staff are also important and need to be recognised and considered in the Strategy.

-The enablers section has financial, digital, and physical resources but nothing about the institutional infrastructure needed to sustain DEI work or dedicated resourcing. This could appear in Enablers as a concrete commitment.

Measurement and accountability for DEI outcomes is missing. It is hard because do we like targets or not? Some do some don't. The strategy commits to be a place where diverse students thrive by 2023. However there are measurable indicators attached to these commitments. Accountability means we track progress.

-I guess looking at the strategy as it is now, if a First Nations casual staff member, someone with a disability or a woman at a senior level who experienced the conduct shared in the Nixon review, would they feel genuinely seen and included in the future of ANU?

Considering the Draft Strategy, what is missing from this draft that should be considered in the final Strategy?

my opinion is right now some may and some wouldn't. I guess the same question for everyone?

-we need to think about the impact staff have experienced and if they feel they can belong and move forward with the strategy for a new ANU.

-To be taken seriously, it needs dedicated leadership, phased measurement, governance structures, and named commitments. Be great if these were to address disability, gender, intersectionality, and First Nations.

What steps do we need to take? How do we strategically get to number 1 again? Those steps need to be in the strategy.

A clear articulation of how key priorities, such as community, trust, and collaboration, will be implemented in practice. Defining ownership, accountability, and measures of success. Providing greater clarity on prioritisation and outlining what will be done differently would strengthen the implementation and strategy.

A clear outline for disability inclusion.

A coherent purpose and direction, as well as some objectives and a clear mapping of individual action/initiatives to those objectives that so that we can see how they will be achieved.

A concrete plan with clear and measurable targets that will convey a sense to staff that the document means something - that it will guide meaningful change toward shared goals.

A functional review or audit of HR services to ensure leading marketing operating model and workforce practises are in place to attract & retain the best workforce.

A great deal is missing.

First Nations: I strongly recommend integrating actions that promote voluntary collaborations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and adding more courses on Indigenous knowledges taught by experts in the field.

Our people: Much of this section focuses on communications, which matters but trust must come first. Rebuilding trust is absent from this slide, which is concerning given the clear signal we have sent that last year's events have seriously damaged our confidence in the institution. I would also ask that "equitable" be added to the workloads objectives and actions.

Research: Reviews should be rigorous and grounded in standards recognised by the relevant field - this is fundamental to the scientific endeavour. The purpose of reviews should also be made explicit. Impact is worth emphasising, but there should be some acknowledgment of ANU's role in addressing society's most pressing moral, environmental, and economic challenges.

Education: This section needs considerably more attention on (1) quality and (2) staff wellbeing - the relative silence on both is notable. I would also welcome more on how ANU plans to reduce the administrative burden on academic staff so that we can focus on teaching rather than form-filling.

Spheres of influence: The most effective way to promote ANU's influence is by providing scholars with the resources they need to do work that attracts attention - I'd suggest the strategy reflect this more explicitly.

Enablers: This section needs further development. I recommend against using the term "enabler," which is well-known to intimate partner violence victim-survivors (and not positive). A growth-focused budget model is a reasonable aspiration, but the strategy should clarify how priorities will be identified and by whom. Budgets should direct resources toward areas that are performing well while offering clear pathways for underperforming units to improve or adapt.

Missing:

The critic and conscience role - this feels like a significant omission.

Reconciliation deserves a more prominent place in the strategic plan. This should never be an afterthought.

A recognition that a university is a collection of different research fields with distinct cultures, methods of operation, ways of teaching, etc, where the role of the central university structures should be to support them all to do their best research and teaching (i.e. the core purposes of the university), not to try to force them into a one-size-fits-all structure for the purposes of "efficiency" and a "unified student experience". There are absolutely places where centralised services make sense (e.g. libraries, general IT infrastructure, higher-level HR, etc), but there are many where central decisions have been very harmful to individual fields.

A sense of what the university is, why it exists (to deliver world class education for leaders of the future and to conduct research that changes the world for the better) and feels like it is just trying to respond to recent reviews.

It needs to be forward looking, ambitious and meaningful, not focused on small cultural reforms that are already underway.

The proposed values taken from the Nixon review relate only to the experiences of students and staff (which is good and fine), it doesn't say anything about what ANU as an organisation stands for and what it would fight for. It is a massive step back from the goals, values and drivers included in the previous strategic plan.

Considering the Draft Strategy, what is missing from this draft that should be considered in the final Strategy?

It doesn't include any mention of gender or equality, and diversity is referred to only in terms of the cohorts of students attending.

A statement that better reflects the needs for fundamental research and how it will be protected.

The important role that many of us play in telling the stories of our teaching and research.

Avenues for greater collaboration with the Australian community, especially in regional and rural areas. This could be built from our external campuses (SSO), School of Medicine and Psychology, rural and regional clinical schools and fieldwork locations. I think that, as a national resource, it is important for the ANU to meet Australians where they are.

Better articulation and prominence of the value of a diverse community for everyone. Especially a statement that acknowledges the barriers that many people face (people with disabilities, for example) and how removing them benefits everyone.

Provisions for professional staff development training and greater knowledge sharing between professional staff from different universities.

'-A vision and objectives (mission) to guide the Strategy.

-Future focus. Current draft is concentrating too much on past issues or the present. A Strategy needs to be future looking.

-Clear idea of who we are trying to impact.

-Research excellence as a goal.

-Commitment to move away from funding from extractive and health harming industries - fossil fuels, weapons, ultra-processed foods.

-Sustainability currently sits only in Enablers. This is a core concern and should be woven through Research, Education and Spheres of Influences.

-Focus not exclusively on AI, but on the changing shape of and power behind all technological developments. AI might not last long (in its current form or at all). Need to be more broadly future looking at how technology will reshape university education and research.

-Create the conditions for our people to do their best work (p.9). Administrative systems need to be excellent so they do not detract from staff time. E.g., ATPI is a letdown because we got the cheapest version. Bring back the Centre for Learning and Teaching; if you want academics who are good educators, this sort of professional development service is essential.

-Needs clearer governance and accountability mechanisms. Also, clearer mechanisms for delivery of the Strategy.

-Recognition of the diversity of actors in the ANU landscape. Traditional academics, professional staff (without whom academics would not be able to function), third space staff who occupy hybrid academic-professional roles, ECRs, students, cross-campus teams (e.g., environment).

- P.9: We attract diverse and accomplished academics and students. Do not limit this to academics. It should be all staff.

-P.9: Campus assets. No/not enough focus on ensuring that ANU campuses are microcosms of how our environment should be. Environmental sustainability needs to be LIVED on campus and in the work that we do. Commitment to sustainability and regeneration as stewards of this place. How is the ANU going to mitigate and address climate-related risks to ANU campuses, operations, and community?

-P.10: Provided Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people agree (see earlier comment about me being non-Indigenous so with no real authority to comment on these components), I believe it should not only be Indigenous students and academics who are exposed to and practicing Indigenous ways of thinking, being and doing. Explore how Indigenous knowledges can be valued and embedded across ANU by all people - guided by Indigenous peoples.

-P.15, Research: Possible actions - internal ANU structures to meaningfully incentivise and support interdisciplinary research. E.g., I wasn't here in the time of the Grand Challenges initiative, but I have heard good things about it in respect to actually supporting people to leave their disciplinary siloes.

AI

intellect

excellence

any mention of ANU graduate attributes

Any sense of what this actually looks like in practice. This honestly feels like more hand-waving from central. Compare Glyn Davis' update on the University of Melbourne's financial issues - clear communication, minimal jargon or passive voice, and frank accountability.

Better evaluation systems are needed for the management of professional staff, especially for those local managers with continuing position and in a small research service unit. The feedback from researchers are necessary as the direct admin managers can lack in the technical skills to validate a report. Strongly advise that all the managers in research support teams should hold a PhD degree or having publications as either first or corresponding author

Centre of excellence for Medicine - training, research and producing high qualify professionals

Clear strategic priorities for research and teaching that will put ANU into the world's top twenty universities.

Considering the Draft Strategy, what is missing from this draft that should be considered in the final Strategy?

Detail on the HOW and WHAT - e.g., there is a promise to invest in areas of research strength and divest from others. But how we identify and decide on these needs to be transparent (e.g., research outputs? income? hopefully quantifiable metrics...). Similarly, the goals of streamlining process and improving governance are laudable but more detail of how this will be achieved is needed.

We need coordination between different areas of ANU (particularly local and central) so that strategy can be delivered. E.g. A major issue that remains at ANU is local areas being denied control and funding to the point where they cannot work towards these strategic goals - e.g., dozens of people in my area have been told not to apply for grants because our school cannot afford on-costs (even if the gap is <5%) if they were successful. Similarly, we are incentivised to take fewer honours students because it's the only way we can manage excessive workload. If we still received some proportion of the income from these students though... different story.

Detail.

Or, rather, a clear framework for how these dot points will be fleshed out and implemented. Importantly, these priorities all need an owner: somewhere the buck must stop. Relying on goodwill or staff to drive this at a grassroots level isn't going to work, as everyone is busy with their other roles and just won't be able to contribute much to an uncoordinated call to "invest in student experience", for instance. This is probably vaguely addressed in the "enablers" section, but it really isn't clear.

One thing that really does need to be there that isn't is a strategy around recruitment and retention of executive talent. Ideally, this should feature a mix of internal talent development and external recruitment, to balance the benefits of local knowledge and attracting outside talent.

Evaluation of executive performance is also critical, as it's rather frustrating seeing staff in senior roles who use their positions to push pet projects and legacy building rather than delivering on the critical initiatives that will deliver value for the university. Executive performance really needs to be audited, these audits should be transparent, and new initiatives should go through some kind of cost-benefit analysis, which should also consider opportunity costs.

explicit mentions of languages in the First Nations context, including language maintenance and language revival and revitalisation, and of languages in the Asia-Pacific context. E.g. p13, building on our longstanding research in archeology, anthropology, history "and languages and related studies."

First Nations knowledge and experience - support for and all of us learning from across campus.

Focus on improving the online postgraduate educational infrastructure and remote student experience.

Greater attention on building relationships with non-elite Canberra region community - a form of engagement that is grass roots and returns resources and value to the local community. This can grow into the more elite connections and resourcing one may seek to sustain research etc goals, however the "everyday" community in which this human-scale campus is located seems to be missing from the draft

I don't know if this is a thing - but showing ANU is a national institution with a footprint beyond. It is clear there is goodwill in the ACT for ANU but it would be good to demonstrate how that translate beyond ACT to regional communities and different pockets of Australian society and beyond.

Overall, I just think the way the strategy is written is a bit underwhelming and gives a sense of an organisation depleted - it is good be cautious but it is also an opportunity to inspire. I also think the work has progressed really well to get to this point so far so I am sure it will turn out well.

I am unsure about timing with a lot the leadership cohort being interim - how will the ANU commit to this and ensure this good work is continued on by the whole executive united as one team.

I love the way the strategy is working toward building trust. I'd like to see the ANU focus on connection and pride of working in the ANU. Working to better the Uni instead of wroking to not get Fired.

I think a greater focus on equity as part of the values (we have inclusion which is amazing) but we dont talk about how we want to attract and retain students and staff from diverse backgrounds and in particular for students, from underrepresented backgrounds. Equity can be a great enabler for a culture of excellence and focus, care and respect.

I would like to see more commitment towards social justice goals. Yesterday, I attended a workshop at ACU, where I heard from staff at Griffith, Curtin, RMIT, USQ, Sydney and UNSW. UNSW's approach is doubtless the most analogous - they now have 24.7% of undergrad students from backgrounds that don't traditionally engage in HE and have led the way on eg housing and scholarships for formerly incarcerated people and domestic violence victims. This is of course linked with the First Nations objectives and Closing the Gap targets. We can and should do much better - not just aspire to be an elite institution but one that helps change life trajectories for whole communities.

I would like to see more recognition of the professionals at ANU in the strategy. Including those who support research and teaching, but also those who are researchers and teachers themselves. It often seems that ANU really only values academics, while professionals are also an important part of the ANU community and deserve recognition. Whether they are researchers, teachers, or those who make sure that ANU can do the things in this strategy.

Considering the Draft Strategy, what is missing from this draft that should be considered in the final Strategy?

In our enablers I think we should reference more strongly that we all need to bring a shared commitment to action and to the strategy. I.e. - once we have determined our strategy let's all swim in that same direction and commit to serving ANU and what it needs rather than our individual selves.

Missing in the Draft Strategy is inclusion of Indigenous content in teaching and research programs at all levels, with Indigenous communities and knowledge-holders and academics as leaders, collaborators and paid consultants. This is especially important in science, engineering, mathematics, and technology areas, where Australian First Nations scientific knowledge in lands and waters management is already leading the way globally. I have stepped up with researching and providing authentic, culturally permitted, advanced Indigenous knowledge bases and content for mathematics and chemistry at second year or higher levels, but I cannot do all of what is necessary alone or without support.

More on overseas students. Not just in the influence category or a small line in the education section

More rigorous system is needed to evaluate the team leaders of professional staff with permanent position but physically and mentally incapable of fulfilling job. The Possible actions in Our people section, particular in the 'Improve systems and processes to enable effective work' is extremely important.

Much of the most impactful work currently underway at ANU does not sit neatly within formal research outputs or award education programs. In its current form, the strategy risks overlooking this contribution or treating it as peripheral to the University's core business.

The structure of the draft strategy makes this tension clear. In the Impact section, research and education are described as the two primary means of our impact in the world. This does not adequately reflect the breadth of how ANU contributes to national capability. A large proportion of the University's real-world impact, particularly in Canberra and through its relationships with government, industry and communities, occurs through forms of engagement that sit outside these two categories.

At present, engagement is framed primarily as an enabler of research and education, rather than as a core mode of impact in its own right. This matters because it shapes what is recognised, resourced, and sustained. Work such as executive and professional education, policy labs and sandboxes, co-designed capability-building programs, public dialogue, and advisory work often sits in a grey zone. It is highly valued by partners and central to ANU's national mission, but not clearly visible in our structures and reporting frameworks.

This is also a workforce issue. Many of the staff leading or delivering this work occupy third space roles that combine academic, professional, and external-facing capabilities. The strategy's strong focus on our people is welcome, but the examples and implied career structures remain oriented toward more traditional academic and professional categories. Without explicit recognition, third space work risks being treated as supplementary, even when it is central to ANU's impact.

There is an opportunity here to more fully align the strategy with ANU's legislated national role. The draft itself notes that ANU is expected to provide a national, regional, and international public policy resource to address major issues confronting governments, business and communities. Much of this work is delivered through engagement activities that do not result in publications or degrees, but that directly build capability, inform decision-making, and strengthen institutions.

I'd like to advocate for a shift in framing that would make a substantial difference:

- Recognising engagement and capability-building explicitly as a third pillar of impact alongside research and education
 - Articulating how engagement activities contribute to national capability (for example through professional learning, policy advisory work, and convening)
 - Making this work visible in examples and case studies in the final strategy
 - Embedding it in workload models, career pathways, and evaluation frameworks so that it is properly supported and rewarded
-

One of the ANU's most unique and embedded qualities is its linguistic diversity and multilingual capability; no other university in Australia researches and teaches anywhere near the number of languages. These languages span the world and include signature ANU focuses such as Indigenous communities and the Asia Pacific. At least one mention of this multilingual capability and our strengths in linguistic diversity should be included, ex. in mention of our research strengths and/or inclusive values.

Refine Courses for both Under Graduates and Post Graduates based on what is needed in Australia.

Research - Directions. It's missing research funding entirely and only talks about NIG. Can we add something about supporting researchers to secure research funding from national competitive grants AND funding from government/industry?

Research - I think there should be something about utilising research to improve the experience and outcomes of those within our community. We are committed to researching to impact on the world, and that should carry through to how we make decisions, evaluate programs and impact within the work we do for students outside of the classroom including in widening participation/access and supporting success and development for all students. Other institutions are already visibly researching with places like the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne, the Centre for Excellence for Equity in Higher Education at the University of Newcastle and the Gonski Institute of Education at University of New South Wales. As the national university, and a research

Considering the Draft Strategy, what is missing from this draft that should be considered in the final Strategy?

institution, why don't we contribute to research in the space of higher education? We should be leading this instead of not even being on the map. We have the opportunity to implement a centre that will help us evaluate the impact of the work of professional staff, research the experience of students across Australia, focus on identifying and removing barriers to entry, success and employment outcomes for students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds, and roll all of it back into the work our professional staff do to continuously improve our approach and the outcomes for students.

Education - The action item about financial barriers to access university is good but not enough, we can't just get students through the door, we need to support them and remove barriers so they can engage throughout their time at ANU. There needs to be more about working to identify and remove barriers, (e.g. systemic, cultural, financial, etc.), which impeded on an individual's ability to fully engage with the University community and opportunities for academic, professional and personal development that occurs inside and outside of the classroom. This is particularly important to support students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. Maybe there also needs to be something about pathways into research and academic roles similar to what is outlined for First Nations students as we know that this is also an issue with students from other backgrounds which are traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

As the national university, we should aim higher with our goals of inclusion and success of students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds and aim for population parity to represent the diversity of our nation within our community and ensure we are actively educating and supporting those who need to be future leaders impacting our world and their communities.

The only suggestion I have is to expand on the Education action "Review, refresh and reinvent our programs to ensure attractiveness and relevance. Use efficient program architecture to support quality delivery" to include the development of more attractive internships, work integrated learning and placements with world's leading businesses and organisations.

The responsibility and duty for a major university to put pressure on governments to create and adjust legislation according to well-supported, good science.

The Strategy doesn't clearly translate into everyday work and interactions with students. It misses the important role of staff influence and how those day-to-day interactions shape behaviour and culture. As well as the important role staff have with students to work together. There needs to be clearer links to how the Strategy will support positive peer environments and create outcomes that are sustained as part of everyday practice.

The value of academic freedom in the value statement

Acknowledgement of the harm done to the University's reputation in recent times - it is not a question of being miserly or resentful but of restoring trust in the institution

There is no actual governance reform program here. Without one, ANU will keep reproducing the same failures under new language. The Strategy talks about accountability, transparency and trust, but does not commit to the structural reforms needed to produce them, such as stronger internal scrutiny, more independent academic governance, and formal staff and student participation in decision making. Unless the final Strategy commits clearly to reforming ANU's governance architecture, the causes of its recent governance failures will remain in place.

While the Strategy gestures towards First Nations self-determination, it does not commit to embedding this fully in the university's institutional design. If UNDRIP is to be taken seriously, it should shape governance arrangements as well as programs and policy, including representation, participation and decision-making authority. Without this, a commitment to UNDRIP is likely to remain at the margins of university governance.

This is my proper input, please ignore my first attempt, I didn't realise this was the only box:

- * Commit to a campus-wide integration of First Nations epistemologies. This requires sustained structural support for Indigenous staff and the creation of culturally safe spaces where Indigenous knowledge is not just 'shared' but respected as a foundational pillar of the university's research and teaching excellence.

- * Prioritise the de-casualisation of the workforce by implementing concrete targets to reduce reliance on 'precarious' roles. The university must provide job security and pathways to permanency, ensuring that the staff who drive our core missions are not marginalised by systemic employment instability.

- * Formalise and champion 'Third Space' identities, particularly for Research Officers who bridge the gap between academic and professional spheres. We need a fairer inclusion model that recognises the unique hybridity of these roles, ensuring they have access to bespoke career development and merit-based recognition that reflects their dual contributions.

- * Develop robust, transparent transition frameworks for Early Career Researchers (ECRs). The university should bridge the 'PhD-to-Academic' gap through structured mentorship, dedicated funding streams for emerging investigators and clear, non-contingent career trajectories that retain talent within the institution. Furthermore, establish robust, transparent transition frameworks for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) that look beyond internal retention. The university should actively facilitate inter-institutional cross-fertilisation through formal exchange programs and collaborative fellowships. By providing structured pathways for PhDs to branch out into the wider academic ecosystem, the university fosters a more resilient, well-networked research workforce and strengthens our collective impact through external knowledge exchange.

- * Adopt a Restorative Justice framework to address institutional harms and conflict. Moving beyond punitive or purely bureaucratic processes, the university should strive to build a restorative culture that infuses empathy, accountability, and active listening into every level of campus life, prioritising the repair of relationships and the well-being of the community.

Considering the Draft Strategy, what is missing from this draft that should be considered in the final Strategy?

* Transform the campus into a 'Living Laboratory' by integrating environmental care into our core operations. This includes rigorous protection for on-campus wildlife and native vegetation, enabling composting and more attuned repurposing and recycling widely across campus and fostering a culture of environmental guardianship where the physical landscape is treated as a vital asset for both ecological health and student/staff well-being

* To remain a world-class institution, the university must move from aspirational statements to structural accountability. This means centring the voices of First Nations people, providing security for our most vulnerable staff and fostering a restorative culture that values the human element of our academic mission.

What appears to be missing from possible actions is to become the first choice of government-funded postgraduate students from around the region. This point can be linked to - We will educate students from around the world in diverse cohorts, and play a distinctive role in educating leaders across the Asia-Pacific region (p.18). This point is linked to sphere of influence as well.

what commitment to accountability training and community will leadership be subject to? The present strategy still sees a separation between university leaders and the students and researchers and teachers that make up the productive parts of the community. Either leaders are OF that community - equally engaged in and required to excel in the same sorts of real work as the rest of us, or they are extraneous to the mission of the university.

What consideration and investigation will be given to currently offered Programs of education that are no longer Relevant?

Appendix 2 | Facilitated sessions

Session notes

1. 28 April 12pm
2. 29 April 12pm
3. 30 April 11am
4. 30 April 1pm
5. 30 April 2pm
6. 1 May 10am
7. 1 May 12pm
8. 5 May 9.30am
9. 5 May 11am
10. 5 May 11.15am
11. 5 May 12pm
12. 5 May 2pm
13. 5 May 3pm
14. 6 May 10.30am
15. 6 May 1pm (1)
16. 6 May 1pm (2)
17. 6 May 2pm
18. 8 May
19. 8 May 2pm (1)
20. 8 May 2pm (2)
21. 11 May 11am
22. 12 May
23. 12 May 11am
24. 12 May 3pm
25. 13 May (1)
26. 13 May (2)
27. 13 May 11am
28. 13 May 2pm
29. 15 May

Session time/date/location	12pm, 28/4/2026, RSSS 3.72
Facilitator name	Jessie Moritz
Attendee numbers	2

Summary:

Topic(s) of focus

- Student experience, belonging and community
- Teaching and Learning Quality
- Discussions on “Draft Strategy Structure”
- Research capability and funding access
- Leadership, governance and transparency
- First Nations engagement and pedagogy
- Leveraging ANU’s Canberra location and national mission

Key findings/recommendations

Student experience, belonging and community

- Strong emphasis on students feeling valued as members of the ANU community, rather than experiencing the University as transactional.
- Recommended supporting students in building social connection, as well as academic and professional networks. The on-campus experience and social support should be a key part of ANU’s unique educational offering, making us distinct from competitors.
- Suggested measuring success through surveys of students’ sense of belonging and peer connections in their final year.
- Suggested incentivising and appropriately resourcing in-person learning and campus activities.
- Suggested the University to provide more opportunities for students to connect socially and professionally. In order to do so, the University needs to strengthen its relationships with industry and government, to enable opportunities such as internships, guest lectures and real-world project partnerships.

Teaching and Learning Quality

- Concerns were raised about constraints on hiring tutors and casual academic staff in the current climate leading to risk of being unable to meet TEQSA threshold standards.
- Noted that large cohorts could be supported by splitting them into smaller learning groups.
- Noted the importance of in-person student participation and raised a question how to support and encourage it. If we want to prioritise the on-campus experience, we need to incentivise students to attend and value in-person teaching and peer interaction.
- Resource allocation and teaching priorities need to be clarified by the University. Interactive in-person classes require more resources and administrative support to maintain than passive watching of videos– but the pedagogical quality may be worth it. There was concern that central Academic skills training for students may not be available after having been reduced and degraded over the past decade. This would need to be addressed to improve the learning experience at ANU.

- ANU needs to provide training in teaching, especially for the many staff who are new to teaching.
- ANU should find better ways of recognising and rewarding high-quality teaching than the current system of teaching awards under which the 'reward' for being nominated by your students is increased paperwork burden.
- ANU should invest in the resources needed to secure assessments in accordance with TEQSA expectations. This will include, among other things, enabling invigilated exams.
- Proposed benchmarking staff–student ratios and teaching approaches against peer universities. This could be part of the offering that makes ANU unique. ANU will never be as large as other Australian universities – and that is one of our strengths. We should lean in to the fact that students get exceptional access to leading researchers due to smaller class sizes here than at other Australian competitors. This means creating policies and goal related to supporting smaller, bespoke courses.
- Students should feel valued as members of the university community. Some students currently feel their interactions with uni are quite transactional. Some have the impression that the uni only cares about the money. We should make uni a place where students can meet other people, more activities on campus, more in person activities and learning.
- There are highly valued in-country learning opportunities for students offered by Schools within ANU, but they could be prioritised or leveraged at the University level.
- Given ANU’s exceptional international focus, in-country and experiential learning activities should be part of the ANU strategy and appropriately resourced as a priority. This helps us to stand out from other universities in Australia and abroad.
- The 'Directions' part of 'Education' should include the point that ANU's curriculum will inspire and challenge talented and ambitious students.

Discussions on “Draft Strategy Structure”

- Expressed overall satisfaction with the values outlined in the draft Strategy, particularly the concept of a human-centred university. Critical to keep this human-centric focus in the next iteration.
- Regarding page 15 on research-direction: people need to know how investments are being used, need more transparency. Need to be more specific.
- The wording could be expanded to clarify how they are implemented and measured. For example, “ensure every student can succeed” on page 16. We should be challenging and inspiring the students to be better and to develop – and should be able to measure how we’ve achieved this outcome.
- Suggested more clarification on the working on **sphere of the influence** (page 17). The current wording is too vague and confusing.
- Noted that delivering on these values may require changes in culture and mindset, not just policy.
- A question raised whether the “acknowledge of the country” on Page 2 is the standardised ANU version.

- Noted that the current Strategy draft seems to focus on addressing current climate at the University but it should explicitly address institutional resilience and adaptability in the long run, in order to build a futureproof university.
- We need to improve logistics to enable / support the program delivery. Decision makers need to engage with people running the uni on the ground level.
- Noted that retaining and attracting talent both academic and professional is critical to future success.
- this draft seems to be quite defensive and focuses on what we can do in current situation. It should offer a clearer vision and more inspiring of the future and focus on what ANU will look like in 5 years' time and how we get there.

Research capability and funding access

- Highlighted current barriers to accessing category 2 and 3 research funding and opportunities, noting that valuable opportunities often exist but are not well known. Suggested improving communication and visibility of research and funding opportunities across the University. Suggested changing the academic promotion system so that it no longer penalises academic staff for investing time in commissioned research. Suggested removing unnecessary barriers in the recruitment process which currently make it difficult to deliver on contracted research projects and disincentivise seeking research funding.
- At the moment, it is difficult to coordinate across Colleges at the ANU. We are incentivised to compete rather than collaborate.
- Advocated for simplified pathways and criteria for securing research funding.

Leadership, governance and transparency

- noted low levels of trust in senior leadership, and higher trust at local levels. This ANU strategy will be about rebuilding trust in ANU as a national institution – both internally and externally – and this should be a central Strategic goal.
- suggesting having more face-to-face feedback and suggestion channels. Currently feel the uni senior leaders are not genuinely listening despite the existing channels. People don't know the governance of the feedback channel. They don't feel confident that their voices are being heard.
- Suggestions included improving transparency, communication, and accountability, including clarity around decision-making roles (e.g. Council, Vice-Chancellor, Academic Board).
- Suggested diversifying leadership representation, with potential KPIs such as measurable diversity indicators (e.g. culture, nationality, religion) within senior leadership roles. ANU currently has little diversity at higher levels of leadership, and it impacts the university's understanding and prioritisation of diversity issues at every level. This might involve amending the wording on page 12(our people) to set as a goal that ANU increase the diversity of its senior leadership
- Regarding ANU's values, the current draft version lacks details on how we get there, how do we know we have achieved it. The wording of the 6 values may need to be expanded. Creating cultural change at the ANU will take time - may need to change people's mindset in order to deliver.

First Nations engagement and pedagogy

- ANU should invest more in First Nations staff. ANU has an Australian Indigenous major but it is not functioning well in practice due to the shortage of First Nations academics at ANU. ANU has set a goal of having an Indigenous Knowledges and Perspectives graduate attribute but has struggled to implement this due to lack of resourcing, leadership and a shortage of suitably qualified staff. If goals are made in the Strategy around First Nations content and pedagogy, there must be a realistic and well-resourced plan to implement them.
- Advocated for more clarity around the responsibilities of the ANU First Nations portfolio. This portfolio is not well suited for supporting First Nations pedagogy across the campus – we need to fill the gap to clarify who is responsible at the ANU for guiding and leading Indigenous pedagogy.

Leveraging ANU's Canberra location and national mission

- Strong support for better leveraging ANU's Canberra location and connections with government, particularly through internships and professional networks for students. Participants viewed this as a distinctive strength that should be far more prominent in the Strategy. ANU should be an exciting, nationally connected place to study and work.
- The current draft strategy feels defensive and doesn't make a strong case for what it means to be an ANU graduate. We produce leaders and nationally and internationally-leading research: our strategy should offer a distinctive and tangible picture of what it means to work and study at the ANU.

Session time/date/location	29 April 12-1pm (online)
Facilitator name	Laura Davy
Attendee numbers	10

Summary

The session largely focused on ANU's national mission, distinctive contributions and identity, and what we need to support these.

Key points:

- The current draft does not sufficiently address ANU's distinctive contributions or national mission and purpose
- There is an opportunity to articulate ANU's contribution to long-term policy stewardship. To do this we need to support to build relationships with policymakers and other stakeholders. Part of our strength is our proximity to power (federal government) and certain industries
- ANU also leads on advancing our understanding of the impacts of policies on Australian society. This needs to be articulated more strongly.
- We also need greater recognition of non-traditional, impactful outputs of research conducted at the ANU in the next strategic plan.
- We don't really talk about ourselves in the same way that our competitors do - we need to build pride in what it means to be studying or working at ANU
- We need a greater recognition in the Strategy that things have changed in our staff and student profile
- We need to better articulate what it means to be an ANU graduate - e.g. by emphasising graduate attributes like leadership or passion
- We need to catch up digitally and update our systems
- We need to own the fact that we are a small institution
- We can't ignore AI
- If we're looking to establish ourselves as a university of choice for First Nations HDR students, we have a lot of work to do in that area.

Notes (mostly verbatim)

--what do you think needs to be reflected in our new ANU strategy?

--most important to articulate the distinctive contribution that ANU makes to the nation. **The current draft does not sufficiently address these distinctive contributions or ANU's national mission and purpose.** If we don't have a good grip on our purpose, it is hard to address other parts of the strategy.

--in the current draft, it says the national university should be 'flexible' to the needs of the Australian nation. Who should be determining the priorities of the ANU?

--from a student recruitment perspective, there are government incentives to focus on international students from South East Asia.

--we need to upskill all our staff and student on how government works, and the balance between the policy we see, and the background work on policymakers. How do we build the relationships to understand more about how we feed into those processes? We need to better understand the policymaking landscape. Really important distinction between politics and policymaking – for example the new emphasis in APS on longterm stewardship for the nation.

There is a real opportunity for the ANU to contribute to **this longterm stewardship** – to lead those discussions and offer insights to policymakers on issues that might not be on their radar.

--ANU should be leading not just on input into policymakers but also on those who are impacted by those policy decisions. I would like to see **greater recognition of non-traditional, impactful outputs of research conducted at the ANU in the next strategic plan**. It's not just about informing government but also understanding the impacts of those policies on Australian society.

--the draft strategy is light on articulating what is the distinctive role of the ANU and its contribution to the nation. The current actions related to this contribution are written in very broad/vague terms.

--The Strategy needs to provide a stronger bridge regarding how ANU supports the existing and published government research priorities. That's not to say that those government priorities are perfect – it has flaws – but it's a useful starting point. It also comes back to the idea of ANU as contributing to that stewardship.

How do we attract and support the talent that we need at the ANU?

--ANU's brand is known, but **we don't really talk about ourselves in the same way that our competitors do**. I feel that our brand and marketing has not been included in some of these strategic discussions – so that we can simultaneously discuss strategy and also how that will be operationalised through our brand and marketing. Marketing and branding then can help **build our pride in what it means to be ANU and to be studying or working at ANU**. It's our 80th anniversary, it's the 50th anniversary of Llewelyn hall – but I think the brand piece is missing and should be occurring in parallel to this work.

--of the six 'values' in the draft plan, only one value speaks to the distinctive national mission and purpose of the ANU.

--our brand should reflect our purpose.

--the current draft plan comes across as passive and defensive. It's all to do with how we fix issues and a lot about what we shouldn't do rather than what we should do. The issues of how we address and support the talent we need should be cast against the more positive light of what our purpose is.

--from what I see in my part of the university, the makeup of the students that we're attracting is quite dramatically different from five years ago, and their expectations of us have changed. Our newer staff that we're attracting also operate very differently from who we've attracted in the past. We need to take some time to understand what students are now, and what their expectations are. I don't think we've done that very well as we've been preoccupied with other things. In the current draft strategy it's not clear that we understand who we are trying to attract. I think we are just relying on our reputation from decades ago – that people will just come here because of our name. I think the current draft strategy is trying to satisfy people without exciting too much feeling. There isn't any part of it that I thought was really strong. It seemed like it was something that had to be put out, but they were afraid of exciting complaints especially in the context of a co-design process. I would like to see **more vision and a greater recognition that things have changed in our staff & student profile**.

--what is missing is a clear vision about where we're going and why. I've been at ANU a long time, and before I came here I read the strategy & teaching & learning plan, and I remember reading that **ANU produced graduates with leadership**. I loved that idea. It looked like we were **producing people with passion**. I think there should be **more on graduate attributes**. There is something on the plan about AI, but our stakeholders are government, students, staff, possibly business. The more we can **paint a clear picture of what the outcome is – what does industry get when they hire an ANU graduate?** We need to define more clearly where we are going.

--we need to acknowledge better that **the world has changed** and that ANU is falling behind its competitors, not just locally but in terms of the international stage. International students are not just looking at Australia – and even if they are they are not necessarily just looking at ANU.

Part of our strength is our proximity to power re federal government and certain industries here.

--**we need to catch up digitally.** The fact that we don't have a unified CRM to communicate with prospective students. This affects the user experience. It's only going to get more expensive and more difficult to catch up.

--we need to **own the fact that we are a small institution.** We need to be more selective in what we offer, we don't use the same naming conventions as our competitors and that undermines the strength of our brand. It has be more than about how we rank in QS or other rankings. That's someone else's ranking. We need to articulate what we want to be known for. We need support from above to make a decision about those things and make an investment in our digital infrastructure.

--**We can't ignore AI** and we need to find a way to embrace certain technologies in terms of our marketing and professional systems so that we're not steamrolled by them. Students and young people are expecting personalised, instantaneous feedback when they apply. We've lagged behind and we need to catch up.

--we need to better understand our incoming student cohorts. Some of our courses have lower enrolments than in previous decades – we need to be confident that our education offerings are in line with the expectations of incoming students.

--the draft strategy has a focus on first nations students and engagement. I don't know if the document is the place to have this level of detail, but in the time I've been at ANU I've had a number of first nations students drop out due to lack of support. If this is something that we're highlighting in the strategy as a priority and **if we're looking to establish ourselves as a university of choice for first nations HDR students, we have a lot of work do to in that area.**

Session time/date/location	Thursday 30 April, 11am, via Teams meeting
Facilitator name	Maya Linden
Attendee numbers	103 team members from IT Services Division

Summary:

Topic(s) of focus

The attendees were asked to consider the following questions:

- How is our national mission reflected in our local activities and impacts? Or is it?
- How can we attract and support the talent that we need (students and staff) to maximise our research and education impact?
- What changes in what we do and the ways we work can make us more resilient to external forces?
- What do we need to "fix" at ANU for the University to work better?
- If the University was to stop doing certain things, what would they be?
- What investments should ANU prioritise to maximise our research and education?
- Where is technology enabling or getting in the way of ANU achieving its goals, and what capabilities do we most need?

Overall key findings/recommendations: Below is a summary of the key themes that emerged in responses across the questions above

ANU's national mission is widely understood and valued, but sometimes feels inconsistent in how it is translated into local practice.

To attract and retain student and staff talent at ANU, the focus must be on job security, competitive salaries, workload management, workplace systems, and culture. Clear career pathways, flexibility in work and study, and a future-focused student and staff experience could all support this.

To be resilient into the future, ANU should consider shifting to a simpler and more coordinated operating model. This will be successful if underpinned by positive work culture, stable work conditions, agile governance, embedded AI capability, and strong technology and data foundations.

Deep structural and cultural complexities are getting in the way of ANU functioning effectively. Inefficient operating models, core technology systems and processes, and lack of trust in leadership, governance and accountability are key concerns to be addressed in this area.

When prioritising its investments, the ANU should foreground its people, technology systems, and foundational capabilities (i.e. cybersecurity, AI, and data) to turn technology into a true enabler of research and education. This in turn will strengthen the student experience, reduce administrative burden, and contribute to building a future-ready learning and working environment.

Discussion notes:

The attendees were asked to respond to the following six questions through a Menti Q&A and below is a summary of the key themes that emerged in their responses.

1. How is our national mission reflected in our local activities and impacts? Or is it?

- The national mission is clearly articulated at a strategic level but it is not consistently visible in day-to-day work. First Nations engagement and need for a diverse and

representative workforce are seen as important components of the national mission, but not always consistently embedded.

- Professional and support areas (e.g. ITS) see themselves as critical enablers (infrastructure, systems, platforms) but one step removed from the mission (i.e. there is a gap in understanding research and teaching needs deeply and connecting enabling work directly to mission outcomes and disconnect between, strategy/funding/execution).
- Some describe how internal issues limit mission delivery due to silos across colleges and divisions, lack of 'one university' mindset and at times slow, fragmented decision-making.
- National mission could be more impactful for staff and students through stronger industry partnerships, community engagement and more practical student outcomes (employment pathways).
- Digital and technology strategy should be linked to national mission to build sector leadership in education technology.

2. How can we attract and support the talent that we need (students and staff) to maximise our research and education impact?

- High admin burden, poor systems and processes and lack of psychological safety are noted as barriers to staff and students.
- Less reliance on fixed-term contracts and less cyclical restructures will mean less talent loss, improved morale and continuity in research.
- Uncompetitive remuneration was a strong and repeated concern - salaries perceived as below market (significantly in some cases, especially for technical and professional roles).
- To retain more talented staff, ANU should offer clear progression pathways, transparent career frameworks, mentorship, professional development and opportunities to grow internally.
- Internal politics, siloed teams and executive turnover are impacting staff morale which in turn impacts students and other members of the ANU community.
- For students, improvements are needed for teaching spaces, digital experience (online and on-campus learning parity) and support services.
- Significant future-proofing opportunity for education offering exists through increased online learning opportunities (especially postgraduate) that can offer global market expansion.
- Flexible/remote study and work is now an expectation not an extra and needs to be fully supported across ANU.
- ANU needs to position itself globally as a great place to work and study by being truly future-focused rather than relying on historic rankings/prestige.
- Professional staff are critical enablers of everything that the ANU does but feel sometimes left out of talent strategies and/or that their contributions are not rewarded and acknowledged – this translates to poor morale and retention.

3. What changes in what we do and the ways we work can make us more resilient to external forces? (eg. AI, climate change etc)

- More forward planning for change: ANU feels reactive to challenges rather than planned and responsive and needs more flexibility (program design, operating models etc), forward planning with clear roadmaps and anticipation of change rather than responding late.
- Smart adoption of technology. Embed AI across teaching, research, and operations including embedding AI across teaching, research, and operations by trialling and scaling solutions iteratively to build AI literacy across staff and students.
- A positive culture was noted as the foundation for whole of University resilience – need to rebuild trust and a sense of shared identity and supportive collaboration ('one University' mindset).

- Current operating environment is too slow, siloed and complex at times to be resilient and future-ready – we need to simplify systems and processes, reduce legacy admin work, deliver improvements in shorter cycles (months, not years).
- Reduce reliance on short-term contracts and use of consultants, provide certainty for staff and researchers and build internal change management capabilities.
- Improve financial resilience - heavy reliance on international student revenue seen as a risk. Need to diversify income streams and explore new models (e.g. different student cohorts, broader and less niche offerings). This could attract different learner types (i.e. mature-age, professionals, ANU staff, non-traditional pathways).
- Resilience will also be bolstered by environmental sustainability, workforce sustainability (tenure, retention), system lifecycle management - reduce unused physical space, improve long-term planning beyond political cycles.

4. What do we need to "fix" at ANU for the University to work better?

- The most dominant theme in responses was that the current ANU environment is too complex, slow and overly bureaucratic. Day-to-day, this means excessive manual processes, rework and duplication, too many layers of approval,
- Address this through better governance clarity, faster, evidence-based decisions and improved alignment between strategy, funding, and delivery.
- Again common themes emerged around persistent issues with salary competitiveness, too many fixed-term roles and repeated workforce cycle of hire/restructure/cuts. Strong call for greater job security and recognition of staff contribution.
- ANU needs to address ongoing workload capacity issues which are caused by inefficient systems (i.e. poor identity systems, legacy finance/HR platforms), lack of integration, under-resourcing, and multiple competing priorities - all of which directly impact delivery.
- Improve access to trusted data and prioritise data-driven decision making to uplift prioritisation, planning, transparency, accountability and effective management of ANU-wide initiatives (and their outcomes).
- Fix cultural and behavioural issues to build a more constructive, accountable culture: discussion described ANU culture as political, siloed and resistant to change with examples of poor interpersonal dynamics, lack of collaboration and tolerance of underperformance.
- Address organisational structure inefficiency – too many management layers and unclear responsibilities. ANU could benefit from flattening structures, and defining clear roles and SOPs so that structure better enables the flow of work.

5. If the University was to stop doing certain things, what would they be?

- The dominant theme in responses was that the ANU should stop low-value work and reduce overcomplexity of processes. There is too much activity that adds complexity without value and creates administrative burden (unnecessary processes, duplicated systems, excessive approvals etc.).
- Stop overcommitting – focus on clever prioritisation. The ANU has too many concurrent initiatives, work started but not finished, constant shifting priorities.
- The University needs to move to a true enterprise model and centralise what makes sense to avoid duplicated systems across colleges, inconsistent technology choices, isolated problem-solving with no broad picture view.
- Stop constant change and leadership instability. Comments reflect widespread frustration with frequent leadership changes, ongoing restructures and instability which is producing disengagement and reduced productivity.
- Stop inefficient use of money and resources. Team members are concerned about spending on high executive salaries and suggest that there are excessive leadership roles and overuse of contractors across ANU, while internal capability is underutilised. They

suggest we are better off funding things that have bigger impact and value and clearly support our national mission.

- Stop weak governance and lack of enforcement. Issues noted include policies not enforced, exceptions routinely allowed, and inconsistencies across the University.
- Stop inefficient HR and recruitment processes. This is overly complex, slow and admin-heavy, meaning we lose good candidates through delays and cannot be agile or have a constructive, outcome-focused culture as an organisation.
- Stop misaligned academic program offerings. Concerns were raised around the ANU's niche courses with low enrolment and the high administrative overhead of some programs. Suggestions were made to focus on the ANU core strengths, national mission and high impact areas in academic focus.

6. What investments should ANU prioritise to maximise our research and education?

We asked team members to first contribute their ideas and then allowed all attendees to vote on their top priorities. The results are as follows from most voted to least:

- Workforce stability (permanent, tenure-track roles and investment in internal capability). The ANU needs to focus on retention of experienced researchers and staff, provide career pathways and progression and professional development and leadership capability and development opportunities.
- Core business systems and digital infrastructure. Modernise legacy systems and improve HR systems, finance systems, networks and infrastructure to uplift all areas of operation – research, teaching and administration.
- Cybersecurity and foundational technology. This is a mission-critical risk area and needs stronger security posture, resilient infrastructure and more proactive investment.
- AI infrastructure and literacy. A major emerging priority is to build the infrastructure for AI (tools, platforms, compute capability) and simultaneously the human capability (AI literacy for staff and students and embedding AI safely and successfully into teaching, research and operations). We need to aspire to be an education leader in AI.
- Prioritise the student experience (physical and digital environments) to create an integrated, seamless student journey. Invest in new delivery models (e.g. online, hybrid) and modernise curriculum so it is more aligned to current technologies.
- Prioritise positive culture and positive leadership capability invest in culture (internally developed, not outsourced), interpersonal and collaboration skills and building genuine feedback loops, trust and alignment between leaders and teams.
- Focus on the physical experience on campus and sense of community. Rejuvenate the campus vibe, ensure accessibility (e.g. parking concerns), increase staff presence, student engagement and whole of University community building.

7. Where is technology enabling or getting in the way of ANU achieving its goals, and what capabilities do we most need?

- Technology is seen as both an enabler and a disabler in different contexts.
- The core problem identified with technology is inconsistency, fragmentation and lack of integration. For example, multiple CRMs, admin systems, disconnected student lifecycle systems, and sometimes multiple systems performing the same or similar functions.
- Legacy systems and technical debt are also a barrier to agility and innovation. Core platforms are not fit-for-purpose, we patch rather than replace outdated systems which causes maintenance burden. This also contributes to high-risk concerns about cybersecurity vulnerability, as well as poor user experience.
- Data is described as poor quality, underutilised and not trusted. While data exists, it may not be relevant, reliable or scalable. This points to poor data quality and governance and fragmented data sources, leading to weak decision-making and the inability to build reliable solutions.

- Need to continue the development of a strong AI strategy and governance. We have an opportunity to embed AI into workflows as a navigation layer across systems and enhance our productivity if used carefully and correctly (with an approach of enhancing human capability rather than replacing it).

Session time/date/location	30 April 2026, 1-3pm, Innovation Space – Birch Building
Facilitator name	Thomas Biedermann
Attendee numbers	8

Summary:

Format

This session involved School of Cybernetics PhD candidates (3), academic (3) and professional (2) staff members. It was held over two hours, using a facilitated futures thinking workshop format, developed in-house, called 'The Next Two Years'.

Drawing on creative and gameful methods, the workshop invites participants to co-create a future state of the university (captured on an evolving map of campus and sticky-notes) by responding candidly to a curated prompts and simulating actions taken by the ANU over a simulated period of two years.

Participants self-organised in 2 tables; read the draft strategy; received a short briefing on the strategy co-design process and workshop format; selected one of the provided questions to guide their inquiry (or generated their own); then went through the workshop at their own pace. The session concluded with a share-back and discussion between tables, to generate further insights and crystallise recommendations for the ANU strategy. A draft version of this output document was provided to participants for fact-checking and additional inputs.

Topics of focus

The tables independently selected two different guiding questions:

1. How does our national mission cohere with our local, national regional and international reach?
2. What should we fix or stop doing for our University to work better?

This led to very different scenarios and enabled rich discussions. Overarching themes include the need for the strategy to more specifically capture the unique mission and contributions of ANU as Australia's National University; more explicitly articulate the changing contexts (especially environmental and technological) in which ANU will continue to operate over the period covered by the strategy; and outlining the conditions we will create to enable valuable responses and contributions to navigating these changes.

The topics and recommendations that emerged from the process are detailed in the table overleaf.

Topic	Dimensions explored	Recommendations for the ANU Strategy
Relations between ANU and our communities and stakeholders	Public perception of the ANU and social license to operate.	The ANU strategy should focus on ways to create and maintain positive (media) relationships and stories, amplifying our work at the ANU and improving reputation.
	The multifaceted ANU value proposition to external stakeholders: the outputs, ideas and people we produce.	The ANU strategy should speak explicitly and specifically to our value in Australian society - e.g. diplomacy, policy, future skills.
Financial sustainability and transparency	Need for greater clarity about ANU incomings and outgoings.	Recognising the current context, the ANU Strategy should foreground the necessity to improve financial transparency, in addition to financial sustainability.
	Transparency about sources and quanta of funding.	
Placemaking	Mobility and accessibility (pedestrian crossings, public transport access). Day to day campus life, especially for on-campus students.	The ANU strategy should foreground our place, space and environment and seek to make best use of our physical environment.
	Natural environment custodianship - Sullivan's creek, biodiversity, campus as living lab for Nature Positive operations.	The ANU strategy should foreground our commitments and contributions to environmental and social sustainability.
Support for transdisciplinarity	Need for funding and incentive structures (e.g. recognition, career progression) to support this work.	The ANU Strategy is silent on this critical contribution. It should highlight and incentivise TD research, education (as a Graduate Attribute) and activities.
Internal and external communications	Requires consistent and regular information sharing within ANU. External communications are equally important and should be strategic.	The ANU Strategy should highlight how we will make use of existing and emerging technologies to improve access to and effective use of our information – both internally and to support how we present ourselves to the broader community.
	Role of IT systems and infrastructures, guided by internal expertise, in supporting information management.	
Organisation and information clarity	Whole-of-process accountability and streamlining - who is responsible for what? Need clarity and signposting / directories - which area(s) do I speak to about X?	The ANU strategy should highlight central systems, information directories, and reporting tools into one consolidated system.
National mission	Developing a robust and distributed government liaison system across campus, through located government liaison officers and coordination / information-sharing systems.	ANU strategy should be prioritising partnering with government, working on policy and capacity building.
Evolving context and practice in a technologically-changing world	Emerging technologies are impacting our communities, practices and societies in ways that cannot be ignored.	The ANU strategy should support cutting-edge research to the boundaries of AI and emerging technologies
	These technological transformations are often treated separately, missing the opportunity to explore the broader dynamics between humans, societies and technologies.	The ANU strategy should frame technology surges (such as AI and quantum computing) as human-machine teaming and focus on adjusting to working with these technologies.

Session time/date/location	2-3 PM / 30 April / HC Coombs
Facilitator name	Bianca Suarez
Attendee numbers	2

Summary:

- Due to the small number of attendees, the workshop reviewed the entire strategy and provides feedback across all areas of the strategy's structure.
- The First Nations Commitment should highlight collaboration and partnership with First Nations peoples to acknowledge the value of different knowledge systems and support the integration of different ways of knowing to address pressing issues such as climate change. ANU should also commit to making it more accessible to First Nation peoples. Suggested practical actions include no tuition for First Nations students; an Indigenous research fund to support Indigenous-identified research priorities; and a mechanism to protect and share Indigenous research and knowledge as determined by First Nations researchers.
- To maximise impact, the strategy must integrate innovation, entrepreneurship, and interdisciplinary collaboration across research and education. Practical actions include training staff and students to build these skills, utilising institutes as interdisciplinary hubs, and designing modular programs to support change without disruption.
- The university needs deeper engagement with external actors, including government, industry, and communities to achieve its purpose as the national university. Practical actions include working with communities to support just and equitable climate adaptation, expand the tech launcher program to all colleges, and utilise institutes as a front door to connect university staff and external actors.
- The ANU should use existing facilities and wealth of expertise, and this should be captured in the strategy, particularly in people and enablers sections. Practical actions include establishing an internal register of expertise as an alternative to consultants and using the campus more intensively to drive activity and engagement with students and external actors.

Notes:

- Values: Add care for the environment and generational considerations for humanity
- Purpose of the strategy:
 - Refer to Act of the Parliament
 - Primary purposes are research and training of professionals and have the purpose flows from there
 - Train people
 - Produce research that's useful
- The name of the university brings some weight and assumptions/expectations from the public/government
- First nations
 - Collaboration with first nations people on climate change/stewardship of the environment; bringing together knowledge systems to address climate change
 - Acknowledge ownership of First Nations peoples in practical manners; prioritise research to improve their conditions
 - Strategy discusses being the choice of First Nations people for education and research, but make it so that's more accessible and addresses their concerns

- Possible actions: No tuition for First Nations students; Indigenous research fund; support for students who are studying and researching remote from the campus in their own community; establish a mechanism for protecting and sharing indigenous research and knowledge as determined by first nations researchers
- People
 - Have staff qualified to teach – ANU should provide training opportunities for staff to enhance their skills in teaching for the benefit of the students
 - Students – need to support a more diverse range of students, considering for example, gender, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, ethnicity
 - Create a safe community
 - Ensure we are an environmentally and financially sustainable
- Institutes provide impact e.g. supporting people to IPCC
- Research
 - Direction
 - Add to the second to the last point training on innovation & entrepreneurship
 - Supporting research to achieve practical outcomes for community benefit and economic development and the environment
 - Support interdisciplinary research in the university to address pressing issues of national and community concern, such as climate change
 - Possible actions
 - Add a possible action on economic development through measure for climate change – new farming techniques, battery technologies, etc.
 - Working with communities to support just and equitable climate adaptation
 - AI and energy & water use
 - Train researchers in innovation & entrepreneurship at the Canberra Innovation Network
 - Train researchers in interdisciplinary research practice e.g. hackathons
- Education
 - Direction
 - Add education for professional training/executive education in priority areas such as the environment, leadership, etc.
 - Emphasis on group problem solving and working in teams as a core skill
 - Education that develops practical skills such as work-integrated learning, entrepreneurship
 - Possible actions
 - Add to first point: across Australia and diverse backgrounds.
 - Design modular programs so that the overall design is maintained but the components can be adjusted as needed without disrupting current students
 - Recognition of prior experience, consider practical assessments of experience
 - Nested qualifications (e.g. certificate, diploma)

- Spheres of influence
 - Expand the tech launcher program to all colleges to bring more external visitors on campus and establish connections to government and industry
 - Use physical and technical facilities to convene forums on topics of national and international importance such as climate change and conflict resolution
 - Reopen to university house as a venue for interaction between staff, students, and the community to enable more informal collaboration and engagement
 - Utilising institutes as a front door for connecting university staff and government and industry
- Enablers
 - Exceed below zero 2040 commitment
 - Use campus more intensively for more students and activity, maximise existing resources already being used (e.g. aircons in rooms)
 - Establish a register of internal expertise to provide an alternative to external consultants (actioning last direction point)
 - An environment and culture that supports innovation and collaboration that can be achieved through training of the staff and courses for the students – teach people to ideate

Session time/date/location	10am, May 1, Online
Facilitator name	Paul Gabriel
Attendee numbers	5

Accountability, Leadership, and Culture

Staff expressed significant concern about a disconnect between ANU's stated values and operational reality. Participants felt management decisions are often made without evidence, consultation, or meaningful accountability, particularly during recent restructures. There was a strong perception that technical staff are not being listened to, morale has deteriorated, and leadership has not taken sufficient action to rebuild trust or demonstrate measurable outcomes.

ITS a Critical Enabler Supporting ANU's Mission

Participants stressed that ITS is not simply a support function, but a foundational enabler of ANU's mission in research and education. ITS needs to be involved in the planning of changes, such as college realignments, so IT system updates are ready when the change occurs, not months later. Concerns were raised that underinvestment in core systems, operational capability, and foundational architecture directly threatens the university's ability to deliver teaching, research, and institutional resilience.

User-Centred Design, Inclusion, and Cross-Organisational Visibility

The strategy's emphasis on user-centredness, equity, and inclusion was viewed as largely aspirational, with little evidence of consistent implementation or measurement. Participants noted the absence of standardised approaches for accessibility, human-centred design, or engagement with diverse user groups, including staff and students with disabilities. The current organisational structure was also seen as limiting visibility and coordination across ITS, making it difficult to embed shared standards and practices.

Technology Strategy, AI, and Long-Term Investment

Participants argued that technology decisions should be guided by technical expertise and evidence rather than executive enthusiasm for trends such as "AI" or "cloud-first" approaches. There was concern that leadership often adopts strategic directions without sufficient technical consultation or understanding of operational impacts. The group emphasised that resilience requires stable, well-designed foundational systems and sustained long-term investment, rather than short-term fixes, patchwork integrations, and reactive decisionmaking.

Security, Talent Retention, and Capability Gaps

Security was identified as a critical and growing risk area. Participants described years of underinvestment, fragmented architecture, and insufficient focus on foundational security improvements. At the same time, ANU was seen as struggling to attract and retain skilled technical staff due to uncompetitive salaries compared with the private sector. Participants argued that world-class outcomes require world-class talent, and that ANU must invest both in its technical workforce and in the secure, resilient infrastructure needed to support the university into the future.

Conclusion

While staff broadly support the strategic goals outlined in the draft strategy, there was a clear view that meaningful progress will require stronger leadership accountability, evidence-based

decision-making, sustained investment in core infrastructure and people, and a more collaborative, user-centred approach to planning and delivery.

Session time/date/location	Friday 1 May from 12 - 1pm - In-person, RSSS Room 2.56
Facilitator name	Lyndall Strazdins with Velinka Vecchi scribing
Attendee numbers	8: we had eight (fabulous) participants, the session went for 90 minutes

Summary:

Topic(s) of focus were:

1. What are the key strengths of this draft Strategy?
2. What else is needed, what are the gaps, what needs to be improved?
3. What are the three most important things needed to strengthen the Strategy?
4. What are the three most important things the University needs to fix, do less of or do differently to achieve the Strategy?

Other observations:

- Really diverse group of attendees
- Why was the drafting of this Strategic Plan not started prior to the end of the previous 2021-2025 Plan?
- Why were the outcomes/evaluations of the 2021-2025 Plan not undertaken?

Key findings/recommendations

1. What are the key strengths of this draft Strategy?

- a. The People section and foregrounding people in the strategy.
- b. Articulates a good direction for the People section.
- c. The six Values are grounded in the Nixon Review and reflect genuine community input rather than corporate boilerplate.
- d. The Spheres of Influence section, it's great to think about this
- e. The Spheres of Influence section articulates our collective value to others gives a sense of the whole institution.
- f. Including enablers.
- g. The engagement with campus to drive the vision and strategy.
- h. It feels collaborative all staff invited to input.
- i. Acknowledges diversity of staff and student.
- j. The First Nations commitment is a real strength – framed around self-determination, UNDRIP, the Tjabal Centre and the First Nations Portfolio rather than aspirational language alone.
- k. Articulates ANU as a partner of choice for government.
- l. It's people centred.
- m. The acknowledgement that ANU has not been providing a safe and stable environment. Saying this out loud matters, and it gives the Strategy credibility post-Nixon.
- n. Feels like a proper consultation.
- o. Inclusive design.

- p. The process.
- q. Articulating our identity.
- r. Linking identity to impact.

2. What else is needed, what are the gaps, what needs to be improved?

- a. Education treated as a peer of research, not as a downstream to research. Resource program design, teaching-focused career pathways, and the professional staff who make programs run.
- b. No mention of health and medical research from the five impact themes, despite being a real ANU strength.
- c. Equity-deserving populations beyond First Nations are not named anywhere in the document.
- d. Not tackling difficult issues like what is a reasonable workload. Wellbeing and workload appear as a possible action but with no concrete mechanism, baseline, or metric.
- e. Insecure work and casualisation are not addressed anywhere, despite being central to the lived experience of staff and to retention.
- f. Need to place education and research at equal value.
- g. Too generic especially in how it treats members of the community (e.g. professional versus academic, junior versus senior, students et cetera). Professional staff are not mentioned even once in the document. Early career researchers are mentioned only once in the whole document, in the Indigenous pathways action. Mid-career academics are not named at all. For a Strategy that depends on the entire workforce delivering it over five years, the absence of specifically identifying members of the community is a significant gap.
- h. If mid-career academics are meant to sit inside “emerging leaders,” that is a category error. We are not emerging – we are delivering. We convene courses, supervise large HDR cohorts, write grants, sit on HREC, mentor ECRs, and carry the institutional load. The strategy should acknowledge and recognise us. Leadership development is a separate conversation.
- i. Resourcing commitment for people development.
- j. Actions to bring resisters along on our values.
- k. Recognise approach to community building and spheres of influence.
- l. It is not Asia – Pacific it is Asia and the Pacific.
- m. Where is employability for students?
- n. More emphasis on being connected and accessible to Canberra city.
- o. Need to address the demoralised staff.
- p. More emphasis on creating a community for everybody.
- q. More emphasis on students as whole people.
- r. More commitment to our distinctive identity - First Nations and Asia and the Pacific regions.
- s. Need investment in all staff – not just leaders – especially professional staff.
- t. The huge loss of time and productivity from our poor systems must be fixed.
- u. More emphasis on culture and kindness.
- v. More emphasis on public engagement and partnerships not just policy. The Australian Public Service (APS) is one of ANU’s most distinctive assets and should be a named pillar of the Spheres of Influence.
- w. It’s fluffy, needs to be clear what we do with the NIG that is different.

x. We have not articulated how we are different to other universities -what if we made our point of difference our service to the public, to policy and to our regions? This would prompt us to focus on outward facing engagement, giving back and interaction so that our stakeholders know and benefit from what we do.

3. What are the three most important things needed to strengthen the Strategy?

- a. More ambition, while making sure the university functions to meet basic needs.
- b. More compelling vision for the whole strategy and subsections + more distinctiveness.
- c. Need to be clear the Australian public is our end user.
- d. Elevate education especially our graduate attributes and focus on EQ for students - we need to build a whole suite of skills for our graduates to succeed – self and thought leadership.
- e. Name and resource the mid-career cohort explicitly. Invest in coursework and HDR program design, in teaching-focused career pathways, and in workload models that recognise convening and supervision properly. Research-led education only works if the education side is genuinely resourced.
- f. Connection with mental health and well-being strategy.
- g. Connection with service performance framework.
- h. Connection with university accord.
- i. Clear strategies directed to foster cohesion amongst the community.
- j. Consider how the strategy will make life better for students?
- k. Explicit recognition of cultural and service cohesion problems and elevate kindness.
- l. Determine and articulate what makes us different. What makes us distinctive and unique is not identifiable in the current draft Strategy.
- m. A vision that places this university in service to communities - internally and externally and including Asia and the Pacific.
- n. We don't have a clear articulation of the new it seems to be repeating what we always do.

4. What are the three most important things the University needs to fix, do less of or do differently to achieve the Strategy?

- a. Need to do less of somethings and articulate what is new.
- b. We need a plan for implementation with stage gates and clear accountability; a measurable accountability framework for the values and 2030 commitments
- c. We need to fix systems and service performance and processes.
- d. We need to do an assessment of system readiness, openness and data.
- e. We need an emphasis on quality and a strategy for how we will improve it.
- f. Get our basic needs met to do our jobs. Invest in service design foundational resources needed to function – computers office space.
- g. Need a coherent visible plan for refreshing IT.
- h. Need a robust implementation plan and governance this includes plan for future needs to work for whole community, staff and students.
- i. Make things easier.
- j. Acknowledge everyone has day-to-day task responsibilities and consider how they are affected in change plans, and updates and upgrades.
- k. Put the right people in the right roles – the right people in leadership roles to bring it to life.
- l. Need to have service design responsibility and accountability – don't move things or remove things until we have a plan to replace or update them.

- m. Implement Nixon review recommendations. Outcomes of the Nixon Review aren't sufficiently incorporated into the Values in the draft Strategy.
- n. Develop a workforce strategy for the whole workforce (not just leadership), that includes pathways/plans for promotions for all staff.
- o. Greater promotion equity and pathways. Provide a clear promotion pathway for both academic and professional staff. Recognition of service load – convening, supervision, HREC, mentoring, community engagement – needs to be built into how progression works, not left as goodwill.
- p. Address precarity and casualisation directly. A Strategy that depends on its workforce cannot keep that workforce on insecure contracts. This needs to be named and acted on.
- q. Address work health and safety particularly psychosocial safety
- r. The way university works especially having more cascading connected governance from the top to frontline.
- s. Commitment to a post implementation review. Consider the impact, losses, the gains, what was the value achieved. What not to do next time.
- t. Identify who makes decisions and how. The Strategy commits to "reshaping or reducing activity in areas that are lower priority" and to "rigorous developmental reviews", but does not say against what criteria, by whom, or with what consequences. Staff need transparent decision rights and a moratorium on overlapping reviews. Constant restructuring is itself a productivity tax.

Session time/date/location	9.30-10.30am, 5 May 2026 Allan Barton Forum, Building 26C, College of Business & Economics
Facilitator name	Erica Walls-Nichols
Attendee numbers	25-30

Summary:

- Graduate Research School operational staff session – GRS is a recently centralised business unit bringing together administrative functions previously located in schools. GRS administration involves significant manual processing and workarounds for systems that are not fit-for-purpose, challenges which pre-date centralisation.
- Conducted as an in-person World Café style workshop:
 - Two structured discussion rounds explored resilience to external change and opportunities to improve how the University operates.
 - A future-state reflection exercise captured aspirations for how work would look if key issues were resolved.
- Discussion captured via Miro Board, with the board link provided following in-person session to capture additional comments. Csv of comments available upon request.
- Recurrent themes included:
 - Systems modernisation and digital integration are foundational to all other improvements.
 - Workforce sustainability requires adequate resourcing, recognition, and investment in capability.
 - Simplification of processes and reduction of bureaucracy are urgent and widespread concerns.
 - Leadership clarity, trust, and engagement are essential enablers of change.
 - There is a strong shared commitment to student and supervisor success.
 - Staff collectively want to move from reactive to proactive

Notes:

- Systems modernisation and integration:
 - Strong need for connected, reliable, and modern IT systems that can respond quickly to external pressures such as AI, demographic shifts, and climate change.
 - Clear demand for a new HDR-specific application and admissions system that ensures compliance and is easy for applicants to navigate.
 - Interest in AI-enabled functionality, including identifying incorrect or potentially fraudulent documents at the point of application.
 - Expectation that the University move faster in adopting emerging tools and trends, supported by clear system ownership and governance.
 - Call for proactive regulatory reporting so the University stays ahead of compliance requirements rather than responding reactively.
 - Recognition that staff require access to University-supported AI tools, licences, training, and clear policy guidance.
- Improvements

- Widespread frustration with manual processes, duplicated data entry, and reliance on shadow systems.
- Strong calls to stop using archaic systems and replace them with integrated platforms (e.g. CRM, CMS) that talk to each other.
- Repeated emphasis on the need to replace PeopleSoft and avoid short-term band-aid solutions.
- Desire to simplify workflows, reduce red tape, and remove unnecessary approval layers that act as barriers to research.
- Need for stable infrastructure, including reliable internet access, consolidated information storage, and dashboards showing work to be done.
- Leadership, culture, workforce
 - Consistent concern about under-resourcing and unsustainable reliance on over-performing staff to cover system and process gaps.
 - Strong desire for leadership to trust professional staff expertise and actively support and action ideas raised from the ground.
 - Calls for clearer role clarity, ownership of processes, and visible follow-through on announced changes.
 - Emphasis on investing in staff training, AI capability, appropriate classification, and career progression.
 - Clear message that respectful relationships, trust, and familiarity across teams are critical enablers of effective work.
- Student centred approach:
 - Participants consistently emphasised that HDR students and supervisors must sit at the centre of the work.
 - Operational efficiency was seen as essential to improving the student and supervisor experience.
 - Suggestions included live chat tools, booking systems, drop-in hubs, and self-service resources for the digital generation.
 - Recognition that economic and structural barriers to participation require institutional attention.
- Ideal future state would be:
 - No manual follow-ups, no duplicated data entry, and minimal transactional processing.
 - Integrated systems that enable high-quality, complex case management
 - More time for deep, proactive, and meaningful work focused on people rather than processes.
 - A solutions-oriented culture with genuine collaboration and reduced stress.
 - Improved job satisfaction, healthy boundaries, and a strong sense of accomplishment for staff.
 - A shift from survival mode to a mature, innovative, and forward-looking operating environment.
- Insights/implications for ANU strategy development
 - Graduate research operations are foundational to research quality and outcomes, and reducing administrative barriers enables researchers and supervisors to focus on impact.

- Operational improvements explicitly link to equity, access, and quality of the HDR experience.
- Graduate Research operations require recognition in enterprise-wide digital and workforce strategies (not an afterthought).
- Modern, integrated digital systems are critical to support operational improvements
- Support for responsible AI adoption with appropriate governance and training
- Leadership expectations should include accountability for implementation and engagement with professional staff expertise.
- A student-centred operating model should be a core institutional principle.
- Workforce sustainability is a strategic risk to delivery, quality, and continuity.

Session time/date/location	Tuesday 5 May from 11am – 12:15pm - In-person, Room 7.4.1, Phillipa Weeks Library, Law School, Building 7
Facilitator name	Velinka Vecchi with Michael Lonergan scribing
Attendee numbers	12: the session went for 75 minutes

Summary:

Topic(s) of focus/consideration in our session were:

- Setting up **Our People** for success
- Attracting and retaining talent
- Onboarding, what should this look like? Who is responsible?
- Workloads
- Values and culture
- Staff benefits and wellbeing
- By 2030, what does different look like?

Other observations that arose from our discussion:

- Interestingly, a few key findings were the same outputs as a session held last Friday.
- Under the Spheres of Influence, the draft Strategy calls out a focus on growing international students. Since we are no longer the Australian student top choice institution, this action should be expanded to not just focus on growth internationally but also identify the domestic opportunity.
- Increase in second requests for Police Checks coming from P&C to staff that have already submitted in past 6-12 months.
- Re-introduce quarterly F&BS Finance Forums for all F&BS staff
- Informal, locally led Lunch & Learn sessions

Key findings/recommendations

1. How do we attract, support and retain the talent that we need?

- Need to increase the stability of our Executive Leadership group.
- Consistent, improved, systemic New Staff Onboarding processes that are monitored for completion, include relevant and targeted at Level and Service Portfolio staff training on relevant enterprise systems and processes.
- Need immediate emphasis on building Culture.
- Commitment to on-going professional development, training and coaching.
- Promote knowledge communicating and sharing across teams within professional service functions.
- Need consistent **organisational** and local area Culture, Goals and Objectives.
- Employment experience at ANU is considered a strong pathway to the APS which initially attracts talent.
- ANU Officer level externally advertised positions attract many applicants, although this is market dependant.
- Provide staff with adequate, quality, reliable data, technology and tools to effectively perform their responsibilities.

- j. Reduce the burden and reliance of bespoke and uniquely created reports; create, promote fit for purpose, quality self-service reports.

2. Do the contents of this draft Strategy already address these areas? How so?

- a. The draft Strategy of The People section and foregrounding People in the strategy are a strength.
- b. It articulates a good direction for the Our People section, just too high level, requires micro level, realisable actions.
- c. Reference to the Enablers as essential for ensuring we have the financial, physical, digital and human resources to achieve our ambitions is identified; **however, success needs articulated, realisable, micro level actions.**
- d. Articulation to replace legacy systems and find ways to deploy new technologies to find efficient solutions is listed as a Possible Action.

3. What else is needed in the draft Strategy, what are the gaps, what needs to be improved?

- a. Identification of the negative impact on efficiency and performance of insecure work, casualisation and fixed term appointments.
- b. Directly address precarity and casualisation of staff. A Strategy that depends on its workforce cannot have a proportion of its workforce on insecure contracts. This needs to be named and include an action to address/improve this constraint.
- c. Develop a workforce strategy for the whole workforce that reduces the appointing of fixed term, casualised staff.
- d. Develop a workforce strategy that requires external advertising at the end of fixed term contracts held by internal candidates to ensure we are recruiting the best talent and not just converting internal staff by default.
- e. Resourcing commitment for an improved professional staff development plan.
- f. Need investment in **all staff** – not just leaders.
- g. Need to address the demoralised staff.
- h. **More emphasis on creating Connection and Community.** Centralising large professional service areas has created disconnect in community.
- i. Explicit recognition of cultural and service cohesion problems and elevate kindness.
- j. Significant loss of efficiency and productivity in some areas from poor systems needs targeted action to address limitations of current systems.
- k. Connection with delivery and service performance frameworks.
- l. Commitment to agreed Service Level Agreements that support the strategic aims of the organisation.
- m. Make things easier.
- n. Acknowledge everyone has day-to-day task responsibilities and consider how they are affected in change plans, and updates and upgrades.
- o. Greater promotion equity and pathways; Role position descriptions that encourage skill development and career progression.
- p. Provide clear promotion pathways for professional staff to strengthen staff retention and capitalise on the on-the-job training investment.

4. The three most important things needed to strengthen the Strategy in respect of Our People:

- a. Need immediate emphasis on building **Culture**, creating Connection and Community, at both organisational and **local levels**. Articulation that this is an explicit responsibility of leaders.

- b. Need a coherent visible plan for refreshing IT and improve systems and processes to enable effective work.
- c. Resourcing commitment for an improved professional staff development plan, that includes a New Staff Onboarding process and is face-to-face centred.

5. The three most important things the University needs to fix, do less of or do differently to achieve the Strategy's Our People focus?

- a. We need to prioritise systems and service performance and processes. Use the existing Digital Plan to address and identify, prioritise biggest impact and develop a plan that supports an enabled workforce.
- b. Set up a taskforce to intentionally and specifically identify what we can stop, do less without impact to performance or risk and systemic disablers that should be addressed or removed.
- c. Get our basic needs met to do our jobs. Invest in service design foundational resources needed to function – computers, office space, financial reports that meet the needs of non-financial staff.

Session time/date/location	11:15-12:15pm, 5 May 2026, HC Coombs, Room 1.109
Facilitator name	Lucy Liu
Attendee numbers	7

Overall sentiment

- Strong consensus that the strategy should set a priority to address the significant loss of **talent** and institutional knowledge resulting from RenewANU, and a clear strategy to attract talent to **rebuild workforce capability**.
- Participants also emphasised the need for a strategic approach to **accountability** and organisational **resilience** in managing major change initiatives such as Renew ANU.
- Call for **restoring** institutional capability, communities, relationships, and confidence as a strategic priority. Serious issues of trust and uncertainty should be acknowledged more openly.
- Call for a confident and aspirational vision for the future that clearly articulates **how** ANU will deliver on its unique **national purpose**. Concerns about the challenge of developing a strategy under an interim Vice-Chancellor. Concerns that the document contains more detail than typical strategies, raising questions about sustainability under changing leadership. If measurable actions are to be added in a separate 'action plan' document – then mention the creation of this in this strategy. The strategy should therefore focus on **fundamentals**, clarifying core purpose and addressing underlying issues, and provide a foundation that future leadership can build on. (this point moved to "Over sentiment" instead of Impressions on the Strategy Draft overall" to highlight the importance)

Values

Participants raised concerns about the inclusion of values derived primarily from the Nixon Review. While these values were appropriate for addressing behaviour and culture issues identified through that review, there was concern that they may not be well suited as the primary values framework for a university-level strategy.

Specifically, participants noted that the current values:

- Are largely focused on behavioural management and conduct
- Are generic in nature and could apply to almost any organisation
- Do not sufficiently articulate what ANU represents as a university or what distinguishes it institutionally and academically

Several participants felt that the values articulated in previous ANU strategic plans more effectively reflected ANU's **identity, purpose, and role as a national university**, including its commitment to academic freedom, knowledge creation, indigenous perspectives, and intellectual leadership.

It was suggested that behavioural values should support and underpin, rather than replace, core academic and institutional values.

There was also concern about fragmentation across the organisation, with multiple value sets currently in use:

- Existing ANU values
- Nixon Review values
- College-level values

→ Lack of clarity on how these intersect or form a coherent whole

Valuing Our People

Strong emphasis that valuing people and investing people should be a priority in the strategy.

Participants emphasised that the strategy should place a much stronger and more explicit focus on valuing people. This includes recognising the central role of staff in delivering ANU's core mission of education, research, and public service

There was a strong view that valuing people must extend beyond statements of intent to include meaningful commitments to retention, career development, institutional knowledge, and wellbeing. Better valuing staff was seen as essential to rebuilding trust, restoring confidence, and ensuring the long-term sustainability and excellence of the university.

Concerns raised about:

- Loss of experienced staff and institutional knowledge
- Understaffing undermining ambitions in education and research

Calls for strategy to more clearly address:

- Job security
- Career pathways
- Succession planning
- Workload
- Loss of experienced staff and institutional knowledge
- Morale

Accountability

Call for developing a strategic approach to ensure accountability and delivery on commitments, to ensure:

- Any change processes genuinely consultative and humane.
- Governance and decision-making quality
- Continuity and service stability as foundational principles

Repeated emphasis on the need to explicitly acknowledge:

- Ongoing trauma from recent restructures and change processes
- Loss of trust, burnout, and emotional impact on staff

Identity, Purpose, and National Role

Calls for clearer articulation of ANU as:

- A **national institution**, not merely a Canberra-based university
- A contributor to public value beyond campus

Suggestions to better highlight:

- Alumni and Scholars impact across government and the Asia-Pacific region
- The role of the ANU in shaping national policy, administration, and regional leadership.
- There were some specific suggestions of those national priorities that need greater attention including language education, public administration and AI technology (as set out below).

Language Education

There is strong concern that language education is not sufficiently visible or explicitly recognised in the strategy, despite being a distinctive ANU strength. This includes Asian and Indigenous languages, which underpin research, regional engagement, and student pathways.

It was emphasised that ANU provides language offerings not available elsewhere in the Southern Hemisphere, underscoring its critical role. But this capability is being eroded and lacks clear strategic protection or investment.

There was a clear call for language education to be explicitly embedded as a strategic priority across the document, including in purpose statements and Asia-Pacific and Indigenous-related commitments, alongside a more aspirational framing of the national and regional role of the ANU.

Additional wording and/or points underscoring the universities commitment to language teaching, especially in Asian and Pacific languages, could be added to a range of sections:

- addressing First Nations Commitments in point 2 of possible actions (adding “and through the Universities unique Australian Indigenous languages programs”),
- On page 13 Context: in Self-Determination and Sovereignty on Context (p.13), adding “language revival.”; in Peace Security and Prosperity, adding “multilingualism, language and intercultural literacy” to the list of expertise in the final sentence. In the section on Spheres of Influence, Context: “We excel in multilingualism, language and intercultural literacy, skills which make our campus inclusive and our research and teaching essential for Australia's future in the world.

Public Administration & Public Policy

- Historically strong
- Noted decline in capability and focus over recent years
- Direct relevance to Australia’s national role and Canberra location
- Closely tied to government, policy, and institutional influence

Areas where the university has historically been strong, and noted the need to regain momentum in these areas after recent declines. The suggestion is not to add extensive detail, but to include enough specificity and reflection to reinforce a positive, forward-looking narrative about returning to areas of established strength.

AI and Digital Capability

Strong concern that AI is not treated as a strategic capability or risk. Calls for:

- Leading nationally on ethical, responsible AI as a priority
- Invest in digital capability across academics, professional staff, and students
- Rebuild communities of practice and reference groups that can engage with genuine decision making from a teaching and learning perspective and current best practice experience.

Issues raised:

- ANU seen as lagging other Australian universities
- Lack of staff and student training
- Absence of governance, policy, and ethical guidance
- Emerging risks to student wellbeing, including misuse of AI in mental health contexts

Teaching and learning

The strategy should include a clearer articulation of:

- Rebuild communities of practice that support shared learning and capability building
- Industry engagement
- Employability pathways for graduates
- Partnerships extending beyond government and policy circles

- Leveraging the transdisciplinary strengths of the ANU. Seen as under-articulated in strategy. Strong differentiator vs larger, more siloed universities. Transdisciplinarity should be framed as a competitive advantage worth protecting and investing in.
- Graduate attributes are not mentioned in any meaningful way.

Call for the strategy to include a clear plan for ensuring the capacity and capability required to deliver the large number of “possible actions” in the Education sessions.

Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability was identified as under-emphasised in the strategy, with concern that it focuses more on expenditure than revenue.

A key risk highlighted is that declining reputation could affect the university’s ability to attract students and maintain revenue, making a clear revenue strategy essential alongside cost management.

Savings and reinvestment should be directed toward areas that underpin national priorities and the distinctive strengths of the ANU.

Financial sustainability needs to be explicitly linked to strategic national priorities, with clearer decisions about where to invest, where to reduce activity, and how to sustain revenue streams over time.

Impressions on the Strategy Draft overall

- Concerns were raised that the “**Possible Actions**” lack clarity and accountability, particularly in relation to how they would be implemented and measured.
- Some participants noted that a strategic document should clearly articulate how intended outcomes will be achieved. Others noted that, detailed actions are typically set out in a corporate or implementation plan rather than included directly in the strategy itself. Some expressed that the three-column structure (context / direction / possible actions) clear, visual, and more accountable than past strategies.
- Confusion about whether this was a discussion document, or the intended final public-facing strategy.
- Acknowledged the **Context** section is important, but it could be franker.
- Confusion about whether this was discussion document, or the intended final public-facing strategy.
- Confusion about the relationship between “**identity**” and “**impact**” in the strategy diagram.
- Concerns that the document lacks agenda-setting aspirational language, and often uses Higher-ed jargon such as “program architecture” which will be meaningless to a broader audience.

Session time/date/location	5/5, 12:00-13:00; Teams
Facilitator name	Kathy & Charlie
Attendee numbers	+5

This summary brings together insights from a cross-college discussion (CESS, CAS, CoSM, CBE) and follow-up written input from early and mid-career researchers (EMCRs). The focus was on reviewing the ANU Strategy draft, with particular attention to EMCRs, including gaps and priorities.

Overall feedback on the Strategy draft

Participants strongly supported:

- ANU's identity as a **research-led national university**
- More **equitable through explicit inclusion of career stages**, particularly EMCRs

However, there was a consistent need for:

- **Clearer prioritisation** (what matters most), more distinction through choices
- **Explicit trade-offs** (what will stop or be deprioritised)
- Stronger linkage between **strategic intent and implementation**

There is currently some ambiguity around how elements such as “directions”, “spheres of influence”, and diagrams translate into institutional priorities and actions that trickle down to individual EMCRs.

Early and Mid-Career Researchers (EMCRs) – a critical gap

A central and consistent theme was that EMCRs are **underrepresented in the Strategy** despite being essential to ANU's future capability.

Key observations:

- EMCRs appear once in the document, in relation to First Nations Commitment
- References to workforce development lack career-stage specificity
- Support structures for EMCRs development are often inconsistent and locally determined

Opportunities to strengthen:

- Explicitly position EMCRs as a strategic cohort
- Embed career-stage thinking across sections (People, Research, Education)

Suggested strategic directions:

- Develop **structured career pathways** with transparent progression/mobility pathways
- Ensure **equitable workload allocation**, including protected research time
- Provide **consistent institutional mentoring (e.g. NECTAR Mentoring) and researcher/academic development mechanisms**
- Introduce targeted supports such as:
 - Bridge funding
 - Centralised grant development and project design support
 - Increased transparency about transition funding and career continuity mechanisms

There was also a strong preference to shift language away from “**talent recruitment**” toward “**researcher development**”, emphasising investment in existing staff alongside new hiring.

From values to systems and institutional design

While the Strategy articulates strong values (e.g. inclusion, excellence, care), participants noted that:

- These are not yet sufficiently translated into **institutional systems and practices**
- Concepts such as **equity** are underdeveloped, particularly for staff

Key issues:

- Limited clarity on how values translate into:
 - Workload models
 - Funding allocation
 - Performance expectations
 - Decision-making processes

Examples:

- Interdisciplinarity and engagement are encouraged, but **not supported by incentives or workload structures**
- Inclusion is not clearly linked to **participation in decision-making across career stages**

A stronger alignment between **values** → **mechanisms** → **outcomes** is needed.

Workload, sustainability, and academic conditions

Participants emphasised the importance of “**human sustainability**” as a missing dimension.

Key concerns:

- “Streamlining workload” is unclear and risks increasing burden in practice
- Additional processes (e.g. local area reviews) may disproportionately affect EMCRs
- Administrative centralisation and reduced support are increasing academic workload
- Risk of burnout and reduced long-term workforce sustainability

Suggested focus:

- Define **sustainable workload models explicitly**
- Assess reform impacts on different cohorts (i.e. EMCRs)
- Elevate **wellbeing and career mobility** as strategic priorities

5. Research environment and emerging technologies (AI)

The rapidly changing research landscape, particularly due to **AI and digital tools**, was a major theme.

Key observations:

- Unequal access to tools (e.g. generative AI) risks creating **new inequities**
- Institutional response is perceived as **slow and uncoordinated**
- Changes to research workflows (e.g. reduced reliance on RAs) are already occurring

Opportunities:

- Treat core digital tools as **baseline research infrastructure**
- Provide **equitable access across career stages**
- Take a **leadership role in emerging research practices and technologies**

National mission and institutional identity

There was strong support for ANU’s role as a **national university**, but with important nuances:

Areas for clarification:

- Who defines the **national interest**, and how?
- How ANU balances:
 - Alignment with the government priorities of the day
 - Institutional independence, research integrity, academic freedom

There is also an opportunity to better articulate how **individual researchers (including EMCRs)** contribute to this mission.

Research and education – clarity and alignment

Several areas would benefit from clearer articulation:

Research:

- Clarify terms such as **“thoughtful and deliberate connection between research and education”**
- Strengthen focus on **researcher development (not only recruitment)**
- Provide clearer purpose for initiatives such as **developmental reviews**

Education:

- Reconsider positioning of ANU as an ACT “anchor institution” (seen as too narrow)
- Ensure global engagement reflects **full international scope**, not just Asia-Pacific
- Elevate **training** as a core institutional function
- Shift toward recognising and developing **teaching and training capability**, not just rewarding excellence

Balance:

- Ongoing tension between **research vs teaching expectations**
- Need for clearer recognition of different academic contributions, e.g. great researchers don’t necessarily make great educators.

Spheres of influence and external engagement

The concept of “spheres of influence” is currently unclear to participants.

Observations:

- Actions are skewed toward **student recruitment**
- Less emphasis on **research partnerships and engagement**

Suggested improvements:

- Broaden framing to include:
 - Visiting scholars programs
 - Research collaborations
 - Local, regional, and global engagement (not just overseas travel, *example of discrepancy in level of detail across actions*)
- Clarify meaning and consistent use of **“impact”** throughout the document

Enablers, systems, and resourcing

Participants raised several concerns about enabling systems:

Key issues:

- Lack of clarity in:
 - Budget model (“growth-focused” vs activity-based)
 - Planning vs strategy sequencing, the v1 draft suggests strategy happens second.
- Ambiguity around terms such as:
 - “Institutional infrastructure for decision-making”

- “Legacy systems” e.g. are collections and libraries legacy systems and will they be replaced?!

Risks identified:

- Over-centralisation reducing our effectiveness and delivery in research and education
- Loss of local support structures, including expertise
- Increased burden on academics, particularly experienced by EMCRs

Suggested focus:

- Clarify definitions and intent of key system changes
- Ensure changes are **fit-for-purpose and evidence-based**
- Recognise the importance of **existing effective systems**

What should be sustained, changed, or stopped

Strongly supported:

- Research-led identity
- National mission framing – *helpful but still lacks definition/clarity*
- Commitment to excellence and impact – *what does that mean for an individual, like an EMCR*

Needs strengthening:

- EMCR inclusion and equity
- More consistent use of language (e.g. impact) and level of detail in direction/actions
- Better alignment between values and systems

Potential areas to reconsider:

- Overextension of priorities
- Initiatives that prioritise **visibility over sustained capability**
- Unclear or undefined concepts (e.g. spheres, legacy systems)

Session time/date/location	2 – 3 pm, 5 May 2026, Bruce Hall, Bernard Nuemann Room
Facilitator name	Samitha Ramanayake
Attendee numbers	6

Overall Sentiment

Strategic Vision:

- Participants felt the strategic vision does not currently resonate with ANU's actual standing and questioned the "Why ANU?" value proposition.
- Duration: Participants were unsure of the duration of this strategy. Seeks clarity on whether it is applicable for a one-year, five-years or for the duration of the interim VC?
- Draft Quality: The draft was viewed as a good starting point with clear direction, though participants noted it is text-heavy and lacks defined impacts or outcomes.
- Current Climate: Strong emphasis on the amount of recent change and the need for the strategy to focus efforts and address the financial base of the university as a not-for-profit institution.

Organizational Structure & Centralization

- Impact of Centralization: There was strong opposition to the current centralized model, which participants felt creates too much distance from academics and results in a loss of vital connections.
- Bureaucracy: Participants noted that the central area is often reactive rather than proactive, with excessive "red tape" and strategy work that slows down institutional processes.
- Local Empowerment: A call was made to empower colleges and local areas with their own strategic planning capabilities and more autonomy.

Talent & Research Investment

- Talent Pipeline: Emphasized the need to retain research talent and develop a 5-to-10-year support plan for recruitment and development.
- Strategic Investment: Research should be treated as a strategic investment rather than an expense, with academics empowered to pursue strategic opportunities.
- Succession Planning: Noted poor succession planning for academic heads of school and a reliance on external appointments that may not add sufficient value.

Budget & Governance

- Financial Transparency: Participants criticized the lack of transparent budget models and noted that centralized budgeting restricts the ability to make strategic appointments.
- Planning Capability: Participants highlighted a "complete inability to plan" as a massive practical issue facing the university.
- Sustainability: Participants were supportive of recognising the importance of pathway programs and expanding access to ANU for international students through a range of entry offerings. Given the current financial position of the University, it is important that recruitment efforts continue to be supported through the development of strong international partnerships and sustainable student pipelines.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that engagement with markets that are not traditionally focused on student recruitment, particularly Europe and the Americas, continues to provide significant strategic value from both a research and reputational perspective. These relationships can also create opportunities for non-tuition-based funding, collaborative research outcomes, and broader institutional engagement. There is also a risk that reduced college-level support for academics may have negative medium to long-term impacts on research engagement activity and output.

Our People & Communication

- Staff Investment: Concerns were raised that the university is not truly investing in its people or their future opportunities.
- Insourcing: Strong support for prioritizing the development of internal staff skills and "insourcing" before seeking external support.
- Communication Gaps: Noted a lack of proactive communication regarding the Enterprise Agreement (EA) progress and other institutional developments.

Session time/date/location	5 May 3-4:30pm (in person): Residences Division
Facilitator name	Dr Jessie Moritz
Attendee numbers	22

Notes (mostly verbatim)

What brought us here today?

- Lots of pride in the ANU - I've been here a long time
- Listening to others perspectives
- We want to know where we're heading as an institution into the future
- The university needs to acknowledge the unique role that residential services provides
- We want to see our daily work reflected in the ANU Strategy
- I've seen three strategic plans in my time at ANU - I haven't always had my chance to input into them
- The Strategy should address the vision for what Residential Services should look like
- I want to contribute to our strategy
- It's good we're being consulted, and it's important we show up
- I've seen wellbeing issues here amongst students - student wellbeing is important to me
- We should have a say about how the student experience is shaped at ANU
- I want to see how our feedback translates into actions
- It's important we use our voices when given the opportunity
- I want to have a say
- Our work is very frontline for student experience and student wellbeing at ANU
- It's good to be consulted for our strategy and i hope what we say is taken on board
- I get a lot of questions about the state of the university from the students
- We could refer to the previous strategic plan when speaking to external stakeholders and speak to our international mission and purpose. I was proud of presenting it. This is lacking at the moment
- Lots of residential students are present at this unit - our division is often not involved in university decisions. We see the impacts on students of university decision making.
- I want to see graduate students from the residences also shape the strategic plan
- We lose focus on the fact that this university is about people - it's about students, research and people.
- It's important to show up when we're invited to contribute.

One participant noted there is a student led co-design session happening at the residences - arms length from staff.

What are your initial reflections on this plan vs previous ones?

- The university went through covid - we were losing money fast - the recovery plan came out and it was a very practical one focused on keeping the university afloat. Then a new visionary strategic plan came out, quite quickly, as if the recovery plan had all been dealt with and everything was back on track. I don't think this (the last strategy) was grounded. This plan is more realistic. It's grounded. It's based on the Nixon Review, and more consultation has fed into it. It reflects how people have been treated by the institution and how they're feeling about it. I think it's good, it's the right direction. What I want to know is how we're going to implement it.
- There's no mention of our safety as a key word. It's nowhere in the draft document.

Do you see the goals of the Residential Division reflected in this strategy?

- Yes and no:
 - We are there as context but not as strategy.
 - It's a superficial reference.

Suggestions for bringing the goals of the Residential Division into the strategy:

- There's not enough about safety and what it means - we need to define what it means on campus and how to improve it going forwards
- The residential experience - we need to put what it is, what it stands for, why it's important to ANU in the strategy
- The University does not have a lot of support services for students. The residential division compensates for this by providing a lot of services. Psychological, health, academic skills, all of these services are underfunded at ANU and our division really plugs these gaps.
- The words wellbeing and safety almost don't appear here in the draft plan at all
- The strategic plan says it will support quality service delivery and quality student experience – but it is not very exactly clear how
- Does the student experience actually match what is presented in the plan? Quality, care, respect etc - these are goals, but we're not sure this is what students are actually experiencing
- Gender based violence needs a stronger focus - what about mandatory training on values? This should be delivered centrally but it sometimes seems to be left to accommodation services to pick up the slack.
- Recruitment: the relevance of accommodation to recruitment and the student experience. The plan focuses on recruiting more students into the university (but this could be stated more clearly). The student experience needs to be centred in this goal. Students will not come to ANU if they don't get the accommodation they want.
- The student experience is only referenced in the context section not the strategic section. It's almost like we're just a bunch of hotels on the edge of campus. We need to meet their wellbeing and safety needs if we're going to build student numbers.
- The residences comprise almost half of the total student numbers in the university. Belonging, community, the role of accommodation services in these strategic goals needs to be more central.
- Without the 6,500 beds in residences what is this campus? We're central to ANU life. We should be acknowledged as a central pillar of the university and the strategic plan. Students will go to other universities if they don't get the accommodation options they want and need.
- Affordability and accessibility need to be centred - and affordability doesn't just mean tuition, it means rent.
- The Residential Experience Division has Business Plan 2026 - elements of this are useful in clarifying strategic goals for this area of the uni - participants thought this plan had been endorsed and was strong so should be reflected in the uni-wide strategy.

What strategic goals and what action items would you like to see in the strategic plan?

Breakout groups focused on these themes: 1. Safety; 2. wellbeing; 3. on campus experience; 4. community belonging; 5. recruitment, 6. accessibility and affordability

Safety:

- To embed a consistent university standard on consent, respectful behaviour, harm prevention that measurably reduces incidents of sexual harm and misconduct, improves student safety on and off campus and lowers institutional risk - positioning ANU as a leader in this space.
- We need a compulsory prerequisite course upon enrolment focused on education and awareness - can track completions, and it's a straightforward scalable way to have an impact.
- But any course like this needs to be more than a tick the box exercise on Pulse. Need to address basics of consent and respectful relationships, particularly given our diverse international student profile.
- This course could be a pilot implemented across a whole year cohort to begin with. The division will continue to discuss and refine this idea.

Wellbeing:

- We need a focus on streamlining and removing barriers to wellbeing services in residences and strengthening these services.

- Medical health, mental health, community cohesion and anti-racism, academic skills, accessibility - all the services that ensure students can complete their studies successfully.
- We don't have a lot of data on this - incidences and reports, for example. ANU needs to collect and share this data so plans can be made to address problems. ANU has been scared of collecting this data because it may not paint a good picture, but we need it to be pro-active
- The student services are very low currently and the residential services are plugging the gaps.
- If we have a third of the students in residences, we need a third of the staff delivering academic and other support services to them. It's been hard to make this happen with the changes and tumult over the past two years.
- It needs to be clear what residential students are getting that off campus students are not so we ensure continuity of support across the student body.
- Wellbeing also needs to be applied to staff, not just students. Wellbeing initiatives - increasing doctors on campus, health food initiatives, gym memberships at a lower price to incentivise participation, etc. What about a staff centre or club to support the community's wellbeing
- Can there be more than one female doctor?

On-campus experience and community belonging:

- Place the residential experience at the core of future ANU strategic plans. Every time there's mention of student experience, residential services needs to be mentioned as well.
- 'Our people' - can be more specific that we mean our staff and our students (Identity section of plan). There needs to be something addressing student residences specifically. We're treated like student hotels, which makes the whole thing really transactional. We need to be front and centre in frameworks to recognise the unique offerings at anu
- Reviewing and strengthening residential programs to align with ANU strategic objectives and enhance student support, academic success and engagement.
- Ensure financial focus on key offerings within residential services like wellbeing and events for students on campus
- We need a stronger focus on student retention. It would be good to see the data on whether we are retaining more students because of the support offered in student residences. ANU should have a sector-leading retention rate - and we need data to track this.

Recruitment:

- ANU will develop a unified approach to recruitment that recognises the role of both academic/educational services and accommodation services in this equation.
- There should be coordination between sections to enable this - and the strategic plan is the place to name this collaboration to hold us all to account on this. To intervene in the culture and ensure that residential services is looped in to key decision making about student services and key information flows around student services.
- Ensure the student residential experiences is recognised in the plan as a unique value offering for ANU.

Accessibility and affordability:

- We need a goal centred on affordable and accessible housing for all students, including students with disability
- To increase the proportion of below market rate beds - subsidised rooms for low income first in family and regional international students
- To embed affordability into future residential development - this includes redevelopment of existing residences - benchmark rooms at the affordability benchmark:
- Renegotiate or buy out the current Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) agreement -

Intersectionality and multiculturalism:

- First to know the nature of things: having a residential living experience helps us to know the nature of things due to our diverse and intersectional student community - this is a strength that we should build on.

Session time/date/location	10.30 – 11.30am, Wednesday 6 May 2026,
Group	Regulatory Affairs and Engagement
Facilitator name	Andy John
Attendee numbers	12

Summary:

- Topic(s) of focus:
 - **Our purpose as The Australian National University**
 - **Our people**
 - **Research**
 - **Spheres of influence**
 - **Enablers**
- Key findings/recommendations
 - Strategy-on-a-page product (like the last one) would be great.
 - Clarity and transparency around how prioritisation decisions will be made is very important.
 - We need to not be afraid of change after Renew ANU, but find a way to do change well.
 - The draft strategy (V1.0) is broadly well developed

Notes:

Our purpose as The Australian National University – Context (page 8)

- Important to describe ourselves as a Corporate Commonwealth Entity and that that means (eg. our obligations).
- Inclusion of “public university” descriptor when describing ANU.

Our purpose as The Australian National University – Direction (page 9)

- Are the bullet points ordered in any particular way?
 - Numbered in order of priority would be good.
- Bullet point #4 (left column) is very vague and concerning.
 - We recommend providing clarity to the community on the framework for making prioritisation decisions, this will have a big impact on the work our people do.
 - This is concerning given community experience of the decisions made during Renew ANU.
- Bullet point 5 (right) – wording not clear. “...diverse students thrive...”.
 - All students to thrive, INCLUDING students from non-traditional pathways/students from diverse backgrounds.
- The content on this page broadly builds on the 2025 strategic plan.

Our people (page 12)

- Happy to see “Our people” included as a specific area within the structure.
- “Human-scale” is ambiguous and should be replaced with a different, clearer description.
- Bullet point #2 in “context” – appreciate the acknowledgement of past failures and base for improvement.
- Bullet point #3 in “possible actions” – “improve” is not specific.

- Communications not currently consistent OR transparent, “ensure” would be a better word.
 - Previous efforts to prioritise communications (through centralisation, restructure, etc...) appear to have halted.
 - These changes were broadly supported.
 - People doing the same things would have been in the same teams.
 - All the hard work has already been done.
 - We need to not be afraid of change after Renew ANU, but find a way to do change well.
 - Current communications structure is not working.
- Bullet point #5 in “possible actions” – ambiguous, what is “integrated People Strategy”?

Research (page 15)

- Bullet point #2 in “direction” Traceability, impact and outcomes of the NIG investment would help us tell a good story and demonstrate value.
 - We have lost academic talent in recent years. Within the people strategy we should use the NIG to attract quality academics.
- Mention of both fundamental and applied research in “context”, but not elsewhere in this section.
- Bullet point #5 in “possible actions” - AI
 - ANU is behind on its strategic approach to AI.
 - A broader piece on AI needed.
 - Need to better articulate, either in this document or elsewhere.
 - Transparency of including it here is appreciated.

Spheres of influence (page 17)

- Bullet point #5 in “direction” - change “international mobility” to a plain English term
- ANU positioning itself to be a civic university for the ACT
 - This seems contradictory, don’t we always state that we are “Australia’s national university”?
 - Feels like this is coming out of nowhere.
 - Impact on relationship with UC
 - We are established under Federal law, not ACT law. We are not a civic university.
 - Our legislative mandate is as national university.
- What is meant by “...attract more international students through both direct entry and pathways”?

Enablers (page 18)

- Bullet point #2 in “context” – the 40 national facilities are not clear – what are they? What is being referenced?
 - We should emphasise the national infrastructure we steward so we can demonstrate its value.
- Bullet point #4 in “direction” – we like the reference to using own expertise
- Bullet point #4 in “possible actions”
 - ANU website urgently requires investment as the international window to ANU.
 - We need an effective technology/digital strategy to guide investment decisions for our systems, with corporate systems in need of investment.

Session time/date/location	Intelligent information systems in healthcare, personalised precision health technologies, health & medical health informatics, and other digital health solutions Wednesday 6 May 2026 at 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM on Teams
Facilitator name	Hanna Suominen
Scribers	Liza Goncharov and Michelle Adiwangsa
Attendee numbers	15 + 1 written entry (due to an unexpected technical issue)

Welcome

University Strategy Codesign 2026

Intelligent information systems in healthcare, personalised precision health technologies, health & medical health informatics, and other digital health solutions

Hanna Suominen

MSc (University of Turku, UTU, Finland), PhD (UTU), Adj/Prof (UTU), MEdL (Monash University), SFHEA (The Australian National University, ANU)

Professor, ANU School of Computing, Hanna Neumann 2.35 (Mon–Wed)
Associate Director (Neuroinformatics), ANU School of Medicine & Psychology, Florey 1.09 (Thu & Fri)

hanna.suominen@anu.edu.au



Australian
National
University

Summary:

- **The attendees** consisted of 8 early to mid-career academics, 6 senior academics, 1 PhD candidate, and 1 professional staff member (8 women and 8 men) across the ANU.
- Seven attendees were from the ANU CSM CSS (5 from SOCO and 2 from SOEN), five were from the ANU CSM (4 from SMP and 1 from JCSMR), two were from the ANU CLGP (both from NCEPH), and one was from the ANU CASS (SLLL). In addition, some attendees were affiliated with ANU institutes (ICH and SII), RIE portfolio (ARDC), or at multiple schools.
- After a welcome, Acknowledgement of Country, round of introductions as a warm-up activity, and ground rules, five activities (see below) took place before concluding remarks.
- **Main recommendations** we make for the ANU by 2030 Strategy based on these activities are as follows:
 - The ANU must mature from informal, event-based, ad-hoc connections to fully operationalised ongoing collaboration across the university. Establishing supported platforms, coordination mechanisms, and thematic transdisciplinary hubs & transformation training centres (e.g. health, technology, AI) would create visible entry points and reduce the burden on individuals to initiate collaboration. These hubs must be properly resourced; past success has depended heavily on funding, structure, and infrastructure.
 - The ANU should move to embed co-design as a standard way of working. Successful initiatives have shown the value of bringing diverse expertise together (e.g., data scientists, engineers, physicists, chemists, clinicians, medical researchers, social scientists, and others) but this needs to be translated into repeatable models and ways of working that can be applied across projects. At present, transdisciplinary collaboration happens despite the system rather than because of it.
 - A particularly strong and distinctive feature of The ANU is the integration of lived experience, which should be formalised as a university-wide capability. This could take the form of a centralised, accessible pool of contributors that researchers can engage with to test ideas and refine proposals.
 - External engagement and co-production need to be more intentional and structured. Partnering in research, education, and service with The ANU should be easily accessible and give smooth entry to our transdisciplinary ecosystem, with clearer interfaces and deeper integration into research and teaching teams. The goal should be genuine collaboration around real-world challenges.
 - The ANU needs to clearly articulate and advocate for the kind of institution our university wants to be. These initiatives point towards a distinctive identity grounded in transdisciplinary collaboration, co-design, co-production, and real-world impact.

Activity 1. Sharing hopeful experiences and aspirations to contribute to future impact in health, wellbeing, care, and related AI, medical, psychological, etc., research (rapid chat entry followed by oral discussion):

Theme	Hopeful experiences and aspirations
Improved Health Outcomes from AI	<i>I am hopeful that we can make our lives and society better for future generations, addressing social and structural changes to improve human health and wellbeing, and embedding care and social justice in the design of emerging technologies.</i> <i>Using our shared knowledge of health and technology to improve health span by 5 years in the next 10 years.</i> <i>All are passionate about health and wellbeing, and this is going to remain central to our world.</i> <i>AI and other data-aware methodologies augmenting human ability to cut across boundaries of time and medical discipline, facilitating efficient holistic and chronic care.</i> <i>I really hope that, with the latest advancements in AI and robotics, we can provide better healthcare with shorter treatments to more people globally... and, ideally, in a cheaper/accessible way.</i> <i>The hope that with better access and control over our own health and life data coupled with sophisticated global models we are at a cross roads to improve health outcomes widely with the safe deployment of privacy caring AI.</i> <i>Hope in the capture of lived experiences (i.e. data) and how to collect that as a data source for local AI deployments and learning from many shared experiences to improve all of our experiences through agents learning their AI model.</i>
Human- Centric & Values-Led AI-Technology	<i>Bringing human-centric approaches – and humanity – to the development and deployment of technology, incl. AI in healthcare and more broadly.</i> <i>The one thing that gives me the strongest sense of hope around health, wellbeing, and AI-enabled care is the possibility of shifting healthcare from a reactive system to a genuinely preventive and supportive one with genuine accessibility for all.</i> <i>What gives me the strongest sense of hope is the commitment to building a values-led, human-scale university where staff and students at every career stage have the conditions to genuinely thrive.</i> <i>All benefits depend on how the “democratisation” of AI tools/models/data is managed, and on ethical governance around the new technologies.</i>
Partnering in Health AI Research with Lived	<i>AI as an enabler to give lived experience a voice.</i> <i>I’m very happy with the inclusion of lived experience in our research, which I think might have been an undervalued topic for a long time.</i> <i>Incorporating multiple (including non-expert) perspectives (patient experience, allied health).</i> <i>It is important to hear from the people themselves beyond just their condition. Everyone experiences their conditions differently.</i>

Experience Experts	• <i>I hope to see more collaborations with people with lived experience, industries, and government with tangible impact (beyond theory, we are building something to help people who need it most).</i>
Engaging with ACT & Australian Health Portfolios	• <i>Professionals are hungry for a shift, co-designing something with users is critical.</i> • <i>Technology is currently still very under-utilized in the delivery of health care in Australia. I'm excited to see how things can improve once the systems are able to effectively make use of the technology that exists and is being developed.</i> • <i>The possibility of shifting healthcare from a reactive system to a genuinely preventive and supportive one with genuine accessibility for all.</i> • <i>The potential for a really effective relationship between ANU and both the ACT and Australian health portfolios.</i>
Trans-disciplinary Research Benefits	• <i>I am hopeful about the multi-disciplinary research at ANU, and getting to work with a lot of amazing people from different parts of the university.</i> • <i>What gives me the strongest sense of hope is the commitment to building a values-led, human-scale university where staff and students at every career stage have the conditions to genuinely thrive.</i>

Activity 2. Reflections and discussions, prompted by a relevant consultation response by the ANU in 2024 for the Australian Government, led by the Department of Health and Aged Care for the healthcare portfolio, in coordination with the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (verbal discussion):



Key Recommendations

TRUST & GOVERNANCE

- Clarifying AI accountability
- Risk-based regulation
- Privacy and data safeguards
- Safe implementation in healthcare

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- Preventing digital exclusion
- Indigenous and rural health considerations
- Inclusion of underrepresented groups
- Fair access and outcomes

CAPABILITY & LITERACY

- AI literacy for workforce and public
- Interdisciplinary expertise
- Supporting informed adoption
- Building implementation capacity

TRANSLATION & SYSTEMS

- Real-world case studies
- Integration into health systems
- Evidence-informed implementation
- Public-interest innovation

- **Position ANU as a national leader** in transdisciplinary health AI, demonstrating internationally and nationally leading capabilities across AI-technology, policy, governance, and translation.
 - **Prioritise asking the right questions** rather than rushing to solutions to ensure that The ANU shapes the national conversation on what future-ready and future-proofed responsible health AI should look like.
 - **Adopt a forward-looking perspective** that anticipates rapid technological change, preparing for impacts years ahead rather than reacting to current capabilities.
 - **Leverage the transdisciplinary ecosystem of The ANU** to connect health, AI, social sciences, policy, and regulation, ensuring research is both technically robust and societally grounded.
- **Embed quality control, equity, and security** as core pillars of the health AI agenda of The ANU, ensuring systems are safe, reliable, and aligned with public expectations.

- **Frame technology as an enabler of equitable access**, articulating positive narratives about how AI can support vulnerable populations when implemented responsibly.
- **Champion equity-driven technology deployment** to ensure AI closes, rather than widens, gaps for disadvantaged and underserved populations, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in remote areas.
- **Advance trust-centred data governance models**, including decentralised data ownership approaches such as data vaults/Solid Pods, and explore implications for clinical trial protocols and research ethics.
- **Promote distributed data control** to empower individuals, counterbalance centralised data systems, and align with emerging global standards for privacy-preserving AI.
- **Strengthen the role of The ANU in advocacy and public voice**, ensuring researchers contribute to public understanding, policy debates, and “do no harm” principles in AI deployment.
 - **Anchor the strategy in four national priority pillars** of Trust & Governance, Equity & Inclusion, Capability & Literacy, and Translation & Systems to align strengths of The ANU with government expectations.
 - **Invest in capability and literacy** across the health workforce, recognising that improved literacy enables safer adoption, better decision-making, and more equitable outcomes.
 - **Translate research into policy and practice** by improving how The ANU presents evidence to policymakers and designing pathways from recommendations to implementation.
 - **Differentiate ANU from commercial actors** by emphasising quality assurance, ethical leadership, and public-interest research.

Activity 3. Guiding questions, #1-voted question from the perspective of digital health: How does our national mission cohere with our local, national, regional and international reach? (verbal discussion):

- **By positioning itself as a Health AI Translation Hub**, The ANU can embed AI into national health systems, ACT Health, and Canberra Health Services. This could look like a **formal, governed interface** that **fuses computing (e.g., human-centred AI) capability with legal, policy, and health-system expertise**. Achieving this vision would require new governance structures, shared data frameworks, and collaborative models that **treat ACT as a prototype jurisdiction for national-scale innovation**. The Canberra regional small, agile jurisdiction provides a unique opportunity to prototype innovations that can scale to the Australian Commonwealth level. The hub would
 - **Coordinate engagement**: replace ad-hoc individual relationships with structured, strategic collaboration.
 - **Broker multidisciplinary expertise**: bring together law, policy, AI, health, and governance.
 - **Build joint data governance and ethics boards** to ensure trust, transparency, and compliance across all data-sharing initiatives.
 - **Align data collection and analysis** by partnering across disciplines, professions, and areas of expertise in co-designing data collection processes to ensure they are analysis-ready and AI-compatible.
 - **Create embedded transdisciplinary multiprofessional programs** by placing ANU experts and students inside health services and healthcare staff inside ANU research facilities, classrooms, and teaching teams.
 - **Prototype system-level innovations**: use ACT as a
 - **Transformation Training Centre** of transdisciplinary talents on, e.g., transdisciplinary work (also including research workforce) in digital health and
 - **Testbed for National Models** for, e.g., the Australian Commonwealth agencieswhile also having an overarching reach across The ANU, thus breaking down barriers and bringing us together across disciplines, professions, and areas of expertise.
- **Embedding AI in healthcare is a systems-level transformation where law, governance, policy, and health practice converge.**
 - **AI for policy making**: AI can transform (federal) health datasets into real-time policy intelligence and simulate policy impacts before implementation.
 - **Cross-jurisdictional data linkage**: The ANU can help design secure, federated models that respect state autonomy.
 - **Distributed data architectures**: The ANU can lead in global trends toward locally owned, non-centralised data systems.
- **Embedding AI in healthcare calls for a multi-layer strategy.**
 - **Human-centred implementation**: AI must support clinicians and healthcare consumers, not burden them; co-design with health services and lived experience experts is essential.
 - **Data fusion frameworks**: to combine datasets across services, departments, and jurisdictions, The ANU must help design interoperable standards and governance models. Data fusion of this kind a legal, ethical, and practical challenge — not just a technical one.

- **AI integration pathways:** AI can support predictive analytics and population-level modelling in, for example, systems for health-resource planning and clinical decision support.
- **Legal-policy alignment:** AI deployment and related privacy laws, consent frameworks, and data-sharing agreements must be co-designed.

Activity 4. Guiding questions, #2-voted question from the perspective of digital health: How do we attract and support the talent that we need – in students and staff - to maximise the impact that we have through our research and education? (verbal clarifying preamble followed by rapid chat entry):

Preamble: Regardless of its leading research excellence in AI, Machine/Deep Learning, Natural Language Processing, and Computer Vision for decades, The ANU has experienced a significant drop in students in recent times, e.g., in these fields of computing. Similarly, there are ongoing challenges to attracting and retaining staff in this globally trending field where The ANU must remain and be recognised world-leading; excellent students and HDR candidates attract and retain excellent staff members, and the excellent ANU graduates create impact and legacy at scale for us. Without deep AI expertise and people with a strong calling for applying their skills in healthcare and medical/clinical research, transdisciplinary missions in AI in health and medicine are put at risk.

Our main recommendation, elaborated by our more detailed recommendations below to address the needs of course-work students, MPhil/PhD candidates, and university staff, is as follows: **Build a visible translational research ecosystem (e.g., health-tech/AI hub) by**

- Establishing a highly visible, impactful hub at the intersection of health, technology/AI, policy, and regulation;
- Leveraging human-scale and proximity within the ANU and ACT to test and refine ideas rapidly, rather than competing in large-scale clinical trials; and
- Formalise partnerships (e.g., with ACT Health) through contracts, platforms, and shared infrastructure to enable ongoing collaboration.

Course-work Students:

1. **Formalise and visibly differentiate transdisciplinary and/or AI offerings of The ANU:** Transdisciplinarity within the student cohort is a clear ANU strength, but currently lacks structure and visibility (cross-referencing the co-design session report by Prof Gabriele Bammer in this context). Therefore, we recommend The ANU to identify both transdisciplinary and AI (jointly and separately) as core pillars of every educational pathway in our university. Although this would call for some review and revision of the academic organisation of the ANU and active advertising of transdisciplinary and/or AI study as defining ANU propositions, it would offer the enablers of, e.g., cross-ANU program pathways, aligned course requirements, joint degrees, shared curricula, supporting infrastructure of cutting-edge AI tools, and train-the-trainers toolkits. When doing so, it is crucial to begin at the teaching level to truly achieve (if not exceed) learning outcomes and showcase them in the context of graduates' career achievements (not just research alignment) and skills to use and lead the use of AI meaningfully, systematically, transparently, proactively, and ethically in solving transdisciplinary challenges.
2. **Reset the value proposition by strengthening entry standards while increasing the study worthiness for students:** The ANU should target increasing the return on study investment on investment (also non-monetary worth for students) by decreasing education costs (e.g., credits for introductory units by exploring options, such as some online courses or bypassing exams). Also, tuition fees are perceived as too high relative to value. Entry requirements, particularly English language standards, are seen as too low and risk undermining academic quality. Hence, we recommend a dual strategy of reducing price barriers while increasing selectivity and quality signals.
3. **Streamline multiple entry pathways to reduce access and efficiency barriers:** While multiple entry points are valuable, they currently create complexity and inefficiencies. Rationalising and clarifying pathways so they enhance access without creating confusion or administrative burden should serve as enablers for improved access and efficiency in course-work studies.
4. **Better articulate and champion institutional strengths:** There is a perception that ANU is not sufficiently championing how good we are. Strengthening our marketing and

communication around distinctive capabilities (e.g., transdisciplinarity, proximity to policy and government, innovation in teaching, and research strengths, e.g., in AI).

Higher Degree Research (HDR) Candidates:

1. **Reform the HDR employment model to address exploitation and precarity:** Unlike, e.g., in northern Europe where HDR candidates are university staff members, ANU HDR candidates exist in a liminal space between student and employee. Moving towards a model where candidates are employed should be explored as a way to improve our organisational culture, financial security, researcher status, and retention of candidates.
2. **Deepen industry-embedded HDR models beyond nominal collaboration:** Current industry programs often stop at having a co-supervisor in an organisation. Thus, we are making two recommendations as follows:
 - a. Redesign these programs at The ANU to include genuine integration into industry teams and active collaboration with industry stakeholders (also benefiting research partnering and impact for the ANU), especially engaging with computing/engineering/design functions relevant to AI in health, wellbeing, and medicine.
 - b. Position candidates within real-world contexts rather than parallel academic tracks (cross-referencing the co-design session report by Prof Gabriele Bammer in this context).
3. **Provide structured transition pathways from PhD to postdoctoral roles:** The ANU seems to offer insufficient support for its PhD candidates nearing completion. Establishing/re-introducing formal bridging mechanisms (e.g., funding, fellowships, industry placements) to prevent loss of talent at the completion stage.
4. **Enable transdisciplinary and translational research through targeted seed funding:** Currently, funding for interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, or trans-sectoral research is highly limited at the ANU and beyond. Hence, we recommend establishing/re-introducing funding mechanisms to support proof-of-concept work and nurture projects that would not be otherwise funded until they can attract major external funding.

University Staff:

1. **Shift funding culture to support long-term, translational research and rebalance the institutional funding model to reward innovation and student-linked outcome:** Current funding settings overly prioritise short-term grant cycles. Explicitly demonstrating that our university values long-term translational and transdisciplinary research would recognise that impact in transdisciplinary work requires time to mature (cross-referencing the co-design session report by Prof Gabriele Bammer in this context). Furthermore, moving towards a model more linked to students and rewarding innovation from staff would better align research, education, and service incentives (e.g., teaching quality, program development, and new research directions).
2. **Establish/re-introduce strategic, “visionary” internal investment and seed funding:** Budget constraints are experienced as overly restrictive and risk averse; thus, providing (modest but) enabling investments is critical to nurture high-potential initiatives at The ANU until they are externally competitive. This includes seed funding for interdisciplinary work and early-stage ideas.
3. **Implement evidence-based retention strategies for high-value staff and address precarity of early career researchers through longer and more stable contracts:** Schools should proactively identify and support obvious (evidence-based) cases for retention. This requires shifting from passive attrition to active talent management and retention planning. Moreover, short-term contracts are unattractive in the current economic climate and undermine retention. Thus, we are calling for longer-duration contracts and clearer progression pathways to improve workforce stability.

Activity 5. Reflections and discussions, prompted by the legacy of the strategic Our Health In Our Hands (OHIOH) initiative at the ANU from 2017 to 2025 (verbal discussion):

Activity Prompt: OHIOH

Legacy of Our Health in Our Hands (OHIOH) from the 2024 Concluding Gala

Empowering lives through innovation and collaboration, OHIOH is on a mission to transform healthcare for those with chronic conditions.

- Justifications: partner across the ANU and beyond; break down silos; shape a new generation of transdisciplinary scientists and graduates
- Capabilities: co-design; cohorts; sensors; smart sensing and sense-making platforms
- Challenges: continuing cohorts; running of the transdisciplinary mission; and embedding OHIOH's co-design into the ANU



© ANU University Strategy Co-design / Facilitator Toolkit 8 May 2025

In summary, the discussion was convincing and consistent in highlighting that success already exists in intelligent information systems in healthcare, personalised precision health technologies, health & medical health informatics, and other digital health solutions. However, this proven track record by the ANU Our Health in Our Hands initiative is currently fragile, fragmented, and funding-dependent. The strategic imperative is to move towards, systemic collaboration with enabling intentionally-set infrastructure and institutional support. That is, ANU does NOT need to invent transdisciplinary excellence in digital health, but rather it must stabilise, scale, and sustain it.

1. Echoing our Activity 4 recommendations, The ANU must **mature** from informal, event-based, ad-hoc connections to **fully operationalised ongoing collaboration across the university**. Many people are doing strong work but rarely connect beyond occasional gatherings. Establishing **supported platforms, coordination mechanisms, and thematic hubs** (e.g. health, technology, AI) would **create visible entry points** and **reduce the burden** on individuals to initiate collaboration. These hubs must be **properly resourced**; past success has depended heavily on having both funding and structure in place:
 - a. A recurring transdisciplinary challenge is the reliance on short-term funding: When funding ends, momentum is lost. Strategic institutional investment is needed to sustain collaborations, support early-stage ideas, and maintain continuity between grant cycles. This includes recognising collaboration itself as work that requires time and resourcing, rather than an added burden on already stretched staff.
 - b. Digital infrastructure is a vital enabler: Providing universal access to advanced AI tools would significantly strengthen research capability, particularly in technical and interdisciplinary domains. There is also an opportunity to better capture and reuse lived experience insights digitally, including through AI-supported synthesis and dissemination.
2. The ANU should move to **embed co-design** as a standard way of working. Successful initiatives have shown the value of **bringing diverse expertise together** (e.g., data scientists, engineers, physicists, chemists, clinicians, medical researchers, social scientists, and others) but this needs to be **translated into repeatable models and ways of working** that can be applied across projects. At present, transdisciplinary collaboration happens despite the system rather than because of it.

3. A particularly strong and distinctive feature of The ANU is the **integration of lived experience**, which should be formalised as a **university-wide capability**. Rather than being project-specific, this could take the form of a centralised, accessible pool of contributors that researchers can engage with to test ideas and refine proposals. This will only be sustainable if participants are appropriately remunerated and supported, recognising lived experience as a form of expertise.
4. **External engagement and co-production** also need to be more **intentional and structured**. Partnering in research, education, and service with The ANU should be easily accessible and give smooth entry to our transdisciplinary ecosystem, with **clearer interfaces** and **deeper integration** into research and teaching teams. The goal should be genuine collaboration around real-world challenges, not superficial or symbolic involvement.
5. The ANU is facing more broadly a need to **clearly articulate and advocate for the kind of institution our university wants to be**. These initiatives point towards a **distinctive identity grounded in transdisciplinary collaboration, co-design, co-production, and real-world impact**. However, this aspiration is not yet consistently communicated or operationalised.

Session time/date/location	Wednesday 6 May 2026, 1.00–2.00pm – Online (Microsoft Teams and Miro board)
Facilitator name	Tehzeeb Zulfiqar
Attendee numbers	9 participants in addition to the facilitator (HDR candidates: 7; ECRs: 7; MCRs: 5).

Summary

Topic(s) of focus were:

1. What are the key strengths of this draft Strategy?
2. What else is needed, what are the gaps, what needs to be improved?
3. What are the three most important things needed to strengthen the Strategy?
4. What are the three most important things the University needs to fix, do less of or do differently to achieve the Strategy?

Observations

- Cohort comprised HDR candidates, Early Career Researchers and Mid-Career Researchers across NCEPH and connected schools, with a balanced distribution across career stage. A strong Indigenous-ECR voice was present in the room.
- The participants wrote their comments/ideas on the sticky notes on Miro and on meeting chat. One ECR couldn't attend the session. so submitted comments on email.
- Strengths captured were thinner than gaps and recommendations for change, reflecting cohort-level concerns about precarity, operationalisation, and recognition.

Key findings/recommendations

1. What are the key strengths of this draft Strategy?
 - a. Research and education are placed at the front of the document as the primary means of impact – this framing is endorsed.
 - b. First Nations commitments are overarching and at the forefront of the Strategy.
 - c. Inclusion is named as a core value, and the focus on inclusion is welcomed (with the caveat that more detail will be required to make it real).
 - d. The values are clearly set out, including accountability, respect and inclusion.
 - e. The document structure – context, direction, and possible actions – is helpful as a reading scaffold.
 - f. The Strategy is appropriately ambitious in its national and global focus.
 - g. Reducing financial barriers in education is acknowledged.
 - h. The Strategy recognises the importance of retaining staff with long-term opportunity, who are invested in producing high-quality research and student experience.
 - a. **The codesign process itself is a strength.** The presence of a draft document open to comment, and the openness to facilitated conversation across multiple cohorts and levels, was endorsed by participants as a valuable first step – contrasted with recent past consultations that have been short or inadequate
 - b. **Soft-money workforce and grant dependency are not addressed.** The Strategy commits to a research pipeline but does not acknowledge that many ECRs and MCRs

are on soft money or short-term contracts. There is no mention of salary coverage gaps, grant funding volatility, or soft-money workforce dependence. The Strategy should permit use of externally raised research funding (for example, Q funds in NCEPH) to bridge between funded research projects, and should build strategy around the reality of grant dependency, including guaranteed gap-funding mechanisms and recognition of long funding cycles.

- c. **Structural employment inequity between schools and centres is not addressed.** NCEPH currently has large proportion of staff on Continuing-Contingent on Funding (CDF) or fixed-term contracts, with very few on permanent positions, while other schools and centres in the same college (notably the College of Law and Governance) carry substantially higher proportions of ongoing staff. This is structural rather than performance-related. The Strategy should acknowledge this and articulate how the disparity will be addressed, rather than allowing finance to be cited as a perpetual constraint.
- d. **The current approach to casual workforce is not fit for purpose.** The University's apparent direction of travel away from casual staff overlooks a real operational need: high workflow periods, surge teaching, short-term project work and time-bound deadlines require flexible capacity. The current casual onboarding process is so slow that by the time a casual is in place the demand has passed or, more critically, the deadline has been missed. A pre-vetted register of casual staff who can be activated quickly when needed would meet that operational need without expanding precarity at the expense of core workforce stability.
- e. **Indigenous research excellence beyond Tjabal and the First Nations Portfolio is not recognised.** First Nations commitments are appropriately placed at the front, but the institutional architecture for support and recognition currently reaches only part of the university. Indigenous research excellence occurs across ANU and is not adequately recognised. As one Indigenous ECR in the session put it, "I don't feel seen in the strategy as it only speaks to certain parts of the university that work in First Nations research." Indigenous health and wellbeing in particular is not highlighted, despite being significant work across the institution. The Strategy needs frameworks at university level (currently very local) to support Indigenous HDR and ECR positions, with explicit detail on how those pathways will be supported.
- f. **The pipeline is treated as linear, but MCR attrition is highest.** The Strategy assumes a linear research career pipeline. Mid-career researchers are where attrition is most severe; they carry institutional load (course convening, HDR supervision, grant writing, HREC, mentoring of ECRs) and need to be named and recognised in their own right rather than folded into "emerging leaders."
- g. **Hybrid and remote work are effectively invisible.** The Strategy does not address hybrid or remote work, risking reinforcement of inequities in visibility, career progression, and inclusion unless built explicitly into workforce, infrastructure, leadership and culture frameworks. This includes how ANU includes staff in remote and regional areas at the same level as those situated on campus, and how community is fostered for staff who are not Canberra-based. Local team-level practices (for example, Yardura Walani's regular meetings, gatherings and writing retreats) work; the gap is at college and university level.

- h. **Sense of community and belonging is undermined by ongoing organisational restructuring.** Belonging is currently sustained at team level but the college and university levels remain weak. The formation of the College of Law and Governance, combined with continued uncertainty about NCEPH's enduring structural position within it, works against the community the Strategy aspires to build. The Strategy should acknowledge this and articulate how organisational stability will be restored or how transitions will be managed.
- i. **Operational research and education infrastructure is degraded.** Library AI and Canvas AI assistance are not working reliably, with substantial researcher and student time wasted on workarounds; in-person assistance, which has been excellent, has been reduced. Library database access and read-and-publish agreements with publishers do not meet the breadth required for a research-intensive university (specifically noted for NCEPH-relevant journals). Localised HDR support at school and centre level has been reduced – getting answers now takes substantially longer than it did before. These are not abstract strategy concerns but daily friction that undermines the work the Strategy depends on.
- j. **Hybrid meeting infrastructure is inadequate.** University-wide town halls and similar events have not been properly set up for hybrid participation; sound and video quality have consistently failed remote participants. In-person training and events are the default, with online access rarely offered as an equivalent option – creating equity issues for staff who are off-site, on leave, or with caring responsibilities.
- k. **HDR financial support is inequitable in both timing and amount.** The Strategy does not address two related failures in how HDR students are financially supported. First, the reimbursement model – requiring students to extend personal credit for conferences, fieldwork and research expenses and wait for repayment – creates real barriers for students with limited cash flow, even when the underlying amounts look small to those who are financially supported or fully employed. Second, the *level* of support available varies substantially by college, school or centre. While PhD research is not uniform and needs differ, there should be greater consistency in what funds are available for common needs – publishing, conferences, travel, fieldwork – with set amounts for each, so that a student's access to research-essential resources does not depend on which part of the University they happen to sit in. Replace reimbursement with up-front mechanisms, and standardise minimum support levels across the institution.
- l. **Operationalisation gap.** The "possible actions" read more like objectives than actions. The Strategy contains "all the right words" without concrete mechanisms, baselines or metrics. Feasibility assessments are needed, as are timelines for achieving goals and reporting back to HDR, ECR and MCR communities at different stages of activities.
- m. **"Impact" is undefined.** The Strategy uses the term "impact" without specifying whether this means policy, commercial, clinical or other forms.
- n. **Decision rights on prioritisation are unclear.** The Strategy commits to reshaping or reducing activity in lower-priority or unsustainable areas, but does not say who decides, against what criteria, or with what consequences.
- o. **Future-facing concerns are largely absent.** Climate change, artificial intelligence, and demographic shifts are each mentioned only once in the document. The values section talks about caring but does not extend caring to the planet or to non-human beings.

Indigenous knowledge is mentioned but is disconnected from the forward-looking framing the Strategy needs. Social inequities, war, and intergenerational and interspecies justice are central concerns for the cohort that will inherit the Strategy's outcomes and are insufficiently named.

- p. **Education and research are positioned as one leading the other, not as peers.** The "research-led education" framing places education downstream of research. If researchers are not supported to be effective educators, research-led education does not translate. Education and research should be peers, with parallel investment in teaching capability, program design, and the people who deliver them.
 - q. **HDR-specific support is not distinguished from coursework students.** The Strategy mentions students broadly but does not address that HDRs have substantially different needs from coursework students – including dedicated career counselling, school- or discipline-specific PhD placement directors, leadership training, and career and job-market workshops. Diverse global cohorts are mentioned in Direction but with no clear actions on how those students will be supported.
 - r. **Cross-school collaboration friction is unaddressed.** Service areas (especially contracts and finance) do not communicate with each other, creating significant time costs. Cross-school teaching opportunities for ECRs are constrained primarily by inability to transfer funds between schools. Mental health research is conducted in many areas of ANU with no mechanism for researchers to know who else is working on it.
 - s. **Investment in research infrastructure is missing.** Centres that operate wholly on grants need investment in tools, labs, and specialised equipment – for example, MRIs, exercise labs, EEGs, polysomnography and psychology labs – to remain competitive globally. Researchers are good but cannot win competitive grants without the infrastructure to do the work.
 - t. **Person-centred orientation is missing.** The Strategy talks about research and values for community and people but does not embody a person-centred orientation toward students or employees in its mechanisms.
 - u. **HDR voice in governance has been tokenistic.** HDR perspectives have been represented in the codesign process in a tokenistic way; the Strategy should articulate what will be different.
 - v. **Workforce as infrastructure is not addressed.** Many staff are on unsustainable or short-term funding and contracts, with limited career growth, programming sustainability and motivation. The Strategy should treat the workforce as infrastructure, delivering impact without losing the experienced staff that make impact possible. The Strategy will increase competition but will also increase job instability if this is not addressed.
3. What are the three most important things needed to strengthen the Strategy?
- a. **Career sustainability and progression for grant-dependent staff.** A clear, institution-wide commitment to researcher security and sustainability – especially for grant-dependent staff – including a structured, protected ECR and MCR sustainability and leadership pathway. Specific mechanisms include long-term support for ECRs in funded positions and clear pathways for promotion within those positions; ECR seed grants for preliminary work; expanded teaching opportunities (with cross-school transfer arrangements that work); and bridging funding between contracts.

- b. **Indigenous HDR and ECR career pathways at university level.** A top-level strategic commitment to supporting Indigenous HDR and ECR positions, with frameworks at the institutional level (not only at Tjabal and the First Nations Portfolio). The wording "develop and implement pathways for Indigenous HDR students, ECRs and emerging leaders into academic careers and external policy and leadership roles" should be paired with a commitment to maintain, improve and strengthen existing pathways that have proven successful.
- c. **Indigenous research excellence recognised across the university.** Improvements in networking and support across ANU for staff working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indigenous health and wellbeing in particular should be highlighted as a strength. ANU should aim to be a "natural partner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples" alongside the existing "natural partner for governments" framing.
- d. **Climate, AI, social inequities, war.** Situate the Strategy in relation to the challenges of today and tomorrow. The current draft is not sufficiently future-facing for a cohort that will be in mid-career through the AI transition, the climate decade, and rising global instability.
- e. **Hybrid and remote work explicitly built in.** Build hybrid and remote work into workforce, infrastructure, leadership and culture frameworks. Where in-person training is offered, default online access should always be offered for staff who are off-site, on leave, or have caring responsibilities. Hybrid meetings (including university-wide town halls) should be properly resourced for sound, video and inclusive participation.
- f. **Industry and NGO collaboration for HDRs and ECRs.** Concrete collaboration opportunities with industry partners and NGOs for ECRs and HDR students, supporting both research impact and post-PhD employability.
- g. **Cross-university collaboration mechanisms.** Better collaboration between service areas (contracts, finance) and between research areas working on shared topics (mental health research is one example, scattered across multiple schools without visibility).
- h. **Define actions, with feasibility assessment and timelines.** Move from objectives to concrete, named actions, with feasibility assessment and reporting timelines for HDR, ECR and MCR communities.
- i. **Democratic governance and representation.** Better representation of different groups in University decision-making, including meaningful HDR and ECR voice, not tokenism.
- j. **Education and research as peers.** Training and development for academics as educators – ongoing, mandatory, structured – working as a collaborative tool between schools and centres. Research-led education only works if educators are supported to teach well; this needs equal weight with research excellence.
- k. **Leadership training for HDR students.** Leadership development for PhD candidates, distinct from research training, recognising that HDRs are future leaders within and beyond academia.
- l. **Restore localised HDR and research support.** Bring back school- and centre-level support for HDR students and research staff. The shift to centralised models has materially extended the time it takes researchers to get answers, with downstream costs to research productivity.

- m. **Library and journal access fit for a research-intensive university.** Library database access and journal publisher read-and-publish agreements need updating to meet the breadth of research being done across ANU. Current arrangements do not meet research-intensive standards in some discipline areas.
 - n. **Sustained funding streams.** Move beyond reliance on volatile competitive grant cycles for the workforce on which the Strategy depends.
 - o. **Talent pools and learning opportunities.** Create talent pools and provide opportunities for research and teaching involvement, including for HDRs as part of their candidature.
 - p. **Global research reach actioned, not just claimed.** The Strategy claims a global reach for research; this needs concrete mechanisms behind it.
4. What are the three most important things the University needs to fix, do less of or do differently to achieve the Strategy?
- a. **Address insecure work and casualisation directly.** Many staff are on unsustainable or short-term funding contracts – this is the lived reality and is currently absent from the Strategy. Job security needs to be addressed explicitly, with attention to disparities between schools and centres in contract concentration.
 - b. **Action over words; leverage existing successful structures.** Rather than recreating new programs, the Strategy should leverage existing structures and programs that have already worked. Management need to walk the talk – the gap between stated values and operational reality is currently large.
 - c. **Fix or replace failing operational tools.** Library AI and Canvas AI assistance are wasting researcher and student time. Either restore the tools to working order or restore the in-person assistance that previously functioned well. The current state degrades research and education productivity.
 - d. **Replace the HDR reimbursement model for conferences and research expenses.** Requiring HDR students to extend personal credit to the University and wait for reimbursement creates equity issues for students without independent financial support. Replace with up-front funding mechanisms.
 - e. **Resource hybrid meeting and town hall infrastructure properly.** Sound and video quality for remote participants in University-wide events is consistently inadequate. This is a fixable problem and is a baseline expectation if hybrid working is to be genuine.
 - f. **Resolve organisational restructuring uncertainty.** Particularly around NCEPH's enduring position within the College of Law and Governance. Sustained uncertainty undermines the community and belonging that the Strategy aspires to build.
 - g. **Articulate a plan to move away from fossil-fuel and war-linked funding.** It is not sufficient to say "that's where the money is available." The Strategy should articulate ANU's position on ethical investment and divestment.
 - h. **Spend funds on ANU researchers rather than external consulting firms.** Use available funds on ANU researchers in preference to external consulting firms (e.g. Nous).
 - i. **Stop thinking of ANU as a corporate entity.** ANU is a university, not a corporation – the Strategy should reflect this distinction in tone and orientation.

- j. **Democratise university governance.** Engage with the ANU Governance Project. HDR representation in governance has been tokenistic; what will change?
- k. **Open up senior leadership.** The ELT is closed. Senior decision-making transparency is needed for the cultural change the Strategy describes to be credible.
- l. **Strengthen international engagement and competency.** The Strategy is not currently focused on international competency or the international stage in a way that matches its stated ambition.
- m. **Reconsider how values are defined.** If the values are defined only by Chancellor, Council and Interim Vice-Chancellor without genuine consultation, the cohort is concerned about the future of ANU.
- n. **Recognise structural support needs of grant-funded centres.** Increase investments in centres that function wholly on grants – without resources (tools, labs, equipment), it is hard to compete for grants in the first place.

Parking lot

Items raised but not directly tied to the four questions, captured for the codesign team's reference:

- Professional development opportunities for remote staff, including the equity dimension.
- How ANU will provide structural support for staff working remotely and on extended leave.
- Intergenerational and interspecies justice as principles to guide the University forward.
- Increased investment in research centres for global competitiveness, particularly in specialised infrastructure (MRIs, exercise labs, EEGs, polysomnography, psychology labs).
- How ANU fosters staff who work remotely as part of the ANU community at college and university level, beyond what local teams already do well.
- Overall: more attention to staff experience: opportunity, support, inclusion in community, security, and the ability to invest in long-term aims.
- A model for inclusive online facilitation: this session was experienced by participants as a working example of how University-wide hybrid engagements could be set up.

Session time/date/location	2-3pm, 6 May 2026 (Research and Innovation Portfolio – Research management & research partnerships and translation staff) Allan Barton Forum, Building 26C, College of Business & Economics
Facilitator name	Jill Mowbray-Tsutsumi & Prof Ann Evans (Acting DVCRI)
Attendee numbers	20-25

The facilitated session was conducted as 3 rounds of discussion (world café style) with all participants tackling the same question at the same time and outputs captured by Miro. PDF and CSV with data is available on request.

We chose 3 questions most relevant to the research management and partnerships and translation staff in the Research and Innovation portfolio.

Q1: How do we attract and support the talent that we need – in students and staff – to maximise the impact that we have through our research and education?

Q2: What do we need – in the ways we work, where we focus, or what we do – to be resilient to change from external forces like AI, demographic shifts and climate change?

Q3: What should we fix for our University to work better? What should we stop doing at ANU? What one small thing would make it easier for you to do your job?

An overarching summary of recurrent themes across all rounds of discussion is provided below. Pages 2-7 provide further detail and recommendations made by participants.

Summary:

1. Systems and ways of working are a critical constraint on performance

Fragmented systems, unclear governance, and inefficient processes are creating friction across research, education, and operations, limiting the university's ability to operate effectively. The Strategy needs to provide more detail on how this will be addressed.

2. Clarity, direction, and alignment are insufficient to support effective execution

There is a strong need for clearer organisational direction, decision-making frameworks, and communication so that strategy, team priorities, and individual work are aligned and understood across the institution. There is a gap between the highly conceptual language of the Strategy and the work of teams – we need a signal of how this gap will be filled.

3. Lack of institutional direction, governance, and capability in AI is creating operational risk and inefficiency

AI is already impacting work, learning, and research practices, but limited institutional guidance, policy, and coordination is leading to fragmented adoption, duplication of effort, and uncertainty, while also constraining the university's ability to build capability and respond effectively to change.

4. Communication and culture are central to both internal effectiveness and external reputation

Improved communication both internally and externally will strengthen ANU culture, help to tell a positive story of ANU as the national university and reinforce ANU as a positive and inspiring place to work and study.

5. Staff capability, adaptability, and resilience are not yet sufficiently developed for a rapidly changing environment

There is a consistent need to better support staff with the skills, development opportunities, and resourcing required to adapt to ongoing change, with current approaches to professional development, workforce capability, and flexibility not keeping pace with external pressures such as AI and shifting demands. This capability will not be built through current professional development models of online learning.

Notes and recommendations from Miro rounds

ROUND 1 - How do we attract and support the talent that we need – in students and staff – to maximise the impact that we have through our research and education?

Staff capability development and career pathways

Staff need clearer, more accessible pathways to grow, develop, and navigate their careers, with better visibility of opportunities and stronger institutional support for professional development.

Recommendations:

- Provide clear, transparent progression pathways for professional staff across the university
- Invest in meaningful, ongoing professional development (training & education) rather than ad hoc offerings
- Create a centralised view of learning opportunities, so staff can easily understand how to engage
- Support cross-university mobility and skill development, enabling broader experience and career growth

Talent pipelines and career pathways

Attracting and retaining high-quality talent requires more structured, visible, and supported pipelines, particularly across academic career stages and leadership pathways.

Recommendations:

- Develop centralised, end-to-end talent pipelines (including EMCR, leadership, and specialist roles)
 - Provide clearer mapping of academic career journeys to support planning and progression
 - Strengthen targeted recruitment mechanisms for academic leaders and priority areas
 - Prioritise retention of high-performing staff as a core strategy for attracting future talent
 - Ensure systems and support are in place for researchers to focus on their core work effectively
-

Culture, brand, and reputation

ANU's internal culture and external reputation need to be more clearly defined, actively communicated, and aligned to support attraction, retention, and institutional pride.

Recommendations:

- Develop a clear and compelling institutional narrative about what ANU stands for
 - Improve external communication and marketing of research, education and our impact
 - Actively address and respond to negative media and reputational challenges
 - Strengthen a culture that supports innovation and entrepreneurship, and make it visible
 - Reinforce ANU as a positive and attractive place to work and study through consistent messaging and lived experience
-

Student attraction and offering

There is a clear need to strengthen how ANU attracts students by more clearly communicating career pathways and outcomes and what it means to study at the national university.

Recommendations:

- Develop targeted international recruitment strategies (particularly Asia-Pacific partnerships)
 - Provide clear, consistent messaging on career pathways and outcomes for students
 - Align offerings with market needs and emerging areas (e.g. IT, research strengths)
 - Expand flexible delivery options, including online courses
-

ROUND 2:

What do we need – in the ways we work, where we focus, or what we do – to be resilient to change from external forces like AI, demographic shifts and climate change?

Student demand, retention, and system risk

Resilience to external disruption requires adapting the university experience to shifting student expectations, as AI, cost, and online alternatives are changing perceptions of value and contributing to declining enrolment, engagement, and retention.

Recommendations:

- Adapt coursework and assessment models to address concerns about poor knowledge retention and over-reliance on AI-generated work
 - Strengthen in-person connections and peer engagement to address declining retention in online learning environments
 - Respond to changing perceptions that university is not an essential pathway, particularly in the context of AI alternatives
 - Focus on student retention and enrolment trends as critical risks, given their impact on revenue, research capacity, and reputation
-

AI, innovation, and capability

Resilience requires coordinated uptake of AI and innovation, supported by leadership, training, and clear guidance, while balancing productivity benefits with risks.

Recommendations:

- Provide leadership and training to support effective uptake of AI and avoid duplication of effort
 - Engage with innovation in line with values and strategy, with clear direction from leadership
 - Develop and implement a policy on AI use
 - Continue training in AI to build staff capability
 - Monitor and amplify internal research and activity in AI
 - Ensure focus on both benefits (productivity) and risks (homogeneity) of AI
 - Enable rapid adaptation of processes to keep pace with AI developments
-

Sustainability

Resilience to climate-related change requires stronger coordination, more energy-efficient infrastructure, and preparedness for extreme weather impacts.

Recommendations:

- Establish a coordinating body to understand sustainability challenges and communicate plans such as maintaining net zero
 - Invest in building upgrades and energy efficiency improvements
 - Assess campus infrastructure for resilience to extreme weather events (hail, heat waves, etc.)
 - Link sustainability considerations with broader planning and communication efforts
-

Adaptability and workforce capability

A major theme is that resilience depends on having a workforce that is adaptable, well-supported, and equipped with the skills and resources to respond to ongoing change.

Recommendations:

- Provide better resourced teams to support adaptability
 - Increase access to professional development resources
 - Ensure staff are trained and prepared with the skills needed to respond to change
 - Continue streamlining processes to enable more efficient ways of working
-

Identity, focus, and culture

Resilience requires a clear sense of institutional identity and focus, supported by a culture that enables consistent direction in the face of change.

Recommendations:

- Focus on institutional strengths, such as the campus environment
- Maintain clarity on core priorities and foundations, avoiding constant reactive change
- Reinforce a shared understanding of who we are as an institution
- Foster an innovative mindset and culture

- Strengthen a sense of one university, unified group of people working together

Diversity

A diverse student and staff base, supported by targeted investment and ongoing effort to broaden participation will instil and support resilience.

Recommendations:

- Provide funding to support diversity in students
- Continue to build diversity in both students and staff

ROUND 3: What should we fix for our University to work better? What should we stop doing at ANU? What one small thing would make it easier for you to do your job?

Process and operating model design

Ways of working need to be more structured, transparent, and co-developed, with clear processes that are defined, aligned across teams, and continuously improved through collaboration and iteration. The Strategy and its implementation plan need to show us how. For e.g.:

- Step 1: Every team outline their business requirements and role expectation (teams are empowered) Step 2: Leadership of teams discuss aligning policy to fulfilling all requirements for upstream/downstream process (esp. compliance) Step 3: record business process and prepare post launch analysis and evaluation Step 4: organise change management template All steps: iterate and co-develop all these steps & processes with business partners including academic leadership

Clarity, direction, and strategy

There is insufficient clarity in decision-making, priorities, and communication, and stronger alignment is needed between organisational direction, team objectives, and individual understanding. For e.g.:

- Decisional clarity - both in how decisions are made across business units and how this vision is propagated
- Knowing what we are pursuing (as an individual or team)
- Clear mission and vision of the organisation- that has a buy in from people
- Need unified comms on where we are going - so we are all swimming in the same direction
- Everyday version of 'First, to know the nature of things'

Systems cleanup and governance, best practice and continuous improvement

Outdated, fragmented systems and unclear governance create inefficiencies, and the university needs more streamlined, up-to-date, and well-maintained systems supported by clear processes and continuous improvement practices. For e.g.:

- Clean up old websites, Sharepoints, policies, and have a central clearing house for what is current and canon
- Resource the implementation of policies, don't just drop them and expect coherent interpretations and procedures to emerge
- A up-do-date (ideally live-updating) org chart
- data record keeping system: invest in the capital to purchase the proper system efficient use of time
- Efficient & good system data record keeping

- Learn from industry leaders and other orgs, develop guidelines and best practices to trial and iterate - within ANU guardrails
- Research capability maps
- Delegations chart
- A better finance system - transparency, accuracy, agility

Operating model and internal capability

The university needs to better leverage and coordinate its internal capability, reducing reliance on external consultants and strengthening internal expertise, service alignment, and relationships. For e.g.:

- Tap internal expertise, rather than consultants, in fixing ANU's problems
- Co-location of research services
- Work on government relations & the follow up relations

Culture and behaviour

Cultural misalignment and unhelpful behaviours undermine effectiveness, and fostering a more positive, aligned, and collaborative culture is essential to improving how the university operates. For e.g.:

- The Uni could be like a playground where we all play well together-appreciation of each other to support collaboration to ensure that our services support the functions we offer - education, research, uni mission etc.

Communication and reputation

Clearer, more effective communication is needed to support collaboration internally and improve the university's external reputation and narrative. For e.g.:

- Improve ANU public image
- Better communications - to explain and inform changes, to support collaboration
- Better/more communication specialists to better tell the positive story about ANU's impact

Leadership

Leadership renewal and stronger leadership direction are critical to driving change, improving culture, and enabling the university to work more effectively. For e.g.:

- Refreshed leadership - new chancellor

Session time/date/location	8 May
Facilitator name	Kirsten Ainley
Attendee numbers	9

General feedback: Make all the goals/ areas equally as concrete – with tangible actions and measurable goals so that we can see if they're done. Some aspects of the strategy are more defined than others at the moment. Our People and Research in particular were felt to be too vague - and the language was thought to be consultant-speak here. People at the meeting wanted clear language and no vague or excluding terminology they wanted to understand exactly what is being promised and how they can contribute. They also noted that vague actions meant it's harder to hold people accountable for achieving them. Action 3 in 'Enablers' is a good example of something no-one really understood, so there could be no genuine accountability for.

PURPOSE: we're here to hold the govt to account and tell truth to power - we are not here to 'build sovereign capabilities' - that phrase was not liked by anyone (and not really understood). The 'National University' should mean the university of the people, not of the govt. The group thought the purpose was still too generic - not distinct enough that you could tell it was ANU rather than any other Uni.

VALUES: make sure accountability structures run up as well as down.

OUR PEOPLE: pay attention to the financial burden of policies on PSS staff, who are often expected to come to campus every day. Childcare and parking price increases, or flat rates that don't take into account pay differentials, have a greater impact on PSS staff. Can strategy correct for this?

On the final action on Our People, change to "effective and meaningful work"

EDUCATION:

We need to line up actions with directions, and then support and resource the priorities – not pretend we're trying to attract domestic students while actually being incentivised to attract intl students etc.

Need some concrete actions to deliver our purpose, eg

- Every ANU student will have a tutor
- Class sizes will be capped

Agreed that campus really matters, so actions that follow include investing in our buildings to give spaces for students to work and improving teaching tech. There was strong concern that if we're trying to bring in Indig students/ first in family students, where are the support structures? These students often need help and guidance to make the most out of their Uni experience.

SPHERES:

'Spheres' - this has a negative connotation (Putin, Trump etc) - 'The University in its communities'??

ENABLERS:

Don't fetishise technology - we need humans - tech won't save us and makes things worse in many areas.

Staff relaying that they are no longer being consulted on new systems. Tech looks to be a way to reduce prof staff. Prof staff are being told that they can't go and physically see someone in the central team in Chancellery.

Systems need to be aligned with our values and strategy - eg emails being sent out without names on them lacks human scale and makes accountability impossible.

We need to be more local, more human and more present - we need to support the day-to-day life of the uni, not using distancing systems, or systems designed for bureaucrats.

Session time/date/location	Fri 2pm 8 th May 2026
Session name	Data Science and Statistics Across Campus
Attendee numbers	20

Summary

In an increasingly uncertain and data-rich world, investment in data science and statistical capability is essential to advancing human flourishing, national prosperity, societal resilience, security, and equity. At ANU, these foundational capabilities underpin excellence across virtually every discipline—from climate science and health to economics, agriculture, engineering, public policy, the humanities, and national security. Strengthening these capabilities is an investment in ANU’s capacity to deliver on its national mission through research excellence, evidence-informed policy, and the development of future-ready graduates. As Australia’s only national university, ANU’s distinctive contribution lies in connecting capability across scales—supporting local communities and institutions, informing national policy and sovereign capability, strengthening regional partnerships across the Indo-Pacific, and contributing internationally to scientific discovery and global problem-solving. Students increasingly recognise these capabilities as essential to their future careers and will look to universities that can provide them. Five main topics were discussed, in varying degrees of depth, at the facilitated session:

1. Data Integrity & Privacy
2. Data Infrastructure
3. Open Data and Tools
4. Excellence for Purpose
5. ANU Programs & Courses

This document was circulated post-session for further input to all session registrants.

Key Findings

- ANU hosts crucial data and computational infrastructure of national significance, such as the Australian Data Archive, the National Computational Infrastructure (NCI), Australia’s climate simulator (ACCESS-NRI), the Australian Research Data Commons, Yardhura Walani, and more, that enhance research capability and researcher productivity.
- A recurring theme throughout the session was the disconnect between available infrastructure and resources, and the broader research community’s awareness and understanding of what infrastructure is available, how to access it, and how to utilise it effectively.
- Expertise and capabilities often remain fragmented, with limited coordination, connectivity, and visibility between groups.
- There is a need to improve awareness of internal ANU operational and national benchmarking data assets and support continued uplift in statistical literacy across the university community. This includes developing a clearer understanding of the limitations of data and the risks associated with inappropriate analysis, interpretation, or use of data. Building these capabilities is important for underpinning informed decision-making, effective governance, and evidence-based strategy development across the university.
- There was a broad agreement around continued support for statistical training and consultation for students and staff across the university, building on the success of the Statistical Support Network, CartoGIS and the like in improving access to expertise, strengthening collaboration, and enhancing the quality and rigour of research outputs.

Recommendations

1. Explicitly articulate and promote data science and statistical capability as a university-wide strategic asset, ensuring it is visible internally to enable interdisciplinary collaboration and externally to strengthen ANU's reputation and attractiveness to future students, partners, and funders.
2. Develop a coordinated communication and engagement strategy to improve visibility, accessibility, and understanding of existing infrastructure and resources, supported by clear and streamlined policies and guidelines that adopt open sharing as the default approach for data governance and access where appropriate.
3. Establish mechanisms that strengthen cross-campus coordination and visibility of data and statistical expertise, including interdisciplinary networks, shared data and analytics platforms, regular community forums, and incentive structures that promote collaboration and knowledge exchange across groups and disciplines. This should be supported by domain-specific subgroups and communities of practice that foster specialised expertise, deeper disciplinary engagement, and targeted collaboration in areas such as Indigenous data, digital humanities, bioinformatics, spatial/geospatial analytics, agricultural analytics, and other emerging fields.
4. Develop a coordinated cross-campus approach to training and education in statistical and data literacy that are grounded on innovative and evidence-based pedagogical approaches, accessible learning pathways, and structured incentives, to support sustained interdisciplinary skill development for staff and students.
5. Recognition of research software as a first-class research output (aligned with the national agenda), with appropriate frameworks, incentives, and evaluation criteria to ensure it is valued alongside traditional scholarly publications.
6. Ensure ANU's own data collection and analysis processes are fit for purpose, including appropriate metadata, to facilitate discoverability, evidence-based decision-making, and robust and transferable training.

Notes

- Some notable existing ANU resources and infrastructure include:
 - **Australian Data Archive** (<https://ada.edu.au/>)
 - **ANU Data Commons** (<https://datacommons.anu.edu.au/DataCommons/>)
 - **ANU Insight** (<https://services.anu.edu.au/information-technology/software-systems/insight>)
 - **ANU Statistical Support Network** (<https://services.anu.edu.au/business-units/statistical-support-network>)
 - **ANU Open Data Policy** (https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_6173778)
 - **ANU Information and Data Governance** (<https://services.anu.edu.au/planning-governance/governance/information-and-data-governance>)
 - **ANU Data, Information Management and Integration Strategy** (<https://services.anu.edu.au/files/2024-07/ANU%20Data%20Information%20Management%20and%20Integration%20Strategy%202023-2026.pdf>)
 - **ANU Software Innovation Institute** (<https://sii.anu.edu.au/>)
- Some discipline-specific data and analytics centres, teams, or initiatives:
 - **National Centre for Health Workforce Studies**, including the **Health Data Analytics Team** (<https://nceph.anu.edu.au/research/centres-departments/national-centre-health-workforce-studies>)
 - **ANU CartoGIS Services** (<https://anulib.anu.edu.au/research-learn/cartogis>)

- **Humanities and Social Sciences Digital Research Hub**
(<https://hdrh.anu.edu.au/>)
- **ANU Analytics for the Australian Grains Industry** (<https://anu-aagi.github.io/>)
- Indigenous Data Governance and Sovereignty:
 - **National Centre for Indigenous Genomics,**
 - **Centre for Indigenous Policy Research,** and
 - **Yardhura Walani.**
- National reports on data science:
 - Australian Research Data Commons: **National Agenda for Research Software Report** (<https://zenodo.org/records/6378082>).
 - Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI) & Statistical Society of Australia (SSA) 2023 **Data Science Review:**
<https://amsi.org.au/?publications=amsi-ssa-data-science-review>
 - The FAIR (**F**indable, **A**ccessible, **I**nteroperable and **R**eusable) Principles of the Australian Research Data Commons (<https://ardc.edu.au/resource-hub/making-data-fair/>)
- Other university-based data science structures:
 - Stanford Data Science (<https://datascience.stanford.edu/>)
 - Monash Department of Data Science and AI (<https://www.monash.edu/it/dsai>)

Session time/date/location	May 8, 2pm, ANUCBE26 Allan Barton Forum
Facilitator name	Stephen Dann
Attendee numbers	8

Summary:

- “An understand of the concept of ‘ANU Excellence’
- What makes for excellence in the ANU community?
- Key findings/recommendations
 - Excellence is a process driven by people supported by systems

Notes: Summarise discussion (no need for verbatim notes)

- The session focused on understanding how the ANU community, as represented by undergraduate, postgraduate, professional staff, and academic staff understand the idea of “ANU Excellence
- Excellence is articulated in four areas
 - Excellence is a process
 - Excellence is determined by people performing within processes
 - Excellence is created through systems that enable people to perform, without barriers, in a way that results in excellence across the ANU
 - Excellence is ANU as a community
- Process as Excellence, Excellence as Process
 - Respondents identified the need for system level support across the campus that enables ANU level outcomes
 - Individuals cannot personally attained excellence without the systemic level support – eg excellence in research comes from the support of systems (ethics, research office, grant income support) where people provide the knowledge that powers the systems’
 - Excellence in teaching comes from conditions created by the interactions between IT, learning management, education designers, buildings and grounds, maintenance, professional development, student facing systems, and classroom environment
 - Respondents identified the breadth of ANU support systems as a key driver and determinant of success
 - Recent reductions / consolidations of support roles (eg non academic, non-teaching) have contributed to the decline in ANU rankings as the human infrastructure that led to world leading, Australia leading rankings has been reduced
- People within Process
 - Excellence is a return on investment, where the resources committed to the human infrastructure of support, knowledge, expertise and enabling creates the conditions which result in success in education, research and social licence
 - For example, investment in communications processes supported by media staff increase social licence by enabling academic discoveries in research to be communicated to wider audiences

- Human Infrastructure through stability, learning, knowledge retention and knowledge sharing were identified as key enhancers to the pursuit of excellence within process
- Excellence is created through systems that enable people to perform, without barriers, in a way that results in excellence across the ANU
 - Moving equity, diversity and inclusion as a commitment to a practice is central to the process infrastructure enabling excellence
 - Systemic barriers (eg disability access, funding/resourcing of inclusiveness) were identified as impediments to the attainment of excellence.
 - Effectively, the ANU frequently stands in it's own way of reaching excellence by making it a "commitment to future outcomes" rather than inherent in the delivery and implementation of strategic plans.
 - An era of a "Commitment to make a commitment" non responses have contributed to increased barriers to ANU's success as key people are excluded from processes, decisions and input
 - We have a specific recommendation here to include a section in this and future plans that recognise Disability, Access, Equity and Inclusion as a commitment at the level to which, and alongside, the First Nations Commitments.
- Excellence is ANU as a community
 - A core resonating message from the session was the belief that ANU as a community is the future for ANU as a place of Excellence. Excellence through community, the sense of belonging, the shared knowledge, the connections between people supported by systems and infrastructure drove much of the discussion
 - Community as a resource to be renewed, tended and supported as a means to return ANU to the place of social licence, academic leadership and global ranking. Success in these areas traces back to ANU's people achieving with, and because, of ANU's community supporting them, removing barriers, and enabling success
 - People, supported, become people, achieving, which is where ANU's future lies.

Session time/date/location	11:00am – 12:00pm 11 May 2026 The Allan Barton Forum, 26C CBE Building
Facilitator name	Rachel Howard, Alexa Dodd
Attendee numbers	17

Proposed Strategic Positioning: Careers & Employability

If ANU aims to attract and retain high performing students, careers and employability must be embedded within the broader university strategy, supported by clear objectives that outline how we will strengthen career outcomes and graduate employability for our students. We also need institutional career learning outcomes that define what students gain during their time at ANU and what they graduate with in terms of skills, capabilities, and career readiness. Our team will develop these, and use the ANU Employability Framework, and Graduate attributes to support these outcomes. Careers and employability cannot stand alone or rely solely on reach and engagement activities.

If we are serious about supporting student success, we must take a more holistic and intentional approach. We already have a clear understanding of what employers need, so the priority must be embedding structured opportunities for students to develop these capabilities throughout their university experience. This requires a coordinated, institution-wide commitment to integrating career development into learning, teaching, and the student experience.

Positioning students as ‘AI-ready’ is not sufficient on its own. Capability development must go further, particularly in areas that industry consistently highlights as gaps, including workplace readiness, resilience, communication, adaptability, and understanding of the organisation.

My advice is to look at other university strategies for guidance. One particularly strong example is UNSW. As a competitor in the Canberra market, their approach is highly relevant, careers and employability are referenced consistently throughout their strategy, demonstrating a whole-of-institution commitment.

I am very happy to be consulted on what the new ANU Strategy could say about Careers and Employability at ANU.

Thank you.

Rachel Howard

Associate Director- ANU Careers and Employability

Session Output

Summary

Topic(s) of focus

- What should the ANU Strategy say about Careers & Employability?

- Define what student success and holistic experiences mean to the university.
- What our partnership is with students and career success.
- What should ANU commit to delivering for every student to prepare them for life and work?
- What truly differentiates ANU in Careers & Employability? If other G08 universities can make the same claim, is it distinctive enough? How do we define our identity and embed it within education?
- Where should ANU focus its efforts for employability because we can do it well and aligns with who we are?
- What could ANU do differently to better prepare student for life and work?
- At what points in the student journey, and in which settings should we be helping students think about their future?

Key findings/recommendations:

- Develop a clear, institution-wide communications strategy articulating the value of career education
- Embed career education directly into existing curriculum structures
- Career education and skills development should be integrated across all stages of the student journey, with scaffolded learning embedded throughout degree progression (1st to 3rd year), potentially supported through structured pass/fail components to reinforce incremental development and progression.
- A shared responsibility model is required in which university leadership provides strategic direction and visibility, academic staff integrate career development into the curriculum and clearly articulate learning outcomes, and students take active ownership of their own career development.

Notes:

1. Where should ANU focus its efforts for employability (sphere of influence)?

ANU should focus its employability efforts in areas that align with its core strengths and institutional identity. This includes leveraging its strong international profile and reach across language, policy, and global relations, reinforcing its position as Australia's most international university. Greater recognition should also be given to current student employment and extracurricular activities as meaningful contributors to employability development. In addition, ANU should strengthen scaffolded learning across the student journey, embedding structured development from first to third year, potentially supported through pass/fail components. Overall, the focus should shift toward deeper connection with the workforce through exposure and engagement, rather than framing this solely as 'employability.'

2. What truly differentiates ANU in careers and employability, and how should this identity be embedded in education?

The University's distinctiveness in careers and employability should be grounded in its unique institutional characteristics, including its Canberra location, close connection to government and Parliament, national university status, and strong reputation. Its relatively small size also enables closer engagement with students, while existing employability frameworks and the ability to report on impact further strengthen its position. The key challenge is ensuring these attributes are sufficiently distinctive within the Go8 context and are clearly embedded within educational design and student experience.

3. What could ANU do differently to better prepare students for life and work?

To better prepare students for life and work, ANU should develop a clear, institution-wide communications strategy that articulates the value and importance of career education. Career education should also be embedded directly within existing courses rather than treated as an

add-on, ensuring it is integrated into core learning. In addition, students should be provided with structured opportunities to reflect on their skills, experiences, and development to better articulate their capabilities.

4. At what points in the student journey, and in which settings, should we be helping students think about their future?

Students should be supported to think about their future across the entire student lifecycle, from open day through to alumni engagement. Career development should be embedded across multiple settings, including curriculum design, course delivery, and teaching practice, ensuring it is consistently reinforced throughout the student experience. This requires a shared responsibility model, where responsibility is distributed across the university executive, academic staff, and students themselves. In particular, students should be encouraged to take ownership of their career development, while academics and course convenors should be equipped with toolkits and prompts to clearly articulate learning outcomes and the value of disciplinary learning in relation to skills and employability.

Session time/date/location	Tuesday 12 May – online – ICEDS Members
Facilitator name	Bianca Suarez
Attendee numbers	18 (including facilitator)

Context: ICEDS convened its members to gather input on the ANU Strategy draft as part of our work within ANU. This memo summarises the views in an anonymised manner.

Key insights:

- This session focused on how ANU should position itself in relation to climate change, emission reductions, and energy transition.
- ANU should position itself as a global leader in energy and climate change resilience, leveraging the critical mass of work in the university and capacity to meet the complex challenges. This should be clearly stated in the strategy and influence the university's research approach, priorities, educational offerings, and recruitment & staffing. ANU has lost significant expertise in this area recently and is losing its competitive advantage with other Australian universities.
- Excellence in research is currently lacking in the strategy. ANU should lead excellent research. To achieve this, the university needs to support long-term research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and research translation into policy. This is necessary to address complex challenges, such as climate change, and attract and retain excellent staff and students.
- ANU should be a "critical friend" to government and advocate from a platform of science and not politics. It should identify its priorities independent of the government, guided by what is important for people and the planet.
- To maximise impact, the strategy needs to clarify who it seeks to impact. This will clarify the pathways to achieve impact. Additionally, staff require efficient & effective systems as well as proper training to maximise their roles and time and support impactful work.

Notes:

IDENTITY

- Climate change is a global problem. While national leadership is important, ANU should also be positioning itself in reference to global progress and action. The ANU should claim the space as a global leader in energy and climate change resilience
 - Australia is a small part of the global issue. Have global/international impact but also with a local focus
 - Work with partners in the Pacific who are more immediately faced with the impacts of climate change
 - Efforts should not solely focus on resilience but also mitigation.
 - Climate change work at ANU should be framed as a human benefit.
- The strategy should highlight the critical mass of work and people engaged in energy transition and climate change resilience as part of its identity.
 - This could be a good focal point for student recruitment
 - Currently, there is nothing in the strategy about leading in climate change work, but it may be captured under "issues of national importance." However, this may not be sufficient since the ANU should focus on what is important for the planet and not just what the nation wants.
 - Historically, ANU has been a leader in physical climate science and related fields. However, it has been in decline with an estimated 5 researchers across physical climate research with permanent positions. The ANU is lagging in comparison to other universities.
- Excellence is a key part of ANU's identity and expectation from staff and students. This is critical for having the capacity to meet the challenges of climate change.

- **Purpose:** ANU should support students across Australia, including those with a nontraditional entry pathway, to come to ANU to truly be a “national” university.
- ANU’s **First Nations commitment** should include an ongoing and authentic way to listen to First Nations’ perspectives on critical climate/energy/disaster issues and integrate it into our thinking.
- The **values** should include what drives ANU passion for excellence—care about major national and global challenges. The values need to be reflected in its actions. For example, not investing in fossil fuels.
- **People:** As a national institution, ANU should have a national and global vision. It should have an ongoing recruitment process for world-class early-career researchers in aligned topics. It should always have a place for truly amazing new hires.

RESEARCH

- The strategy lacks “excellence” in research. ANU should lead **excellent** research.
 - ANU lost capability through budget cuts and attrition. It needs to attract and retain leading researchers.
 - Long term approaches to research are needed to support excellent research. ANU should utilise its unique position to support and acknowledge this. This would also allow for retention and attraction of leading researchers through longterm employment.
 - Short term research approaches limit the ambition and achievements of ‘complex challenge’ research. It affects the momentum, the staffing, and the priorities.
- ANU should support initiatives that support interdisciplinary collaboration to tackle difficult problems and have a strong policy element.
 - The ZCEAP Grand Challenge was a great example of cross-campus activity. It was done in an open approach with everyone welcome to bring their ideas. It placed ANU in a unique position in proximity to policymakers and away from heavy industry. It should be replicated and highlighted as an example of success.
 - Research needs to be translated into policy.
- ANU should lead national research for long-term sustainable development.
- The type of research ANU seeks to focus on should be identified to help identify the pathway to impact.
- ANU has not kept up with its peers in relation to physical climate research due to the loss of expertise in recent years. This comes at a time when Australia’s climate landscape is increasingly fractured and there is an opportunity for ANU to fill the gap.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

- The ANU should be advocating from a platform of Science not politics. It should situate itself as a critical friend to government.
 - The framing of “complex challenges” and “issues of national importance” raise concerns about priorities being shaped by the government. However, the ANU should lead on climate change independent of the government.
 - The framing of “partner of choice” also raises concern. While ANU should engage and work with the government, it should not be in the back pocket of the government.
- The strategy needs to clarify “who” it seeks to impact. A pronged approach for each audience may be needed to make it clearer.
 - Potential audiences include: government, global audience, Pacific partners, etc.
- ANU should engage more with the public and external stakeholders.
 - This includes strongly highlighting the contribution of university research to long term productivity, economic growth, etc.
 - Interdisciplinary research initiatives, like the Grand Challenge, should include a series of complementary public events that create an opportunity to collectively work with outside experts, industry, the public, children, etc. on complex challenges.

EDUCATION

- ANU should take a lifelong learning approach to education. It should be a 'home' to return over and over again.
- The campus should be maximised but should also allow students to study remotely to reduce carbon emissions and increase equity.
 - Increase student numbers on campus to make more efficient use of spaces.
- Educational offerings need to be aligned with ANU's vision. Bold decisions can only be made once its been finalised.

ENABLERS:

- Support staff to maximise their roles and abilities through training and functional ANU systems.
 - Train staff to teach effectively and efficiently
 - Practical systems are needed to streamline administrative processes. The disconnected systems waste effort and time of staff.
 - Professors are paid too much to do "low value" work. There is a need to review the skills and roles of staff.

Session time/date/location	11am 12 May 2026 Online
Facilitator name	Dale Holland
Attendee numbers	15-20

Summary:

- Research infrastructure as a national asset
- Infrastructure is inextricable from people
- Participants broadly support the direction but want the strategy to be bolder and inspiring, and more specific about infrastructure and people.

Notes:

Research Infrastructure as a National Asset

Participants strongly affirmed the principle that ANU, as the national university, has a unique and essential role in hosting, developing and sustaining nationally significant research infrastructure. The stewardship of 40 national facilities and over \$2 billion in infrastructure was seen as a genuine strength, but participants felt the strategy should go further – connecting this role explicitly to Commonwealth government data systems (e.g. climate, health, social science datasets), compliance requirements (DataPlace, ISO27001, the SoCI Act), and arguing more forcefully *why* ANU does what it does. There was also a question about whether ANU's aspiration for national leadership might create tension with peer institutions, and whether the strategy should acknowledge collaborative rather than solely dominant leadership.

The word "developing and supporting" on page 14 was suggested to be replaced with "integrating," to better reflect ANU's role in connecting into world-scale projects rather than simply building domestically.

Infrastructure Is People

This was the most emphatic theme of the session. Participants repeatedly stressed that research infrastructure is not primarily instrumentation – it is the people who operate, maintain, and develop it. The strategy was seen as underweighting this. Specific suggestions included:

- Amending the Enablers slide (p.18) to read "assets **and expertise** of national significance" to acknowledge specialist knowledge alongside physical assets.
- Adding people-focused language to the Guiding Questions around attracting and supporting talent (p.18).
- Including technical and specialist staff in the possible actions on p.15, not just researcher talent.
- Recognising career development, access to training, and workforce pipeline issues – noting that RI skills development begins at undergraduate level and that this is not currently expressed in the strategy.

There was also a call to consider whether the strategy should articulate a position on a technical specialist career stream, and how the RI workforce should be managed and developed over time.

Placement of Research Infrastructure in the Document

Participants questioned where research infrastructure sits within the strategy's structure. Currently mentioned in the Context column of the Enablers slide but absent from the Direction and Possible Actions columns, participants felt this was inconsistent. There was debate about whether RI belongs under "Enablers," "Research," or both – and a somewhat tongue-in-cheek suggestion that research infrastructure deserves its own page.

Values – Too Generic

The values section drew significant criticism for feeling generic ("are we selling shoes?"). Participants felt the values as written could apply to any organisation and don't reflect the distinctive character of a research university. Specific suggestions included adding:

- **Curiosity** – notably absent
- **Collaboration** – seen as fundamental to how RI works
- **Ambition/aspiration** – participants referenced the SERD "Ambitious Australia" framing and asked where "Ambitious ANU" is
- **Innovation and creativity**
- **Excellence** – felt to be missing or watered down; participants wanted ANU to be confidently, not "quietly," excellent

Ambition, Tone and Inspiration

A recurring sentiment was that the document is competent but not inspiring – described as "vanilla." Participants want a strategy that captures the diversity and grassroots energy of the institution ("the collection of tribes that we are"), that speaks to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research (currently absent), and that commits more boldly to open research and data sharing. Several noted the document doesn't need to be the "magna carta" – implementation docs can carry detail – but it should give each person a reason to recognise themselves in it.

One participant offered a constructive counterpoint: they found the document generally sound, felt NRI had good recognition, and appreciated the emphasis on ANU's national leadership mandate. Their concern was whether that leadership aspiration would be accepted by peer institutions or create friction.

What to Fix / Stop Doing

This section generated strong and sometimes frustrated responses, particularly around administrative burden:

- High turnover in support services (HR, Finance, IT) has caused significant loss of institutional knowledge and created friction for research staff.
- Researchers feel they are "sinking under admin weight" – time spent on HR, procurement, finance, regulatory compliance and recruitment is directly impeding research.
- Access to specialist support staff (HR, procurement, IT, business development) who understand research infrastructure requirements was identified as a genuine gap.
- The call was to reduce silos and enable more fluid, cross-disciplinary collaboration – noting that not knowing what other parts of the university are doing "undercuts our effectiveness."
- The Nixon report was referenced: "it has to be better – everyone has been burnt."

One participant noted the strategy's language about "stop doing" may not belong at strategy level – framing it instead around priorities.

Specific Drafting Concerns (p.9, p.15, p.18)

Several participants offered precise textual critiques:

- **"The challenges that matter"** (p.9, p.15) was called "awful language" – the strategy should celebrate all pursuit of knowledge while acknowledging the need to prioritise funding over the next five years.
- **"Excellence for Purpose"** framing was seen as too passive – ANU needs to commit definitively to what it will be known for, within a defined timeline, and back it with active marketing and student recruitment strategy.

- **Post-DECRA employment certainty** was raised as a concrete action: ANU invests heavily in DECRA fellows, who are then poached. Other institutions offer employment certainty post-fellowship; ANU should too.
- **"Invest in research infrastructure renewal and expansion"** (p.15) was criticised as meaningless without a dollar figure, a mechanism, or a commitment to avoid "white elephant" passion projects. Suggestions included reinstating MEC and increasing SRF for LIEF, and requiring close-down/sell-off planning in all infrastructure proposals.
- **NCRIS** was noted as a de facto national research infrastructure strategy – but one that excludes collections. Collections was noted as a gap that should be explicitly addressed.

Session time/date/location	May 12 th , 2026 3pm-4pm; JCSMR Gordon Ada Room (Building 131)
Facilitator name	Xuexin Gao
Attendee numbers	7

Summary:

A co-design facilitator session was held to gather feedback on Strategy Draft v1. Participants expressed broad support for the strategic intent and direction; however, there are significant concerns regarding clarity, implementation feasibility, and alignment with operational realities. The current draft is seen as overly high-level and lacking sufficient definition, which limits meaningful engagement and creates uncertainty about how the strategy applies across different parts of the university. In particular, key concepts such as research, research income, and infrastructure are not clearly articulated, and there is limited recognition of service-based and externally facing activities.

A major theme was the under-recognition and poor visibility of research infrastructure, including both physical assets and staff expertise. Participants highlighted that existing capabilities across the university are difficult to identify and access, with no effective central mechanism to connect users with facilities, equipment, or specialist knowledge. This fragmentation undermines efficiency and prevents the university from fully leveraging its internal strengths.

There were strong concerns about the impact of centralisation on operational effectiveness. While the intent of greater coordination is understood, current processes are widely perceived as slow, opaque, and administratively burdensome. Participants reported reduced responsiveness and limited ability to directly engage with relevant staff, contributing to delays and frustration. A more balanced approach that retains the benefits of central coordination while restoring local agility was seen as critical.

Workforce pressures were also identified as a significant risk to successful strategy delivery. Staff reductions have resulted in unsustainable workloads and service bottlenecks, particularly in key support areas such as HR, finance and research administration. This has contributed to declining morale and a perception that staff contributions are undervalued. Participants emphasised that without adequate resourcing and support, the ambitions of the strategy will be difficult to realise.

In addition, there are concerns about the lack of formal recognition for contributions, particularly in areas such as statistical and computational support, where work is often relied upon but not consistently acknowledged. Misalignment between formal role descriptions and actual expectations further complicates this issue. The limitation on hybrid professional-academic contracts does not justify the required demand, and the delay of specialist stream provides no benefit. Strengthening recognition frameworks and clarifying role expectations were identified as important enablers of engagement and retention.

Participants also highlighted the need for greater transparency in systems and processes, including workflow management, decision-making, and budget allocation. Current limitations reduce visibility and trust, and make it difficult for staff to navigate institutional processes effectively. Similarly, highly centralised control over digital presence and branding was seen as limiting the ability of teams to respond to client needs and promote services, particularly in externally facing environments.

Finally, while the co-design process itself was valued and appreciated, there was concern about whether feedback would meaningfully influence outcomes. Participants noted that maintaining trust will depend on visible follow-through and clear communication on how input is being used.

Overall, there is strong alignment with the intent of the strategy, but participants emphasised that delivery risks are significant. Addressing these will require clearer definitions, improved visibility of infrastructure and expertise, better balance between centralisation and local

autonomy, adequate workforce resourcing, stronger recognition of contributions, and increased transparency in decision-making and processes.

Pre-session discussions:

- The draft document is very broad/general and vague, it is hard to read and understand what it actually says
 - o What are the measures that bring these terms into practical
- Definition of concepts were not clearly stated: eg. Research, Infrastructure, etc.
 - o Research infrastructure: only the instruments? Or should it also include the people who runs/manages the instruments
- When people were in trouble/doubt: where to turn to for help, how to know who should I talk to?
 - o If I want to use a particular research infrastructure existing in the university, but not knowing where, how do I know who should I talk to and etc.
- It'd be good to have a cross the uni LIMS-CRM system that is universally used – make it clear what research infrastructure/facility is available cross the whole uni and can be easily accessible to anyone (from any college or school) for booking/training or request service

Notes from the scheduled facilitator session:

- Overall, the *Strategy draft version 1* slides: big word, very vague, we cannot really comment on the general concept/term.
- two main things of uni: research and education. There's also the commercial aspect of of the uni but not discussed in detail in the strategy design.

When talked about the “research income”, what does it exactly refer to? Was it just the research fundings such as grants/philanthropic funding? What about the insititutional services/facilities that is available not only for internal users but also having national and international clients? Where do these teams position in the strategy?
- Centralisation > everything is way way slower. Really slows things down and more effort/work on the end user. There could be benefits from a centralising structure (ie. to help **integrate** resources that available in-house) but the system is currently not working.

The ticket system (ie. IT, Finance, HR etc) should allocate job in a reasonable and transparent manner – people who submit the ticket needs to know where the case is sitting at, who is responsible (and the chain above who oversees the workflow), timeline of responses, able to change urgency and directly approach the responsible personals if need – it is understandable there might be workload issues, and workload issue should be resolved by increase workforce, not by adding more pressure to limited people; see next point
- We think the university should value our staff. Cut of work force > doesn't really work>smaller can't make better. After the cut everything is falling down. E.g. research office and HR is flat out. There is just not enough people.

Many examples people were seeking supports, from research office (for grant application) or from HR (for recruitment) for examples, and have heard nothing back in weeks, have to chase up multiple times and tap on the shoulder to get things done – this shouldn't be the norm; the lack of proactive supports and self-motivation from

service teams/admin supports need to be resolved (by having enough workforce and an incentive system)

- Also ridiculous to force people to take their leave. Don't make people take leave. We should have the freedom to decide.
Discussion is under the scenario that following the cutting of workforce, existing staff were also forced to take leave to reduce leave balances, however the workload is unable to be resolved within the existing workforce; the result is creating more workload pressure to existing workforce unreasonably
- The Uni should reward employees for the good/hard work. It's not about the money, it's about caring/team bonding. Otherwise there's no recognition, which is fatal. Some system of bonus recognition should be in place.
Discussion is around implementing incentives to reward hardworking teams/people, to acknowledge their success/contribution to the university's reputation; so that employees will be self-motivate to do better than the setting expectations; Additionally, there needs to be clear career development pathways/opportunities and fundings available if employees seek to move up and move around
- Parking on campus is very miserable. They also keep on reducing the number of surface parking at the same time.
Discount for parking should be considered as employee benefits with reasonable value
- *Enablers slide: Direction* last point: trust us own expertise, all the consultancy business should be in house.
- There needs to be some entity that directs/tells people where to go for specific things (e.g. a triage table, a clear explanatory system; a functional website searching engine);
ie. dome directory that relates to infrastructure directly. Eg it would be great to have something that allows us to look up what instruments are available at this uni, then down to the school level and who to contact to access/use them.
This is discussed under the "enabler>using existing expertise before outsourcing": how would people find out there are existing resource in-house because currently the cross-college or cross-school information is not easily available
- Branding disadvantage: everything is branded under ANU. ANU has one of the most inflexible website -we have to ask for permission to change things on the website. It'd be good have our own service level website that we have full control of. E.g. AGRF has their own developers and content creators.
Discussion is not saying that we don't want to belong to ANU, but referring to there should be certain level of freedom with local level managerial team for functions that can be and should be resolved locally: for example, change some information on the website directly related to the business of a team – the team should be able to easily handle this
- Following on from the last point: this prevents us to respond to the market quickly > Financial restriction, very big brandy restrictions etc. We should have the right to make decisions on the spot, not waiting to get approvals from 5 people up in the chain.
- Stats and Computing support, at the moment, they completely relied on voluntarily research academia donating their free time – a fairer and more recognisable system is required to be established
Discussion initiated as statistical and computational support plays a huge part in nowadays teaching and research activities. The previously existing "statistical consulting unit (SCU)", this model didn't work very well as the supports were scattered into each local area but with limited people available; a new team "statistical support network" has replaced the SCU but this network rely on the local statistical expertise to voluntarily work for supporting other researchers, sometimes not even being

acknowledged – there needs to be a better system: eg. if substantial work is done, publication needs to reflect authorship or acknowledgement based on contribution; the work/support contribute by local expertise needs to be recognised in their PDR etc.

- A lack of commitment for hybrid contract (a staff of both professional and academic responsibility/potential), for example, who needs to publish paper to fix the funding for the group however this is no where written in the JD as KPI. There's a clash between what one's expected to do and what actually needs to do for the job.
- If a professional staff is willing to take on academic responsibility (eg. Teaching non-credited certificate-based course), there needs to be some level of support for that
- Transition to specialist stream of existing roles has been push back for 1 year or so.
- Facilitator sessions like this (not only about input for university strategy), from local area to present thoughts and feedback to the top, is helpful – if the input is actually being heard and help shapes the decision making process
- PDR/PD: Should assign task clearer, with greater transparency.
- Will there be any kinda of transparency regarding university budget?

Session time/date/location	13 May 2026
Facilitator name	Toni Bauman
Attendee numbers	17 (incl facilitator)

Summary:

Participants provided feedback on the first draft of the ANU strategy in the following areas:

- communication and engagement gaps in strategy development
- level of ambition and ability to be implemented
- governance to support strategy development and implementation
- coordination required to support implementation
- language and framing
- data
- acknowledgement of challenges
- teaching is not mentioned in the strategy

Strategy feedback

1. Communication and engagement gaps in strategy development

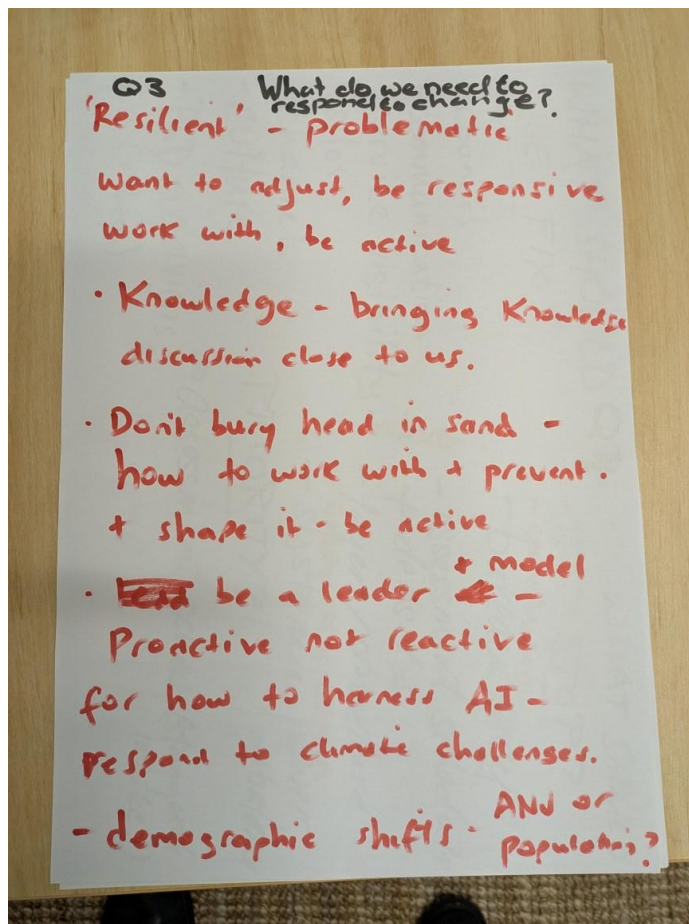
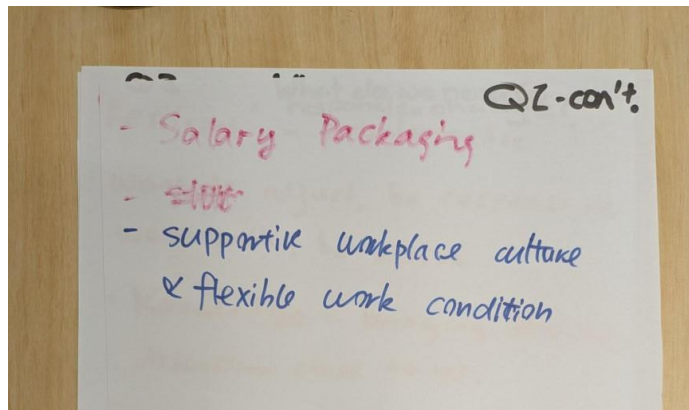
- Communication with First Nations participants on the strategy needs to be consistent, and the strategy needs input from First Nations participants right across the university community
- The group felt there had been a lack of communication to First Nations staff about this meeting and the strategy development process to date
- Limited understanding of who is driving the development of this strategy and who has ownership of actions; uncoordinated approach
- Coordinated messaging about the strategy should reach all First Nations staff across the university
- HR identified as a key channel for reaching First Nations staff
- First Nations Portfolio (FNP), Colleges/Deans to distribute information to relevant people
- **Action:** FNP to collate list of First Nations staff to engage in this process.
- **Action:** hold another meeting with this group after Version 2 of the strategy is released and required data has been compiled.

2. Ambition and ability to be implemented

- Significant concerns that the current draft strategy feels symbolic rather than actionable.
- Commitments appear superficial without resources, staffing, or clear pathways on how outcomes will be achieved.
- Overstatement of ANU's achievements
- *'Feels like more of the same' – layering over long-standing issues; as the national university we need to be bold in ambitions.*
- Strategy should articulate responsibilities, not just aspirations

3. Governance to support strategy development and implementation
 - New ANU strategy needs a separate Indigenous Strategy Implementation Plan designed by a First Nations Strategy Implementation Group and stakeholders
4. Coordination required to support implementation
 - A challenge under the current strategy has been lack of coordination – need to resource these commitments so there is a coordinated approach under the new strategy, resourcing and a plan.
 - *'Of course we need more Indigenous academics and student numbers, but how do we do this? Who is driving it and what resourcing from the university do we have to make it happen? Ad hoc, piecemeal and uncoordinated.'*
5. Framing and language
 - the strategy needs to reflect an understanding of the importance of responsiveness to community – this is currently missing.
 - Indigenous agenda setting needs to be done by community and be Indigenous-led, not co-designed; pathways of accountability must be to mob not only in Indigenous related sections of the strategy but also in identifying Indigenous interests in all strategic areas.
 - *'how we listen and respond as the national university; it's a core role of the ANU'*
 - need to shift from transactional (benefits the university) to relational
 - national collective responsibilities; ANU is good at what it does, but is part of a landscape, we don't provide everything all students need
 - *'We are part of a landscape - local, state, national. Not competing. Collective responsibility to help young people find their right path. Remove terms like 'we are the best'.*
 - Current language is problematic: *'benevolent', 'outdated'*
 - *'Need to change how it is worded. It reads like ANU is perfect but It's also about collective responsibilities'.*
6. Data
 - Currently reads as value judgements rather than being data informed;
 - pockets of data exist across the university, but who collates it/holds it all e.g. how much First Nations money is going to First Nations researchers and research.
 - FNP to collate data - First Nations staff, students, research.
7. Acknowledgement of challenges
 - Strategy needs to acknowledge existing environment and what is not going well; ie cultural safety, bullying, racism, curriculum review and other review outcomes.
8. Teaching is not mentioned in the strategy

Session time/date/location	13 May 2026, Health and Wellbeing Centre
Facilitator name	Jesse Hooper
Attendee numbers	11



WHAT SHOULD WE FIX? Q4

- council
- communication
- service visibility
- silos
- channels
- culture
- PhD supervisors? (relationships)

WHAT SHOULD STOP? Q4

- ^{redundancy cycle} ~~central system~~
- bureaucracy
- assessment schedule + density
- layers/structure
- ^{getting rid of admin} systemic power imbalance

PRIORITY?

→ Assessment sched (staggered intake?)

- WHAT'S MISSING? BETTER QNS? Q5

- ① In what ways are we working in EWI to collaborate better/more directly with our referring client base (Residences + Colleges)? (reduce silos)
- ② How do we ensure that we don't duplicate or waste our professional efforts?
- ③ How do we ensure that our clinical + admin systems support "excellence for purpose" across ANU?
- ④ How are barriers to accessing wellbeing supports being reduced?
- ⑤ How do we ensure that our systems, designed to support compliance + upskilling, don't disenfranchise professional expertise?

CULTURE.

* What are our needs as staff?
Who knows what these are? How
do managers support this?

* A clear Strategy supports org culture.

*

Session time/date/location	Wednesday 13 May 2026, 11.00am-12.00pm Jean Martin Room, Beryl Rawson
Session name	Digital HASS Infrastructure
Attendee numbers	4 convenors + 9 guests

Summary

The session discussed how digital research infrastructure for the humanities, arts, and social sciences (HASS) should be reflected in the ANU strategy, what is required to enable digital HASS research, and what services and priorities are needed. Three breakout groups responded to five framing questions.

Discussion converged on five themes:

1. the inclusion of digital HASS in the current strategy draft;
2. the human dimension of infrastructure (training, communities of practice, sustained capability);
3. persistent siloing across colleges and between STEM and HASS;
4. the need for explicit policy on AI use, data sovereignty, and environmental cost; and
5. the preference for in-house, academic-led tooling that enhances rather than displaces existing disciplinary practice.

Key Findings

1. Digital research methods, infrastructure, and outputs are present across the full breadth of disciplines at ANU. The strategy's treatment of 'digital' should explicitly reflect this disciplinary range.
2. The ANU HASS community is heterogeneous in its intellectual commitments, and the tooling that ANU supports should reflect that heterogeneity.
3. Infrastructure includes people, practices, and communities, not only hardware and platforms.
4. All groups reported difficulty identifying which digital HASS services, resources, and points of contact are available to the ANU community.
5. Siloing across colleges and between STEM and HASS impedes collaboration, in that researchers cannot easily find out who is doing what or what is possible.
6. AI use, data sovereignty, and environmental cost require explicit institutional policy, developed with bottom-up input rather than imposed from the centre. Responsible-use guidelines and quality criteria for AI-assisted research, including AI-assisted coding, remain un(der)defined.
7. Introducing new digital research infrastructure after a sustained period of institutional austerity carries social-safety risks that need to be adequately addressed.
8. In-house, academic-led tooling is preferred to external consultancies. Trust depends on visible academic and researcher-led governance, and bespoke systems should be possible where standard tooling falls short.
9. A two-tier ITS arrangement disadvantages specialist research computing, with baseline ITS supported and specialist provisions inadequately resourced. Software licensing is expensive, grant-funded equipment sits uncoordinated, and storage for large or culturally sensitive datasets exceeds what NCI can hold. Long-term stewardship of these data needs to be planned for.

10. Digital HASS should be framed as enhancing existing disciplinary practice rather than supplanting it.
11. Digital HASS has a public-facing dimension that connects to ANU's national mission, particularly in outreach and the communication of research.
12. Digital HASS produces outputs that conventional publishing does not handle well. Research storytelling, public-good outreach, and non-text artefacts were raised as work the University should support.

Recommendations

1. Where the strategy mentions 'digital', name HASS alongside STEM, and frame digital research infrastructure as a university-wide concern
2. Infrastructure design, procurement, and governance decisions for digital HASS should be accountable to the disciplines they serve and should be designed to accommodate different intellectual norms.
3. Treat training, communities of practice, and sustained statistical, software engineering, and data-management capability as infrastructure, and fund them as such.
4. Publish and circulate a current catalogue of digital HASS services, resources, and points of contact, covering its consultation, training, infrastructure, and bespoke-development work.
5. Build cross-college collaboration mechanisms and a university-wide directory of researchers, methods, and capacity.
6. Develop an ANU AI research policy through bottom-up consultation, covering responsible use, quality criteria for AI-assisted research, data sovereignty, and environmental cost.
7. The rollout of digital HASS resources should be sensitive to organisational and institutional conditions at ANU. Communications should make clear how the new infrastructure is intended to relieve existing burden.
8. Make the academic and researcher-led character of digital HASS resources at ANU visible in its external communications and allow bespoke tooling where standard offerings fall short.
9. Extend ITS support to specialist research computing; coordinate software licensing and grant funded equipment to reduce duplication and waste.
10. Plan storage and stewardship for large and culturally sensitive datasets that fall outside NCI's remit.
11. Provide services for grant proposals, code and review of analysis, and statistical and research software support.
12. Position digital HASS within ANU's outreach and public-communication functions, and resource it accordingly.
13. Support and produce research and outreach outputs that conventional publishing does not accommodate well, including animations, games, simulations, mobile and web apps, interactive visualisations, and audio-visual artefacts.

Session time/date/location	2pm, 13 May 2026; Alan Barton Forum
Facilitator name	Jill Mowbray-Tsutsumi, Wendy Russell, Sejul Malde, Charlie Morgan
Attendee numbers	Approx 20

Method:

The session was conducted in World Café style - we split the group into four tables each taking a theme relating to the strategy and engaged research and impact (impact framing; Partnerships and spheres of influence; Systems & Incentives; and Research priority and investment). The session was conducted in 3 rounds, with participants rotating around the 4 tables. We closed with sharing our hopes and fears for the Strategy (captured below).

Key themes from discussion rounds

THEME 1: Engagement and public responsibility need to be much more centred in the ANU Strategy

Currently the strategy does not tell a cohesive, connected narrative of change and national mission and focus on publics and responsibility to the Australian people. For example, the Values pages are just individual unconnected elements of what we think are important but does nothing credible to tell this overall narrative. A focus on engagement could do that - it could be the narrative glue. If engagement and relational work was foregrounded in the strategy, then all aspects of the strategy could also have that focus.

- Engagement needs to be included in the main framing of the ANU strategy, not just a small piece of it. At the moment there is 'whiff' of engagement but nothing concrete and useful.
- Engagement should be directly aligned to our national mission. Eg service to communities should be centred in our national mission. If it was, then engagement would naturally be considered in all aspects of the strategy, cascading down to inform all our work, rather than being siloed off
- Engagement should be a pillar of impact alongside research and education. Currently we do so much other engaged work that isn't just about research and education (as we traditionally understand them) and that is responsive to current needs and reality e.g. the other responsive and flexible forms of education, partnership work, translation, convening. This is all currently being missed off.

THEME 2: Overall tone, direction and spirit of the ANU Strategy needs significant shift so people can feel inspired to make the changes that are needed and see themselves in it

Currently the strategy can be either be read (by some) as only responding to the current moment, and (for others) focused on the past as it's about maintaining the university as is. Instead, it should be much more future orientated, framed as striving for change and inspiring people to be part of it - it does none of that at the moment.

Participants want the next version of the strategy to shift from an internally-focused, incremental document to a bold, externally-engaged, impact-driven agenda, with clear principles around research priorities, investment alignment, and foreshadowing of implementation pathways with responsibilities.

THEME 3: Impact needs much more explaining and opening up in the Strategy.

Currently impact is just a singular term that is treated as a natural and automatic output of all our work. The Strategy needs to talk more about what it is, how it is enabled, and how impact intersects with collaborations and relational work.

THEME 4: Engaged research and impact underpins our national reputation and service to Australian public

Our national reputation and the NIG are critically related to our engaged research and impact, our connections with society and how we demonstrate value to the Aust public. We want the public to intuitively know that that is what ANU is about. The Strategy should make this explicit.

THEME 5: Approach to partnerships is one-way and should be reframed. ATSI/FN research provides exemplars in this space.

The approach to partnerships is very inward-looking/extractive and not outward looking in the way strong and enduring partnerships are. Partnerships should be reframed as two-way and mutually beneficial.

Increased flagging of the importance and role of diverse communities in shaping our priorities and actions across the pillars is needed. A broad definition of community, including government, publics, partners, end-users, alumni, etc. is needed.

Engaged research's underpinnings are in ATSI/FN research - ANU has amazing examples of how these partnerships can be conducted, particularly in the ATSI research area – but these strengths are not clear in the Strategy at all, even though FN is a clear emphasis.

- Eg could use Yardhura Walani as an example of a by nature engaged approach to research for community.
- Eg: The focus on FN feels quite siloed off. It would be better if it was more meaningfully connected into our strategy. Eg to talk about how First Nations work allows us to learn more about engagement and also to support our engaged work e.g. like in Aotearoa where Mauri concepts are more directly considered as feeding into other approaches and structures

THEME 6: Concept of our research value shouldn't simply be outsourced to rankings.

Understanding what value is and where value is understood by our partners enables ongoing learning and improvement for research, education and engagement. This process of understanding value shouldn't simply be left to rankings. We need broad, inclusive and generative processes to determine quality and value of research to the nation.

THEME 7: Explicit articulation of ANU as a civic university with local responsibility is welcome

This focus should help us start to unpack what it would be like to be truly civic, eg. what would it be like making our campus truly open to our communities.

THEME 8: Misalignment in structure– actions don't align with overarching goals and values

The strategy has internal misalignment between overarching goals and values, which are consistent with the priorities of the ERI strategy, and possible actions, which suggest business-as-usual and do not support the change that is signalled as desired.

The Strategy seems to be to invest in people, performance, excellence; instead of investing in systems, including diverse people in diverse roles, and relationships within and beyond the university, in order to support existing capability and build new capability. This is needed to fulfill our mission.

Hopes and fears for the Strategy

Hopes	Fears
That the draft changes a lot	That the strategy will adopt business-as-usual
The strategy (S) will set standards for the ANU community, needs to be more ambitious	
Our distinctive contribution influences the S	BAU, tick-box exercise, not moving forward
Change, articulation focused on external, not inward-looking	What happens when this becomes a one-pager?
A guiding document we can use to guide decisions	The opposite
Captures the good perspectives raised here	Our perspectives don't get captured
Diverse voices incorporated	Implementation challenges and risks
Something useful, helpful	Implementation challenges – ANU doesn't have a good track record on this
'impact' better understood, supported	Disingenuous, agenda already set
Capture energy, voices	If done badly, might be the last straw for some people
First Nations commitments really reflect views of indigenous staff and community	Lip service
Who's in the room, we care	Word salad that gives cover for Renew to be reactivated
Sets out ambitious goals, that we can get behind	Poor implementation track record
Just a hope that we can get some words in that keep things open	That things are already closed
That we can shape the S a bit, signal ERI work, that this cascades up	That we miss this opportunity

There is still energy and care.

Notes – Impact framing

Eg 1 The focus on infrastructure could widen to relational capital also?

Eg 2 Values are internal – about us and how we act – but instead should and could be about how we relate to others, publics and to the nation

Eg 3: Current references to relationships/partnerships feel very singular and one way rather than a focus on mutuality and helping others.

- The tone and framing of the strategy should reflect on how everyone's contribution (academic or professional) is vital for engagement and impact
- Framing and content of much of strategy is very passive currently and also very operational language, focused on day to day maintenance rather than about meaningful ambitious change
- Eg Action in Research Stream: "implement rigorous development reviews of academic units" - this should be normal business - why is it in the strategy?
- Eg 2 Spheres of influences as a term is very passive and also focus is again more operational e.g. revenue raising. Should instead be more active re owning it – put it front and centre. Spheres of Action would be a better term but needs more ambitious actions in it than currently.
- You could easily substitute 'attention' for 'impact' as tone of strategy is more focused on things we do that are noticed rather than being valuable to others
- Impact if not explained properly is not really as helpful term. It implies a crash!
- Impact differs according to context but strategy does not reflect this
- We need to say more about how impact intersects with collaborations and relational work
- Social impact should have its own page in the strategy.....all about publics – is absent...
- Eg Research page : possible actions to grow impact is not mentioned
- Eg 2 Reference to 'Greatest impact'. Impact on who and how?
-

Partnerships and spheres of influence

Notes –

- Strategy overall is light on social impact side -> not serving communities
- Inward looking - partnerships can't operate in inward looking environment -
- nods to elements of impact but not actually outlining what we mean in a meaningful way
- Need to touch on why partnerships are set up with a longterm horizon (foundational reason - National university - certain qualities for doing this)
- Different knowledge systems, different disciplinary areas will look different when it comes to ERI
- No mention of what sorts of infrastructure, capability and skills needed to do partnerships → relational labour (legwork put into relationships)
- Spectrum of types of relationships which need to be impact oriented/measured
- We need to be transparent about what we can and can't do - our partner's objectives may not be aligned with ours
- Organisational value and overlaps - mapping of needs across a longterm timeframe
- foundations of research and approach are reasonably aligned.
- 'Influence' is unclear and potentially troubling terminology – 'Give value' should be reflected in the language - should be service; community
- Directions -
- Can we include some acknowledgement of what is required to deliver partnerships? Do x, which would require y, z .

Suggested eg. wording for Spheres of Influence page:

Direction - we will talk to the Australian public

Actively engage with our end-users of our research

We will equip our community to engage with our communities (industry, govt etc)

ANU Examples which speak to more reciprocal, mutually beneficial partnerships

Fearless Women

NSC

Sustainable Farms

NCEPH

Sarah Bice - Infrastructure

Co-Lab

Give specific examples of consortia instead of competition eg - climate change work and Access-NRI. Not about ANU, or about competition but about acting together as a consortia, in service of the nation.

Systems & Incentives

Notes:

- Vanilla strategy, internal misalignment (front matter vs later possible actions); actions matter more than language (incentives are key)
- 'Possible actions' refer to functions, not to values, behaviours, no reach through of values into strategy
- Strategy should provide the big Why, supporting many Hows
- Bigger picture – ANU profile – to attract collaborators, students, public; rankings limited; also not just about ANU but 'Australia' (need to lift our horizon)
- Risk profile in strategic statements mismatched with systems (risk-averse); need to remove guardrails
- Need room to fail; faster pace of change cf other sectors
- Engagement is missing – should be a third pillar
- Collaboration and engagement are spoken about but not supported, how to enable interdis collaboration?
- Impact is too narrowly defined – the definition will miss some of our core business, incl contributions to national capability
- Framing of impact – what does ANU put value on? (just what is easy to measure?)
- How to account for long-term, meaningful impacts
 - E.g. Book (ANU incl Peter Yu) – Land of Promises – ANU stepped in (WA mining), intervened, engaged with communities to develop solutions, now stories of impact
- Lack of recognition for third space staff/labour – creates disincentives for work and capability that is critical to mission and impact e.g. bridging, translation, convening
 - Third space staff are professional staff, in service of academic staff, this discounts value of their work and unique contributions; their work is not legible in systems
 - Professional staff wait at port to refuel the research boats; have unique skills, help research to work with unwieldy systems – critical roles
- Everyone has a role in the system (but current focus is on individual researchers)
- Need a systems approach
- Talent; Investing in people (cheaper) vs investing in systems (generative)
- We should harness the ingenuity that goes into working around systems -> gold!
- Some live in a world of exemptions – systems are colonial, impede much work
- Accessibility, transparency of info – a blocker/barrier; we can't just get on with things, need confidence in systems
- CRM; internal, who is where doing what; know who we're working with
- Streamlining to reduce friction in workloads – but in which direction are we streamlining?
- Compliance focus gets in the way of gathering useful info
- Incentives (still focused on individuals and performance) vs providing support and systems; recognition vs monitoring performance (recognition can be culture-building, linked to learning)

- How do we incentivise and measure the engagement activity that makes us a partner of choice?
- Rankings not significant for most partners (relationships more important)
- Criteria are critical and come from values
- Politics of classification, papers vs engagement and impact
- Explicit vs tacit incentives/disincentives; not explicit in strategy but sets a 'permission structure'
- Narrow understanding of excellence (Nixon review provides some useful suggestions about broadening)
- Rigorous tests re national contribution -> rigorous dialogue!
- What is effective work? Who decides
- Whip them harder -> excellence vs understanding of quality (how defined and by whom); building capability towards quality
- Quality = value (useful to community)
- Current focus on 'stuff' vs merit, quality
- What's currently valued vs what's important (engagement, opening up)
- How to measure relational work? Broader academic community, diversity should feed into 'rigorous testing'
- Need focus on culture, principle-based incentives – to do our best work

Notes - Research priority and investment

- The ANU value proposition remains unclear in the v1 document. Staff were expecting one to be present, particularly for external readers of the new strategy.
- V1 is too inward-looking, vanilla and lacks aspiration, vision and boldness – staff are looking for inspiration
- Reads as incremental (“backing the same horse”) rather than future-focused
- Some wanted a clear articulation of: where ANU will lead and what ANU will stop or deprioritise
- Participants expressed concern about the lack foreshadowing/flagging of delivery mechanisms and/or ownership and time horizons for the potential actions. While a few statements in v1 have predictable owners and timelines, most were too vague, suffered from being business as usual (rather than strategic in nature) and/or jargon heavy to make sense of their meaning and intent.
- Participants highlighted the need to build/maintain the public trust and cultivate “friends in the public sphere”
- Concern overall the lack of community, stakeholder, public engagement in our priorities and creation of impact.
- Some felt that additional context regarding government alignment and scrutiny of our education and research priorities is needed in the revised document.
- Long-term partnerships seen as a major strength but not recognised/measured
- The role of engagement & partnerships is under-emphasised and undervalued in v1. Engaged research should be a core strategic pillar
- Gaps in people and culture; the role, recognition and impact of our EMCRs are missing in v1
- Decision making is seen as dominated by established leadership and not responsive to emerging fields, priorities, etc.
- The Strategy should better reflect the talent development of staff and students, recognition of the importance of engagement work, and that there will be different metrics of success.
- There is an opportunity to treating enabling platforms as institutional-wide assets, i.e. interdisciplinary research and cross cutting capabilities, e.g. AI, GIS/Spatial, statistics, maker space etc.
- Participants expressed confusion and dissatisfaction with the lack of foreshadowing around investment strategy and priorities. It isn't yet clear if there is a linkage, or if such strategy/priorities are forwarding looking and/or provide opportunities to differentiate ANU research, education, and impact.
- The strategy would benefit from the recognition of externally funded strengths that are elevated due to community/public/peer review significance and support for emerging areas (both internal strengths and national priorities).
- Shift from “research done to/for” → “research done with”
- Questions staff wanted answered/address in the strategy: “ANU will be known for what?” and “For whom?”
- On the topic of v1 Values, they are too internally focused for an institutional strategy. While its recognised they are reflected of the Nixon report, many expressed a desire for values of integrity, curiosity, and academic freedom/independence to sit above what often reads as more best practice values in a work environment.
- A v2 strategy should recognise and require non-ROI-based investment logic for many components, e.g. collections, long-term relationships and datasets, and other capabilities of a National University such as the ANU. This could come in the form of our context and potential actions.
- Participants thought that the flagging/framing of research risks/rewards within the University research portfolio would elevate the section and principles.

Session time/date/location	15 May 2026 - Online
Facilitator name	Kirsten Farrell
Attendee numbers	11 including - facilitator & scribe

Summary:

- What does it really mean now to be the national university and how does this manifest in strategic and practical terms for ANU Institutes and Centres
- Transdisciplinarity and how this should be expressed in the strategy

Notes:

- The strategy document is a little confusing has both strategic points and action plans.
- The language in the strategy should be **inspiring** which is not the current case. It seems like ANU is still in a mending process. Instead, it should present itself as a confident leader.
- The strategy should name **key research areas**, like in the last version, to display research leadership.
- Currently, there is not a lot of optimism in the university. People are doubling down on their safe spaces and are finding it difficult to elevate themselves. There is a need for some self-assurance within the university. The strategy should first of all speak to our internal identity.
- Need to refocus national mission on **gender equality** and reanimate aspects of the gender initiative cf Nixon review
- The strategy doesn't commit to a **systems thinking approach** to professional resources. There needs to be a stronger link to build connective tissues that support the academic mission.
- ANU should double-down on what it does well and **distinctively**. The institution structure is not unique but some of the elements are.
- **Values**
 - Perception of separation of 'respectful' and 'collegial'; suggestion to use 'collegial respect' to address it
 - It is missing some values (e.g. intellectual curiosity, academic collaboration) that can scaffold transdisciplinary research and present it as a positive and valued thing at the ANU.
 - ANU graduates are expected to have transdisciplinary skills (see Graduate Attributes), but it is not reflected in the values. It should be which would also support the mission of institutes & centres. However, transdisciplinary work is hard and even when done well can look messy from an external perspective. It would be better to not to explicitly name transdisciplinary as a value. Instead, consider: interconnectedness, compact and diverse university, cross-campus collaboration/connection
- What does ANU need to do to fulfill its role as the '**national university**'? ANU has to work differently to other universities because of the **NIG**.
 - Consider prioritising **trans/inter/multidisciplinary research** and using a part of NIG to support that through institutes
 - Although many universities claim to do this, it is very hard to do well. People often struggle outside their discipline. ANU needs to put in the efforts to make it happen as it should be a practice, an ongoing everyday thing.
 - Particularly relevant for institutes whose success has traditionally required bringing different disciplines together.

- This requires **disciplinary excellence** which means having a deep knowledge in the areas we prioritise and value. This needs to be reflected in hiring and recruitment. Many experts in key areas as on soft money and/or short-term contracts which puts disciplinary expertise in jeopardy.
- **Incentives** are also important to support interdisciplinary engagement (e.g. seed funding, interdisciplinary fellows). Institutes navigate this by letting projects sit in Colleges. If ANU moves to a model where institutes have to self-fund, this will create competition and limit collaboration.
- This is unlikely to happen since the NIG funds ongoing salaries and has no surplus to go into new initiatives.
- The ANU has a **national convening power** that comes with the NIG and the national research mandate. It should also play a leadership role in the sector.
 - Areas ANU already does this well: space, COP, Pacific, Asia-Pacific, Northeast Asia
 - **Space:** ANU is seen as the only university able to have a national coordination & convening roles to bring capabilities across universities and states to limit/manage the competition between states and universities.
 - **Pacific engagement** is a strength of ANU. The Pacific Institute has a national convening role around conferences. ICEDS engagement with Pacific partners around climate change, a key issue for Pacific partners, has overcome perceptions of ANU colonialism. This is at risk since DPA has largely been funded by DFAT which has not been renewed.
 - Asian institutes are fragmented. However, ANU has supported interdisciplinary research in the region (e.g. ZCEAP in decarbonisation)
 - Due to competition with other universities, it is sometimes difficult to collaborate with experts from other universities. ANU cannot be the national convenor in areas where other universities have stronger research expertise.
 - Leverage **national infrastructure** that cannot easily be replicated to support national convening around an issue (e.g. NCI and climate modelling; nuclear stewardship)
- ANU's **proximity to government** is being challenged by the internet. Bigger universities have easier access the federal government even without being in the Canberra.
 - Federal government still relies on disciplinary expertise.
 - Federal government wants short-term research to support policy development. ANU needs to build itself better (e.g. systems and staff) to do this to work with government and build human networks. UTS ISF is an example of a university area that does this well.
 - ANU needs to distinguish its relationship between national government and national research efforts. Relying on national government funding in key strengths/areas of ANU has significant implications on staff and research.
- **Share research findings with all Australians**, not just through submissions to government.
 - **Media** is a key component to people's lives. ANU experts appear on radio interviews. ANU also produces key media outputs. This needs to be valued, but it is difficult to reflect on a balance sheet.

- Internal ANU media teams need to work with researchers to create accurate and authentic stories about ANU's leadership in different areas. Do not use AI to create vignettes.

Appendix 3 | Other submissions

Submissions list

1. Strengthening alignment between the Draft ANU Strategy (v1) and the ANU Engaged Research and Impact Strategy
2. How can disciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education mutually strengthen each other at ANU?
3. New York Alumni Roundtable
4. Shanghai Alumni Roundtable
5. Integrating sustainability into the University Strategy
6. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) / Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA)
7. Halls of Residence
8. Commercialisation and Intellectual Property (CIP)
9. ANU Enterprise
10. Workshop Input from the Global Institute for Women's Leadership and Wiyi Yani U Thangani First Nations Gender Justice Institute
11. Yardhura Walani and National Centre for Indigenous Genomics
12. ANU Institute for Space – InSpace
13. Creative Arts and Humanities
14. CASS Anthropology Response to the Draft Strategy V1
15. Positioning ANU as a National Leader in Health and Care Workforce Research, Policy and Training
16. Australian Centre on China in the World

Strengthening alignment between the Draft ANU Strategy (v1) and the ANU Engaged Research and Impact Strategy

Purpose and context

The Draft ANU Strategy presents a strong and compelling vision for ANU as Australia's national university: purpose-driven, publicly accountable, values-led, and committed to education and research that matter to Australia and the world. Its emphasis on national service, First Nations leadership, collaboration and long-term societal contribution strongly reflects ANU's distinctive role.

The Engaged Research and Impact (ERI) Strategy was developed to ensure ANU can deliver on this national mission in practice—by shaping how research and education are designed, conducted and governed to create meaningful, sustained value with and for society. Consultation during its development highlighted the need for ANU to evolve how knowledge is created and mobilised with society—through meaningful engagement, collaboration and partnership—to enhance research quality, societal relevance and long-term impact, and to build a culture and institutional capability fit for this purpose.

In this sense, the ERI Strategy provides a practical articulation of ANU's national mission, translating ambition into the conditions, practices and relationships required to realise it over time.

The ERI Strategy was approved by Academic Board in late 2025 as a strategic framework recognising disciplinary diversity and varied engagement contexts across the University. An Engaged Research and Impact Working Group has since been established under the University Research Committee to steward learning-led implementation and support alignment across ANU's strategies, systems and practices.

A key risk identified during ERI development was misalignment with other University strategies, particularly where impact, excellence, partnerships and systems are framed in ways that unintentionally reinforce traditional institutional incentives—shifting attention toward reporting outcomes rather than supporting the research processes that generate impact over time. This submission therefore focuses on priority opportunities to strengthen alignment, reduce delivery risk and ensure that the Draft ANU Strategy's ambitions can be realised coherently over time.

The priority recommendations below focus on areas where alignment will have the greatest effect on delivery, capability and long-term impact, while fitting directly within the existing structure of the Draft ANU Strategy.

Priority 1: Reframe impact as a core ANU practice

Where in Draft Strategy: Impact overview; referenced in Research and Spheres of Influence sections

Alignment issue:

The Draft Strategy strongly values impact, but primarily presents it as an outcome of excellence, scale and investment. The ERI Strategy emphasises that impact is not automatic; it must be deliberately designed, supported and sustained.

Recommendation:

Explicitly define impact as a core practice of the University.

Suggested text (insert in Impact overview):

ANU's impact is generated through engaged research and education practices that embed collaboration, reciprocity and mutual value creation across and throughout the full lifecycle of research, learning and knowledge creation.

Benefit to ANU:

Creates a shared operational understanding of impact, ensuring ANU's national mission is realised through consistent, practice-based approaches across disciplines and partnerships.

Priority 2: Link research excellence to engagement and knowledge democracy

Where: Research → Direction

Alignment issue:

The Draft Strategy affirms research excellence and national relevance, but under-specifies the role of engagement, diverse knowledge systems and co-creation in achieving these aims.

Recommendation:

Broaden the definition of excellence to explicitly include engaged and collaborative knowledge production.

Suggested text:

ANU recognises research excellence as encompassing disciplinary rigour and enhanced research quality through engagement, alongside the inclusion of Indigenous, community and practitioner knowledges, and the capacity to generate shared societal benefit in line with ANU's role as the national university.

Benefit to ANU:

Strengthens research relevance, legitimacy and national leadership, while aligning investment priorities with contemporary expectations of excellence.

Priority 3: Embed engaged research as the delivery mechanism for First Nations commitments

Where: Our First Nations commitments → Direction / Possible actions

Alignment issue:

The Draft Strategy's First Nations commitments are strong and values-aligned, but would benefit from clearer articulation of how they are delivered through everyday research practice. These commitments are closely aligned with engaged research principles, many of which are grounded in long-standing Indigenous-led research practices that centre relational accountability, reciprocity and shared authority.

Recommendation:

Explicitly position Indigenous-led engaged research—drawing on principles grounded in Indigenous research practice—as the primary implementation pathway.

Suggested text:

ANU will operationalise its First Nations commitments through Indigenous-led engaged research, embedding UNDRIP principles in research design, ethics, data governance, partnership agreements and evaluation.

Benefit to ANU:

Moves commitments from aspiration to embedded practice and ensures consistency across research governance and partnerships, while reflecting ANU's responsibility to lead nationally in Indigenous-led research practice.

Priority 4: Define “partner of choice” through reciprocity and shared value

Where: Spheres of Influence → Direction

Alignment issue:

The Draft Strategy emphasises convening power and scale, with less attention to how partnership experience and reciprocity underpin trust and long-term impact.

Recommendation:

Clarify reciprocity and shared value as defining features of ANU's partnership approach.

Suggested text:

ANU's position as a partner of choice is strengthened by how it works with others—through reciprocity, respect, working with partners throughout the research lifecycle, shared agenda-setting and partner-defined value creation—as much as by what it convenes or provides.

Benefit to ANU:

Positions ANU as a trusted, long-term collaborator and supports sustainable societal impact.

Priority 5: Align people and culture settings with engaged research practice

Where: Our People → Direction; Enablers

Alignment issue:

The Draft Strategy acknowledges cultural harm and workload pressure, but does not yet signal how engaged research and partnership work—particularly work that is time-intensive, relational and central to delivering ANU's national mission—will be recognised and supported in practice. This reflects a broader challenge identified through ERI consultation, where this work is often under-recognised within workload and performance frameworks.

Recommendation:

Explicitly recognise and support engaged research and impact work within people and systems, as a core component of delivering ANU's research, education and partnership mission.

Suggested text:

ANU will recognise and support engaged research and impact work through workload, recruitment, promotion and performance frameworks, enabling staff to contribute to the University's national mission in sustainable and recognised ways and creating conditions in which engaged research and impact can flourish.

Benefit to ANU:

Supports culture renewal, workforce sustainability and equitable participation in engagement and impact activities, and enables staff to contribute effectively to ANU's national mission through their research, teaching and partnerships.

Priority 6: Consider ERI alignment in system and governance reform

Where: Enablers → Governance, budgets and performance reform

Alignment issue:

Without explicit reference, system reform risks unintentionally undermining engagement capacity and long-term impact.

Recommendation:

Signal that ERI principles will inform system design and review.

Suggested text:

In designing governance, budget and performance reforms, ANU will consider alignment with relevant University strategies, including the Engaged Research and Impact Strategy, and the effects of reforms on engagement capability, partnerships, culture and long-term impact.

Benefit to ANU:

Reduces the risk of perverse incentives and supports reform that enables, rather than constrains, delivery of the University's mission.

Closing

The Engaged Research and Impact Strategy provides ANU with an Academic Board-endorsed understanding of how its national mission is realised in practice—through high-quality research, education and relationships with society. Explicit alignment between the Draft ANU Strategy and the ANU ERI Strategy strengthens coherence, reduces delivery risk and positions ANU to lead nationally in collaborative, socially responsive research and education.

Critically, successful implementation will depend on sustained communities of practice that support shared learning, capability development and reflective practice in engaged research and impact across the University. As a working group under the University Research Committee, the ERI Working Group stands ready to support this work as the Strategy develops.

This submission is provided on behalf of the ANU Engaged Research and Impact Working Group, a working group under the University Research Committee. Membership of the Working Group is listed below.

DVCRI – Stuart Wyithe

Office of DVCRI - Jill Mowbray-Tsutsumi

CASS - Sejul Malde

CASS - Mitchell Whitehall

CASS - Maya Haviland

CoSM - Charlie Morgan

CSS - Wendy Russell

PVC RIE – Tim Senden

P&C – Richard Farran

RPT – Danielle Neale

RPT – Ed Bertram

RFD – Laura Dan

APPA – Sophie Holloway

CAP – Kirsten Ainley

CoSM – Anna-Sophie Jurgens

CASS – Tim Denham

NECTAR – Kathy Wang

CLGP – Alison Callear

NECTAR – Saule Burkitbayeva

NECTAR – Georgina Lee

Advancement – Divya Sahgal

CSS - Ehsan Tavakoli-Nabavi

How can disciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education mutually strengthen each other at ANU?

Participants	<u>Gabriele Bammer</u>, <u>Robert Ackland</u>, <u>Owen Atkin</u>, <u>Nicholas Brown</u>, <u>Saul Cunningham</u>, <u>Katherine Daniell</u>, <u>Paul Francis</u>, <u>Sigi Goode</u>, <u>Llewelyn Hughes</u>, <u>Peter Kanowski</u>, <u>Kate Mitchell</u>, <u>Christine Phillips</u>, <u>Sujatha Raman</u>, <u>Tim Senden</u>, <u>Hanna Suominen</u> and <u>Katerina Teaiwa</u>, with input from <u>Robert Breunig</u> Gabriele Bammer organised and facilitated the workshops and production of the report. Robert Breunig provided background documents and input into the report, but was unable to participate in the workshops.
Date	15 May 2026

Summary

The ANU Strategy “ANU by 2030” is being developed at a challenging time in the history of ANU, when academics, professional staff and students are feeling bruised, jaded and exhausted.

Our aim is to contribute to the “repair” process by assessing a distinctive contribution that ANU can make to serving the nation, the region and the world through the mutual strengthening of disciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education, enabling more effective tackling of complex societal, environmental, security and other challenges. This builds on ANU’s disciplinary excellence and breadth, as well as innovative approaches to transdisciplinarity that have been incubated at ANU over a number of years.

Our considerations cover four areas relevant to the development of the ANU Strategy “ANU by 2030” and the actions that will flow from it.

In essence, the University’s ability to serve the nation, the region and the world in addressing demanding existential issues will be enhanced by mutual strengthening of disciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education that:

- Maintains and strengthens the foundations for both disciplinary and transdisciplinary work;
- Nurtures an enabling culture;
- Removes disincentives; and
- Seizes opportunities and builds resilience.

We elaborate on each of these below and welcome an opportunity both to discuss them further and to be involved in their implementation.

Key Recommendations

- I. That the ANU Strategy specifically mentions that a focus on mutual strengthening of disciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education at ANU is key to:
 - capturing and articulating the distinctive, and complex, contribution that ANU makes locally, nationally, regionally and internationally;
 - attracting and supporting the talent that is needed—in students and staff—to maximise the impact that the University has through research and education;
 - being resilient to change from external forces such as artificial intelligence, demographic shifts and climate change; and
 - asking better questions that identify new ideas for the future of the University.
- II. That the ANU Strategy specifically recognises the existing foundations of disciplinary excellence and transdisciplinary incubation and innovation as “context” for the strategy.

- III. That the ANU Strategy specifically includes nurturing an enabling culture for mutual strengthening of disciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education as “direction” for the strategy.
- IV. That the ANU Strategy lays the necessary groundwork for removing disincentives for mutual strengthening of disciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education as “actions” flowing from the strategy.
- V. That the ANU Strategy prepares the way for seizing opportunities to further mutually strengthen disciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education as “actions” flowing from the strategy.

Specific Recommendations from the Workshops

Maintaining and Strengthening the Foundations

1. Acknowledge that the foundation of disciplinary excellence, plus the broad coverage and diversity of disciplines at ANU, is critical to, and a major strength for, transdisciplinary research and education at ANU. Further, acknowledge that much of the University’s disciplinary excellence and distinctiveness derives from its foundational interdisciplinary Research School structure and initiatives in building interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary centres and institutes. Finally acknowledge that the University’s two comparative advantages—being in the federal capital and long-standing research and policy linkages with the rest of Asia and the Pacific—advance, and are advanced by, transdisciplinary research and education.
2. Recognise that transdisciplinarity in research and education works best when it meets all of the following conditions:
 - active use of the depth that disciplinary expertise provides;
 - engagement with government, business and civil society (the non-government and community sectors) to improve policy and practice, with a focus on leveraging University capabilities to create real world impact; and
 - building and applying specific expertise, including for dealing with problems as systemic; integration across disciplinary boundaries; engaging with communities and decision makers to improve policy and practice; working in teams encompassing a range of worldviews, values and interests; and appreciating the impact of context.
3. Recognise that disciplines benefit from involvement in transdisciplinary research through increased appreciation of their relevance, generation of new questions and methods for disciplinary exploration and access to funding opportunities. Disciplines can also benefit from skills honed as part of building expertise in transdisciplinary research and education, including effective teamwork, harnessing plurality and effective research implementation.
4. Value the creativity and innovation that result from understanding and fostering productive tensions, such as between disciplines and transdisciplinarity, serendipity and structure, traditional and non-traditional outputs, and metrics and capabilities.
5. Celebrate inspirational, courageous, ambitious and purposeful working across boundaries both in research and in research-led, human-centred education that equips the next generation to effectively apply their skills to a range of future problems, situations and environments.

Nurturing the Enabling Culture

6. Acknowledge the University’s current research and educational commitments to transdisciplinarity and their history, including:
 - multiple schools, centres, institutes, projects, programs and courses tackling complex societal, environmental, security and other problems that bring together a range of disciplines and that are developing transdisciplinary expertise; and
 - the ANU graduate attribute “Capability to Employ Discipline-based Knowledge in Transdisciplinary Problem Solving” involving teaching across the whole university.
7. Value and promote the richness of different approaches to transdisciplinarity, including problem- and field-based education, teams using practice-based approaches to real-world problems, development of transdisciplinary theory and methods, and

individual researchers combining disciplines to support government decision making. Foster and support researchers and educators in “giving transdisciplinarity a go.”

8. Understand that on-going promotion of a culture for transdisciplinarity also involves encouraging multiple additional strands, especially grounding in First Nations culture and wisdom, place-based involvements in Asia and the Pacific, attention to values, the creative arts, multi-and interdisciplinarity, systems thinking, and community and consumer engagement.
9. Facilitate serendipitous encounters, through a culture of making time for them, along with formal and informal occasions and spaces, such as organised cross-university lunches and seminars, and Fellows Garden at University House. In particular, encourage the multiple cross-university, cross-college and cross-school committees and working groups to also devote time to building relationships and sharing ideas that could open new research and teaching opportunities to develop and operationalise transdisciplinary activities.
10. Use transdisciplinary approaches internally to tackle major problems confronting ANU, especially as individuals and areas have only a partial view of the whole. Encourage learning from failure.

Removing Disincentives

11. Recognise the substantial loss to the University’s ability to serve the nation, the region and the world from disincentives that reduce enthusiasm for, and even block, cross-university transdisciplinary initiatives, especially in education.
12. Specifically prioritise and target well-known disincentives, such as budget and financial allocation arrangements that deter cross-campus educational courses and programs.
13. Undertake a stocktake to identify other disincentives for prioritising and targeting, such as recording and assessing the impact of organisational rigidities, including lack of mechanisms to feed back on-the-ground experience to those responsible for setting and enacting policy.
14. Recognise and accommodate inherent different discipline-based levels of ease and comfort with engaging in transdisciplinary research and education, including delivering courses in line with the graduate attribute “Capability to Employ Discipline-based Knowledge in Transdisciplinary Problem Solving,” and do this without reinforcing disciplinary silos.
15. Support educators in accommodating diversity among students in background knowledge, motivations, life experiences and pressures when providing courses focused on the graduate attribute “Capability to Employ Discipline-based Knowledge in Transdisciplinary Problem Solving”.

Seizing Opportunities and Building Resilience

16. Recognise that the difficulties confronting ANU and the university sector—which are just one example of the many challenges facing Australia, the region and the world—also provide opportunities to demonstrate the value of the University’s disciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education, as well as to build resilience.
17. Recognise the growing demand and funding for mission-led research (e.g. pillars that are part of the Federal Government’s recent Strategic Review of R&D) and education (e.g. ATEC mission-based compacts), which implicitly require transdisciplinarity. Support an approach to mission-led research that builds on the ANU’s expertise, advantages and history, including:
 - encouraging and supporting coalitions of willing researchers to enhance understanding and action on major social, environmental, security and other problems by going beyond usual disciplinary inputs to encompass additional new partners from the wide coverage of disciplines at ANU (including expertise from the humanities which does not usually feature in mission-led research); and
 - promoting and playing a leading international role in codifying the skills necessary for transdisciplinary research and education by facilitating the development of an ANU Centre for Mission Design, Synthesis and Scenarios.
18. Enhance the University’s position as a trusted provider of research and education tackling demanding existential problems by:

- recognising and supporting the development of the institutional discovery substrate that underpins our unique convening power across disciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education, including the stewardship and integration of distinctive, nationally significant infrastructure, collections, instrumentation, digital environments, library and information services, governance systems, and engagement platforms that together attract talent, enable deep expertise, and create opportunities for collaboration across the University and with external partners; and
 - leveraging the National Institutes Grant and the Institute of Advanced Studies embodied in the Australian National University Act 1991.
19. Realise the potential for strengthening transdisciplinary education and research training through key ANU initiatives, especially flexible double degrees, targeted masters-by-coursework degrees and ANU's McCusker Institute, as well as strengthening transdisciplinary higher degrees by research and post-doctoral research. In particular, recognise:
- the value in helping students to genuinely integrate disciplinary insights when undertaking flexible double-degrees;
 - the opportunities for education and research innovation that can come from encouraging and supporting academics to design courses, including flagship courses, that cross disciplinary boundaries; and
 - the benefits to higher degree by research students and their supervisors of engaged disciplinary interactions and development of transdisciplinary expertise, both in undertaking the projects and in finding suitable examiners.
20. Recognise the current opportunity to capitalise on multiple past incubators for risky (at the time) transdisciplinary ideas and to build strong foundations for on-going transdisciplinary research and education. Support on-going and future incubators, especially small-scale initiatives and strengthening of relevant local capabilities. Encourage peer recognition and the building of peer groups around current and future transdisciplinary initiatives.

Participants and Process

The group producing this report is a “convenience sample” of ANU professors. Because of the time constraints, it was not possible to invite everyone who might have been interested, or for many of those interested to participate. Nevertheless, there was reasonable diversity in the group as a whole, and among the participants in each workshop, with many meeting for the first time.

Three two-hour online workshops (each with 5 participants, plus participant-facilitator) were held to accommodate the availability of interested participants (April 22 and 23 and May1). Before the workshops, each participant provided a 1-2 page document with a brief introduction to themselves and an initial response to the topic “How can disciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education mutually strengthen each other at ANU?” Each workshop started with a brief presentation by each attendee, reflecting on the documents from the other participants, especially what most interested them about the other participants, as well as overlaps, differences and new ideas about the topic. This then led to a more general discussion and consideration of key themes emerging from the background documents and other participant inputs.

Participants had an opportunity to comment on a draft report and all participants would like to be named in association with this report.

New York Alumni Roundtable

1. Purpose of the Workshop

The New York Alumni Roundtable formed part of the University's global co-design process to inform the next ANU Strategy.

The session brought together a select group of senior alumni to:

- Test the emerging strategic narrative
- Assess clarity, ambition and distinctiveness
- Identify gaps, tensions and opportunities
- Explore the role of alumni as partners in delivery

The workshop was intentionally positioned as early-stage and exploratory, with participants encouraged to provide candid, externally informed perspectives.

2. Overall Assessment

There was strong support for the directional intent of the draft strategy, particularly its emphasis

on:

- Research-led identity
- National purpose
- Global engagement

However, the consistent and dominant feedback was that:

The strategy lacks a clear, compelling and differentiated “North Star”.

Participants felt the draft is:

- Thoughtful and comprehensive
- But too generic, and in parts indistinguishable from peer institutions
- Not yet sufficiently ambitious, sharp or globally distinctive

This reflects a gap between:

- The substance of ANU strengths, and
- The clarity with which they are articulated

There was also a sense that the Strategy does not yet fully grapple with:

- How the University has evolved relative to its historical position, and
- What must change to reclaim and strengthen its comparative advantage

3. Key Strategic Themes from Alumni Feedback

3.1 The Missing “North Star”

The most consistent feedback was the need for:

- A single, unifying ambition
- A clear articulation of where ANU is going and why

Participants noted:

- The absence of a defining goal or “Big Hairy Audacious Goal”
- Limited clarity on end-state outcomes, scale, or timeframe

- No clear articulation of what success looks like in 5–10 years
- “What is the point of arrival?” / “What is the tagline in five years?”

3.2 Distinctiveness: Reclaiming “The National University”

Alumni strongly reinforced that the core differentiator already exists but is under-leveraged.

Key insight:

“The” Australian National University is the defining asset.

This should be more explicitly expressed through:

- Proximity to government and policy influence
- National research infrastructure and capability
- Convening power across sectors
- Historical role in shaping national policy
- Physical location in Canberra as a strategic asset, including access to institutions and a distinct campus environment

Participants also reflected on the University’s evolution, noting that:

- Earlier models, particularly the prominence of research schools and block grant settings, created conditions for bold and globally recognised research
- Elements of this distinctiveness have diminished over time and should be actively reasserted
-

3.3 From Comprehensive to Focused

The draft strategy was seen as:

- Covering “everything”
- But lacking clear prioritisation

There was a strong call to:

- Define what ANU will not do
- Sharpen core areas of excellence
- Move from broad themes to strategic choices
- Clarify how success will be measured, while avoiding over-reliance on rankings as the primary driver of behaviour

“Everything is covered, but what is the core competence?”

3.4 Research Identity and Research Schools

There was deep alumni affinity with the historic research model:

- Research schools as centres of excellence
- Strong national and global reputation

Feedback suggests:

- This identity has weakened or become less visible
- The strategy should reassert research intensity and differentiation

Opportunities identified:

- Re-elevate research schools as distinct entities

- Strengthen their national and global profile
- Reconnect research more clearly to teaching
- Reinforce pathways where undergraduate and postgraduate students engage directly with leading research and researchers

3.5 Education and Student Proposition

The undergraduate and postgraduate proposition was seen as underdeveloped in the draft.

Key gaps:

- Lack of clarity on target student mix and scale
- Weak articulation of value proposition to students
- Limited differentiation between UG and PG experiences

Additional themes:

- The need to define the desired scale of the University, with discussion suggesting potential growth beyond the current size
- Stronger outreach to secondary schools to position ANU as the destination of choice for high-achieving students
- Clearer articulation of outcomes, including employability and pathways to leadership

Strong themes emerged around:

- The on-campus, residential experience as a differentiator
- Canberra as offering a distinctive student experience, including proximity to national institutions and a more accessible cost base relative to major cities
- The opportunity to position ANU as:
 - a. A research university with direct student access to leading academics
 - b. A “college-style” immersive experience (distinct from large urban universities)
 - c.

3.6 ANU as a National and Global Convenor

A highly resonant theme was ANU as a convenor:

- Bringing together government, academia, and industry
- Hosting critical national and regional conversations

This was seen as:

- A major underleveraged strength
- A potential defining strategic pillar
- A natural extension of the national university role, particularly in connecting government, academia, and industry across Australia and internationally

3.7 Asia-Pacific Leadership

Alumni emphasised that:

- The founding orientation toward the Asia-Pacific is a core strength
- This is currently understated in the strategy

There is an opportunity to position ANU as:

- The leading Australian university for regional engagement and influence

3.8 Emerging Strategic Opportunities

Participants identified several areas requiring stronger articulation:

- Artificial Intelligence
 - a. Currently present, but diffuse
 - b. Needs a clearer “point of arrival” and institutional positioning
- Industry and external partnerships
 - a. Limited visibility in current draft
 - b. Opportunities with organisations such as CSIRO and other national partners
- Immigration and national identity
 - a. Seen as a defining Australian strength not currently reflected
 - b. Opportunity to position the University as contributing to national understanding of migration, identity and cohesion
- Entrepreneurship and innovation culture
 - a. Opportunity to differentiate from US startup ecosystems
 - b. Potential to strengthen connections between research, students and entrepreneurial pathways

4. Alumni Engagement: A Strategic Lever

There was strong alignment that alumni should be positioned as: Active partners in strategy delivery - not passive supporters

Key insights:

- Alumni are global ambassadors and connectors
- Engagement is less constrained by distance, more by:
 - a. Information flow
 - b. Clarity of purpose
- US alumni culture demonstrates:
 - a. Long-term relationship building
 - b. Integration of alumni into institutional identity

Opportunities identified:

- Build structured global alumni networks and pipelines
- Increase intellectual engagement (lectures, forums, access to research and ideas emerging from the University)
- Strengthen on-campus reconnection opportunities
- Embed alumni thinking earlier:
 - “Students as future lifelong partners”

5. Tensions and Strategic Questions

The discussion surfaced several important tensions for resolution:

- Scale vs Excellence

Should ANU grow significantly or remain deliberately small?

- UG vs PG focus

What is the optimal balance?

- National vs Global identity

How does ANU lead nationally while competing globally?

- Breadth vs Focus

What should ANU stop doing?

- Values vs Positioning

How prominently should First Nations commitments sit relative to research identity?

- Research vs Education integration

How should the relationship between research intensity and student experience be more clearly defined and leveraged?

6. Synthesised Strategic Anchors (Emerging from Workshop)

Alumni feedback converged around five potential pillars:

1. National Identity : The one national university, anchored in public purpose
2. Research Excellence: Deep, focused, globally recognised research capability
3. Convening Power: A platform for national and global dialogue and collaboration
4. Asia-Pacific Leadership: The leading Australian university in the region
5. Campus Experience: A distinctive, immersive, research-led student experience

7. Implications for the Next Iteration

To strengthen the Strategy, the next draft should:

1. Define the North Star

- Clear ambition, timeframe and measurable outcomes
- A compelling external narrative

2. Sharpen Differentiation

- Lean heavily into:
 - National university identity
 - Government proximity
 - Convening role

3. Make Strategic Choices

- Explicitly state:
 - What ANU will prioritise
 - What ANU will stop or reduce

4. Strengthen the Student Proposition

- Clarify:
 - Target scale and mix
 - Distinctive ANU experience

5. Elevate Key Strategic Themes

- Asia-Pacific leadership

- AI positioning
- Industry engagement

6. Integrate Alumni as a Core Enabler

- Make alumni central to:
 - Influence
 - Partnerships
 - Reputation and advocacy

8. Conclusion

The New York Alumni Roundtable provided high-value, strategically mature input.

The central message is clear:

ANU has a powerful and distinctive story - but it is not yet being told with sufficient clarity, ambition or focus.

The opportunity now is to:

- Translate substance into sharp strategy
- Articulate a bold, differentiated vision
- Align internal strengths with a compelling external narrative

Done well, this will position ANU not just as a strong university, but as the defining national university of Australia, with global influence and purpose.

Shanghai Alumni Roundtable

May 2026

Following the University's New York Alumni Roundtable held in April 2026, ANU convened a further alumni co design discussion in Shanghai as part of the development of the next ANU Strategy and broader Alumni Engagement Strategy.

While the Shanghai roundtable adopted a similar discussion format to the New York session, the nature of the conversation differed significantly, reflecting both the profile of alumni in attendance and the broader context of engagement in China over recent years.

These roundtables form part of a broader codesign approach being undertaken to inform development of the next University Strategy. The intention of these conversations is to ensure alumni perspectives, lived experiences and global insights help shape future institutional direction, particularly in relation to reputation, student experience, international engagement, and long-term community connection.

The Shanghai cohort was notably younger, with many alumni earlier in their professional careers and more connected to their student experience at ANU. This, in part, reflects the reality that the University has undertaken comparatively limited alumni engagement activity in China over the past decade. Despite this, alumni demonstrated exceptionally strong enthusiasm for future engagement with the University.

The discussion highlighted not only alumni perspectives on the draft Strategy itself, but also broader reflections on student recruitment, reputation, belonging, employability, alumni engagement, and institutional positioning within the China market.

Across the discussion, alumni consistently expressed a deep emotional connection to both ANU and Canberra, describing the University experience as intellectually formative, globally minded, and personally transformative. Several alumni referenced a concept translating to "spiritual home," describing a lasting sense of connection both to Canberra and to the ANU community.

Consistent with feedback received through other consultation activities, alumni also emphasised the importance of international engagement, institutional distinctiveness, research excellence and stronger articulation of the University's global role and regional identity.

Given the breadth of discussion, this report has is presented in two parts:

- Part One: Feedback on the Draft ANU Strategy
- Part Two: Reflections on Engagement, Recruitment and Alumni Experience in China

Part One | Feedback on the Draft ANU Strategy

Research Excellence Must Be More Central

Alumni consistently viewed ANU as a deeply research led institution and felt this was underemphasised within the current draft Strategy.

There was a strong view that the University's global standing derives significantly from its research intensity, academic expertise and internationally recognised subject strengths. Several alumni reflected that subject rankings and international academic reputation had directly influenced their decision to study at ANU, reinforcing the importance of maintaining and communicating excellence at discipline level within an increasingly competitive global higher education environment.

Consistent with feedback emerging through other consultation activities, participants suggested the Strategy should speak more confidently and explicitly about distinctive research capability, intellectual leadership and global contribution.

The Strategy Requires a Stronger International Orientation

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was that the current draft Strategy felt overly internally focused and insufficiently global in outlook.

Alumni felt the University should position itself more clearly as an internationally connected institution with a distinctive role in the Asia Pacific region. In particular, participants felt there should be stronger reference to Asia Pacific engagement, China and the University's role within broader regional and global conversations.

This feedback was particularly notable given the international perspective of the cohort and reflects broader expectations of globally engaged universities operating within increasingly competitive international education markets.

As raised in other consultation forums, there was also strong support for clearer articulation of institutional distinctiveness and global identity.

Participants also reflected on the importance of leveraging the University's global alumni and professional networks more intentionally as part of future institutional positioning. There was a view that stronger international connectivity between alumni, industry and academic communities could further strengthen reputation, student opportunity, employability and global influence over time.

Values and Institutional Identity

Some alumni felt sections of the draft Strategy, particularly the values section, appeared somewhat generic and did not fully capture the University's distinctive identity or intellectual culture.

There was strong discussion around the unique character of the ANU community, including its multicultural environment, globally minded student population and intellectually engaged culture.

Participants reflected that ANU and Canberra together created an environment that felt simultaneously international, welcoming and academically focused. Alumni described Canberra as a place populated by "global people" and lifelong experts, contributing to a uniquely intellectual and outward looking student experience.

A number of alumni also reflected warmly on their residential experiences during their time at ANU, with several specifically referencing Toad Hall as an important part of their student experience and sense of community. Participants described these residential environments as formative spaces that fostered friendship, intellectual exchange, cultural connection and lasting personal relationships, contributing significantly to their enduring connection to the University and Canberra.

Several alumni referenced a concept translating roughly to "spiritual home", describing a lasting emotional connection both to Canberra and to the ANU community.

One alumnus also reflected on the enduring resonance of the University motto, "First to know the nature of things", describing it as deeply connected to the intellectual identity of the institution and to the curiosity, inquiry and global perspective that shaped their experience at ANU. There was also a view that the Strategy could more strongly reflect the University's multicultural identity and the importance of belonging for international students.

Part Two | Reflections on Engagement, Recruitment and Alumni Experience in China

Rankings Strongly Influence Student Decision Making

Rankings emerged as a highly influential factor in student recruitment decision making within the China market. Multiple alumni noted that subject specific rankings had played a significant role in their own decisions to attend ANU. Participants suggested that maintaining visibility of the University's strengths at subject level remains critically important in an increasingly competitive international environment.

Participants consistently indicated that rankings remain particularly influential within the China market, both at institutional and subject specific level, and continue to shape perceptions of prestige, employability and long term educational value among students and families.

Consistent with broader international recruitment trends, alumni indicated that institutional prestige and global standing remain highly influential factors for prospective students and families.

Early Engagement with Schools and Families Is Critical

Participants consistently emphasised the importance of engagement with students and families well before university application stages.

There was strong discussion regarding the importance of visibility within middle school and secondary school years, with alumni noting that many Chinese families begin making international education decisions significantly earlier than universities may anticipate.

Parents were also identified as key decision makers within the recruitment process, reinforcing the importance of family oriented engagement approaches within the China market.

Participants suggested that stronger visibility in schools, together with more sustained in market engagement, would strengthen future recruitment opportunities.

Multiculturalism and Belonging Are Major Institutional Strengths

Alumni consistently described ANU as a welcoming, multicultural and globally minded environment where international students felt supported and included.

There was a strong sense that the University's strengths in tolerance, diversity and community support should be more prominently communicated, both within strategic positioning and student recruitment activity.

Several alumni who experienced disruptions during the COVID period spoke positively about the alumni and peer communities that emerged during that time and the lasting sense of connection this created.

Participants reflected that the University's multicultural environment and strong sense of belonging remain defining features of the student experience and continue to resonate strongly with alumni following graduation.

Sustained Presence and Relationship Continuity Matter

Participants emphasised the importance of consistent in market engagement and visibility from the University.

There was strong support for continued visits from University leadership, academics and Advancement representatives, alongside greater alumni activity within China itself.

Alumni consistently expressed enthusiasm for deeper ongoing engagement and indicated a desire for more regular opportunities to connect intellectually, professionally and socially with the University and one another.

Participants also stressed the importance of building long term relationships before seeking philanthropic support, with a strong preference for community building, intellectual engagement and meaningful connection over transactional approaches.

A number of alumni also spoke positively about the alumni ecosystem and sense of community that has been developed and sustained locally in Shanghai, particularly during and following the COVID period. Participants reflected that these connections played an important role in maintaining engagement, supporting students and fostering a continuing sense of belonging to the University community during a period of considerable disruption and uncertainty.

There was strong recognition of the value of consistent local engagement and relationship building, with alumni indicating that sustained in market connection creates meaningful long term community trust and significantly strengthens alumni affinity and participation over time.

Participants also specifically acknowledged the contribution of Elsa ZHONG and the China Liaison Office in fostering and maintaining these alumni connections in Shanghai. Alumni reflected positively on the continuity of engagement and community support that has been established locally and the important role this played in strengthening long term connection to the University.

Alumni Networks and Employability

Industry connection and employability emerged as significant themes throughout the discussion.

Participants expressed interest in:

- employing ANU graduates
- supporting internship pathways
- facilitating alumni mentoring
- strengthening professional networking opportunities
- increasing connections between alumni and current students

Several alumni noted the value of stronger connections between industry and the ANU College of Business and Economics in particular.

There was a strong sense that alumni wish to remain actively connected to the University throughout their careers and contribute meaningfully to future student success.

Conclusion

The Shanghai Alumni Roundtable reinforced both the significant goodwill that exists toward ANU within the China alumni community and the substantial opportunity to deepen long term engagement in market.

While the discussion reflected some concerns regarding visibility, international positioning and continuity of engagement, alumni consistently spoke with warmth, pride and enthusiasm about their experiences with the University and their desire to remain connected into the future.

The conversation also reinforced several themes emerging through broader consultation processes, particularly the importance of:

- clearer international positioning
- stronger articulation of research excellence and institutional distinctiveness
- meaningful student belonging and multicultural identity
- sustained alumni engagement and community building
- stronger integration between reputation, rankings, recruitment and alumni strategy
- and globally connected engagement approaches that leverage alumni, academic and professional networks more intentionally over time

Notwithstanding the relatively limited alumni engagement activity undertaken in China over the past decade, the roundtable demonstrated a highly engaged cohort eager to contribute intellectually, professionally and personally to the future success of the University.

The discussion highlighted the importance of sustained presence, relationship continuity and globally connected engagement approaches as the University continues development of its next Strategy and broader international engagement agenda.

Integrating sustainability into the University Strategy

The University's current draft strategy gives little explicit attention to sustainability. This paper sets out why that gap matters, both practically and strategically, and what changes would bring the strategy into alignment with the University's obligations and its ambitions to address the major societal challenges associated with climate change and ecological loss. Integrating environmental and social sustainability into the strategy gives the University the standing to identify and respond to risks and opportunities that come with those challenges.

The compliance imperative

Mandatory climate-related financial disclosure regime for Commonwealth Entities commenced in 2025. ANU is required to identify and disclose climate-related risks and opportunities across three dimensions:

- Physical risks – the impacts of extreme weather and changing climate on student and staff safety, campus infrastructure, and continuity of operations.
- Transition risks – the obligations and costs arising from decarbonising our campus, operations, and supply chain as Australia moves to a low-carbon economy.
- Opportunities – the growing demand for climate-related research, education, and advisory services that ANU is well-positioned to lead.

This disclosure will be subject to **external assurance and auditing**. A strategy that addresses climate risks and opportunities will support the disclosures now required by law, and position ANU well as the requirements mature. Nature-related disclosures under the TNFD framework are expected in the next few years, and a strategy framed broadly enough to accommodate these will avoid the need for revision as obligations evolve. Omission of these issues in our strategy can expose ANU to direct legal and reputational risks.

Beyond climate disclosure, the ANU has broader obligations under the EPBC Act and Commonwealth sustainability requirements that, as a Commonwealth-funded institution, should be reflected in our strategy. The ANU Environmental Sustainability Plan 2026–30, endorsed by Council, provides an implementation pathway and should be explicitly referenced in the overarching strategy.

Rankings, reputation and the competitive gap

ANU currently sits 16th in the QS World University Rankings for Sustainability, behind UNSW (7th), University of Melbourne (11th) and University of Sydney (15th). This is an internationally visible measure that prospective students, researchers, and partners consult when making decisions about where to study, work and collaborate.

A growing proportion of ARC and international research funding is tied to sustainability-related themes or requires demonstrated institutional governance of sustainability. A clear strategic position on sustainability strengthens the University's competitiveness globally.

What our peers are already doing

Several Australian peer institutions have made sustainability central to their institutional strategies, providing useful reference points.

- **Melbourne** – The University of Melbourne has integrated its Sustainability Framework with its institutional strategy, *Advancing Melbourne*, aligning sustainability with its strategic themes of education, research and resilience. The Framework encompasses a Sustainability Charter, a Sustainability Plan and annual reporting ([Source](#)).
- **Western Sydney** – Western Sydney University has been ranked 1st in the world for four consecutive years in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings for its contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its commitment is structured across four pillars – Curriculum, Operations, Research, and Engagement – running through every function of the university ([Source](#)).
- **SDG Signatories** – Monash, Deakin, RMIT, Griffith, Adelaide, Melbourne, and others have formally signed the SDSN University Commitment to the SDGs, publicly committing to promote the Goals through research, education, and operations, and to report on progress ([Source](#)). ANU has not yet made this commitment.

Recommendations

We propose two tiers of recommendations: foundational changes that bring the strategy into alignment with its current obligations and further steps that would position ANU as a genuine sustainability leader among its peers.

Foundational changes – to achieve compliance and signal intent:

- Integrate sustainability explicitly across the strategy rather than in a single section, with reference to:
 - *Research*: how ANU research agenda responds to Australia’s National Science and Research Priorities and addresses climate and ecological challenges
 - *Teaching*: building the knowledge and capabilities graduates need to contribute to a resilient and sustainable future;
 - *Operations*: leading by action through the University’s campus and operational commitments
 - *Governance*: meeting mandatory reporting requirements, including Commonwealth Climate Disclosure, and referencing the net, and then below, zero by 2040 pathway and the Environmental Sustainability Plan 2026–30 as the endorsed implementation vehicle
- Acknowledge how the University plans to respond to climate-related risks and opportunities (physical, transition, and opportunity) through mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- Reinstate the environment as an explicit University value. The current draft omits a commitment that was previously central: “We are committed to better outcomes for our community, the environment, our nation and the world”¹

Leading practice – for competitive standing and to fulfil our national mission:

In addition to the above:

- Develop a full Sustainability Strategy that embeds sustainability across curricula and research, complementing the operational commitments covered by the Environmental Sustainability Plan
- Formally commit to the SDGs by signing the SDSN University Commitment, as Monash, Melbourne, Deakin and others have done.
- Embed social dimensions of sustainability more explicitly. Indigenous knowledge partnerships and staff wellbeing are already referenced in the draft; supply chain obligations, including modern slavery and environmental impacts, should also be addressed.
- Appoint a dedicated senior Sustainability Lead within Chancellery with formal standing in relevant governance structures. This is a governance mechanism, rather than a sustainability team role, providing assurance that sustainability commitments are maintained when they compete with other institutional priorities.

The strategy is a significant opportunity to make the University’s sustainability commitments visible, coherent and actionable across ANU. The University is well placed to do this, and the foundations are already in place.

Appendix: Suggested strategy language by section

Direction

We recommend that the overarching direction include an explicit sustainability commitment:

Our Strategy commits that we will be, by 2030:

- A University that embeds sustainability at its core – in our research, teaching and infrastructure – for our people and the planet

Values

¹ Our values | Australian National University

Environment was previously listed as a core University value, and its absence from the current draft is a gap worth addressing. Suggested value statement:

- We recognise our responsibility to future generations and protect the natural systems on which life and learning depend.

Research – Direction

- ANU will advance knowledge and solutions that help address climate change, biodiversity loss, and other pressing sustainability challenges, ensuring this work creates real-world impact beyond the University.

Research – Possible actions

- Increase research funding, partnerships, and incentives for sustainability-focused and interdisciplinary research.
- Grow research that delivers practical solutions to environmental and social challenges at local, national and global levels.

Education – Direction

- We will equip students with the knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking needed to understand sustainability challenges and contribute to a more just and sustainable future.

Education – Possible actions

- Embed sustainability literacy and systems thinking as a core outcome of an ANU education.
- Embed sustainability across curricula so all students develop the knowledge and capabilities to contribute to a sustainable future.

Spheres of Influence – Direction

- We will use our expertise, connections and public leadership to help shape a more sustainable future beyond campus.

Spheres of Influence – Possible actions

- Integrate sustainability into procurement, partnerships, investments and external engagement so the University's work beyond campus helps drive positive environmental and social change.

Enablers – Direction

- Build the governance, capability, systems and culture needed to embed sustainability across the University.

Enablers – Possible actions

Align planning, budgeting and risk management processes with sustainability goals.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) / Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA)

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (IDEA) need to be embedded throughout the strategy, rather than standalone, implied and tokenistic. While “inclusion” appears in the values, but does not translate into a strategic priority, and lacks clarity around IDEA governance, accountability, infrastructure and resourcing to sustain progress. This limits IDEA to an aspirational concept rather than an operational driver and misses an opportunity for ANU to be a visible sector leader and advocate for IDEA.

Aside from First Nations peoples, the strategy largely overlooks other marginalised groups (noting that half the workforce is born overseas). The strategy doesn’t name or address Disability, Gender, Neurodivergence, Intersectionality, or Classism – which intersects and compounds disparities across all other demographic categories (while identity-based disparities exist across all groups, socioeconomic privilege often provides better access and outcomes that enable individuals from marginalised identities with socio-economic advantage to achieve better outcomes than those from traditionally privileged groups facing significant socio-economic disadvantage). Without naming these factors, IDEA becomes vague, aspirational, and ineffective. We also need mindful language we use addressing disability and neurodivergence, with terms such as adjustments, accessibility, and inclusion, used more frequently in their place.

Commitments to First Nations communities could be strengthened by complementing existing priorities, with a greater focus on how Indigenous knowledge and research are shared and applied. This includes amplifying Indigenous knowledges in accessible ways that inform policy, education, and public discourse, while embedding culturally safe approaches that recognise and protect Indigenous contributors.

Recommend applying the DEI checklist tool and a Universal Design approach to review and embed IDEA across the strategy. This should be supported by a clear statement on IDEA governance, such as an overarching IDEA Framework. The strategy should also commit to a positive duty, intersectional approach, and position IDEA as a core responsibility embedded in all roles across ANU, rather than a discrete or specialist function.

The strategy could more clearly articulate ANU’s ambition to lead the sector into the future of higher education by adopting creative, innovative approaches, doing things differently, and better, than in the past, including in how we address entrenched hierarchies and power structures that have contributed to harm and exclusion at ANU. While the value “excellence for purpose” states that excellence should not create exclusivity or hierarchy for its own sake, it does not fully address the complex and potentially exclusionary ways in which “excellence” can be interpreted and applied. As currently framed, the concept of “excellence” risks reinforcing elitism and exclusion. To address this, the strategy should acknowledge the implicit biases embedded in traditional definitions of excellence, and emphasise that diversity strengthens standards, impact, reputation, and rankings, rather than compromising them. Definitions of “excellence” should not favour full-time, conventional career pathways, that exclude those requiring flexibility, noting that ANU has comparatively low levels of part-time and job-share roles.

The strategy could place a stronger focus on its people by enhancing staff and student experience. It could also emphasise actively building internal capability, complementing its commitment to insourcing expertise.

The strategy is heavily weighted toward academic functions, with limited recognition of the professional workforce, or hybrid roles that sit in-between academic and professional domains. While research and teaching are core university functions, the strategy underemphasises the mechanisms that translate these into impact. A third function, enabling and operationalising impact, should be more clearly recognised, such as advisory work and delivering practical tools and solutions across government, industry, and the community. Highlighting this would better acknowledge diverse contributions to impact, including from professional and hybrid staff whose work sits outside traditional academic categories. This could be positioned as a distinct pillar or more prominently within the “spheres of influence.”

- Enabling impact: creating the conditions for impact (e.g. building partnerships, collaboration pathways, identifying opportunities).
- Operationalising impact: applying ANU expertise to real-world challenges, translating knowledge into tangible outcomes (e.g. advisory work, policy influence, programs, tools).

The strategy could place greater emphasis on improving access to higher education, and student employability and workforce readiness. A large proportion of ANU students come from privileged backgrounds, and is not representative of the full diversity of backgrounds in Australia – there is an opportunity to broaden participation by attracting students from diverse groups, including mature-aged learners, full-time workers, parents and carers, visa holders, people with a disability, and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Embedding this focus within the strategy would create an enabling framework for considering and progressing more flexible and inclusive pathways to entry and participation over time (such as recognising skills gained through professional experience, or expanding flexible entry pathways through micro-credentials leading to full qualifications).

IDEA Leads Network feedback

Strengths:

Well-articulated values, strong First Nations commitment, and clear intent toward inclusion and belonging.

Core issues:

DEI is not yet embedded, measurable, or transformative. It remains largely aspirational, unevenly applied, and insufficiently tied to institutional performance.

To be effective, the strategy needs to shift from:

“Stated commitment to inclusion” to “System-wide, measurable, and accountable design for inclusion that enhances excellence.”

1. Key Strengths

Clear values and intent

- Strong emphasis on institutional values: respect, inclusion, care, accountability.
- Acknowledges a need for organisational reset (trust, safety, workload, human-centred approaches).
- Signals a shift toward belonging and community, including staff and student experience.

First Nations Commitment – **see below**.

- A highly visible and well-developed pillar focused on First Nations inclusion.
- Strong alignment with:
 - Research priorities
 - Teaching and knowledge systems
 - National mission
- Seen as a genuine strength and leadership area.

Widening participation (Access + Attainment)

- Goes beyond recruitment to consider:
 - Pathways and affordability
 - Student support and retention

- Recognises success outcomes (not just entry) as important.

External positioning

- Positions the university as:
 - Globally connected (Asia-Pacific focus)
 - A partner of choice
- Emphasis on impact beyond the institution.

2. Key Weaknesses / Gaps

IDEA is implicit, not embedded

- Inclusion appears mostly in values, not operationalised across strategy pillars.
- Reads as aspirational rather than actionable.
- Treated as:
 - A standalone idea, or
 - Implied rather than explicit

Missing: whole-of-strategy integration of DEI/IDEA

Over-reliance on narrow “inclusion” framing. Diversity, equity, access are not mentioned across the document. IDEA should be a “guiding principle” that is present through all streams of work, not as an add on or ‘nice to have’.

- Strong focus on:
 - First Nations (positive)
- But limited visibility of other groups, including:
 - Disability and neurodivergence (*not explicitly named*)
 - Gender (*not mentioned at all*)
 - Socioeconomic/class diversity
 - Cultural and racial diversity beyond international framing
 - Non-traditional learners (mature age, carers, part-time learners)

Risk: one-dimensional representation of inclusion – tokenistic.

Lack of explicit language

- Avoidance of naming groups (e.g. “disability”) leads to:
 - Reduced clarity
 - Reduced accountability
- Preference for vague terms like:
 - “access”
 - “inclusion”

- “adjustments”

Issue: If problems aren’t named, they cannot be addressed effectively

Conservative (not transformational) approach

- Strategy seen as:
 - Looking backward (restoring past success) rather than forward
- Focus on:
 - Access/support instead of transforming systems
- Missing:
 - Universal design in teaching, research, and workplaces
 - Innovation in delivery models (e.g. microcredentials, flexible pathways)
 - Innovation in employment models
 - Lack of addressing structural barriers

Gap: limited ambition for systemic change

Implicit assumptions about excellence

- The document implies there is a tension between:
 - Equity and quality (“without compromising standards”)
- Perceived as:
 - Reinforcing elitism
 - Creating exclusion (“who is ‘excellent’ enough?” and who self-excludes?)

Risk:

- Reinforces hierarchies, prestige culture, and exclusivity – undermines Nixon, other culture reviews
 - May discourage participation from diverse groups
-

Lack of metrics, targets, and accountability

- Minimal clarity on:
 - How success will be measured
 - Who is accountable
- No clear:
 - KPIs
 - Targets
 - Consequences

Gap: strategy lacks "teeth"

Staff experience underdeveloped

- Strong academic focus; limited recognition of:
 - Professional staff contributions
 - Hybrid or third space roles (academic/professional boundary)
 - Build out contributions of all community members to make work more visible
- Missing:
 - Staff diversity commitments
 - Workplace inclusion (e.g. flexible work, part-time viability)

Risk: large portion of workforce remains invisible

Weak connection to outcomes

- DEI framed as:
 - Moral obligation
- Not clearly linked to:
 - Academic excellence
 - Research quality
 - Innovation
 - National impact

Missed opportunity: DEI as performance driver

Overemphasis on prestige and rankings

- Perceived “elite university” framing:
 - Risks prioritising prestige over inclusion
- Limited attention to:
 - Employability
 - Real-world outcomes
 - Broader community impact

Concern: misalignment with national mission

Specific recommendations / feedback

Embed DEI as a core principle (not an add-on)

- Integrate DEI/IDEA across all pillars:
 - Research
 - Education
 - People
 - Enablers

- Position it as a system-wide design principle
-

Adopt a Universal Design approach

- Shift from “supporting specific groups” to:
 - Designing systems that work for everyone
 - Apply across:
 - Curriculum
 - Workplaces
 - Physical environments
 - Digital systems
-

Expand and balance representation

- Maintain strong First Nations focus without dilution, but:
 - Extend visibility to other groups
 - Use:
 - Clear definitions of inclusion (e.g. IDEA frameworks)
 - Broad but intentional language to avoid omissions
-

Use explicit, inclusive language

- Clearly name underrepresented groups:
 - Disability, neurodivergence, gender, etc.
 - Avoid overly generic terminology
-

Redefine “excellence”

- Frame excellence as:
 - Inclusive, collaborative, and purpose-driven
 - Remove implication that:
 - Equity compromises quality
 - Emphasise that diversity enhances outcomes
 - Consider whether “excellence” can ever be a truly inclusive value to hold
 - Question assumptions about why students come to university, and what makes them choose ANU. Are we telling ourselves stories that are no longer relevant (e.g. about excellence, prestige etc.).
-

Introduce metrics and accountability

- Include:

- Clear targets
 - Performance indicators
 - Leadership accountability
 - Align with governance frameworks
-

Strengthen staff inclusion

- Explicit commitments to:
 - Workforce diversity
 - Professional staff recognition
 - Flexible work (e.g. part-time, job sharing)
 - Address:
 - Workload equity
-

Build integrated DEI governance framework

- Develop a unifying DEI/IDEA framework linking:
 - All action plans
 - All portfolios
 - Ground in principles like:
 - Intersectionality
 - Universal design
-

Recognise all contributions to impact

- Broaden concept of impact beyond research to include:
 - Professional staff work
 - Community engagement
 - Operational quality
-

Shift toward future-focused innovation

- Move beyond “restoring past ranking success” toward:
 - New models of education
 - Digital/AI-responsive approaches
 - Changing student needs
-

First Nations commitments

- Retain the strong and visible placement of First Nations commitments within the University’s identity as the national university.

- Do not dilute these commitments into generic diversity or inclusion language. They arise from the University's distinct national role, existing commitments, location, and responsibility to First Nations peoples.
- The section is strong in intent, but the final strategy must show how these commitments will be implemented, resourced and held accountable.

Priority wording and framing improvements

- Replace general references to 'First Nations issues' with more precise wording such as 'First Nations matters', 'First Nations priorities', or 'First Nations rights, interests and aspirations'.
- Reason: 'issues' can unintentionally frame First Nations peoples as a problem-space, rather than recognising areas of responsibility, leadership, partnership and national significance.
- Use 'issues' only where referring to a specific structural, policy or institutional problem.
- Review wording that may sound paternalistic. For example, 'leadership ... for Indigenous peoples of the Asia-Pacific' could be reframed as leadership 'in partnership with Indigenous peoples and organisations across the Asia-Pacific'.

Specific paragraph requiring revision

The paragraph beginning 'As the national university...' is repetitive and should be tightened. It repeats the same areas of work twice and uses 'First Nations issues' in a way that could be improved.

Suggested revised wording

'As the national university, ANU has a particular responsibility to build knowledge, capability and public leadership in relation to First Nations matters of national significance, Indigenous priorities and self-determined futures. Led by, and developed with, Indigenous colleagues, communities and partners, we will strengthen Indigenous-led and collaborative work across health and wellbeing, justice, economic self-determination, knowledge systems, sovereignty, professional capability building and Indigenous Data Sovereignty. This work builds on ANU's longstanding contributions in archaeology, anthropology and history, while placing contemporary Indigenous leadership, research and policy impact at the centre of our future direction.'

Implementation and accountability

- The strategy should move beyond aspiration and identify how First Nations commitments will carry institutional weight.
- Recommended inclusions:
 - clear executive ownership and governance responsibility;
 - a funded implementation plan with timeframes and milestones;
 - measures for Indigenous student success, staff attraction and retention, leadership pathways, research impact, UNDRIP implementation and Indigenous Data Sovereignty;
 - Indigenous oversight and advice in determining what success looks like;
 - regular public reporting on progress, including where progress has stalled.

Integration across the broader strategy

Retain a distinct First Nations commitments section within Identity. This appropriately recognises that the University's obligations and ambitions in relation to First Nations peoples are foundational to its role as the national university, not simply a subset of broader diversity or inclusion work.

At the same time, these commitments should not be confined to a standalone section. They should be clearly carried through the relevant parts of the broader strategy so that they have operational weight.

In particular, the sections on Our People, Research, Education, Spheres of Influence and Enablers should reflect the relevant First Nations commitments already articulated here, including:

- Indigenous staff and student attraction, retention, progression, cultural safety and belonging;
- Indigenous-led research, governance, data sovereignty and policy capability;
- Indigenous student success and Indigenous knowledges in education, where appropriate;
- local accountability to Country, national responsibility, Asia-Pacific relationships and international Indigenous partnerships;
- funding, governance, digital systems, procurement and accountability required to deliver these ambitions.

Additional specific comments

- ‘University of choice for Indigenous students and staff’ is a strong ambition, but it needs evidence measures beyond recruitment numbers, including retention, progression, cultural safety, trust and success.
- The roles of the Tjabal Centre and First Nations Portfolio should be described distinctly so student success, policy leadership and research impact are not blurred together.
- The commitment to UNDRIP is significant and should be operationalised across research governance, community engagement, data governance, policy development and partnership standards.
- References to the post-Voice context, AI and Indigenous knowledge systems should be used to justify concrete institutional capability and leadership, not remain contextual statements only.

Summary statement

The First Nations section is appropriately prominent and should remain so. Its placement within Identity recognises that First Nations commitments are foundational to the University’s role as the national university. The strategy would be strengthened by: improving deficit/problem-framing language; tightening repetitive wording; ensuring these commitments are visibly carried through the broader strategy where relevant; and making clear how they will be implemented, resourced, governed and reported. Without this accountability frame, the language risks being read as aspirational rather than operational.

Halls of Residence

6 May 2026

Introduction

Structure

The session was run in two parts:

- first, a '**SWOT analysis**' (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) of ANU's Residential Halls ('the Halls'); and
- second, a series of **targeted questions** related to the "Guiding questions" on page 4 of the Draft Strategic Plan ('the Draft Strategy').

Due to low attendance at the open session conducted by me, Presidents of the various Halls were requested to gain input from their communities independently. Those insights have been incorporated in this Report; however, the total number of participants is therefore unknowable. Given the contemporary demands upon students, it is recommended that future co-design efforts give greater notice to facilitators and extended timelines to conduct sessions.

Disclosure

I conducted the session in a 'near-to-peer' capacity. I once held roles as President of Ursula Hall and ACT Representative on the National Association of Australian University Colleges. I have held neither position since about January 2024. I designed and conducted the session independently. I introduced myself in this context during the session only to demonstrate my familiarity with residential life and the University generally. All input has been anonymised.

Aims

The session was run with two aims. The first aim was to provide insights from residents to the ANU's Strategy Team, signalling that ANU's residential offering ought to be a key part of the University's Strategy going forward. Residents in attendance affirmed that ANU's Halls are a distinguishing feature—especially for undergraduate domestic students—of ANU's student experience. Broadly, participants detected a lack of attention within the Draft Strategy as to this signature drawcard in being the 'national university'.

The second aim was to use the strategy co-design process as an opportunity organically to draw out observations from residents about what motivates (strengths/opportunities) and concerns (weaknesses/threats) them about the Halls, and to provide this data to ANU's Residential Experience Division ('RED'). This was to illustrate how strategy co-design of this sort could shape the Halls into better communities (in terms of both operation and governance) which would better meet the objectives and values of the ANU more broadly.

In the spirit of co-design, participants were refreshed not only to air what they expressed as their deep-seated frustrations regarding RED's management of the Halls, but also to contribute and celebrate what they love, and what they are proud of, about their Halls and communities. This facilitator was grateful for the honesty and candidness of participants and was inspired by their passion and commitment.

Participants also expressed a sort of exasperated catharsis at the opportunity to comment on—and contribute ideas to—the operation of their Halls within the University, as well as the Strategy which guides them. Given the emotion participants clearly felt in that respect, **my principal recommendation as to this second aim is for RED to enlist ‘near-to-peer’ facilitators of like sessions to develop a transparent, student-led strategy for the residences more generally, and as frequent feedback mechanism to RED thereafter.** This would empower students to take ownership in the future of their communities. As far as I am aware, no such strategy or forum currently exists.

A note on the discussion

The following must be said: the animosity expressed by participants towards RED was both alarming and saddening. RED’s attitude towards residents was described as one of hostility, general disregard for residential concerns, as well as a disinterest in incorporating their views—in particular those of residential leaders—into RED’s governance and decision-making apparatuses. For example, participants noted that the Inter-Hall Council (‘IHC’)—the current routinised feedback mechanism between RED and residential leaders—was not made aware of the recent decision to allow non-ANU students to live in the ANU Halls. Hence, current structures for residential participation in decision-making were said to be inadequate.

Understandably, RED may dispute many of those characterisations, and I note no verification effort has been undertaken as part of this summary as to the accuracy of those descriptions. For the avoidance of any doubt, nothing in this summary suggests any kind of impropriety or wrongdoing on RED’s part. Instead, the summary seeks to reflect accurately the emotion and sentiment of the discussion, which was explicitly conducted with a view to constructive resolutions in the future. For that reason, no individual is named in this summary, and the summary as a whole is presented in the spirit of transparency and collaboration. With that said, so long as such a sentiment is felt by residents, then it suggests there is enormous room for improvement.

Though alarming, these points demonstrate the value in co-design more generally. That is, the animosity and distrust felt by residents would surely be mitigated by making co-design a key element in the governance of the Halls. Shortly after the session, participants suggested that low attendance was due principally to student disenfranchisement. For example, participants expressed dissatisfaction regarding RED’s consultation as part of its ‘ResComm Review’ in 2025. Since, from their perspective, participants believed decisions made consequent to that review did not reflect the concerns of residents, and that data collected as part of that consultation were never provided to residents, that it was “pointless” for them to participate in another feedback session (not realising it was being run independently of RED). In short, participants viewed previous consultations by RED as disingenuous and ineffective.

If this is true, then it provides great cause for concern. Co-design is a participatory, collaborative, and democratic exercise which makes better organisations. The invitation from the University’s Strategy Team to engage in this way was therefore welcomed by participants and myself alike. Hence, a spirit of co-design between RED and residents seems essential if the Halls are to maximise their potential within Australia’s only national university. The following insights should hopefully make that clear.

Key findings

Participants were prompted with key language from the Draft Strategy related to the Halls to inspire contributions. Participants agreed that language such as “holistic student experience” and “belonging” implied features of residential life. Indeed, being a “destination of choice” for students

necessarily implies moving from home: something almost all ANU students do, and a phenomenon which is surely not replicated on the same scale at Group-of-Eight (‘Go8’) universities in metropolitan areas, such as Melbourne, Sydney, or Brisbane. It should be lost on no-one that the Halls are part of the core infrastructure which enables students to make that move from home. However, insights from participants demonstrated that the Halls are not merely a logistical necessity in housing students—they are a core part of ANU’s national and global appeal.

The rest of participants’ insights are categorised beneath headings taken from the “Guiding questions” in the Draft Strategy. Most of the feedback can be incorporated into the first two questions:

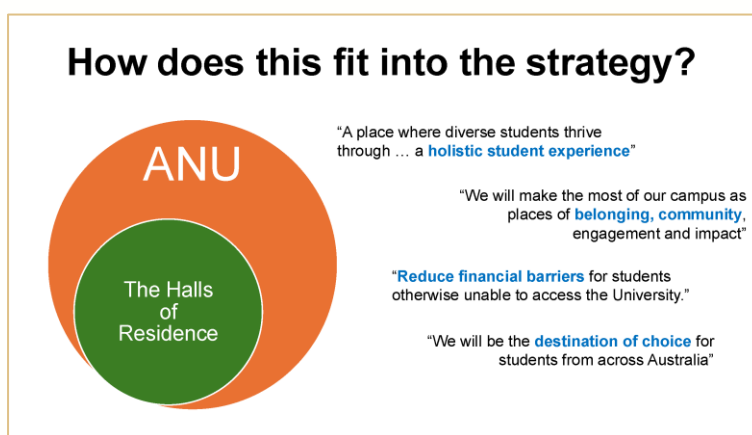
- how the Halls, of themselves, make ANU distinctive; and
- how the Halls should be a key element of how ANU attracts the best students from around Australia and the world.

“How can we best capture and articulate the distinctive, and complex, contribution that ANU makes to the nation?”

Participants noted that the Halls are a powerhouse of development and self-growth. They manifest the “human-scale experience” of ANU’s deliberately moderate-sized university community. It is through this human scale that ANU achieves the highest proportion of residential students (1/3) of any Go8 university. Indeed, page 12 of the Draft Strategy aspires that “This Strategy should be human-centric with a focus on supporting the cultures, norms, and behaviours for both individual and collective success.” Participants were therefore asked, **“How do the residences make ANU a better place?”**

Key insights

Participants identified a key set of benefits to living in the Halls, which relate more broadly to ANU’s ability to provide “our community with the conditions and opportunities to thrive” through “a holistic student experience”. Each of these benefits relate to a core theme running through the Draft Strategy: “people”. Participants agreed that the Halls enable ANU to transform the lives of its students. At the moment, however, the Halls feature only minimally in the Draft Strategy.



A “university town”

One participant said of ANU that while “ANU is a renowned university ... its appeal lies in its residential experience”, and that there is “no other university like ANU in terms of having a college town”. This is a real standout aspect of ANU. Though smaller in student population to the other Go8 universities, ANU makes up a very large portion of the ACT’s population more broadly. Therefore, the Halls enable ANU’s character as a true university town, similar to that of Oxford or Cambridge. Participants related this reality to the University’s identity as the “national university”; that is, a place—a home—to which students from around the nation travel for a transformational education.

Communities of like-minded individuals

Participants echoed that the Halls provide ANU students the practical means not simply to connect with, but *live* with, people from all over the country and the world. Participants placed great value in the friendships they said were possible as a result of living in-residence. They also noted that the Halls helped them immerse in student life more generally, and live close to their classes, therefore enriching and enabling their academic experience at ANU as well.

Self-growth

Participants described the value of self-growth in relation to the Halls in terms like “supported independence”, “independence without isolation”, and “educational transformation”. By living in residential communities, participants said that individual “echo-chambers”—that is, personal biases, ideological prejudices, etc—are broken down. This was said to tie into ANU’s academic experience. That is, exposure to different views is a core part of learning in a university. However, living in residence makes this a constant and unavoidable reality, thus expanding the worldviews of all residents.

Participants also said that the independence gained from moving out of home was important, but was balanced with “college staff support systems when needed”. Participants described this stage in their life as “transitional” and “intermediate” (that is, the transition from school to adulthood). They described ANU’s residential experience as tapping into and enriching that period. This was in addition to the identified benefit of access to leadership opportunities as ways to develop personally. In their eyes, this opportunity for responsibility was linked to self-growth.

Student-led communities

One participant described ANU as providing “unparalleled community” and “homes away from home”. It was said that these communities exist as “homes” because of the residents themselves; in particular, their leaders. Although the University could do more in this regard, these sentiments signalled that ANU has attracted, and is creating, well-rounded individuals willing to contribute positively to their communities. Participants universally expressed this as a strength of the Halls, and valued the sense of ownership this created.

Diversity

Much of the discussion surrounding this point reflected sentiments expressed above. In addition, however, residents placed value on the international character of the Halls, suggesting this made ANU “a truly international community”. That is, over and above the mere presence of international students on campus or in class, the Halls provide a

means by which to live with, learn from, and be exposed to the cultures of international students.

More generally, participants also noted that students at the Halls arrive with “the common goal of making valuable friendships, which means the majority are giving it a go when it comes to getting involved”. This suggests that although one of the great benefits of living in the Halls is their mix of people, backgrounds, and experiences, a unifying factor is that these individuals arrive with a common goal of belonging.

Plurality, heritage, history, tradition, and belonging

Participants were explicit that having distinct Hall communities was important to their experience. Participants expressed that **belonging** to a community larger than any individual was important to them. They valued the different traditions of their Halls, and the sense that they inherited a history of belonging, experienced by ANU students for generations. Importantly, participants remarked that having a diversity of offerings in the identity and cultures of the Halls helps residents find a style of belonging which works best for them. Participants said that this attracts a wider group of prospective students than would a single, homogenous product of “ANU residences”. They were explicit that a homogenous “ANU residential life” product is uninspiring, and that it is more important that ANU offer different communities—something different for everyone.

Conclusions

Together, participants expressed that these qualities of residential life—which each focus on the human scale, people-focus of ANU—make ANU a better university. It demonstrates two things in relation to ANU’s contribution to the nation:

- The first is it that ANU provides students “unparalleled community”, and therefore an enriched academic experience beyond the typical bus-in, bus-out student routine. This is good for our students, since it provides Australians, as well as citizens from other countries, an “educational experience equal to the world’s best”, as previous Strategies have envisaged.
- The second contribution ANU makes to the nation through its Halls is the people these students become. Having been exposed to diverse communities, self-growth, and a spirit of collaboration/giving back, ANU produces world-class, global citizens committed to engaging positively with their colleagues, inspired by these formative years in their life, over which the Halls are a key influence.

The point, then, is not that the Halls provide something amazing of themselves; it is that the Halls represent, and enable, the very best of ANU. ANU builds bigger minds in the classroom, and better people in the Halls. It is a holistic, wrap-around project committed to transforming people’s lives. The ability to do this at scale, for one third of ANU students in any given year, is surely a distinctive and unique contribution to the nation.

“How do we attract and support the talent that we need – in students and staff – to maximise the impact that we have through our research and education?”

Incentives

At their most basic conception, the Halls exist to house ANU students. But given the language of the Draft Strategy, they are clearly there to do something more. If we are to house the best students in Australia and the world—and provide them a “holistic student experience” grounded in a campus of “belonging, community, engagement, and impact”—then surely we need to make the place they live in something extraordinary. Accordingly, participants were asked the following question, based on the strengths they identified in the SWOT analysis:

“What message should we be sending to prospective residents, and what is missing from the current message?”

As far as the residences are concerned, attracting “the talent we need” lies in marketing the Halls according to the strengths that participants identified in relation to the first question. Participants said ANU should explicitly be advertising its character as Australia’s only true “campus” university, in the sense that one third of all students live on campus, and roughly 70–80% of all first years. Participants recommended that ANU be passionate and explicit in its advertising that the Halls enable:

- personal development/self-growth;
- living with a national and international community;
- leadership opportunities;
- autonomous, student-led communities (i.e. residents’ committees);
- sporting/artistic opportunities;
- communities of like-minded individuals;
- plurality (distinct communities/Hall that work better for different people);

Participants understood the benefit of an ANU residential experience as equal to, if not more important than, ANU’s academic attraction.

Disincentives

Far and away the biggest threat participants observed in attracting “diverse and accomplished students” (to take the language at page 9 in the Draft Strategy) was the price of living in ANU’s Halls. Residents from traditionally “cheaper” Halls (such as Burton & Garran Hall), noted that increases in rent have led to noticeable demographic changes in the composition of their communities and, even more concerning, vacancies in occupation upwards of 40 beds. To be specific, demographic changes were perceived as decreases in the number of students;

- who went to public high schools;
- who are from regional, rural, and remote backgrounds; and/or
- who can afford to finance their accommodation independently (that is, without assistance, either in whole or in part, by relatives).

Participants lamented what they described as an increasing homogeneity in the composition of the Halls, which contrasts starkly with the University’s aspiration for diversity and inclusion. Residents noted that ANU can hardly claim to be the “national” university if inner-city private school students take up an ever-increasing share of its campus accommodation. That is, ANU’s residences could not claim to represent, demographically, the nation. Participants noted that this contributes to a harmful narrative that rural, regional, and remote students cannot make it either to, or at, ANU, and that the only people who “fit in” or “make it” at the University are those who come from privileged metropolitan backgrounds.

Though this report does not have access to formal data, these trends have been anecdotally observed by students since the ANU entered its Purpose-Built-Student-Accommodation Agreement ('PBSA') in or about 2014. Participants canvassed great concern about the lack of control both residents and the University have over the Halls, due to its arrangements with private investors, and the outsourcing this has entailed. This was perceived as a key strategic risk for the University. In any case, the changes understood to have stemmed from this could not simply have occurred overnight. Participants' contributions in relation to rent are also related, therefore, to the fourth "Guiding question": ***"What do we need – in the ways we work, where we focus, or what we do – to be resilient to change from external forces like ... demographic shifts ...?"***

Considering, then, the long-term nature of these changes, and the long-term ambitions of the University's next Strategic Plan, it is concerning that ANU's residential offering—which provides a home to one third of all ANU students (so long as they remain wholly populated by ANU students)—itself could present a barrier to accessing the University, and therefore a barrier to the University's own ambitions to attract diverse cohorts of students. Participants identified an irony that the price of living in the Halls places the University out of reach for many prospective students, even though the Halls exist to enable students from outside Canberra (that is, the vast majority) to live at Australia's national university. Participants worried that increases in rent present a real barrier to ANU attracting the students it needs to maximise its educational impact, given would-be ANU students may instead select universities closer to home due to the price of accommodation.

Beyond scholarships, bursaries, or other assistance, one structural and wide-reaching change ANU could implement to reduce financial barriers would simply be to reduce the price of its campus accommodation.

"What should we fix for our University to work better? What should we stop doing? What is the priority order?"

Participants were asked two questions in relation to this overall question:

"What is the one thing about the residences that should change?"

"What is the biggest threat to the residences?"

Centralisation and RED

Overwhelmingly, participants identified the centralisation of the Halls through RED as a key threat to the quality of ANU's residential product, and the one thing they said ought to change. From their perspective, participants believed the balance between intra-Hall management and RED fell heavily towards the latter. Participants perceived the downsides of this arrangement as in direct opposition to what they favoured most about their Halls (including student-led communities and plurality, identified above). That is, an overcentralised system:

- disempowers residents;
- limits possibilities for feedback;
- leads to poor communication;
- creates inefficiencies;
- alienates residents from key decision-makers;
- increases uncertainty;
- removes face-to-face connection;
- reduces transparency; and
- breeds animosity.

Given the intimate nature of residential living—its constancy, scale, and wrap-around effect on daily life—participants found the lack of access to decision-makers in RED troubling. For example, one participant remarked that there is an “obvious gap in knowledge between how the staff perceive residential life and how students experience it”. This was compared to Heads of Hall and other in-Hall staff, who know their residents personally, and are therefore far better placed to make decisions in their interests.

As compared with the increasing number of staff at RED, participants expressed concern at the low pastoral care ratio at the Halls. That is, despite Halls comprising between 400 and 700 residents, there are only as many as two staff members who are qualified pastoral care professionals at each Hall. Some participants noted that prospective residents on events such as Open Day are specifically interested in the availability of pastoral care, and presently it is difficult for residents themselves to express confidence in its availability, given such large student-staff ratios.

Overall, participants placed enormous value in face-to-face connection, since, as they made clear, residents spend more time on the ANU campus than any member of staff. Accordingly, participants expressed frustration that no key decision-makers from RED work inside the Halls (and certainly do not live in them) like students do. As a result, participants hypothesised that what they perceived as RED’s disregard for their concerns stemmed from not experiencing the on-the-ground consequences of their decisions. The suggestion was not that RED live on campus, but that more effort be made to understand what that experience is actually like for residents.

“What’s missing? What better questions could we ask to identify new ideas for the future of the University?”

In terms of ANU’s broader success, participants observed two core aspects as missing from RED’s operation of the Halls:

1. The first is formally including residents in the governance of the Halls.
2. The second is treating the Halls as a core aspect of ANU’s student experience, not simply an accommodation service.

Opportunity one: student voice in residential governance

Residents have an unmatched and intimate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of ANU's residential experience. Why? Because they are the *only* people who experience it in totality. To be trite, residents have the answers. Therefore, some questions ANU could be asking are;

- "What more could we learn from students?"
- "How can we improve our product based on their experience?"
- "How do we make sure we don't lose their most valuable insights?"

Asking these questions could only be beneficial to ANU's strategy for the Halls. They would get to the heart of the matter.

Discussion with participants

Specifically, participants said that large operational decisions ought not to be made unless they have been communicated transparently, in complete detail (save, for example, for sensitive commercial or confidential information). This is not simply because it is the right thing to do, but because it helps make better decisions. Because of their lack of proximity to the Halls, as expressed by participants, RED cannot anticipate the total effect of its decisions, especially their consequences for communities, which are uniquely understood by residents. Conversely, by hearing residents' concerns in detail and in advance of making decisions, RED is less likely to take actions which frustrate residents, thus contributing to a sense of trust between both parties.

In my previous dealings with RED, I have been assured that such efforts are already undertaken. However, that assurance is difficult to square with the impassioned frustration with RED expressed by participants, and the deeply held conviction that RED "doesn't care" or "doesn't understand" residential life. At the very least, that sentiment indicates that RED's efforts are not cutting through. Participants suggested much of that was due to the "facelessness" of RED. It is true, they said, that a lack of proximity to, and engagement with, RED means residents will inevitably describe RED with increasingly hostile language. Much of this could be improved by increasing the frequency of face-to-face engagement by RED with each Hall.

It should be said that some participants qualified these views. Some participants said that they of course understand that RED does not set out maliciously to hinder their residential experience. Again, to be clear, this summary certainly does not wish to convey that the opposite is true. However, participants said that current structures mean RED does not understand residents' present situation, and that RED therefore is bound to make decisions which frustrate residents. In response, participants emphasised their desire to maintain the distinct identities of their Halls, and thus devolve RED's centralised approach to their operation.

Worse, participants said that while RED probably makes decisions with some conception of residents' best interests, this conception is not sufficiently informed by what residents understand those interests to be. Anecdotally, participants worry that the student voice has only experienced regression in recent years. Participants explicitly cited the recent 'ResComm Review' as evidence of that concern. Hence participants expressed frustration with what they perceived as a kind of distant paternalism: that is, decisions made notionally in residents' best interests, but without due care to ensure those decisions reflect residents' *own* conception of *their* best interests.

In that vein, participants perceived a regression in the influence of residents within RED's governance structures over recent years. Although roles like Community President have persisted through that time, the centralisation of RED, and corresponding reduction in autonomy given to Heads of Hall, mean participants believed that residents' influence on key decisions has significantly diminished. That is, although larger operational decisions have been centralised, participants remarked that the student voice has not carried over in the process. In their view, residents do not have access to RED in the same way they have historically had access to their Heads of Hall. Accordingly, they do not retain the influence they once did and, so far as the University's next Strategic Plan is concerned, residents no longer have the ear of the University's strategic governance.

In any case, participants understood this regression as a principal threat to the quality of the Halls as a signature product within ANU's educational experience. That is, this regression diminishes the character and history of the Halls as student-led communities which foster a sense of ownership and belonging.

Proposal

The clearest message from participants as to "what's missing", is them. Two things were remarkably clear from our discussion. The first was the frustration of residents regarding the ever-increasing centralisation of management to RED from the Halls themselves, and thus further away from the influence of residents. The second was how rich in knowledge residents are about their communities and what makes them special. In response, participants suggested two improvements:

1. First, participants suggested that RED undergo its own "governance review" (undertaken independently of the Division).
2. Second, and subsequent to that process, participants suggested entrenching the student voice in the governance of the Halls.

Regarding the latter, participants suggested that this effort ought not to be made through typical mechanisms like surveys or focus groups, but in frequent, system-wide, formal structures. The former approaches tend to sterilise engagement, and distance the conversation from its real-world setting. Instead, participants suggested that engagement should be localised within their communities, in the spaces residents are used to participating in (such as common rooms, dining rooms etc.). Participants remarked that engaging with residents on their own 'turf' would increase a sense of empowerment and would mitigate the perception of hostility expressed above. They said it would go a significant way to repairing what they expressed in clear terms as a distrust of RED.

To be specific, participants recommended a variety of entrenchment mechanisms for resident input in university governance. Of note was a "Residential Committee to Council", constituted in a similar fashion to the Student Safety and Wellbeing (SSW) Committee to Council. Such a mechanism was said to reintroduce accountability pathways from the residences to senior decision-makers in the University, and would recharacterize the Halls as part of the ANU's broader academic project. This would enable elected residents—for example, the IHC—to make representations to Council, not simply to those in charge of operational/commercial matters. Another suggestion was a "Dean of Residents" to oversee the Division. Again, such a position would be responsible not for operational/commercial matters, but for the guardianship of ANU's residential life, in terms of both its traditions and student leadership.

Either example would reestablish a spirit of student-staff partnership in the broader leadership of the Halls, and a reduction in the influence RED has recently gained in cultural, leadership, and community matters. Instead, RED would be background to

operational matters—the team that keeps the show on the road, and enables students to work with their Heads of Hall in the best interests of their individual communities. Participants were excited at the scale of such proposals, and believed something “more” was required to guarantee student input in decision-making. After all, the stakes for residents in the Halls are enormous: the best and worst can happen in residential communities—something of which Elizabeth Broderick, recent appointee to the Selection Committee for ANU’s next Chancellor, is acutely aware.

It should be noted that student-entrenched governance is not a radical or threatening proposal. It reflects the way the Halls are already, and have historically been, run within themselves. That is, residents already collaborate with their Heads-of-Hall and ‘lead’ the Hall together. Participants remarked that elected Community Presidents and appointed senior pastoral care leaders already converse on a semi-formal basis with their Heads, informing and improving the decisions their Heads make. Prior to the inception of RED, this is how the Halls were run. In fact, RED is a rather novel aspect in the governance and operation of the Halls (it was established circa 2020/2021). Its precursor, the “Campus and Residential Communities Division” dates back only as far as 2010. In those years, the Halls were run with greater autonomy.

Nevertheless, RED is the status-quo. If it remains, it would hardly be radical to incorporate—formally and structurally—the historic (and, as participants remarked, successful) student-staff governance partnership which has existed in each individual Hall into the broader RED project. As participants remarked, one of the strengths of the ANU Halls (as opposed to wholly commercial student accommodation) is that they are student-led. If ANU could advertise that its whole residential operation was run in partnership with students, this would surely be an attractive selling-point to prospective students.

Opportunity two: celebrating the Halls as a signature ANU product

It is without question that the Halls are a central feature of student life at ANU. The sheer number of students who live on campus makes this impossible to ignore. As recently as 2013, the Heads of Hall reported immediately to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), who then reported to the Vice-Chancellor. This governance structure signalled a keen awareness by the University’s senior leadership that the Halls formed part of ANU’s broader academic and intellectual project. The current system—a centralised Division with no academic oversight—is a notable departure from those recent governance structures.

In the words of participants, the Halls “are the product”, at least so far as ANU’s undergraduate offering is concerned. Beyond a logistical necessity to house students, participants described ANU’s Halls as at the heart of the University’s campus experience. As one participant said,

“If ANU wants to maintain its reputation as a leading residential university, it must treat the residential experience as an investment in student success and community, rather than simply an accommodation service”.

It follows that a core part of ANU’s strategy going forward should be to emphasise how its residential product distinguishes the University from its competitors nationwide. Participants expressed a desire that ANU advertise not simply that the University educates people, but that it *transforms their lives*, and that the Halls are a necessary ingredient in that process. They hope ANU first understands, and then transmits, the message that being the “national university” rests in bringing students to the heart of the University—that is, in student-led, diverse, like-minded residential communities.

Specifically, this would involve designing ANU's advertising in partnership in students, by asking them what they love most about their Halls. It would require focussing on the human, people aspect of the Halls over and above the bricks and mortar of the rooms themselves. It would involve selling the communities—not the buildings. It would be a message that the Halls sit at the front of ANU's attraction, the excitement of moving for university—not an afterthought which follows the decisions students make regarding their selected program of study.

Conclusion

It is difficult to overstate the value of sessions like these. Tragically, participants expressed two sentiments which stood in stark opposition to one another. The first was deeply encouraging. Participants demonstrated a palpable love for, and enthusiasm about, their Halls. Discourse between participants as to the strengths of their communities (and how they make ANU a better place) was vibrant and lucid. It was evidence alone that ANU has had a transformational impact on their lives, and is precisely the message we should be sending to prospective students about the opportunities of a holistic ANU education, enabled by its residential experience. Participants engaged constructively, positively, and with a sincere gratitude for the opportunity to speak in a peer-run forum.

However, the second sentiment was an exhausted, fatigued frustration about the management of the Halls by RED and the lack of contact residents had with key decision-makers. Participants feared that as a result of centralisation, what they loved about their Halls—their autonomy and student-led character—was slipping away, and that ANU would not, therefore, have the same transformational impact on future students. One participant (a second-year) was visibly distressed when reflecting on their experiences dealing with RED.² To hear these experiences was saddening and, at times, confronting. However, holding both sentiments in balance, it is clear that creating transparent, genuine opportunities for residents to engage in free, open dialogue about their experiences (with a view to co-designing a future for their communities, on their terms) is a certain pathway to improve the Halls. Ultimately, the passion and affection for the Halls expressed by participants signals a group of willing individuals who would welcome like opportunities to participate in co-design.

I would welcome any future engagement with these findings either from the University's Strategy Team or the Residential Experience Division.

With thanks to all participants,
Archie Horneman-Wren

² In the interest of this participant's wellbeing, the person was followed up with at the conclusion of the session. No further action was taken.

Commercialisation and Intellectual Property (CIP)

Input to the ANU University Strategy Codesign Process

Prepared by: Head of Commercialisation & IP

Date: 15 May 2026

Introduction

The Commercialisation and Intellectual Property (CIP) team welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the next Australian National University Strategy.

We support the Strategy's ambition to better articulate ANU's distinctive contribution as Australia's national university:

"A research-led institution that serves the nation, builds sovereign capability, partners with government, industry and communities, and focuses effort on areas of greatest impact."

Our team works at the point where ANU research, knowledge and expertise become impact. We help researchers, students, colleges, schools, institutes and partners identify, protect, manage and translate intellectual property and research outcomes.

Our work spans invention disclosure, IP advice and governance, patent strategy, commercial grants, partner and investor introductions, pitch development, licensing, negotiation, spinouts, entrepreneurship support and proof-of-concept pathways. In doing so, we help ANU convert research excellence into public value, commercial outcomes, social benefit, sovereign capability and new partnerships.

Annually, we support:

- 80–150 researchers across all disciplines,
- 120–150 active patent families, trademarks and trade secrets,
- 30–60 new inventions,
- 30–100 hours per project,
- 35–50 grant applications in commercial schemes,
- 12–15 emerging startup and spinout companies,
- and 345 - 400 agreements.



Why this submission matters

This submission is made at an important moment. ANU research expenditure has continued to rise, reaching almost \$800 million in 2024 – and yet the University's rankings have trended downward since 2017 – while the institution has navigated COVID-19, financial constraint, organisational disruption and multiple change processes.

Despite these challenges, the commercialisation pipeline *is* strengthening.

- ANU received approximately **\$6.65 million in realised commercialisation returns** over the 12 months to 30 April 2026. Previously, the highest recorded return was \$735K in 2019. In fact, 3 ANU affiliated companies collectively raised \$124M in venture capital during April 2026.
- A further sign of progress is a sharp increase in researcher engagement. Invention disclosures – a practical indicator of trust in the system – increased from 24 in 2024 to 34 in 2025, with **22 invention disclosures already submitted for 2026**. This puts us on track to exceed the highest annual record of 54 in 2019.
- At the same time, participation is increasingly diverse. In 2026,
 - **16–25% of all inventions are PhD-led**, and
 - **36% of all inventions are led by women**.
- The 2025-26 disclosure pipeline already shows this wider reach, with disclosures from Chemistry, Engineering, Medicine, Physics, Biology, Computing, Fenner, Astrophysics, Humanities, the Respectful Relationships Unit, Science Communications, Population Health and Cybernetics.
- The team also supported
 - 30 Australian Economic Accelerator (AEA) grant applications (~\$10M),
 - 3 female-led teams in Cicada Innovation's Tech23 program (2025),
 - in collaboration with CBRIN, hosted First Wednesday Connect networking events attracting;
 - 340 registrations and 17 pitches in 2025
 - 348 registrations and 19 pitches in 2026 (with 6 pitches in reserve)
 - and finally, in collaboration with CSIRO's ON Program;
 - 6 CSIRO ON Prime teams including 3 from social science disciplines,
 - 4 CSIRO ON Accelerate teams,
 - 50 researchers through CSIRO Research to Value training,
 - and one team through the CSIRO ON Translate pilot program.

Together, these indicators point to the kind of innovation ecosystem ANU should be building excellent, inclusive, research-led, nationally relevant and open to multiple forms of impact.

Our submission argues that commercialisation and research translation in all its forms, should be recognised in the Strategy as core institutional capabilities. If ANU is to realise its national mission, and it's potential – we must expand specialist support and promote a culture of innovation further enabling fundamental science to move responsibly from discovery into use.

Now is the time to turn recent momentum into a repeatable model for impact.

What we have heard and what we recommend

During May 2026, the Commercialisation and Intellectual Property team undertook targeted consultation with researchers, students, founders, professional staff, external partners and community members.

We utilised existing outreach and event opportunities to gather feedback via (1) individual stakeholder conversations, (2) survey questions relating directly to ANU's Draft Strategy, and (3) direct written submissions from key stakeholder groups.

Consultation (May 2026)	Participation / Output
HASS Innovators Lunch	19 invitations, 10 attendees, 1 formal submission
First Wednesday Connect with CBRIN	348 registrations, 19 pitches, 6 survey responses
Future Women Federal Budget Dinner	10 invitations, 10 attendees, informal dialogue
Investor Showcase with CBRIN	24 attendees, 4 presentations, 11 startups
Canberra Innovation Network (CBRIN)	Formal submission
ANU Entrepreneurship Club	Formal submission
ACT Government's Badji Program	Informal dialogue, ongoing consultation
IP Australia	Formal connection, ongoing consultation

Across these engagements, the message was consistent:

"ANU has significant research translation potential, but the University needs clearer pathways, earlier support, stronger entrepreneurship capability, more inclusive models of engagement, and investment that matches the scale of the opportunity."

Community feedback called for ANU to build engagement, attract more visitors to campus, work alongside other organisations, provide bookable spaces for SMEs, collaborate with CBRIN, host conferences and industry-facing events, and commit to an entrepreneurship strategy with proof-of-concept funding, pre-seed pathways, training, resources and intent.

This submission therefore makes four recommendations:

1. Establish an evergreen Proof-of-Concept fund
2. Expand CIP to provide targeted translation support for all disciplines and minority groups
3. Build ANU's entrepreneurial ecosystem for staff and students in collaboration with CBRIN
4. Develop an Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol and Community Guidelines

Recommendations

1. Establish an evergreen Proof-of-Concept fund

ANU should establish an evergreen Proof-of-Concept Fund to reinvest commercialisation returns into the next generation of high-potential research translation opportunities. ANU has received approximately **\$6.65 million in realised commercialisation returns over the 12 months to 30 April 2026**, creating a rare opportunity to move beyond one-off revenue and build a transparent, repeatable reinvestment model for impact.

The Fund should support early validation, market testing, IP strategy, prototype development, partner engagement and commercialisation planning for opportunities that are not yet ready for licensing, spinout formation, commercialisation grant funding, external investment or industry partnership. It should support the full breadth of ANU research, including venture-backable technologies, licensing opportunities, PhD-led and student-led projects, HASS and social impact projects, Indigenous-led research translation and community-engaged innovation.

This would bring ANU closer to contemporary practice across research-intensive universities, including other Go8 institutions that have invested in structured proof-of-concept,

entrepreneurship, founder development and translation pathways. It would also create a sustainable business model for commercialisation: **small, disciplined investment in ideas → translation → leverage → impact → reinvestment.**

2. Expand CIP to provide targeted translation support for all disciplines and minority groups

ANU should expand the Commercialisation and Intellectual Property team to provide targeted translation support across all disciplines and for groups whose pathways to impact are currently under-supported. This should include dedicated capability for HASS researchers, Indigenous researchers, women researchers, PhD candidates, students, social impact projects and community-facing initiatives, as well as junior roles to support service continuity, succession planning and future growth.

Consultation showed strong demand for practical, individualised support: mentoring, coaching, grant advice, partner introductions, business case development, pitch materials, funding strategy and help navigating university systems. HASS innovators identified specific barriers around contracts, e-commerce, brand development, engagement with communities and non-profits, advancement, government procurement, conflict-of-interest management and staff-led company structures. Female researchers highlighted the need for curated networks, warm introductions, visible institutional sponsorship, ongoing communities of practice and practical support to turn early conversations into collaborations, grants and applied outcomes.

CIP is the right team to provide this function because it already sits across invention disclosure, IP ownership, commercial assessment, patent strategy, licensing, spinouts, investor engagement, grants, agreements and commercialisation records. Expanding CIP would allow ANU to provide more consistent, expert and inclusive support for researchers and students whose impact pathways do not fit neatly into traditional commercialisation models.

3. Build ANU's entrepreneurial ecosystem for staff and students in collaboration with CBRIN

ANU should explicitly recognise entrepreneurship, founder development and ecosystem engagement as part of a well-articulated research translation system. This should include entrepreneurial training for staff, PhD candidates and students; recognition of engaged research and entrepreneurship within the academic performance framework; and credit-bearing entrepreneurial learning opportunities for undergraduate students.

This work should be developed in close collaboration with CBRIN. CBRIN's submission identifies industry and community engagement, innovation, entrepreneurship, intra-city institutional collaboration and commercialisation as critical mechanisms through which ANU's research and education reach the nation. It also highlights that ANU cannot deliver these ambitions alone: the Canberra innovation ecosystem already exists, ANU helped build it, and CBRIN provides ready infrastructure for engagement, translation and societal impact at a scale and speed ANU could not match in-house.

ANU has already proven the model. The former Discovery Translation Fund backed more than **100 projects** from **\$5 million**, with recipients securing more than **\$50 million** in follow-on funding – approximately **10:1 leverage** – and around **one in 10 grants** leading to spinouts or licensing opportunities. That pipeline is now showing material outcomes: in April 2026 alone, ANU-linked companies **Liquid Instruments, Syenta and Haast** raised approximately **\$124 million** in venture capital. Liquid Instruments is a professor-led spinout, Syenta has an ANU PhD as CEO, and Haast is an ANU student startup.

This is the model ANU should build deliberately rather than episodically: clearer founder pathways, stronger collaboration with CBRIN and the ANU Entrepreneurship Club, more industry-facing events, better use of campus as an engagement asset, and more visible pathways for students, staff, SMEs, investors and community partners to connect with ANU.

4. Develop an Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol and Community Guidelines

ANU should develop an **Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol and Community Guidelines** to ensure that its commitments to First Nations peoples are embedded in practical

guidance for research, commercialisation, engagement, data, knowledge-sharing, creative works and partnership.

This responds directly to community feedback that ANU must work more effectively with local Indigenous communities and ensure that commitments are not tokenistic. It would also bring ANU closer to better practice across the sector, including the University of Newcastle, which has already developed ICIP guidance.

For ANU, this would be more than a compliance document. It would strengthen trust, support self-determination, guide respectful engagement, and improve how the University supports Indigenous researchers, Indigenous-led projects, community partnerships and social impact pathways.

Appendix A: Facilitated Session Data

Stakeholder Group 1: Innovation in Humanities and Social Science

Session time/date/location	HASS Innovators Celebration Lunch Hosted by DVCRI Wednesday 6 th May 2026, 12:30pm – 2.00pm
Facilitator name	Danielle Neale
Attendee numbers	Invitees: 19 individuals, 15 projects Attendees: 10 individuals, 8 projects 1 Formal Written Submission

Group discussion:

- Overall positive response to recognition from DVCRI for innovative HASS researchers and overall positive regard for support provided by CIP team.
- In your opinion ... how important is commercialisation support for HASS researchers?
Average Response: 10/10
- Impact pathways look different for HASS projects and require bespoke support, systems and processes. In particular accessing support for contracts, e-commerce, brand development, engagement with communities and non-profits, advancement and government procurement processes require specialist support.
- Commercialisation outcomes are extremely diverse in the HASS disciplines. Examples of ANU outcomes have included publications, policy, consulting, licensing, program interventions, scalable training programs, books, games, cards and other products, brands protected by trademark, content delivered via learning management program, philanthropy, executive education, social enterprise, spinout companies, films, events, mixed media, art exhibitions and more.
- University procurement pathways are unclear for staff who have unique and valuable services to offer the university through a company structure. Policies and processes relating to conflict-of-interest management and contract research between the university and a staff-led company are also unclear.
- Many examples of successful HASS innovation and commercialisation projects exist, however there is a significant fear and anxiety for staff when undertaking engaged research because there is no clear recognition pathway for this work within the current academic performance framework. Policies and processes to undertake the work are unclear.

Individual submissions:

- Support has historically been inconsistent, staff turnover [in Advancement team] meant that relationships and continuity were lost – contributing to unsuccessful applications for external funding.
- Proof-of-concept funding (\$30K) received from ANU via an internal grant program enabled the development of a prototype which has invaluable in conversations with external investors and sponsors. Further support included engagement through a makerspace and development of a high-quality promotional video explaining the work – which led to international engagement and is still an essential asset.
- My projects are innovative and sit outside existing funding categories. They are new, not-yet-existing formats that do not align with the existing funding frameworks. This is why philanthropic or any kind of funding support is transformative for engaged research work.
- As academics, we are expected to work across teaching, research, and service - but there is an additional dimension that is becoming increasingly important: engagement. When an academic develops an idea with potential beyond the university (for example, a product, tool, or new format for public engagement), it is unrealistic to expect us - on top of our existing workload - to obtain additional qualifications in areas such as entrepreneurship, economics, or production, IP or commercialisation. What is missing is targeted, individualised support: personal mentoring, coaching, and guidance on how to move an idea forward, as well as practical help with the production process itself. This kind of individualised, structured, hands-on support would make a significant difference for academics working on innovative, non-traditional projects.

Stakeholder Group 2: Industry and Community Engagement

Session time/date/location	First Wednesday Connect May 2026 Hosted at the School of Cybernetics in collaboration with the Canberra Innovation Network (CBRIN) Wednesday 12 th May 2026, 3:30pm – 6:30pm
Facilitator name	Danielle Neale
Attendee numbers	Registrations: 348 Pitch Presentations: 19 6 Survey Responses 1 Formal Submission 1 Informal Submission

Session time/date/location	CBRIN Investor Showcase Thursday 14 th May 2026, 3:30pm – 6:30pm
Facilitator name	Commercialisation & IP Team
Attendee numbers	ANU Attendees: 24 (invited through CIP) ANU Presentations: 4 ANU Startups/Spinouts: 11 Registered Investors: 100+ Total Startups: 36

Summary of feedback across both events:

- Overall positive regard for ANU research excellence, researcher participation and collaborative engagement between ANU and CBRIN.
- How likely are you, to engage with ANU in the future?
Average Response: 8/10
Highest Response: 10/10 (3 responses out of total of 6 responses)
- Three respondents expressed an interest in connecting further with ANU beyond the events and the survey. A more extensive consultation and dialogue has commenced resulting from one informal response.
- There is an opportunity to engage more with the local Indigenous community to ensure that ANU's objectives under the Draft Strategy are not just tokenistic.
- In seeking to build more engagement and attract more visitors to campus, ANU could offer bookable spaces to SMEs so they can run events.
- Give younger academics permanent employment to build good long term research programs.
- Commit to an entrepreneurship strategy and stick with it. Including a Proof-of-Concept and Pre-Seed investment fund. Training. Resources. Intent.
- Use targeted social & professional media campaigns to raise awareness and opportunities to connect virtually and in person.
- Collaborate with CBRIN to build more engagement and attract more visitors to campus. Attract conferences to host not just scientific, also industry and community engaging.
- Meaningful engagement with a university looks like; collaboration, testing new ideas, working alongside other organisations, engaging in affairs of concern to the community, establishing a two-way channel to capture diverse views and opinions on matters of concern, and connection to talent, expertise, infrastructure.
- Meaningful engagement with a university is efficient, effective, helpful and providing connections in a customer friendly way.
- Survey respondents identified as:
 - Alumni of ANU (2)
 - Parents of ANU Students (2)
 - Employer of ANU Students (1)
 - Previously attended event/workshop on campus (4)
 - Previous staff member (1)
 - Investor in ANU company (1)
 - Licensee of ANU IP (1)
 - Previously accessed ANU facilities or equipment (2)

Individual submissions:

- "The CBRIN investor showcase was spectacular last night, and I wanted to say how many wonderful comments I received about the First Wednesday Connect event. The polish of all speakers was noted and those who have been in the ecosystem for many years said there has been a step change in quality over the past few years. Well done to you and your [CIP] team."

CBRIN submission (intentionally identified):

CBRIN input on Draft Strategy v1.0

Dear Danielle,

I've been reading the Draft Strategy v1.0 and wanted to share CBRIN's reflections, particularly as we've also been hearing from across the community and to echo our own reading.

The view we share is that the draft could emphasise more a cluster of areas that we'd expect to be central to a research-led national university's impact: industry and community engagement, innovation, entrepreneurship, intra-city institutional collaboration and commercialisation. These are the channels through which much of ANU's research and education reaches the nation, and through which the sovereign capability and translation ambitions in the draft will or won't be realised.

The draft talks about convening power, civic role, and partner-of-choice ambitions in the Spheres of Influence section. But the mechanisms: how ANU engages industry, how research translates, how students and staff connect to entrepreneurship, how community impact is generated and measured are not articulated. For a strategy intended to guide the institution to 2030, this is a key gap in our view.

From CBRIN's perspective where ANU is a foundation member, a few observations:

- Industry and community engagement is not a peripheral activity to research and education; it is part of the mechanism by which both have impact. The strategy would be strengthened by treating ecosystem engagement as integral to how ANU operates.
- Innovation, entrepreneurship and commercialisation are critical pathways for ANU's translation ambitions. The draft references sovereign capabilities, the National Reconstruction Fund, and advanced manufacturing, all of which depend on functioning translation pathways that ANU cannot deliver on alone.
- Cross-institutional collaboration through networks like CBRIN is part of the answer to this gap. The ecosystem already exists, ANU helped build it, and it provides ready infrastructure for engagement, translation and societal impact at a scale and speed that ANU could not match in-house.

ANU is positioned at the centre of gravity of the Belconnen to Airport Innovation corridor with institutions such as AIS, UC, CIT, CSIRO, ANU, CBRIN, ACT Government, UNSW Reid, UNSW at ADFA, and Defence, space, intelligence and security facilities at the Canberra Airport. This is one of the most concentrated research, development and innovation capability precinct in Australia. The strategy can leverage this unique setting and use ANU's investment in CBRIN and the relationships with other foundation members and with the government to maximise its impact from research and education through collaborative commercialisation, innovative entrepreneurship and deeper industry, community and ecosystem engagement.

We'd welcome the chance to discuss this with you, and to think together about how the next iteration of the Strategy might address these areas. We'll also provide this input through the formal codesign channels.

Kind regards,

Petr Adámek

CEO, Canberra Innovation Network

Stakeholder Group 3: Female Researchers

Session time/date/location	Future Women Federal Budget Dinner Wednesday 13 th May 2026
Facilitator name	Varvara Mironova, supported by Danielle Neale
Attendee numbers	10 Attendees on ANU table 2 Attendees on Mallesons table

Summary:

- Feedback from the Future Women Federal Budget Dinner reinforced the need for ANU to be more outward-facing, accessible and practical in how it supports innovation and impact. Participants highlighted the importance of supporting diverse talent, including women, students, early-career researchers and founders, and creating clearer pathways for people with ideas to access networks, mentoring, funding and institutional support. This feedback aligns with the broader consultation theme that ANU needs stronger engagement infrastructure and more visible support for entrepreneurship, translation and community-connected impact.

Individual submissions:

- **Access to curated networks and warm introductions:** female researchers value opportunities to meet funders, founders, industry leaders, policymakers, community organisations and other women working across research, entrepreneurship and impact.
- **Visible institutional sponsorship:** ANU can play a powerful role by using its convening power to place female researchers in rooms where partnerships, grants, collaborations and profile-building opportunities emerge.
- **Ongoing communities of practice, not one-off events:** participants want continued connection through regular gatherings for women interested in engaged research, applied research, innovation and community impact.
- **Practical support to convert ideas into collaborations:** female researchers need help identifying grant opportunities, building partner networks, shaping proposals, and turning early conversations into funded projects or applied outcomes.
- **Recognition of diverse forms of impact:** the feedback highlights women working across economics, STEM, AI, education, neurodiversity, First Nations engagement and community impact – areas that do not always fit neatly into traditional commercialisation pathways but have strong public value and translation potential.

Stakeholder Group 4: Entrepreneurial Students

Session time/date/location	Survey and Formal Committee Submission from the ANU Entrepreneurship Club (ANUEC) Friday 15 th May 2026
Facilitator name	Danielle Neale
Attendee numbers	4 survey response 1 Formal submission

About the ANU Entrepreneurship Club:

- The Club's mission is to support student entrepreneurs by providing access to resources, networks and opportunities to grow ideas, and it identifies a gap in the ANU and Canberra ecosystem: students and researchers have limited resources and guidance to take innovations and ideas into the real world. In its inaugural year, the Club worked directly with 550+ students, hosted 6+ events with 800+ attendees, helped 10+ students with entrepreneurship projects, and built a mentor network for idea validation and seed support.
- The Australian National University is Australia's leading university with cutting-edge research facilities. However, within ANU and Canberra, the startup culture and ecosystem could be further developed. Students and researchers are presented with limited resources and guidance to take their innovations and ideas into the real world. ANUEC strives to bridge this gap.
- Current engagement metrics
 - 270 Active members (paid membership)
 - 1,226 All time members

- 68 Prototypes across medtech, healthtech, edtech, and SME tools
- \$5,200 cash awarded to students to further build and develop prototypes and support their entrepreneurial journey
- Active mailing list of approximately 600 students
- Database of approximately 1,544 contacts

Individual/committee submissions:

- In your opinion ... how important is entrepreneurial training and support for ANU students?
Average Response: 9.5/10
- One challenge we have identified is that while we can help students get started and give them space to explore their ideas through our events, we do not have the capacity to individually follow up with each student or track what they are building over time. This is largely a resourcing constraint. We think this is an area where ANU could play a meaningful role, by providing structured support that picks up where we leave off and helps students develop their ideas further and take them to the next step.
- ANUEC has given me the space to build and explore, but with university it becomes hard to manage my studies. I'd appreciate if the University could build a system where students could be awarded credits in their degree for learning and exploring startups or building their ideas. This fits well within the newly established ATDP programs at ANU, and I would love for entrepreneurship to be supported and given the same amount of credits and recognition as other formal ways of learning.
- All of our spinouts come from research. I can't think of any student or recent graduate-led venture that has scaled globally. When we say we need to be a global university, it is not just in research partnerships but also making sure our students are as good as Ivy League students in this space.
- It would be great to get more monetary support for student ventures on behalf of the university to support student projects. Furthermore, organising more networking events with ANUEC to connect students to professionals within the entrepreneurial space would be great.
- ANUEC has given me the space to build and explore, but with university it becomes hard to manage my studies. I'd appreciate if the University could build a system where students could be awarded credits in their degree for learning and exploring startups or building their ideas. This fits well within the newly established ATDP programs at ANU, and I would love for entrepreneurship to be supported and given the same amount of credits and recognition as other formal ways of learning.
- I believe ANU students would benefit from greater access to entrepreneurship because it builds skills that are valuable across every career path, including creativity, leadership, resilience, commercial thinking and problem-solving. Many students have strong ideas or interests in innovation, but may not know how to test, develop or act on them. More entrepreneurship-focused opportunities would help students apply what they learn in the classroom to real-world challenges and become more confident in creating impact, whether through startups, social enterprises or innovation within existing organisations.
- Entrepreneurship is increasingly important in a job market where thinking 'outside the box' is key to success. Understanding the fundamentals of entrepreneurship and getting the support from administration to start building upon their ideas is crucial for university students.



Workshop Input from the Global Institute for Women's Leadership and Wiyi Yani U Thangani First Nations Gender Justice Institute

13.05.2026

The draft strategy represents a critical opportunity for the ANU to articulate its role as a national institution with global impact. Yet, at present, it underestimates and under-recognises its distinctive strengths and overlooks key cross-cutting research, education and policy priorities such as gender equality and intersectionality. It reflects a reactive positioning that talks primarily to internal stakeholders, rather than offering a compelling vision and strategy that firmly places the ANU on the map for impact nationally and internationally.

Whilst participants generally advocated for institutes not to be named (including the already named First Nations Portfolio and Tjabal Centre), they do feel it is important the substance of institutions, research centres, and colleges is reflected in the document in a way they are not currently.

The following encompasses notes and suggestions taken from participants.

1. Overall framing should move from being a reactive document to having a clear institutional vision

The draft strategy currently reads as reactive and somewhat apologetic, rather than forward-looking and ambitious. It lacks a clear, compelling articulation of ANU's purpose, vision, and distinctive role over the next decade.

This should be grounded in: why the ANU exists (grounded in its founding legislation and national mission); what distinguishes ANU globally and nationally, and; what it seeks to achieve in the next phase of its development.

At present, the document delays articulation of purpose to page 8, provides limited insight into what success looks like over the strategy period and lacks a clear "vision anchor" to guide priorities and trade-offs.

2. The strategy should respond to a more robustly articulated national and global context

The strategy does not sufficiently situate ANU within:

- The Australian national policy environment
- The Asia-Pacific region (and Australia within it)
- The global challenges shaping research and higher education

This absence weakens the rationale for the ANU's work and obscures institutional priorities. There is also limited engagement with major contemporary challenges (e.g. inequality, technological disruption, geopolitical shifts), despite their direct relevance to ANU's research strengths.

The strategy should:

- Explicitly position ANU within Australia and the Asia-Pacific region (and not solely reference the "Asia Pacific region" in isolation, given the mandate is Australia and Asia Pacific)
- Articulate the national and global challenges the university is responding to (e.g. backsliding on equality, threats to democracy, climate change, technological shifts, conflict, etc.)
- Clarify how ANU contributes to agenda-setting and policy impact, not just education and knowledge production

3. The ANU's distinctive contributions are almost entirely absent when it comes to strategic investments in gender equality and First Nations justice

The draft strategy underplays one of the ANU's greatest strengths: its unique ecosystem of national policy engagement and priority institutes, including through institutes like the Global Institute for Women's Leadership (GIWL) and Wiyi Yani U Thangani (WYUT) First Nations Gender Justice Institute.

Workshop participants highlighted that:

- The ANU hosts institutionally embedded, policy-facing centres not replicated elsewhere in Australia – e.g. both GIWL and WYUT are unmatched nationally, and in many cases, globally. They were invested in as strategic priorities harnessing both university and federal government funding, alongside strong philanthropic investments since. They have been supported as strategic priorities yet their work, interests, values, and policy/research/education work is not at all reflected in the ANU's strategy, with no mention of gender, First Nations women and gender diverse groups, and the equality work of these institutions – despite their high profile nature of work and the outcomes generated so far.
- These centres are deeply connected to Commonwealth policy processes and national reform agendas
- They represent a distinctive value proposition for the university

This contribution is largely invisible in the strategy. The strategy should:

- Explicitly recognise ANU's policy-engaged research model as a core institutional strength
- Better integrate strategic investment and priority institutes into the strategy narrative
- Highlight these already strong existing pathways between centres, policymakers, and communities and move from passive recognition to active leveraging of these assets

4. Gender equality and intersectionality must be reflected as core institutional priorities

A major concern is the complete absence of gender equality and intersectionality as strategic priorities. This is a significant regression from previous strategy iterations, where such equality was a core pillar of the ANU's work. The omission is particularly problematic given:

- The strong evidence base demonstrating gender inequality as a cross-cutting issue across research and policy domains the ANU purports to be leading in
- The ANU's national leadership in gender policy research and practice (see prior point)
- The university's reputational context, including recent institutional reviews (e.g. Nixon, etc.)

The strategy currently:

- Treats diversity primarily as an HR or workforce issue, rather than a research and policy priority
- Uses national security centric language ("identity, civility, cohesion") instead of explicit commitments to equity and justice – echoing a sidelining of equality inclusions unless it threatens national security
- Fails to engage with First Nations gender justice or intersectionality, despite the significant, strategic investments and core work of institutes like WYUT in leading this work nationally and internationally

Participants feel it is important to:

- Reintroduce gender equality as a core strategic commitment / pillar of the ANU – tying our past priorities to our future priorities

- Treat gender as a cross-cutting research, education, and policy imperative, not just a workforce issue
- Better reflect and embed intersectionality, including First Nations women's experiences, across the strategy
- Consider a dedicated commitment or pillar (analogous to First Nations commitments) to equality and justice to ensure coherence and visibility

5. Move from experience-based values to guiding principles for institutional action and impact

The values articulated in the draft are predominantly experiential (focused on internal culture, e.g. specifically referencing values that arose out of Nixon) rather than guiding principles for institutional action and impact.

This creates several issues:

- Weak alignment between values and research, education, and policy missions
- Overemphasis on internal experience at the expense of external impact
- Lack of clarity on what guides decision-making, particularly in areas such as funding models, partnerships, and technology use that might sit outside these Nixon-informed values that represent only one small part of the ANU

There is also concern about the framing of values in relation/reaction/response to recent institutional reviews, rather than as enduring principles.

Participants suggest:

- Reframing values as institution-wide principles guiding the ANU's core work (teaching, research, and engagement, etc.)
- Align the strategy's espoused values with the ANU's public mission and societal contribution (beyond just the experiences of staff and students)
- Ensure values inform strategic decisions, including resource allocation and partnerships

6. Better address structural change and impact

The strategy emphasises human-centred aspirations but lacks:

- A clear framework for structural or systemic change
- Specific articulation of how ANU will "move the needle" on major challenges
- Clarity on how proposed actions translate into measurable impact

Some proposed actions are:

- Either too vague (e.g. references to AI without policy direction on its ethical use, normative or governance position on its use, consideration of ethical risks and societal impacts, how it integrates more broadly with questions of equity and justice, etc.)
- Or too specific and reactionary (e.g. AI is mentioned multiple times (gender is not mentioned once) but in many cases it would be much more timeless and relevant if instead of stating "graduates will be AI ready" we talk about "graduates/staff/etc. being equipped to navigate emerging technology and ideas" – something that enables us to reach the same conclusion (AI readiness) but without limiting us to only AI readiness, and in a way that also recognises not only new technologies but ideas. This is also at the heart of ensuring there is a balanced approach to tech and humanities.)

7. Address the missed opportunity on ethics, AI and future-facing leadership

The strategy lacks a strong future-oriented or intergenerational perspective. It should:

- Develop a clearer position on societal leadership
- Articulate ANU's role in shaping future-facing global debates
- Set out a vision for the next generation / 75 years / century??

8. Address visibility, representation and cohesion gaps

Workshop participants raised concerns that key communities (including women, gender diverse scholars, and First Nations groups) are insufficiently visible in broader strategy and change-making processes. They were also concerned that centres and institutes operate in silos, with limited institutional integration or recognition. There is a risk that what is not named or recognised in the strategy will be under-resourced – with the major gaps around intersectional gender equality a reputational and strategic risk for the University.

Participants sought:

- Improved visibility and representation of key communities and research areas
- An assurance that strategy language translates into resource and governance commitments
- That strengthening institutional coherence across colleges, centres, and priority institutes be represented

9. Reconsider tone and style

The document currently lacks clarity on priorities, is focused most heavily on an internal narrative rather than stipulating external impact. We would like to see a “plan on a page” equivalent for this new strategy, and more directly articulate what will change as a result of the strategy.

10. Provide some kind of framework or outline of strategic research and teaching strengths

This might include an overview of the college structure and institutes, or the thematic areas of the university.

Yardhura Walani and National Centre for Indigenous Genomics

12/05/2026

What's missing?

A commitment to developing a specific implementation plan for the First Nations components of the ANU Strategy.

Data on education and staffing

Monitoring and evaluation for the commitments

The recognition of ANU as a National leader in First Nations health research – a thriving area at ANU that should be invested in and built on.

ANU houses Australia's largest and arguably most impactful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led and governed health research centre in – Yardhura Walani, which boasts deep partnerships and demonstrated impact at both community and policy levels, self-built at ANU over a 12 year history at this institution. Yardhura Walani is also an international leader in Indigenous Data Sovereignty.

ANU is also home to the National Centre for Indigenous Genomics (NCIG), an internationally recognised Indigenous-led centre that plays a unique national role in the stewardship and governance of one of the country's most significant collections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander genomic material.

NCIG has positioned ANU as a leader in Indigenous genomics, Indigenous data governance, and ethical research practice. Alongside its custodial responsibilities, the Centre leads nationally significant research across genomics, rare disease, kidney disease, precision medicine, and health system translation, supported by long-standing partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations across Australia.

The work of NCIG reflects decades of scientific leadership, community accountability, and relationship-building that contributes substantially to the distinctiveness and national reputation of ANU.

The long-standing, nation-leading work of these ANU centres is a key contributor to the distinctiveness and global reputation of ANU, and pivotal to attracting, retaining, and developing First Nations staff and students across the pipeline.

To frame "Indigenous health" as "emerging or pathfinding work" in the strategy, without acknowledging the depth, history, established impact, and leadership in this area, is to understate a core institutional strength. It overlooks essential context for ANU's First Nations commitments, disregards the foundation this work provides, and risks overlooking the university's strongest platform for national research and policy influence.

UNDRIP

The Strategy commits ANU to implementing the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This raises important questions regarding Indigenous governance, decision-making authority, and institutional accountability within the University itself.

If ANU is serious about embedding UNDRIP principles in practice, consideration must be given to how Indigenous-led centres, programs, and communities within the institution are supported to exercise meaningful leadership and governance in areas directly connected to their expertise, responsibilities, and community relationships.

This includes recognising established Indigenous-led centres as part of the University's leadership and governance environment, with expertise and responsibilities that should inform strategy, implementation, research priorities, and accountability across ANU.

The implementation of UNDRIP within ANU should not be limited to aspirational language or external engagement. It should also require consideration of how Indigenous governance and self-determination are reflected structurally within the University itself.

What better questions could we ask to identify new ideas for the future of the University?

What would meaningful implementation of UNDRIP look like within ANU's governance and decision-making structures, particularly in relation to Indigenous-led centres, research, education, and strategy implementation?

What are the education and research priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

What Indigenous governance and Indigenous leadership mechanisms are required to administer the ANU Strategy? How is self-determination enacted?

Does ANU see First Nations health research as a strategic priority for its future, and as central to its national responsibility and its standing as a leading Australian university?

Should ANU, in line with other leading Australian universities, establish a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (First Nations)? How should it reconsider the value of a dedicated First Nations portfolio compared to a DVC model?

What long-term institutional commitments will ANU make to sustain and grow Indigenous-led centres that already demonstrate national and international leadership?

How will ANU ensure that First Nations governance is embedded within implementation, decision-making, and accountability structures, rather than limited to hand-picked and non-diverse consultation processes?

How will success for the First Nations components of the Strategy be measured, monitored, and reported over time?

How do we attract and support the talent that we need – in students and staff – to maximise the impact that we have through our research and education?

Map community needs to student and research agenda.

Hone existing programs to support undergraduate retention, HDR retention and completion, and to build academic staff in key areas as defined by community/policy stakeholders.

1. Recognise and invest in areas that demonstrate proven success in attracting, retaining and developing First Nations students and staff.
2. Continue sustained investment in the Tjabal Centre to support undergraduate success.
3. Commit to strategic and sustained investment in, and support for, leading First Nations researchers and HDR students through:
 - o Investment in, and partnership with, Yardhura Walani—the home of the largest cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and HDR students at ANU, with strong staff retention and 100% HDR completion rates.
 - o Dedicated funding for Level A and B Indigenous programs to support, grow, and retain the next generation of Indigenous research leaders across ANU.
 - o Expand the First Nations Strategy Committee advising the IVC and Chancery to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher and student representation, and ensure these key stakeholder groups are meaningfully involved in guiding University level policy and decisions.

ANU Institute for Space – InSpace

1: What we are good at

Driving impact through education, research and development initiatives.

Enabling collaboration across the entire campus regardless of college boundaries. For InSpace this is because the RI portfolio sits above all colleges. We have 18 Mission Specialists from all 6 Colleges and hold workshops each year to share updates, research opportunities and collaboration potential.

Offering a diverse space research portfolio, spanning AI, robotics, quantum comms, Earth observation, space medicine, biology, law and economics.

Unifying promotion of \$200M of world-class space infrastructure across ANU Acton, Mt Stromlo campuses and NSW facility, including HIAF, NSTF, AITC, QOGS, Remote Sensing Lab, ANFF OptoFab ACT and Siding Springs Observatory.

Transformative in the way InSpace is at the forefront driving cultural change within the ANU by enhancing collaboration between academia and industry thereby establishing pathways for greater translation and commercialisation prospects of researchers.

2: The opportunities before us

National role opportunities: ANU remit is to solve/address national challenges and has a first mover advantage with the space sector through the InSpace model. This can be replicated across other sectors ANU dominate, climate resilience, medicine, quantum.

Global status opportunities: ANU can take a leadership position in the Indo-Pacific research and diplomacy sector.

Educational opportunities: ANU can lead workforce development for emerging industries and develop/expand executive and professional educational offerings. Strengthen regional affiliations for the benefit of research partnerships and attracting talent.

Commercialisation opportunities: InSpace's success with leading iLAUNCH can be mirrored to create additional industry-driven research programs and offer a pathway to develop IP and licensing solutions for ANU researchers.

Community opportunities: ANU can strengthen First Nations research leadership and be the primary voice on contemporary conversations about ethics, AI and governance.

3: What we (most) need to focus on

Change our ANU narrative by going all in on research distinction, not breadth. ANU is ranked 1st in Australia for natural sciences and has more subjects in the global top ten than any other Australian university, this needs to start to work for us.

Focus on the success stories that bring in revenue such as University Trailblazer iLAUNCH, help to diversify revenue stream currently dependent on foreign students.

Replicate the InSpace model of collaboration and purpose-driven work which is a template for the kind of culture ANU needs more of.

Lean into our national university identity – this is what we were charged with solving national challenges, this is our defining and defensible asset. Utilise our proximity to government. InSpace is proof that when ANU leans into that identity, convening, connecting and solving national problems, its irreplaceable.

Simplify offerings – by doing fewer things exceptionally. The InSpace space sector success story is the model to emulate.

Creative Arts and Humanities

ANU Strategy Co-Design: Creative Arts and Humanities, 12 May 2026

Sophie Constable (HDR, CHL, CAP)

Naomi Hay (academic, SoAD, CASS)

Katerina Teaiwa (academic, CHL, CAP)

Chris Sutevski (HDR, SoAD, CASS)

Ying Xin Show (academic, CHL, CAP)

Mingyuan Jiang (HDR, HRC, CASS)

Anna Raupach (academic, SoAD, CASS)

Chaitanya Sambrani (academic, SoAD, CASS)

1. Concept of creative and creativity

Strategy V1 uses the word 'creativity' on one occasion. The word 'creative' is entirely missing from the strategy.

Language used in mission statements favours innovation. Creativity and the creative treated as secondary or irrelevant in the conversation. Linguaging sidelines the significance of creativity in favour of innovation.

- We support specific, strong, weighty language about the importance of the creative in all that we do. It is important to include concepts of creativity into the vision.
- The inclusion of critical thinking and creative practice, rather than creativity alone, is imperative

Strategy V1 does not use the word 'critical' at all!

From an HDR and student perspective, ANU needs to be a place that students aspire to come to for the right reasons: linked to our national mandate and an expectation of excellence. Teaching staff must therefore be significantly supported to develop and adapt teaching excellence for a diverse student cohort. Creativity needs to be valued in the teaching and learning space. Creativity and flexibility lead to transformative learning. Emphasis on creativity values the independence of the work of staff and students: creativity allows you to fill gaps and spaces without spending lots of money on imported systems. Allows agility, fluidity, flexibility. If this is not enshrined in the strategy, the ongoing struggle to value teaching and learning becomes impossible.

2. The significance of non-traditional research is part of the question. NTROs work with researchers as practitioners. Humanities and creative arts need alternative measurement, with NTROs deeply embedded in research. As Australia's national university, ANU should be leading this discussion. The NTRO is core when we speak of First Nations and Indigenous knowledge in the Asia-Pacific region including Australia. For many cultures in our region, art, music, architecture, dance, design are integral parts of life, and knowledge. The NTRO is central to knowledge production and dissemination. To serve the region in the format of the region, producing and exploring in ways that can be understood and valued for those places and people is deeply relevant to research and teaching.

We do have existing mechanisms for the measurement of NTRO impact: documentation of audience numbers, discourse around the research (reviews, linking across time and progression) demonstrating growth of impact, associated outcomes.

3. Resilience and sustainability

As we aim to include and promote national and regional voices, ANU brings in regional and local students from a range of backgrounds. However, we could be doing better in this space, supporting a diverse student body -not just those who can afford to study at ANU. Increased costs of living means that many cannot afford to go to university

or attend classes, or struggle to achieve their potential in a system designed with locally-based full time neurotypical English first language students in mind – Australia and the region is more than this. The ANU should not be the environment where students are choosing between learning and making a living. Making sure that students can stay. Make it through their degree without too much stress. Dependence on technology militates against students in or from remote locations.

4. AI in the university: p. 16 of strategy V1 states: human-to-human learning which prepares students for coexistence with AI.

Should the University be a place where the co-existence with AI is taken for granted? Should we not be critically examining that on multiple fronts, not the least the cost of AI in terms of natural resources? It is important not to - use the language of AI inevitability in a vision statement. Creativity is the core of humanities research, which AI cannot challenge. Humanities are said to be in crisis because humanities are inconvenient for the tech future. 'Our graduates will be AI ready.' TEQSA asks universities to respond to AI. Should we not be contesting this? This is why critical thinking is important in leading ethical discussion around AI.

5. Communicating impact: research impact does not always equate to social impact. Recognising the impact of NTROs cannot happen in the context of Times HR rankings etc. which rely upon impact metrics from journal article submissions only. Research impact is more than journal publications. What is a working definition of impact? Social impact needs to be a priority for the national university. The importance of social impact was demonstrated by the Sharing Stories case and the 2025 move to close the Environment Studio. ANU needs to be a space that recognises the substantive social impact of creative and critical thinking. Policy impact is well publicised at ANU. How do we substantially demonstrate the impact of publicly engaged and public facing contributions? For example, we are closely linked with national institutions in the arts (GLAM sector) which is unique in the Australian university context – how is this appropriately recognised? It is critical to take a multi-scalar approach: locally grounded, regionally connected, and globally engaged.

6. Our place in the world: We should be attentive to the importance of translation across languages, multilingual space, multiple registers of meaning production and hierarchies of knowledge. Cross-cultural communication, ideas travelling in the Asia-Pacific region. Learning a language is a transformative experience, and multilingualism should be valued for its bridging perspectives. We should not emphasise policy alone, which becomes too Australian focussed, as can be seen that it is increasingly hard for non-Australian research to receive national funding. ANU should be locally grounded (work with Canberra-based communities and institutions), regionally connected (our deep commitment to Asia and the Pacific), and globally engaged (be able to solve and engage with complex world problems). International students' experience is different. Their future work necessarily involves working beyond academia, working with museums and heritage sites in Australia and in the region, and writing for the public, not just specialist academic audiences. The word 'international' appears 17 times in V1, but its use appears sloganistic. We in the humanities need to work beyond academia if we are serious about our work being impactful in the region. National goals can end up instrumentalising work in the creative arts and humanities, holding them up as showpieces. However, this does not always feed back into resourcing. We need to maintain wariness around the primacy of national goals unless real resourcing follows.

CASS Anthropology Response to Draft Strategy V1

13 May 2026

Submitted by the following anthropology faculty in the School of Archaeology and Anthropology:

- Caroline Schuster, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Head of Discipline
- Adam Sargent, Lecturer in Anthropology
- Annika Lems, Associate Professor of Anthropology
- Ashley Carruthers, Lecturer in Anthropology
- Chitra, Senior Lecturer in Anthropology
- Tim Heffernan, Lecturer in Anthropology
- Tim McLellan, Lecturer in Anthropology
- Yas Musharbash, Associate Professor of Anthropology

Anthropology in CASS contributes to ANU's core purpose through internationally leading and globally-connected teaching and research that is focused on areas of national importance, including: climate change, environmental sustainability, indigenous knowledge, social dimensions to science and technology, international development, migration, xenophobia and social diversity. Our #9 QS global ranking reflects the excellence of these contributions. This ranking also contributes to the wider global reputation of ANU as a world-leading institution.

Our ability to continue this work, as well as to sustain our high global ranking is, however, severely limited by ongoing under resourcing of our discipline at ANU.

An important goal of the draft strategy document is to identify “enablers” that make research and education possible while supporting our purpose and values as a key institution in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. **For the discipline of anthropology, the most crucial enabler is strategic funds to support fieldwork travel and research.** This component is often overlooked as it gets lumped with other forms of travel that are deemed extraneous to research and education programs.

A guiding question for the draft strategy is: **“What should we fix for our University to work better?”**

We believe that fixing the under-resourcing of anthropology should be a priority action. It has ramifications beyond our discipline, and it feeds directly into ANU's core purpose and values of addressing major contemporary concerns while delivering innovation and creativity in research and teaching. **ANU could begin to fix this with a minimal annual cash investment of around \$165,000 per year for research and seminar funding.**

This modest annual investment would still leave us underfunded compared to most peer anthropology departments in the global top 20. But we believe this is the minimum required to sustain our teaching and research – both of which are now at serious risk. This minimal investment is necessary for a viable research program that enables grant applications, sustains our publishing record, and maintains the profile needed to attract postgraduate students. Without it, we fear our global ranking and reputation will continue to slide, with potentially disastrous (and financially expensive) consequences. A continued slide in our rankings would further hamper our ability to recruit leading faculty, to attract postgraduate students, and to sustain a meaningful presence in the discipline. The risk is not just the managed decline of our discipline but the effective disappearance of anthropology as an active program at ANU. In this document, we build a case for travel funding as fundamental infrastructure for anthropological research and a primary enabler in maintaining our teaching, research, and global ranking.

Benchmarking

Research funds and globally orientated research

Anthropology is a discipline with an inherently global outlook. Every anthropology department in the QS top twenty employ faculty whose research activities collectively cover at least 4 continents. CASS anthropology faculty currently conduct research across 4 continents (Asia,

Europe, Oceania, Latin America). This geographic spread is typical of top twenty anthropology programs and is crucial to our globally leading reputation.

The core of anthropological research is long-term ethnographic research. Typically, this involves us working in situ over at least 12 months with a single research community (with these 12 months often split across multiple trips). Compared to many other forms of research, this kind of research can be relatively inexpensive.

To cover anthropology's modest but unavoidable research costs, world leading anthropology departments provide their faculty with both guaranteed annual funding, plus minimally competitive research funding. We have been able to gather data on guaranteed annual funding at the following peer anthropology departments (all figures in AUD):³

1. University of Michigan (ranked #10) provides incoming ECRs with a lumpsum research grant of approximately \$98,000 to \$166,000. This is in addition to annual opportunities for minimally competitive internal research grants.
2. London School of Economics (ranked #8) gives all anthropology faculty a guaranteed annual grant of \$6,000 AUD, plus annual opportunities for minimally competitive internal funding.
3. University of Oxford (ranked #1) gives all anthropology faculty a guaranteed annual grant of \$6,000 AUD, plus annual opportunities for minimally competitive internal funding.
4. The National University of Singapore (ranked #14) provides all incoming faculty with a lump sum research grant of \$45,000 AUD. All faculty can also apply for up to \$12,000 per year of additional travel funding.
5. University of Pennsylvania (ranked #32) provides its anthropology faculty members with \$14,000 per year for travel and research funding. Additionally, it also provides seminar and conference funding on a minimally competitive basis.

As it stands, **anthropologists in ANU CASS have absolutely no access to any internal research funding**. This is not a minor gap but an anomaly among world leading anthropology programs. To support a research presence, world leading anthropology departments provide faculty with both guaranteed annual funding and competitive internal grants. For anthropology, these comparatively low research costs are real and unavoidable. What our peer institutions provide to meet them is instructive.

Seminar funds and globally orientated research networks

There can be no intellectual community or world leading discipline without scholarly engagement. Yet ANU is the only top twenty anthropology department without a funded speaker series. Our seminar series currently depends on visitors self-funding their travel, while our own faculty provide hospitality out of their own pockets. Meanwhile, our faculty regularly receive invitations to speak at leading institutions across Asia, Europe and North America, which come with travel funding and honorariums. What this tells us is that ANU anthropology is recognized globally as an engine of cutting-edge research but lacks the basic resources to reciprocate that engagement. A funded speaker series is the minimum infrastructure for a discipline that runs on conversation, debate and the exchange of ideas across borders.

How \$165,000 per year would be spent

The proposed minimal annual funding of \$165,000 to CASS anthropology would be directed into two streams.

First, each faculty member would receive \$15,000 per year in discretionary funding. In some disciplines this amount would not even cover basic lab or equipment costs. We would use these funds to:

- Fund exploratory overseas field research to inform proposals for external grants
- Fund ongoing ethnographic research that is not dependent on external funding.

³ Since this data is not in the public domain, we have gathered this information through connections our faculty have to counterparts in each of these institutions. Though we do not have access to this data, we would imagine that private universities with the top 10 departments (e.g. Harvard and Chicago) would offer even higher levels of funding than those we do have data for.

- Travel to international conferences in Asia, Europe and the Americas, allowing us to sustain global research networks, and project our reputation beyond Australia.

\$15,000 would enable the scoping fieldwork that makes grant applications competitive, sustain ongoing research between grants, and fund the international conference attendance through which we maintain the global networks our ranking depends on. For nine faculty, the total cost is \$135,000 per year, among the most cost-effective research investments ANU could make as it would allow us to be productive in the absence of external funding.

Second, we would spend \$30,000 per year on seminar series, and international keynote lectures, including:

- Bringing two international speakers per year to the ANU to deliver keynote lectures, as well as to delivery masterclasses for HDR students.
- Bringing 6 external speakers per year to ANU from within Australia.
- Other events with support for external guests – for example workshopping ANU faculty book manuscripts.

External Funding for Anthropology

The need for funding CASS anthropology must be understood in relation to the wider domestic and international funding environment for anthropology. ARC is by far the largest source of funding for anthropology in Australia. Smaller grants of approximately 40,000AUD are also available through the Wenner-Gren Foundation which is an international funder dedicated to research in anthropology.

For both ARC and Wenner-Gren, developing competitive fundings applications requires seed funding. Funders (quite rightly) expect proposals for anthropological research to be grounded in scoping fieldwork that has already been conducted at proposed research sites. To write a competitive grant proposal for ethnographic research in Delhi, for example, an anthropologist would need to spend several weeks or months in Delhi conducting scoping fieldwork. In anthropology, one cannot write a competitive grant proposal based on armchair research. In short, a modest amount of prior research travel funding is a prerequisite for competitive grant proposals in anthropology.

Even with seed funding, ARC funding success rates are very low – around 15% for DECRA and Future Fellowships, with a similar success rate for the much smaller Wenner-Gren grants. Relying exclusively on those competitions will inevitably leave many of us research inactive for significant periods of time.

In this domestic funding environment, it is not plausible to remain a world-leading anthropology department by relying only on external funding. While we must and will continue to put our best efforts into winning ARC funding, we need also to have plan B for those inevitable situations when grant applications are unsuccessful. In this regard, \$15,000 per year per faculty member is not just a path to more grant revenue, it is a vital fallback that would keep us research active in a challenging domestic and international funding environment.

Return on Investment from \$165,000 per year

Halting our Slide in Global Rankings

The Interim Vice Chancellor has identified QS rankings as a strategic priority. We are a top-ten ranked discipline operating with a minimal budget, and this is unsustainable in the long term. Indeed, we have already slipped 5 rankings places since 2020. HASS disciplines like anthropology operate at a fraction of the cost of infrastructure heavy fields. The university's strategic focus on QS rankings provides a clear case for investing in anthropology. We believe \$165,000 per year constitutes the minimum funds needed to begin to revitalize our research agenda and global reputation which has suffered due to years of systematic defunding.

The Financial Cost of Not Sustaining Global Rankings

A further drop in anthropology's global ranking would have direct financial consequences for ANU. Our Master of Anthropology and Planetary Futures (MAPF) program recruits strongly from international markets, and we are actively developing new markets in Thailand and the US. Students choosing between us and comparable programs at SOAS, LSE, or the University of Edinburgh are making decisions in which QS rankings are a major factor. A drop out of the top twenty would cost us those students.

The proposed \$165,000 annual investment is equivalent to the fees of approximately three international master's students. While it is impossible to quantify the exact impact of falling rankings, it is reasonable to assume that a drop out of the global top-twenty would cost us more than three international students per year. In all likelihood, the losses would compound as our ranking continue to slide. In this respect, the investment would more than pay for itself through the international student revenue that our global ranking enables.

Risk of downward spiral

While lost revenue from international students would be the most obvious and direct financial loss to the university, slipping rankings would have wider implications for our anthropology at ANU, including:

- Further undermining our ability to recruit and maintain leading academics. (This is something which has already been compromised by our lack of internal funding. In 2025, we had a failed search with the first-choice candidate turning us down for the sole reason that we could not offer her any internal funding).
- Further undermining our ability to bring in external funding.
- Further undermining our ability to recruit the best undergraduate and HDR students. (This is already highly compromised by lack of funding for international PhD students).

Without urgent investment in CASS anthropology, there is a very high chance of imminent drop in our global ranking. Rather than a one-off slip, there is a real risk of a rapid downward spiral, with each drop in rankings further undermining our ability to deliver the basic teaching and research that our current high ranking recognizes.

Wider issues and context in underfunding of CASS and HASS

In addition to our proposal for targeted funding of \$165,000 per year, we would like to highlight wider historic and systemic issues that have led CASS anthropology to the precarious position it is in now. These are likewise issues that can and should be fixed to the benefit not only of anthropology, but to the university more broadly, and especially to CASS – a college which hosts many of ANU's highest ranked disciplines yet receives relatively little investment.

Defunding CASS anthropology has been a gradual but ongoing process

It is important to highlight that ANU anthropology's global reputation and rankings are the result of historic investment in the discipline. This has been gradually eroded since 2015. Here is a recent timeline of defunding research funds:

1. Prior to 2015, all faculty had access to 3,500AUD per year in research funding.
2. Between 2015 and 2019, SoAA faculty were able to apply for 10,000 AUD grants for pilot & small projects. This was awarded through a competitive process administered by the school.
3. Between 2020 and 2022, the school's internal grants were reduced to just 7,000 AUD.
4. Since 2023, there has been no research funding available to SoAA faculty.

This divestment from anthropology research sits alongside other cuts to staffing budgets, as well as to conference funding. For example, in recent years, SoAA faculty could apply for conference travel funding through a competition administered by RSHA. This year, RSHA's conference funding competition was limited to ECRs, meaning that only three of our eight faculty were eligible to apply.

Broader principle of supporting HASS infrastructure: THE FIELD AS LAB

Historically, even in times of crisis, ANU continues to maintain its basic research infrastructure: computing, telescopes, particle accelerators, and laboratories of all kinds have been maintained throughout recent crises. It has been (rightly) unthinkable to achieve cost cutting by, for example, halting the operation of the Mt Stromlo observatory or of ANU's supercomputers. The impact of such a decision would, however, be much the same for RSAA or NCI as the decision to halt research travel funding has been for CASS anthropology and other HASS disciplines: it makes it impossible for us to continue with research or be competitive for external research funding.

For anthropologists, the field is the lab. Just as ANU would not defund a laboratory or shut down a telescope, defunding research travel effectively closes anthropology's primary research infrastructure.

The basic infrastructure needed for HASS is significantly cheaper than most STEM disciplines. Maintaining Mt Stromlo costs orders of magnitude more than the \$165,000 we are asking for. The fact that research travel funding is not considered "infrastructure" means, however, that it is wrongly assumed to be an expendable luxury whenever cost savings must be found. Given the contributions of CASS and HASS disciplines more broadly to the core of ANU's mission, such **research travel funding should be recognized as a core part of ANU's fundamental research infrastructure**. Such recognition would help protect HASS disciplines from the kinds of short-sighted and hugely damaging cuts that we have seen at ANU over recent decades.

In Conclusion

The core challenges that anthropology faces as a discipline at ANU – our inability to recruit world class faculty; to support international PhD students; to host a speaker series; to maintain a viable research program – trace back to the defunding of Anthropology at CASS. The \$165,000 we are asking for is extremely modest. It is the minimum needed to halt a decade of divestment before the damage to our discipline becomes irreversible.

A more ambitious program would go beyond that \$165,000 investment. It would invest in, among other things: international PhD scholarships; internally funded postdoctoral fellowships; sessional teaching support; and competitive internal grants to support larger research projects. Such investment would allow us to do more than simply halt our slide in global rankings, it would create opportunities for ANU to work towards becoming the most innovative and exciting center for anthropology globally.

Positioning ANU as a National Leader in Health and Care Workforce Research, Policy and Training

Tomoko Sugiura (she/her)

Associate Professor in the Practice of Health Systems and Resource Planning

Director, National Centre for Health Workforce Studies

Summary

Embed and visibly support nationally relevant, interdisciplinary centres such as the National Centre for Health Workforce Studies, and other externally engaged capabilities within the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health (NCEPH), as strategic institutional assets that strengthen ANU's societal impact, deepen government and community partnerships, enhance research reputation, and demonstrate ANU's distinctive value as a nationally engaged and globally recognised university. This includes clear institutional recognition, sustained support for people and capability, and stronger internal and external signalling of these capabilities as part of ANU's strategic identity.

The Opportunity

The competition between countries, and between Australian states and territories, for health and care workforce that underpins Australia's health and care systems is intense and increasing. Evidence about current, emerging and future skills, training, capabilities, and scope of practice would be a strategic advantage in this environment, yet available workforce data and policies are as fragmented as the healthcare system itself.

Recent Australian national developments reinforce both urgency and opportunity for health system reform through workforce capability and capacity building; for example:

- Health workforce is explicitly recognised in the 2026 addendum to the National Health Reform Agreement, cementing its central importance in the Australian health systems;
- The Independent Scope of Practice Review led by Prof Mark Cormack highlights ANU's role in shaping national reform;
- The National Competition Policy Federation Funding Agreement Schedule provides state and territory governments funding for workforce reform; and,
- Implementation of aged care and disability Royal Commission reforms is increasing demand for workforce innovation, cross-sector capability building, and evidence-informed planning.
- This represents an unmissable opportunity for ANU to demonstrate our intellectual leadership and work with governments to jointly reform health and care workforce evidence, policies and systems.

Why Health Workforce Research matters now more than ever

WHO estimates a projected shortfall of 11 million health workers globally by 2030⁴. Jobs and Skills Australia highlighted pronounced shortages of health professionals⁵. Yet Australian health and care systems are struggling. Key issues include:

- Fragmentation in health and care systems;
- Workforce supply shortage as well as maldistribution of supply;
- Reactive rather than anticipatory policy response, including overseas migration;
- Complexity in how population needs, housing, education, and regional development relate; and,
- Lack of data, lack of accessibility to data, and research capacity and capability.

⁴ <https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-workforce>

⁵ <https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/publications/towards-national-jobs-and-skills-roadmap-summary/current-skills-shortages>

Care and service demand will continue to rise due to population ageing and increasing complexity of care needs. In response, significant investment is occurring, but without a unifying health and care workforce framework.

A national role for the National Centre for Health Workforce Studies

Since their inception in 2022, the National Centre for Health Workforce Studies and its Health Data Analytics Team (HDAT), have worked extensively with Commonwealth, local governments, and WHO. These strong ties with policymakers make the National Centre well-placed to capitalise on workforce reform opportunities in the period 2026-2030.

Looking forward to 2030, research at the National Centre will grow and deepen ANU's capability and capacity in health workforce research expertise while further strengthening our collaborations with governments and communities, through,

- Convening researchers, educators, policymakers, health care partners, and the community sector to assess and respond to complex health and care workforce issues within the current health and care systems;
- Integrating knowledge bases and consolidating evidence from disciplines such as population health, health systems, data science, engineering, law, climate change science, migration and political science in one connected ecosystem to accelerate research translation and shaping the future health workforce;
- Contributing to the rebuild of ANU's research reputation through contract and grant research;
- Advising local and Commonwealth governments on workforce strategies and new models of care based on our integrated models for workforce supply and demand;
- Applying systems thinking to national, regional, and local health workforce attraction and retention strategies/risk management; and,
- Providing executive education courses and masters level courses.

This work represents the continued development of a system-level discipline at ANU, with growing national and regional relevance and impact.

Strategic Advantage and Operational Sustainability

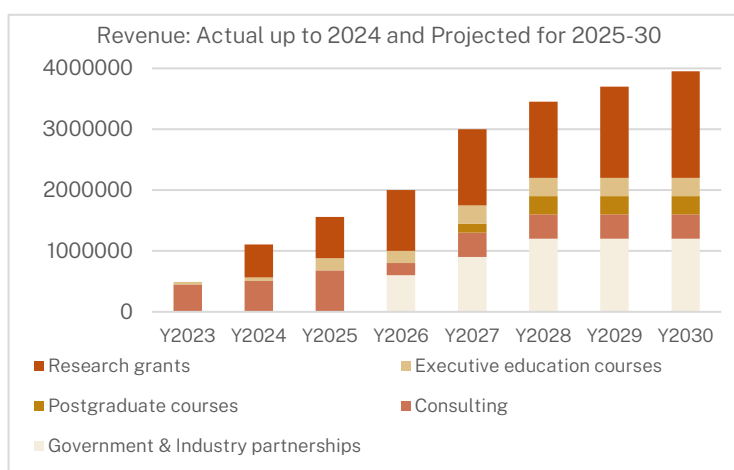
Continued strategic investment in health and care workforce research and government engagement will reinforce ANU's role as a systems-focused, nationally relevant institution. Our impact will be felt locally, nationally and globally.

ANU can do this by capitalising on earlier investments in the National Centre for Health Workforce Studies by committing to a modest investment in ANU's human capital.

During its first three years of establishment, the Centre secured a total of \$3.6 million in revenue: \$2.13 million through tendered research projects and educational activities, plus \$1.44 million in MRFF grants.

With sufficient workforce, the projected annual revenue of the Centre will continue to grow from \$1.56M in 2025 to \$3.95M in 2030 through education, partnerships, grants, and consulting.

In addition, The National Centre's power of convening research-policy roundtables and discussions will also see broader ANU community benefit from our advice, activities and connections.



The Centre's forward workplan

With committed salary support through to June 2030, ANU will be well positioned to realise sustained benefits across research, teaching, and external engagement.

- Research
 - Continuing to position health and care workforce research as a system-level priority for the University
 - Produce high-quality manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals;
 - Strengthen ANU's public intellectual leadership through broad-audience outputs such as the Conversation
 - Deliver workforce planning briefs to support local decision-making by Primary Health Networks; and
 - Secure further competitive research funding through MRFF and NHMRC applications
- Training
 - Deliver executive education through the Health Workforce Masterclass; and
 - Develop and embed health workforce courses within ANU Master's programs.
- Outreach
 - Continue to strengthen engagement with governments and partner organisations at local, jurisdictional, national, and international levels.

Recommendation for the next ANU Strategy

The National Centre is an integral part of its School, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health (NCEPH), and the sustainability of the National Centre is intertwined with the School's sustainability. The next ANU Strategy should explicitly recognise and support nationally relevant, externally engaged interdisciplinary centres and capabilities—such as the National Centre for Health Workforce Studies and other departments in NCEPH—as strategic institutional assets. This includes sustained investment in people and capability, clearer institutional recognition, and stronger internal and external signalling of ANU's distinctive strengths in policy-relevant research, education, and government partnerships.

Australian Centre on China in the World

Strategic gaps, ambiguities and risks

- a. **Specific regional expertise absent by name:** The region is referenced as the “Asia-Pacific”, but the document doesn’t acknowledge the depth of expertise, infrastructure, and sustained investment ANU has made in understanding China, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, nor the national significance of that work in the current environment.

At a moment when the sector is actively debating whether to maintain or reduce China-related engagement, an explicit and confident reference to China capability - grounded in ANU’s statutory obligations and longstanding comparative advantage - would send a constructive signal to staff, students, funders and partners.

- b. **Generic description of the “Asia-Pacific”:** The strategy’s repeated use of “Asia-Pacific” as its regional reference, without further differentiation, risks diluting the strategic signal. ANU’s depth in specific countries (including China) and regions represents a genuine comparative advantage that a broad regional label does not capture. It may be worth distinguishing between the breadth of ANU’s regional engagement and the depth of its expertise in areas of particular national importance.
- c. **No framework for navigating geopolitical complexity:** The strategy doesn’t address the complex geopolitical environment, including the discourse around foreign interference, national security obligations, and the reputational pressures that universities face when communicating about this work. Management of this space requires a clear, principled position, one that affirms academic freedom, transparent research integrity frameworks, and responsible engagement practices. Even at a high level, such a statement would provide an important enabling framework for researchers and centres working in sensitive policy areas.
- d. **Business and wider engagement:** The draft strategy’s treatment of external engagement focuses primarily on government partnership and international student recruitment. A more complete picture would recognise business and civil society - particularly those with direct China and Indo-Pacific exposure - as both beneficiaries of, and contributors to, the University’s regional expertise. This is also an under-leveraged non-government revenue and partnership pathway.

Suggestions:

- a. Consider naming China, Southeast Asia and the Pacific explicitly within the strategy’s Asia-Pacific framing, in a way that reflects both the statutory obligations of the National Institutes Grant and ANU’s unique institutional position.
- b. Within the “Peace, Security and Prosperity” research theme, the strategy could signal more directly that ANU’s depth of expertise in understanding China (as Australia’s most significant economic and strategic interlocutor in the region) is a core national asset.
- c. A brief, principled statement on academic freedom and research integrity in contested geopolitical contexts would strengthen the enabling environment for staff and students and provide a credible institutional reference point for external audiences.
- d. The Enablers section could acknowledge specialist research centres within the University’s broader financial architecture and commit to governance arrangements that support their operational continuity and development.
- e. The spheres of influence section could be strengthened by indicating how ANU’s “specific mandate for Asia-Pacific engagement” will be translated into sustained investment (in people, programs, and partnerships) rather than remaining at the level of aspiration.

Appendix 4 | University Leadership Group

ULG Workshop Summary | 4 May 2026

ULG engaged in a short prioritisation workshop in its 4 May meeting. The workshop identified key immediate (2026) priorities for ANU:

- a. Articulating a 'North Star' for the University and building pride in the University;
- b. Implementing an incentive-based budget model;
- c. Ensuring high quality governance, planning and infrastructure to support academic objectives;
- d. Being an incubator for Indigenous leadership;
- e. Developing sector-leading AI policy;
- f. International student recruitment and market diversification;
- g. Insourcing expertise;
- h. Ensuring workload sustainability and focusing on staff wellbeing;
- i. Improving internal communications;
- j. Retaining and supporting research talent;
- k. Focusing on nationally-important transdisciplinary problems;
- l. Articulating and celebrating Graduate Attributes;
- m. Fixing teaching technologies;
- n. Conducting a roadshow to improve our relationship with decision-makers and influencers across states and territories.

Near-term priorities (2027) for the sequencing of strategic initiatives included:

- i. Investing in Indigenous leadership in education and research;
- ii. Future-proofing education through AI investments (including skills for complementing AI);
- iii. Revising our approach to allocation and reporting of the National Institutes Grant;
- iv. Reducing the number of academic programs through a rigorous, and academic-led, review process and leading a whole-of-ANU approach to the design and marketing of excellent and attractive prestige postgraduate programs;
- v. Establishing and enlarging programs for student access and equity;
- vi. Improving project execution capabilities;
- vii. Investing in campus improvements;
- viii. Investing in leadership capabilities;
- ix. Implementing rigorous reviews of academic units, and targeting a return for those review efforts;
- x. Supporting public policy impact through flagship education offerings, research engagement and engagement with policy change and inquiries;
- xi. Building transnational education (TNE) pathways and partnerships;
- xii. Building the institutional architecture to enable multi-year decision-making

This document records the substantive findings from the two-day workshop. It draws on session presentations, facilitated discussion notes, and Slido poll exports.

What does the University need to be/do, if you are to be here in 2030?

Wordcloud Poll ✓ 121 responses 👤 41 participants

The word cloud contains the following terms:

- Support structures
- educational
- Visionary
- experiences
- leaders
- important
- scholarship
- continue
- freely
- Innovation
- work
- Reputation
- students
- defining
- national
- Stability
- Leadership
- able
- basics
- field
- right
- Culture
- develop
- reward talent
- employability
- appropriate
- international
- signed
- nation
- Supported
- Respect
- Community
- handover
- impactful
- Unsiload

The most frequent terms in a word-cloud poll (41 responses) were *Respect* (6), *Community* (5), *Culture* (2), *Leadership* (2), *Stability* (2), and *Reputation* (2). Single responses included *Trust*, *Fairness*, *Accountability*, *Clarity of vision*, *Principled*, *Indigenous leadership*, *Meaningful work*, and *Enable impact*. The pattern points primarily to the relational conditions of work rather than resources or vision.

A cluster of responses named institutional repair as the precondition for everything else: *Repair, Repair relationships with community, Get back on track, Remove mediocrity, We need to not be complacent*. Participants noted that many staff are experiencing sustained disruption and fatigue from organisational change, and that re-establishing ANU as a caring, human-scale institution is a strategic precondition, not a soft concern.

Participants called for the Strategy to regenerate shared purpose rather than simply describe it, and for confidence that it would be implemented rather than shelved. The phrase clarity of strategy was used in the specific sense of being able to look back in 2030 and know what was attempted and whether it succeeded.

The Tjabal Centre was presented as a proof of concept: Indigenous student completion rates in the top tier of the Department of Education's Indigenous Student Support Program; diplomacy training for the UN Indigenous Fellowship Programme and DFAT; and growth of Indigenous academics at Levels A and B across ANU. This impact is largely invisible in how ANU presents itself externally.

- **National leadership and regional and global engagement** – deepening connections with Commonwealth and State governments and international partners, positioning ANU as a trusted advisor on national Indigenous policy, and establishing ANU as an international thought leader on First Nations issues.
- **Facilitating national policy dialogue in Canberra** – using the University’s location as the hub for national and international Indigenous policy discourse, leveraging future Indigenous trade and economic relationships in the Asia-Pacific, and developing a coherent northern Australia economic and national security presence.

- **Developing the next generation of leaders** – making ANU the university of choice for Indigenous students, scholars and researchers, cultivating Indigenous thought leadership, and creating pathways for emerging leaders to engage in policy, research and global forums.

Three unresolved strategic questions were posed: how the University positions itself on Indigenous modernity in a modern social democracy; what role AI plays for Indigenous peoples in their survival as distinct peoples; and whether ANU should adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a guiding institutional framework.

The question of how Indigenous teaching and research is embedded across the University – whether led by the First Nations Portfolio or taken up by each area – was raised and not resolved. The answer has direct resource allocation implications. A new committee has been established to work through these questions.

3. Academic productivity and rankings

Between 2019 and 2026, ANU lost ground to all Australian peer universities in all subject areas with the exception of Law. Fields including Engineering, Life Sciences, and Psychology moved from positive to negative differential relative to peers. The differences in ranking, once weightings are applied, are dominated by Teaching reputation and Research reputation – both of which have declined in absolute terms and relative to Sydney, Melbourne, and Monash.

In *THE* rankings, ANU scores lower than Melbourne and Sydney on all indicators other than International Outlook (which reflects international staff and student numbers rather than research networks). The most significant gaps are in Research Quality and Industry indicators. Teaching reputation is above Monash and UNSW but behind Sydney and Melbourne.

In QS rankings, Academic Reputation is only a couple of points behind Australian peers but is weighted at twice Employer Reputation and six times Employee Outcomes. ANU is significantly behind on Employer Reputation, with nominations concentrated in South-East Asia where weights are low. Life Sciences and Medicine is a particular drag – removing it would result in large gains relative to peers.

The mechanism is not disputed: student-to-faculty ratio held steady at ANU while competitors improved; research reputation and citation performance declined both absolutely and relative to peers; and the University's International Research Network score is lower than Australian peers, which compounds weakness in h-index and Academic Reputation.

4. Building research talent

Pipeline findings by career stage

Across all career stages, the consistent finding was that ANU has strong foundations in talent attraction but that the systems, culture, and career architecture needed to allow that talent to flourish are inadequate and in some cases counterproductive.

At **HDR** level: increased international scholarships (ANU is turning away strong talent); improved domestic recruitment; supervisor vetting on interpersonal capability, mentoring ability, and alignment of expectations, not just academic credentials; and cohort building – the working-from-home shift has reduced campus density to the point where incoming HDRs arrive into something closer to isolation than a research community.

At **ECR** level: clearer career pathways beyond academia; better access to independent funding; training on collaborative project development; and removal of workload assignments that don't support career progression, aren't valued in promotion, and disproportionately fall on particular groups. Stop items included: assuming all ECRs want academic jobs; failing to support ECRs outside the traditional academic trajectory; and one-size-fits-all models.

At **MCR** level: the most acute concern was MCRs being ground down to the point where they cannot develop their research profile or take on leadership, while carrying teaching, supervision, service, and leadership responsibilities without recognition, training, or workload relief, and then being assessed against promotion criteria that do not reflect those contributions.

For **established** academics: the transition and retirement pipeline requires attention. The existing VR process is experienced as inadequate, and there is no good mechanism for honouring long careers and transitioning people to emeritus roles in ways that benefit both the individual and the institution.

Cross-cutting issues

- **Culture:** building collaboration across Schools and with external and commercial partners is foundational; the current culture is perceived as risk-over-opportunity; internal peer review should be the norm; professional staff should be treated with equal respect as academic staff; work-from-home where it undermines connection should be limited; administrative support should be treated as investment, not overhead.
- **Systems:** the FOCUS cycle is not optimal for research planning – a two-year cycle for academics was proposed. Research infrastructure is a talent attraction mechanism, not only capital expenditure. A University-wide intranet was called for across multiple sessions.
- **AI:** simultaneously a potential threat to the sector's business model and an opportunity to create time for creativity, synthesis, and deep thought. Whether ANU has a principled posture on AI was raised and not answered.
- **Workload model:** ECRs should have a research-intensive period on arrival, which may require senior staff to take on more teaching. This is a resource reallocation within the academic enterprise, not a policy change.

5. University finances and margin

The structural problem: recurrent funds have a spending ratio of 110.9% – more is being spent than received. Research funds sit at 90.5%, philanthropic at 63.7%, commercial at 96.0%. Capital expenditure is predominantly directed at managing current and legacy issues (asset renewal, digital platforms, compliance) rather than strategic growth. Forward estimates show sustained capital demand through to 2030 with below-zero requirements emerging from 2030 onwards.

The margin distribution across programs is known but rarely stated: a relatively small number of units generate the margin that cross-subsidises a much larger number that are margin-neutral or negative. The question is not whether this cross-subsidisation is appropriate – it often is, for mission reasons – but whether it is deliberate and sustainable at the current scale.

Eight working assumptions about the educational model were put to the room: appetite for growth rather than shrinking; education as the source of margin for reinvestment; no compromise on quality; continued co-investment in some programs; preference to stay under 25,000 students; quality over volume in international recruitment; TNE as pathways and articulation rather than full offshore campuses; and online and executive education as complementary but not dominant.

Key Slido findings on margin (21 responses):

- **Program portfolio:** too many degrees, too many low-enrolment courses, not enough willingness to stop. Multiple responses called for fewer degrees, specialisation through majors, and active cessation of low-enrolment courses. "There is zero incentive for schools to grow programs under ECF, it adds more workload and we cannot reinvest. Fix ASAP please."
- **Conversion:** "For International PG, conversion from application to offer is 93% but from offer to acceptance is 4%. We HAVE to improve our conversion rates."
- **Canberra advantage:** government departments have substantial budgets for higher education, many public servants are ANU alumni, and yet much postgraduate funding goes to other universities that offer more flexible approaches. Program architecture and approval timelines are currently preventing ANU from capturing this.

- **Budget model:** collaboration incentives and cross-School program development are constrained by the approval process and budget model structure. Local areas need full financial information to understand which levers are available.
- **Reputational risk:** multiple responses flagged the need to consider reputational risk before pursuing volume growth – the premium product should not be diluted.

Financial transparency was identified as a live concern: staff perceive limited visibility of the University's financial position. Clarification on how the NIG is being used – specifically whether as intended for long-term research and national capability, or absorbed into operational budget – was called for.

6. Student recruitment and education

Recruitment trends

Domestic undergraduate commencements are largely stable while international commencements have fallen. Postgraduate enrolments have fallen for both domestic and international cohorts.

International student pipeline resilience has been significantly reduced. In 2017, 33% of international recruitment came through pathways (ELICOS, Foundations, Diploma); in 2025 that had fallen to 7%, with 81% direct to market. Total acceptance numbers are only marginally lower (3554 vs 3936 in 2017 – a 9.65% decline) but the ability to recover from a sharp drop in direct-market demand is substantially diminished. ANU has eliminated its foundation year and diploma pathways.

Teaching profile

International load is contracting: losses in major programs (–105 EFTSL) outweigh growth (+40 EFTSL), with major drops in Financial Management and Computing. Domestic load is concentrating in a small number of programs – BSc Psychology and BEng are the primary growth areas; BHLthSc has seen the largest drop.

Strategic directions raised

- **Retreat to quality:** prioritising well-subscribed, high-quality offerings with coherent pathways, which may mean fewer courses with stronger enrolments.
- **AI response:** in-person exams, vivas and oral defence as integrity mechanisms; applied problem-based tasks as the modes most resistant to AI substitution.
- **Small-scale advantage:** intensive teaching and research-led learning as a distinctive alternative to mass delivery models; the risk that recording-and-laptop consumption of lectures makes ANU vulnerable in the AI age.
- **Speed of change:** approval times are too slow for market-driven change. If it takes two years to change a curriculum, the institution is perpetually behind.

Discussion also identified: postgraduate program development has historically been School-driven, leading to inconsistency; a move to College- or University-level PG program design was proposed. ANU risks losing domestic students to UC and may lose further share to UNSW Canberra's expansion. Small-scale pilot funding to test new concepts was called for, given that the budget model continues to limit innovation.

7. National university identity

Identity formulations

Responses clustered into three families:

- **National mission:**
 - 'The Australian National University exists for Australia';
 - 'A university for Australia's future';
 - 'Serving the nation through research, teaching and partnership';
 - 'ANU supports Australia's prosperity and security';
 - 'Nationally powered, globally engaged'.

- **Service-to-nation:**
 - 'Solving complex problems for Australia and the region';
 - 'Preparing the next generation of national leaders';
 - 'Where Australia thinks';
 - 'A national partner for capability, innovation and people';
 - 'We are Australia's University for the World'.
- **Values-and-culture:**
 - 'Excellence, curiosity and courage in service of the nation';
 - 'Engaged excellence';
 - 'Frank and fierce'.

Productive pushback included: whether ANU is the government's university or the people of Australia's university (different accountability and optimisation logic); whether ANU is proximate to government or actually connected to it; and whether the University's role is to align with government priorities or with the goals and priorities of the people and parliaments of Australia and the region.

What we would have done differently by 2030 (Slido – 22 responses)

- **National mission and government:** built deep two-way partnerships with government through secondments, co-designed programs and joint priorities; positioned ANU as the primary university serving national needs where others cannot compete; amplified national visibility through outreach to all states and territories; led national conversations, major reviews and foresighting work; asked government what it wants from its national university in a 21st-century, not post-1945, moment; and used the NIG as intended – for long-term research and national capability.
- **Educational model:** developed a small number of world-leading masters programs aligned to national purpose, reputation, and margin; ensured graduates have a nationally significant experience (government internship, international exposure, or cross-state engagement); shaped the residential hall experience to reflect the University's civic role in the national capital; and delivered a top-20, liberal-arts-style education experience with sustained contact with senior faculty.
- **Portfolio and focus:** stopped competing where large universities have natural advantages; made tough decisions on programs and courses to discontinue; re-localised decision-making and budgets to Schools; and used Institutes and Centres to rapidly convene expertise and respond to national and mission-oriented questions. The view that ANU should be able to articulate what it does not do – 'we don't do x, y, and z; if you want those, go to another sandstone' – was put explicitly.
- **Storytelling and systems:** made student and alumni stories central to identity and impact communication; launched a domestic marketing campaign ('The University for Australia'); invested in unique research infrastructure; and modernised systems and governance so decisions are streamlined and aligned with mission.

8. Open questions for Strategy v1

The final Slido activity (6 responses) identified what the two days did not resolve:

- **Rebuilding senior research capability**

How to regain world-leading researchers lost since COVID. A small number of high-profile researchers drive reputation, international networks, h-index from Day 1 rankings data, and international recruitment. Centrally funded endowed chairs or strategic appointments in key areas were proposed.

- **Staff morale and wellbeing**

A deliberate strategy to restore staff morale, trust, culture, and psychological safety needs to be integral to implementation, not a parallel workstream.

- **Clear accountability for implementation**

Strategy must include specific actions, timelines, responsibilities, and regular performance reviews. Named senior roles must be explicitly accountable for delivery.

- **New model for HDR workforce development**

A staff model for PhD candidates – paid, well-supported roles – would differentiate ANU and address scholarship access and cohort-building problems simultaneously.

- **External trend scanning**

Scope major disruptions including the race to AGI and automation, the collapse of entry-level white-collar jobs, rising mental ill-health in young people, and future labour market and capability gaps.

- **Incentives for cross-College collaboration**

Identify budget, governance, and recognition mechanisms that support collaboration in teaching and program design, especially around national challenges and wicked problems.

ULG Workshop Summary | 10 March

Between December 2025 and February 2026, 32 organisational units across ANU - six Colleges, their constituent Schools and Research Institutes, and six Portfolio areas - engaged in deep strategic reflection on institutional identity, opportunities, and future direction. The consultation included workshops, surveys, focus groups, interviews, and digital collaboration platforms.

On March 10, 2026, all six College Deans and five Portfolio Leads synthesised their findings. The consultation revealed five elements that ANU considers non-negotiable:

1. **National University Identity:** ANU serves the nation, meets complex challenges, and convenes national conversations
2. **Research Excellence:** Exceptional at both fundamental research and high-impact research, with trans-disciplinarity as a core strength
3. **Human Scale with Global Impact:** Intimate, personalised engagement in both teaching and research, with world-leading outcomes
4. **Government Engagement:** ANU guides policy and advises government on today's and tomorrow's challenges
5. **360° Institutional Coherence:** One university view that integrates teaching, research, and external engagement, including branding

SECTION 1: IDENTITY & DIFFERENTIATION

Who We Are and What Sets Us Apart

The National University Identity

Across all submissions, a consistent theme emerged: ANU is the national university, with a distinctive responsibility to serve the nation and meet its most complex challenges.

This identity is embedded in ANU's founding Act of Parliament and reinforced by the National Institutes Grant. This is not simply a rhetorical claim but reflects genuine institutional commitment and distinctive capability grounded in research excellence, institutional independence, and demonstrated track record of engagement with national challenges.

ANU's capacity to convene national conversations on complex issues is distinctive. The institution brings together diverse perspectives, provides neutral space for dialogue, contributes research evidence to public debates, and maintains focus on public good. This convening role shapes research priorities toward challenges of national significance, engagement with government as trusted advisor, educational mission focused on developing national leaders, and institutional culture embedded in commitment to national mission.

Research Excellence: Fundamental and Applied

ANU's research identity is fundamentally distinctive: the institution excels at both fundamental research (the "long game") and high-impact research (the "urgent"), with trans-disciplinarity as a core integrating principle. This combination is rare among research universities and represents a significant competitive advantage.

The institution's strength lies in cross-disciplinary integration. Rather than simple collaboration across disciplines, ANU creates structures and cultures enabling genuine integration to address complex problems. Climate change, for example, requires integration of earth sciences, biology, engineering, economics, policy, and humanities - a capability ANU has developed distinctively.

Human Scale with Global Impact

A striking theme across the consultation was the emphasis on human scale (intimate, personalised engagement) combined with global impact and world-leading outcomes. This combination is distinctive and valuable in an era of increasing institutional scale and depersonalisation.

Human scale manifests in residential campus experience combining academic intensity with community and intellectual life, small campus with good student-to-staff ratios, and access to senior academics. Critically, this human scale is not a limitation but foundation for global

impact. It enables deep mentoring relationships, authentic community engagement, and research collaborations grounded in genuine relationships rather than transactional arrangements.

Government Engagement and Policy Influence

ANU maintains trusted relationship with government grounded in decades of engagement, demonstrated expertise, institutional independence, and commitment to national interest. This is not simply about research funding but a distinctive role as trusted advisor and partner in addressing national challenges.

ANU advises government on complex policy challenges, provides research evidence for policy decisions, develops leaders for government service, and engages in long-term partnerships addressing persistent challenges. This role combines research excellence with policy relevance, maintains independence while engaging with government, addresses long-term challenges and immediate policy questions, and engages across multiple levels of government.

SECTION 2: CORE ROLES

What We Do and How We Do It

Role 1: Research Leadership and Knowledge Creation

ANU's primary role is to create new knowledge, advance understanding, and develop new capabilities across all five strategic domains. This is not simply about producing research publications but about contributing to human understanding ("first, know the nature of things") in ways that address complex challenges. ANU's research leadership is distinctive because it combines fundamental research, applied research, transdisciplinary integration, with national mission alignment. This role is essential for maintaining ANU's competitive advantage and fulfilling its national mission.

Role 2: Transdisciplinary Research and Teaching

ANU has a distinctive role in integrating knowledge and perspectives across disciplines to address complex challenges. This is not simply about collaboration between disciplines but about developing genuinely new ways of thinking that integrate multiple perspectives. ANU's role is to create structures, incentives, and cultures that enable genuine transdisciplinary integration.

Role 3: Government Engagement and Policy Influence

ANU has a distinctive role as trusted advisor to government on complex policy challenges. This role is grounded in research excellence, institutional independence, and commitment to the national interest. ANU's policy engagement is distinctive because it combines research excellence with policy relevance, maintains independence while engaging with government, addresses long-term challenges as well as immediate policy questions, and engages across multiple levels of government.

Role 4: Education and Student Development

ANU has a distinctive role in developing the next generation of leaders, scholars, and professionals through research-led education that combines academic rigour with human-scale mentoring and support, that develops whole-person capability, provides distinctive experiences, and supports diverse student cohorts. This role requires ongoing investment in teaching excellence and student support.

Role 5: Convening and Leadership

ANU has a distinctive role in convening national conversations on complex challenges and providing leadership to the higher education sector and Australian society. ANU's convening role is distinctive because it brings together diverse perspectives, provides neutral space for dialogue, contributes research evidence to public debates, builds partnerships across sectors, and maintains focus on public good. This role positions ANU as a leader in addressing complex national challenges.

SECTION 3: ENABLERS OF EXCELLENCE

What's Needed to Succeed

The consultation consistently identified six critical enablers - systems, structures, investments, and cultural factors - that are essential for ANU to realise its strategic potential

Enabler 1: Investment in People and Culture

Across all submissions, a consistent and urgent theme emerged: ANU needs to invest significantly in people and rebuild institutional culture.

Investment in people requires competitive salaries and benefits, clear career pathways with transparent promotion processes, professional development opportunities, wellbeing support addressing mental health and work-life balance, leadership development at all levels, and rebuilding trust through transparent communication

This is not a "nice to have". Without investment in people, ANU cannot maintain research excellence, deliver distinctive educational experiences, build transdisciplinary collaborations, or attract and retain top talent. The consultation revealed significant concern about staff wellbeing and trust, suggesting that this enabler is urgent and foundational.

Enabler 2: Systems and Infrastructure

Across all submissions, a consistent theme emerged: ANU's core systems are not fit for purpose.

Systems modernisation requires integrated systems that enable data sharing, user-centred design that prioritises experience of staff and students, fit-for-purpose functionality that supports strategic priorities, robust cybersecurity, scalable infrastructure, and effective change management. Poor systems create friction, waste time, undermine staff morale, and prevent integration across Colleges and Portfolios. Investment in systems is essential for enabling collaboration, supporting student experience, reducing administrative burden on academic staff, enabling data-driven decision-making, and protecting institutional reputation.

Enabler 3: Budget Model Reform and Financial Sustainability

Multiple submissions identify the need for budget model reform to align financial structures with strategic priorities. Budget model reform requires alignment of budget allocation with strategic priorities, transparent allocation processes, incentive structures that reward strategic priorities, investment in infrastructure, sustainability planning, and flexibility to respond to emerging opportunities.

Enabler 4: Research Infrastructure and Facilities

Multiple submissions emphasise the critical importance of protecting and investing in research infrastructure.

Infrastructure investment requires maintaining and upgrading research facilities, investing in emerging capabilities (e.g., quantum computing, AI, climate modelling), ensuring equitable access across Colleges and Schools, developing national research platforms, and integrating teaching and research spaces. Research infrastructure is foundational to ANU's research excellence.

Enabler 5: Institutional Integration and Governance

Multiple submissions identify the need for better integration across Colleges, Schools, and Portfolios while maintaining autonomy and enabling innovation.

Institutional integration requires clear governance structures, cross-institutional coordination mechanisms, shared accountability for strategic priorities, transparent communication about institutional priorities and decisions, balancing centralisation and autonomy, and conflict resolution mechanisms. Better integration is essential for realising transdisciplinary research opportunities, delivering consistent student experience, aligning resources with strategic priorities, reducing duplication and inefficiency, and building institutional coherence.

Enabler 6: Institutional Identity and External Communication

Multiple submissions identify the need for clearer articulation and communication of ANU's distinctive identity and value proposition.

Strengthening institutional identity requires clear articulation of ANU's national mission and distinctive role, consistent communication of this identity across all institutional communications, authentic storytelling that reflects genuine institutional strengths and values, integration of narrative across Colleges and Portfolios, external engagement that builds understanding of ANU's role and impact, and alumni engagement. Clear institutional identity is essential for attracting top students and staff, building partnerships, securing philanthropic support, engaging with government, and building public understanding of ANU's role and value.

SECTION 4: CROSS-CUTTING THEMES AND TENSIONS

Consistent Themes Across All Submissions

National mission as binding principle: Across all submissions, the national mission emerged as a binding principle that connects diverse strengths and opportunities. The Research & Innovation Portfolio articulates this most clearly: "the mission binds together other strengths and opportunities." This suggests that the national mission is not simply a constraint but a distinctive source of identity and purpose that differentiates ANU. It provides coherence across diverse Colleges and Portfolios and enables ANU to maintain distinctive identity while pursuing excellence across multiple domains.

Trans-disciplinarity as necessity: Across all five strategic domains, the consultation revealed that transdisciplinary integration is essential. Complex challenges cannot be addressed within single disciplines. ANU's distinctive strength lies in its capacity to integrate perspectives and create new knowledge at disciplinary boundaries. This requires not simply collaboration between disciplines but genuine integration of perspectives and methods.

Human scale as competitive advantage: Across all submissions, there was emphasis on maintaining human scale (intimate, personalised relationships) while achieving global impact. This is not a limitation but a distinctive competitive advantage that enables deep learning, meaningful research collaboration, and authentic community engagement. ANU's size and structure enable this human scale in ways that larger universities cannot replicate.

Investment in people as foundation: Across all submissions, investment in people emerged as the most urgent priority. Without investment in people, all other strategic initiatives will fail. This includes competitive salaries, clear career pathways, professional development, wellbeing support, and rebuilding trust through transparent communication.

Systems and infrastructure as enablers: Across all submissions, there was consistent emphasis on the need to modernise systems and invest in infrastructure. This is essential for supporting strategic priorities, reducing administrative burden, enabling integration, and protecting security and privacy. Without investment in systems and infrastructure, ANU cannot realize its strategic ambitions.

Key Tensions Requiring ULG Leadership

Beyond the strategy formulation phase we are in now, the following tensions will require consistent debate and dialogue, and aligned leadership from Executive and ULG:

Scale vs. human scale: How can ANU maintain intimate, personalised engagement while achieving necessary scale? ANU needs to grow student numbers and expand research capacity while maintaining human scale. Possible approaches include maintaining small class sizes and research groups while growing overall numbers, using technology to support personalisation at scale, and creating multiple pathways and programs.

Specialisation vs. breadth: Which domains should ANU prioritise, and which should it maintain at baseline? Resources are limited. Decisions should be based on distinctive capabilities, national mission alignment, opportunity for transdisciplinary integration, and financial sustainability.

National mission vs. international competitiveness: How to balance service to Australia with global research leadership? These are not contradictory - ANU's national mission actually enhances international competitiveness by providing distinctive identity, enabling deep engagement with complex challenges, and attracting researchers committed to public good.

Centralisation vs. autonomy: How much institutional integration is needed without stifling College/School innovation? Better integration is needed for transdisciplinary collaboration and consistent student experience, but Colleges and Schools need autonomy to respond to local opportunities.

Fundamental vs. applied research: How to balance long-term foundational research with urgent societal challenges? This is a false dichotomy. ANU's strength lies in maintaining disciplinary depth while engaging with complex challenges through transdisciplinary collaboration.

SECTION 5: IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

This synthesis reveals a University with clear identity, distinctive capabilities, and genuine consensus on strategic direction.

The ULG workshop on March 31–April 1 should address critical questions:

- What does national leadership mean in practice? How do we identify complex national challenges where ANU has distinctive capacity?
- How do we achieve talent density - world-leading talent concentration - while maintaining human scale?
- What principles should guide our scale decisions? What trade-offs are we willing to make?
- How shall we reinvest in key capabilities? What margins do we need to achieve to do this?
- What changes are required to implement this strategy? What will we stop doing? What will we continue?
- What do we need to hear from our people, students, alumni, and other stakeholders?

APPENDIX: CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

Between December 2025 and February 2026, ANU conducted a comprehensive co-design consultation across all six Colleges, their constituent Schools and Research Institutes, and six Portfolio areas. The consultation employed diverse methodologies tailored to each organisational unit, reflecting different cultures, structures, and engagement preferences. This approach ensured that the synthesis reflects genuine institutional voice and diverse perspectives rather than a single imposed narrative.

Principles

The consultation was guided by several principles:

- Genuine co-design - seeking authentic input rather than validation of predetermined conclusions;
- Diversity of voice - ensuring that academic staff, professional staff, students, and leadership all contributed;
- Institutional authenticity - capturing genuine institutional voice and perspectives rather than external interpretation;
- Transparency - making clear how input would be used and how decisions would be made;
- Integration - seeking to understand how different perspectives connect and where genuine consensus exists.

Consultation Approaches

College of Asia and the Pacific (CAP) Engaged through structured workshops and leadership consultation. Emphasis on understanding regional expertise, government engagement, and student experience. Consultation revealed distinctive strengths in Asia-Pacific engagement, regional policy influence, and student mobility. CAP's consultation highlighted the importance of regional expertise and government engagement as distinctive capabilities.

College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) Employed multiple consultation methods including workshops with leadership, School-level submissions from Research School of Humanities and the Arts and Research School of Social Sciences, and targeted interviews. Consultation revealed distinctive strengths in Indigenous research, multilingualism, democratic resilience, and creative practice. CASS's consultation highlighted the importance of humanities and social sciences perspectives across all strategic domains.

College of Business and Economics (CBE) Conducted workshops with academic and professional staff, followed by college-wide survey. Consultation revealed distinctive strengths in policy engagement, governance, economic analysis, and business leadership. CBE's consultation highlighted the importance of business education and economic policy expertise.

College of Law, Governance and Policy (CLGP) Employed college-level consultation combined with School-level inputs from Law School, Crawford School of Public Policy, and National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health. Consultation revealed distinctive strengths in policy influence, governance, health systems, and legal scholarship. CLGP's consultation highlighted the importance of policy engagement and governance expertise.

College of Science and Medicine (CoSM) Conducted structured meetings across leadership, School managers, and professional staff, combined with School-level submissions from Centre for Gravitational Astrophysics, Research School of Chemistry, Research School of Astronomy & Astrophysics, Research School of Earth Sciences, Research School of Physics, School of Medicine & Psychology, and Research School of Biology. Consultation revealed distinctive strengths in fundamental science, research infrastructure, health research, and transdisciplinary collaboration. CoSM's consultation highlighted the importance of scientific infrastructure and talent pipeline.

College of Systems and Society (CSS) Engaged through multiple School-level submissions from Centre for Public Awareness of Science, Fenner School of Environment and Society, School of Computing, School of Cybernetics, School of Engineering, and Mathematical Sciences Institute. Consultation revealed distinctive strengths in systems thinking, computing and AI, environmental science, and mathematics. CSS's consultation highlighted the importance of systems thinking and trans-disciplinarity.

Academic Performance Portfolio Used SciVal research intelligence tool analysing 10 years of ANU publication data (2015-2024) across ~1,400 topic clusters. Consultation revealed distinctive research strengths and performance trends across all Colleges and Schools.

Education Portfolio Conducted consultation on distinctive educational proposition, student experience, and system modernisation.

Research & Innovation Portfolio Conducted consultation on research strategy, national mission alignment, and budget implications. Consultation revealed distinctive research strengths, infrastructure needs, and national mission alignment.

Services Portfolio Engaged 824 FTE (approximately 20% of University staff) through varied approaches across divisions. Consultation revealed need for system modernisation, staff culture rebuilding, and governance clarification.

First Nations Conducted structured small group consultation session in hybrid format (in-person and online) with cross-section of academic and professional expertise. Consultation revealed distinctive strengths in Indigenous research, data sovereignty, and nation building role.

Advancement Employed interactive digital collaboration (Mural board) with mixed participation: Philanthropy team workshopped collectively, other teams contributed individually then consolidated through group discussion. Consultation revealed distinctive opportunities for alumni engagement, philanthropic support, and brand development.

Draft Strategy v1.0

University Strategy Codesign | April 2026



The Australian National University acknowledges the Ngunnawal and Ngambri-Kamberri people, who are the Traditional Owners of the land upon which the University's Acton campus is located.

This Ngunnawal and Ngambri-Kamberri land supports students and staff throughout their time at ANU. It will continue to hold a space for future generations to come together and learn from Country and one another.

We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Indigenous peoples, past, present and future, and acknowledge that this land from which we benefit has an ancient history that is both rich and sacred.

The ANU community makes a commitment to always respect the land upon which we stand and to ensure that the voices of this land's Indigenous peoples are both heard and listened to so that we may move towards a future marked by cooperation and mutual respect.



Invitation

This Draft Strategy follows the Strategic Directions document from March 2026 and invites your further input. The document is the product of significant work and engagement from across the University.

The Strategic Directions document explained the process of codesign and how sharing materials is central to that approach. This draft is shared in that spirit. This document reiterates some guiding questions as prompts for how to interrogate the draft Strategy.

The draft tries to capture many of the distinctive features of the University including: our human scale; our partnership with government; and that we are research-led.

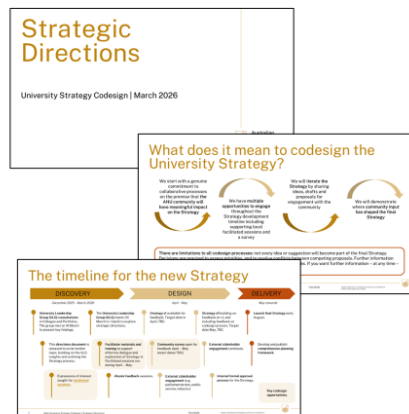
Please share what resonates, and what doesn't, where there are the right ambitions and where there is more work to do. We also want to know what's missing.

There are two key ways for you to contribute to the development of the University's Strategy:

1. Complete the staff and student survey, open 21st April to 13th May;
2. Attend a discussion session led by a volunteer facilitator from among our staff and students, from 28th April to 13th May.

The outputs from these activities will inform the next stages of the Strategy. Thank you for all your contributions.

Professor Rebekah Brown FASSA, Interim Vice-Chancellor & President, and the University Executive



Access the Strategic Directions document and details about codesign opportunities here anu.edu.au/about/anu-university-strategy-community-engagement



Guiding questions

These questions are not exhaustive. As a codesign process, we offer these as stimulus for dialogue. In the spirit of dialogue, please feel free to ask the questions that you feel are most necessary for exploring the future of the University.

How can we best capture and articulate the distinctive, and complex, contribution that ANU makes to the nation?

How does our national mission cohere with our local, national, regional and international reach?

How do we attract and support the talent that we need – in students and staff – to maximise the impact that we have through our research and education?

What do we need – in the ways we work, where we focus, or what we do – to be resilient to change from external forces like AI, demographic shifts and climate change?

What should we fix for our University to work better?

What should we stop doing?

What is the priority order?

What's missing? What better questions could we ask to identify new ideas for the future of the University?

To find out more about the Strategy development process, the staff and student survey, or find out more about attending a facilitated session, please see: anu.edu.au/about/anu-university-strategy-community-engagement





Draft Strategy

Draft v1

Draft Strategy structure



Identity

- We first articulate the **purpose** of our institution through both a re-statement of our role as the national university and our commitments to First Nations.
- We share the **values** that we commit to nurture in the University. These are drawn from the Living Document which was informed by community codesign.
- We focus on our **people** as central to the Strategy, and how success for ANU relies on our ability to support all staff, students, alumni, partners and other stakeholders.

Impact

- **Research and education** are the two primary means of our impact in the world. Cross-cutting these are our **spheres of influence** – local, national, Asia-Pacific region, and international – and how we cultivate collaborations for mutual benefit.
- The **enablers** are essential for ensuring that we have the financial, physical, digital and human resources to achieve our ambitions.



Identity



7

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategy v1

17/05/2026

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00120C

Draft v1

Our purpose as the National University

Context

- The University was established in 1946 and is governed by [the ANU Act of 1991](#). ANU is unique among Australian universities having been established by the Commonwealth Government and with distinct statutory obligations.
- As the only national university, we have a distinct and essential role to recognise, celebrate and promote First Nations people and knowledges.
- We receive the National Institutes Grant as the stewards of public investment in research, infrastructure and sovereign capabilities.
- The Act requires the University to play national and international roles, and to be an institution for the ACT and locality. The University's functions are further elaborated in the Funding Agreement with the Department of Education (see excerpt, right).
- Our work is informed by national reference points including [Australia's National Science and Research Priorities](#) and the [Universities Accord](#), and our engagement with the Australian Public Service. As our world changes, and the needs of the nation evolve, we must also adapt and ensure that we serve Australia.

The purpose for which the National Institutes Grant is provided to the ANU is to recognise the role the University plays as a national institute in facilitating key activities that are of national significance, including:

- 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.

8

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategy v1

17/05/2026

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00120C

Our purpose as the Australian National University

Direction

- ANU will be celebrated as a globally-connected research-led university which serves the nation through our teaching and research. We attract diverse and accomplished academics and students, and we create the conditions for our people to do their best work.
 - We will demonstrate our service to the nation. Our research and education build sovereign capabilities. We work directly with politicians and public servants to provide access to timely, rigorous and impartial evidence.
 - We will be known as the trusted steward and advisor for the public investment in research capabilities for the public good and be the natural partner of choice for governments.
 - We will focus our effort and investment on the areas of greatest impact in alignment with our purpose while progressively reshaping or reducing activity in areas that are lower priority or no longer sustainable.
 - We will make the most of our campus assets as places of belonging, community, engagement and impact.
- Our Strategy commits that we will be, by 2030:
 - A leader for First Nations empowerment through self-determination;
 - A values-led institution which provides our community with the conditions and opportunities to thrive;
 - A growing university where our people are focused on addressing the challenges that matter, and with the support and resources to create the highest quality research and impact;
 - A place where diverse students thrive through high quality, relevant and purposeful research-led education supported by a holistic student experience;
 - A university which is a partner of choice, domestically and internationally, where we leverage our relationships to drive mutual benefits; and
 - A well-run university with clear governance, leadership and management accountabilities underpinned by the financial sustainability, digital capabilities, physical resources, policies, systems and processes required for our ongoing success.

9

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategy v1

17/05/2026

TESGA PROVIDER ID: PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00090C

Our First Nations commitments

Context

- The University has a distinct and essential role for First Nations peoples. Our location positions us as a natural convenor of national Indigenous policy dialogue.
- We have a proven record through the Tjabal Centre which achieves nation-leading completion rates for Indigenous students, and through the First Nations Portfolio's recognised leadership in policy, economic empowerment, and Indigenous Data Sovereignty.
- The context is urgent, and shifting rapidly: the post-Voice environment, the growing salience of UNDRIP internationally, and the intersection of AI with Indigenous knowledge systems all demand institutionally-embedded commitments.

Direction

- ANU will celebrate our explicit commitment to First Nations peoples, Indigenous knowledge and leadership as a core institutional strength underpinned by the principle of self-determination.
- We will provide leadership in Australia, and for Indigenous peoples of the Asia-Pacific.
- We will build on our existing commitments to UNDRIP by embedding its principles across our institutional practices.
- We will be the university of choice for Indigenous students and staff, and a global leader in First Nations education and research.
- We will be recognised as the national leader for cultivating the next generation of Indigenous leaders for academia, public life, and international forums.

Possible actions

- Embed UNDRIP as a guiding institutional framework and implement its principles across research practices, data governance, and community engagement.
- Strengthen Indigenous representative leadership and commitment through the Tjabal Centre for Indigenous student success and through the First Nations Portfolio for research and policy impact.
- Develop and implement pathways for Indigenous HDR students, ECRs, and emerging leaders into academic careers and external policy and leadership roles.
- Grow ANU's global profile in Indigenous-led research through international partnerships and training programs.

10

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategy v1

17/05/2026

TESGA PROVIDER ID: PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00090C

Our values

The Nixon Implementation Working Groups, Community Reference Panel and Steering Groups identified the following values as essential to our experiences in the University:

- **Accountability:** We follow through on our commitments and take responsibility for our decisions. This includes transparent reporting, owning setbacks, and ensuring meaningful consequences when expectations are not met.
- **Respect:** Respect shapes every interaction within our community. It is central to eliminating harassment, bullying, racism, sexism, and discrimination.
- **Integrity:** Integrity means acting honestly, making fair decisions, and using power responsibly.
- **Excellence for Purpose:** We pursue excellence through openness, humility, and intellectual generosity, to create knowledge and serve our national mission — not to create exclusivity or hierarchy for its own sake.
- **Inclusion:** Inclusion is about designing environments where people can participate, feel safe, and be heard. Representation alone is not enough.
- **Care:** Care recognises the humanity in one another. It includes attention to wellbeing, workload, and the human impact of our decisions.

The behaviours associated with these values are further elaborated in the [Living Document](#) (login required). These are the values that should be nurtured in the University through the next Strategy period.

11

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategy v1

17/05/2026

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00096C

Our people

Context

- The University's quality, culture and impact are driven by our people – staff and students – who choose to be members of the community.
- We have not always provided our community with a safe, respectful, stable or sustainable work or study environment. We must do better.
- When our community is high trust, and our values are lived out in practices, our colleagues can do their best work. Our collaborative capacity and relational capital are drivers of our success, and we must actively nurture these.
- This Strategy should be human-centric with a focus on supporting the cultures, norms, and behaviours for both individual and collective success.

Direction

- ANU will live out its values and be a place of pride and belonging.
- We will be a resilient institution with trust, leadership accountability and the capacity to deliver our Strategy through robust management and governance structures.
- We will have a compelling and distinctive student proposition based on our scale and high-quality research-led education.
- We will grow the size of our community of staff and students judiciously to ensure that we can be sustainable, and not to lose the human-scale experience that we enjoy.
- Through our actions, behaviours and commitments, we will build trust with external stakeholders and our alumni, supporters and donors.

Possible actions

- Promote our values across the University, and embed them in our leadership, management and governance practices.
- Invest in our people including leadership development and succession planning, and communities of practice.
- Improve our internal and external communications for consistency and transparency.
- Demonstrate trust in our internal capabilities through insourcing expertise before outsourcing.
- Implement an integrated People Strategy.
- Ensure that workloads are transparent, reasonable and sustainable.
- Improve systems and processes to enable effective work.

12

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategy v1

17/05/2026

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00096C

Context | Examples of our impact through research and education

National Infrastructure for Scientific Advancement and Capability. As the national university, we hold responsibility for developing and supporting globally leading infrastructure and instrumentation to address understanding of the natural physical world, and to serve higher education and other entities across Australia. We focus on identifying areas of national need and emerging technologies and accounting for infrastructure across STEM and HASS. This underpins the National Reconstruction Fund, advanced manufacturing, quantum, and emerging technology strategies.

Peace, Security and Prosperity. Good governance, national security and defence, and economic prosperity are the essential foundations for successful nations. Their interdependence means that shocks in one area will impact all. The current context of global uncertainty makes these shocks more likely. Effective responses require expertise and capability that can operate across and with these interdependencies and be sensitive to context. Drawing on our expertise in governance, security, and economic development, with unique understanding of Asia and the Pacific, we address the interdependent foundations of successful nations in an era of increasing global uncertainty.

Self-determination and Sovereignty. As the national university we have a particular responsibility to develop new knowledge and capability in relation to First Nations issues and priorities. We build on pathfinding work in relation to Indigenous health and well-being, justice systems, economic self-determination, knowledge systems, sovereignty, and professional capability building. Led by, and developed with, Indigenous colleagues and communities, we advance pathfinding work in Indigenous health, justice systems, economic self-determination, knowledge systems, and sovereignty, building on our longstanding research in archaeology, anthropology, and history.

Planetary Health and Planetary Systems. Securing sustainable solutions to our planetary challenges requires us to think and act differently. This requires action across a range of areas from air quality to resource extraction, food systems to wildlife, human security to artificial intelligence, energy to water. We bring together our global expertise across disciplines to generate transformative, actionable solutions to planetary challenges supporting Net Zero 2050 and nature-positive legislation.

Understanding Ourselves and Our Place. Questions of identity, civility, and cohesion are central to our understanding of who we are and what we owe to each other and to our role in the region. We draw on, and combine, our concentration of excellence in humanities disciplines to address questions of identity, civility, and cohesion through multidisciplinary approaches that bring together humanities, social, natural, and life sciences to explore ethical and moral dimensions of our existence.



Impact



Research

Context

- The University is a leading research-intensive institution which plays a distinctive and essential role in the Australian tertiary education and research landscape. We are a steward of essential shared resources through our infrastructure and collections.
- We are positioned to provide the Australian Government with a unique platform in which to invest for research quality and impact, and in fields which provide sovereign capabilities.
- Our research is broad, and we have expertise in fundamental as well as applied research.
- We make a distinctive contribution to the Asia-Pacific region through our research portfolio.

Direction

- ANU will be known as the place where researchers work on the questions that matter to the nation, and the world. We work collaboratively with partners, stakeholders and communities to undertake this work.
- We will cement our unique role in the Australian context through purposeful and judicious investment of the National Institutes Grant.
- We will grow and sustain our researcher community across the pipeline through leading HDR training, strategic and equitable hiring, and support for progression.
- We are thoughtful and deliberate in our connection of research to education.

Possible actions

- Target investment in researcher talent – at all levels – to grow our impact.
- Develop our approach to distribution of the National Institutes Grant including rigorous tests of what best serves the national interest.
- Implement rigorous developmental reviews of academic units.
- Invest in a program of research infrastructure renewal and expansion.
- Support researchers to deploy technologies – including AI – where appropriate to their disciplines.
- Streamline processes to reduce friction in academic workload.

15

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategy v1

17/05/2026

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: P101002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00102C

Education

Context

- The University is an anchor provider of high-quality research-led education in ACT. We attract brilliant students and provide a personalised, purposeful and human-centric education which is more than a transaction.
- We are proud of our campus environment and residential experience which sustain a thriving student community.
- Patterns of demand for education are changing, and the University needs to respond and reinforce the relevance of human-to-human learning which prepares students for co-existence with AI.
- The Universities Accord challenges all universities to place increasing emphasis on student equity.

Direction

- ANU will be the destination of choice for students from across Australia with pathways and support to enable all students to succeed.
- We will be known, and celebrated, for a student experience centred on our human-scale campus and the community of students and staff.
- We will educate students from around the world in diverse cohorts, and play a distinctive role in educating leaders across the Asia-Pacific region.
- We will have a distinctive portfolio of programs which are attractive to students, are delivered to high standards, and provide graduates with purposeful options. Our graduates will be AI-ready.
- We will actively manage our program architecture, aligning our areas of excellence with demand and sustainability.

Possible actions

- Enable new pathways into our degree programs to increase access for students from across Australia.
- Reduce financial barriers for students otherwise unable to access the University.
- Review, refresh and reinvent our programs to ensure attractiveness and relevance. Use efficient program architecture to support quality delivery.
- Develop new offers and delivery models to expand our reach, including better enabling working professionals to access postgraduate programs.
- Invest in the student experience with a focus on ensuring that every student can succeed.
- Support and reward excellence and innovation in teaching.

16

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategy v1

17/05/2026

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: P101002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00102C

Spheres of influence

Context

- The University is a permeable institution with myriad connections across governments, civil society and industry. We operate simultaneously in multiple spheres of influence: local, national, the Asia-Pacific region, and internationally.
- We need to be connected to the worlds outside the university for our research and education to be relevant, for us to have impact, and to play our role as a civic anchor in our community.
- While we work globally, we have a specific mandate for – and depth and breadth in – engagement with the Asia-Pacific region.
- We both bring people to Australia and support our staff and students to be outwardly mobile.

Direction

- ANU will be even more open, more engaging, and more outward-looking, across our research and education. We will support collaboration-building – focusing on mutual benefit – to be a partner of choice.
- We will be known as a high-quality, welcoming and enriching destination for international students and staff where diverse cultures are celebrated. We will attract more international students through both direct entry and pathways.
- We will be an essential civic university for the ACT as a complement to our national purpose, regional leadership, and international connections.
- We will use our convening power to be a place where the most important national conversations are held.
- We expect, and enable, international mobility for staff and students.

Possible actions

- Make our campuses more open and increase the number of external visitors, including through more conferences and events. Use campus master-planning to find long-term ways of increasing our physical permeability and contribution to Canberra.
- Grow our international student community, and broaden the range of countries from which our students come.
- Build transnational education operations and increase the availability of pathways for student articulation from our overseas partners.
- Invest in our convening capacity and relationship-building across public and private partners, and use our campus assets to increase our impact.
- Build our alumni, supporter and donor engagement activities to increase our impact.
- Invest in a visiting scholars program to draw talented researchers to ANU temporarily, and support our people to engage with overseas partners through travel.

17

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategy v1

17/05/2026

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: PRV10022 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00202C

Enablers

Context

- The University is the steward of significant public and private investment. We plan for the long term and need the ongoing financial stability and sustainability to ensure that we can operate today and reinvest for the future.
- We steward more than \$2 billion in research infrastructure and 40 national facilities, assets of national significance that require sustained investment and active management, not just maintenance.
- Our operating costs have historically outpaced revenue growth, and the budget model has not consistently directed resources toward strategic priorities.
- Our ways of working also need renewal to be fit-for-purpose.

Direction

- ANU will be a well-organised, and well-run, university which achieves its strategic goals through effective governance, management and leadership.
- Our systems, policies, processes and cultures will align to support an environment of high performance and high impact.
- Our budget model, governance frameworks and workforce planning will direct resources toward strategic priorities.
- We will use our own expertise to build the capabilities and resilience needed to respond to the changing environment.

Possible actions

- Implement a growth-focused budget model, effective planning cycle, and developmental reviews for academic units and portfolios.
- Integrate governance, data, risk, evaluation, planning and strategy – and academic expertise – to ensure that we have all the information, insight and foresight to make good decisions.
- Build the institutional infrastructure for targeted decisions over a multi-year planning horizon linked to resource allocation choices.
- Replace legacy systems and find ways to deploy new technologies to find efficient solutions.
- Invest in our campus to provide a more consistently high quality learning, research and work environment, and to be attractive to our partners.
- Deliver our 2040 Below Zero commitment.

18

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategy v1

17/05/2026

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: PRV10022 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00202C

Next steps



Please provide your input to the Strategy through the survey, a facilitated session, or directly to: strategy.codesign@anu.edu.au.

All codesign inputs received by 13th May will be synthesised and considered for the next iteration of the Strategy.



That next version of the Strategy will include a timeline and prioritisation approach, recognising that some actions need to be higher priority than others.

There will also be a report on how the codesign approach informed the Strategy.



The final Strategy document will be in prose and illustrated with examples which bring to life the current and future state of the University.

The aim is to publish the final Strategy in mid August 2026 following approval by the University Council.

To find out more about the Strategy development process, the staff and student survey, or find out more about attending a facilitated session, please see: anu.edu.au/about/anu-university-strategy-community-engagement



Thank you

Contact us

The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 2600

strategy.codesign@anu.edu.au



Australian
National
University

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00120C

Strategic Directions

University Strategy Codesign | March 2026



Australian
National
University

The Australian National University acknowledges the Ngunnawal and Ngambri-Kamberri people, who are the Traditional Owners of the land upon which the University's Acton campus is located.

This Ngunnawal and Ngambri-Kamberri land supports students and staff throughout their time at ANU. It will continue to hold a space for future generations to come together and learn from Country and one another.

We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Indigenous peoples, past, present and future, and acknowledge that this land from which we benefit has an ancient history that is both rich and sacred.

The ANU community makes a commitment to always respect the land upon which we stand and to ensure that the voices of this land's Indigenous peoples are both heard and listened to so that we may move towards a future marked by cooperation and mutual respect.

TEQSA PROVIDER # D-PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 90020C



Invitation

There are many things about ANU that make it a uniquely positive, inspiring and high-impact place to work and study. We are proud of the rich foundations on which we build, and we are excited for the next phase in our development.

As a key part of our commitment to codesigning the University Strategy with the ANU community, we share this strategic directions document with you. Here, we explain the process, timeline, and some key emerging themes.

In this discovery phase of strategy development, we invite you to continue contributing your expertise, insights and perspectives to inform how the University progresses over the next five years, and beyond.

This is a work in progress. We will continue to iterate the Strategy by sharing drafts with the community as we seek to articulate a future of which we can all be proud.

We are grateful for your input and your dialogue, and we are excited to build the future of our University together.

Professor Rebekah Brown FASSA, Interim Vice-Chancellor & President, and the University Executive



Why does the University need a Strategy?

The Strategy serves multiple purposes

The University has published strategies, or strategic plans, for over thirty years. These documents serve several functions: at one level, they articulate to the University community – and beyond, to our alumni, partners and stakeholders – how the institution conceives of itself at the given moment, and what its aspirations are over the coming few years.

Practically, whole-University strategies are used to guide work across the institution by providing the direction and guiderails through which we work. As well as the core functions of research and education, strategies speak to our capacity for investment in the people, systems, campus environment and processes needed for a successful university. They can also articulate what we plan to stop doing.

Typically, university strategies also articulate specific ambitions and align performance measures to our goals. These form a key part of the governance and accountability mechanisms for the University.

Our context is changing

While the Australian National University Act (1991) provides core principles for our operation, it does so in broad terms. In addition to our founding mission and Act, we will benefit from Strategy which looks ahead to take account of many factors, including:

- The evolving needs of the nation which we serve through our research and education;
- Changing patterns of demand for education from both Australian and overseas students;
- Social change, including threats to concepts of truth and the importance of freedom for academic inquiry;
- Technological developments, including Artificial Intelligence;
- Climate change and geopolitical shocks.



The Strategy provides the guide for the University's plans and actions

The inputs to the Strategy include:

- Our community codesign process inviting contributions from everyone with an interest in the University's future, including staff, students, alumni and external stakeholders;
- The [Roadmap](#), including the rapid stocktakes and transparent plans;
- Existing strategies and plans, including the [ANU Corporate Plan 2025-2028](#), Research Strategy, and Learning and Teaching Strategy;
- Our values, and the [Living Document](#) which followed the Nixon Review.
- Financial modelling and performance data.

ANU
by
2030
working title

The outputs from the Strategy include:

- Feedback to the community from the codesign process;
- Information to inform our community about the ambitions, values and direction of the University, and how they can continue to engage actively in the evolution of the institution;
- A comprehensive planning framework which aligns internal strategies and plans, provides performance measures, identifies governance mechanisms and accountabilities, and shows how we will monitor implementation.

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00120C



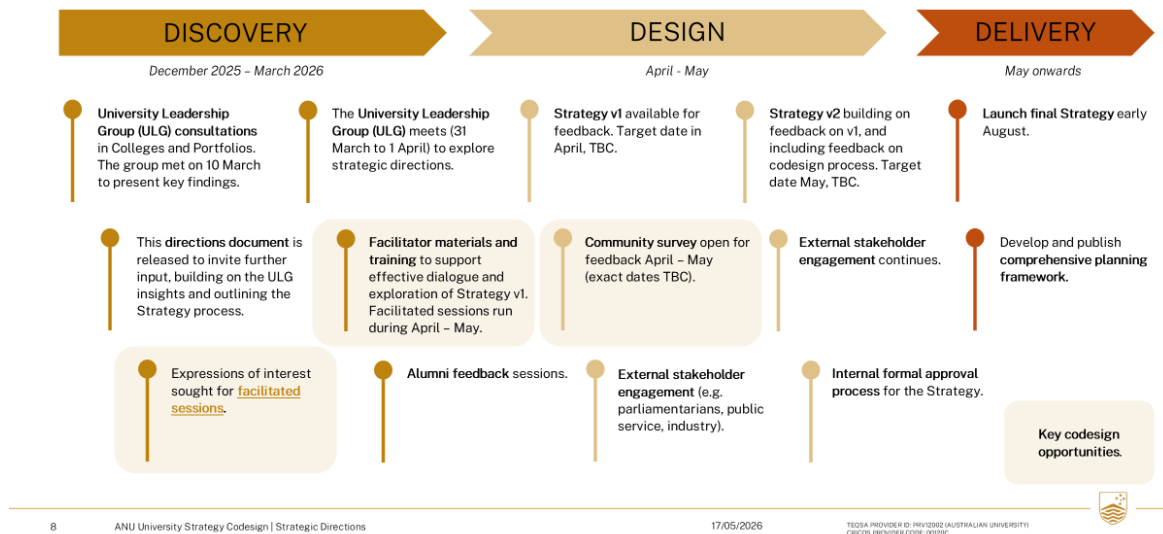
What does it mean to codesign the University Strategy?



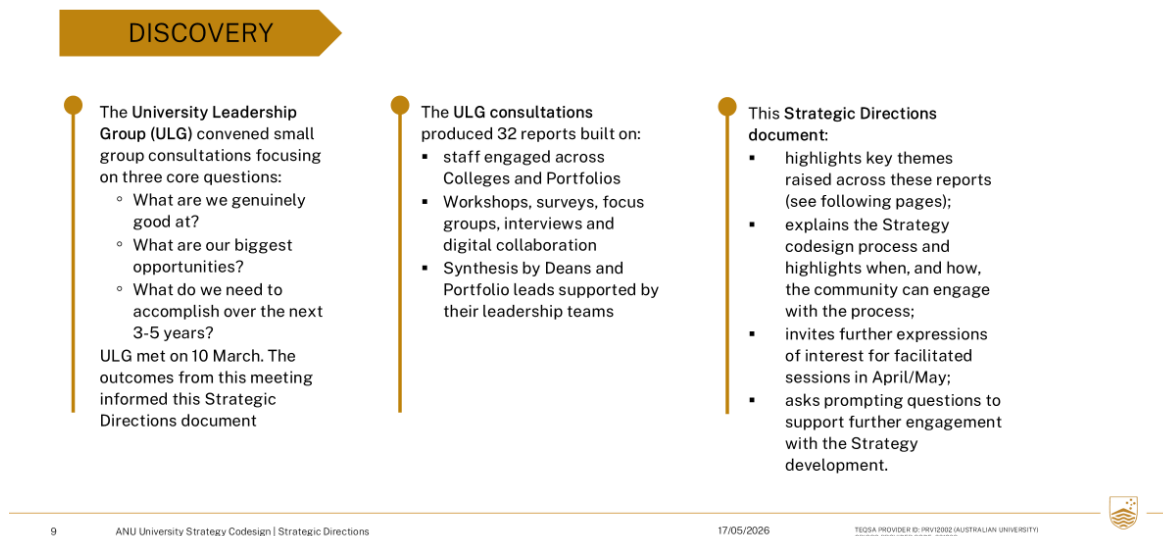
There are limitations to all codesign processes: not every idea or suggestion will become part of the final Strategy. Decisions are required to assess priorities, and to resolve conflicts between competing proposals. Further information will be provided about decisions as the Strategy development progresses. If you want further information – at any time – email: strategy.codesign@anu.edu.au



The timeline for the new Strategy



Where are we on the timeline?



What we have heard so far



10

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategic Directions

17/05/2026

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: PRV12032 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00120C



We should celebrate the unique features of the University

Elements to nurture and promote raised in the codesign, so far:

Our unique National University identity: ANU serves the nation, helps navigate complex challenges, and convenes nationally-important conversations

Our commitment to research excellence: we seek to be exceptional in all our research, and our trans-disciplinarity is a core strength

Our high quality education: we shape the future through the next generation of leaders inspired by research-led education, opportunities for trans-disciplinarity, and First Nations perspectives

Our human scale with global impact: our University campus experience is an asset for our diverse students and staff, and we provide a distinctively personalised education

Our engagement with policymakers: ANU provides expert input to policy design and development, and counsels governments on today's and tomorrow's challenges

Our goal of institutional coherence: we have the opportunity to present one university view that integrates education and student experience, research, and our broader social impact

11

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategic Directions

17/05/2026

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: PRV12032 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00120C



We should work to build our capabilities and resilience

Priority areas for improvement raised in the codesign, so far:

Invest in **people and culture** including clear career pathways, professional development and wellbeing support

Ensure that **systems and infrastructure** are fit-for-purpose – through user-centred design – to reduce friction, free up time and improve morale

More clearly articulate ANU's **distinctive identity** and value proposition to build reputation and attract talented staff and students

Protect, and further invest in, **research infrastructure** including emerging capabilities as a foundation for research quality

Enable better **cross-institution working** to promote innovation – in education and student experience, and research – while preserving autonomy

Reform the internal **budget model** to incentivise positive behaviours, enable essential investment, and fund strategic priorities

12

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategic Directions

17/05/2026

TESDA PROVIDER ID: PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00202C



Help shape our future, together



13

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategic Directions

17/05/2026

TESDA PROVIDER ID: PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00202C



Guiding questions

These questions are not exhaustive. As a codesign process, we offer these as stimulus for dialogue. In the spirit of dialogue, please feel free to ask the questions that you feel are most necessary for exploring the future of the University.

How can we best capture and articulate the distinctive, and complex, contribution that ANU makes to the nation?

How does our national mission cohere with our local impact and international reach?

How do we attract and support the talent that we need – in students and staff – to maximise the impact that we have through our research and education?

What do we need – in the ways we work, where we focus, or what we do – to be resilient to change from external forces like AI, demographic shifts and climate change?

What should we fix for our University to work better?

What should we stop doing?

What is the priority order?

What's missing? What better questions could we ask to identify new ideas for the future of the University?

To find out more about the Strategy development process, or to volunteer to host a facilitated conversation, visit the webpage: anu.edu.au/about/anu-university-strategy-community-engagement

14

ANU University Strategy Codesign | Strategic Directions

17/05/2026

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00120C



Thank you

Contact us

The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 2600

strategy.codesign@anu.edu.au



Australian
National
University

TEQSA PROVIDER ID: PRV12002 (AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY)
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00120C