



Australian  
National  
University

# ANU by 2025

Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025



# Contents

The Australian National University acknowledges, celebrates and pays our respects to the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people of the Canberra region and to all First Nations Australians on whose traditional lands we meet and work, and whose cultures are among the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

2	Introduction
4	The Australian National University
4	Purpose
4	Vision
5	Values
6	Motto
8	Strengthening our national mission and meeting our unique responsibilities
14	Conducting research that transforms society and creates national capability
18	Delivering a student experience equal to the world's best
22	Being a standard-bearer for equity and inclusion
26	Measuring our success

# Australia's national university

This plan is about the future. Here, we articulate bold ambitions for The Australian National University (ANU) and the nation we serve.

The future of ANU will be built on the success of our first 75 years. Our extraordinary graduates continue to lead meaningful change in every part of the world. Our scholars maintain global standards of excellence in their research and teaching activities, and many thriving companies and transformational public policy ideas have originated on our campus.

Creating ANU was a courageous and visionary response to a time of crisis – one that also focused on the future. Ours was the first new university in Australia for 40 years, the first research-led institution, and the first national university.

Prime Minister Ben Chifley, speaking in an election address in 1949 about the value of Australia's new national university, said “scientific research is a necessity for the maintenance of our standard of living and even for our survival”.

The truth in those words has never been more evident than when ANU staff and students supported the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic, using their expertise in service of our communities.

Uniquely, our ANU community is the entire nation. We engage with First Nations Peoples and Australia's modern multicultural society to help understand and assert our nation's place in an ever-changing world.

Our community is again looking to their university to help navigate the disruption through which we live. We aim to partner with the Commonwealth and its people to continue the work of our founders in similarly challenging global times: national renewal supported by a national university.

At the heart of our plan is a simple principle, enshrined in our previous 2017-21 strategy:

that we will invest in, and insist on, excellence everywhere. As Australia's only national university, in receipt of National Institutes funding, this is nothing less than our community expects and deserves.

We aspire to strengthen the bond that exists between ANU and Australia based on trust and engagement. We will use our expertise as a national resource, challenging orthodoxies to transform society in the spirit of fairness.

While our responsibilities are to Australia, our horizons are global. The legacy of our long-standing international engagement and expertise has delivered ANU unrivalled impact beyond our borders, particularly throughout Asia and the Pacific.

Our campus will be used to discuss the evidence and data underneath the most intractable issues. We will listen to, learn from and work with First Nations Peoples as we champion a just and meaningful reconciliation built on equity and engagement.

Our research will be second to none in quality and impact. We will continue to attract the most exciting academic talent globally and support their success.

We will provide the platforms and investment to enable the co-creation of new approaches to interdisciplinary problem-solving and support our academics to realise the possibilities of their discoveries in society and business.

As we develop our research translation and business development activities, we will continue to champion the value of pure research as the building blocks of all new knowledge: “first, to know the nature of things.”

Our student experience will be equal to the best in the world. Our range of programs will respond to the needs of our nation and our students, and our institutional culture will distinguish ANU from other universities. We will innovate in the classroom: research-informed learning delivered seamlessly across physical and digital spaces.

We want our campus and community to be the best place to work and study in Australia, a welcoming and safe place for all.

It will be a magnet for talented people from every part of the world, built on a commitment to equity as the platform for excellence.

As we work to bring our vision to life, our values will guide and inform us, and we will continue to deliver on the mission set for ANU in 1946: “bring credit to Australia, advance the cause of learning and research in general, and take its rightful place among the great universities of the world.”



**The Hon Julie Bishop**  
*Chancellor*



**Professor Brian P. Schmidt AC FAA FRS**  
*Vice-Chancellor and President*

# The Australian National University

## Purpose

To serve society through transformational research and education

## Vision

ANU will be among the great universities of the world and driven by a culture of excellence in everything we do

## Values

Membership of the ANU community means committing to our institutional values:

Academic freedom and integrity

Respecting, celebrating and learning from First Nations Peoples

Inclusion, equity and diversity

Fairness and justice

Truth-seeking, transparency and accountability

Respectful collegiality

Safety and wellbeing

# Motto

*First, to know the nature of things*

*Naturam primum cognoscere rerum*

Since foundation in 1946, the ANU motto has been the guiding principle for our University –‘first, to know the nature of things’. The original author, the Roman poet and philosopher, Lucretius wrote the Latin words over 2,000 years ago.

Whether it be research to understand humanity or the science that underpins our existence, at our institution’s very heart is the creation of knowledge. This knowledge is the foundation of all that we do. With it we advance human understanding, we teach our students, and we translate this knowledge to advance human prosperity.

To know the true nature of things, one must acknowledge the past and history. At ANU, we are committed to knowing the country on which we are situated and learning its rich history. To do this, we will strive to recognise and incorporate First Nations languages and knowledges into our University and across our campus. We do this as acknowledgement of the First Nations Peoples who have met and shared knowledge on these lands for over 65,000 years.

By first knowing the nature of things and through understanding, we can learn, create and share knowledge to transform society for a better future.



# Strengthening our national mission and meeting our unique responsibilities

ANU was established following the Second World War to put education and research at the service of national prosperity and peaceful global development.

Seventy-five years on, new uncertainties face Australia, its region and the world: the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, economic and gender inequalities, the spread of radical populism and the retreat of democracy, rising tensions heralding possible global conflict and a weakening of global institutions.

The knowledge, research and goodwill universities generate have never been more needed. But our universities have also never been under more pressure. Science, facts and knowledge are too-often dismissed, imperilling the fabric of our democracy. Our national university must provide the

intellectual leadership and moral courage needed to overcome this threat. Our work must be of the highest quality, relevant to the times, and characterised by trust, respect, goodwill and generosity. We must help make progress possible.

To do this, our University will build on its existing strengths. We will continue to educate the next generation of public and private sector leaders. We will continue to listen to and work with our expert partners around the world. We will continue our emphasis on public policy, including our scholarly work on Asia and the Pacific and the security and prosperity of the region. Our contribution to debates about Australia's history, culture and traditions will go on, as will our work with national institutions to increase the intellectual and cultural

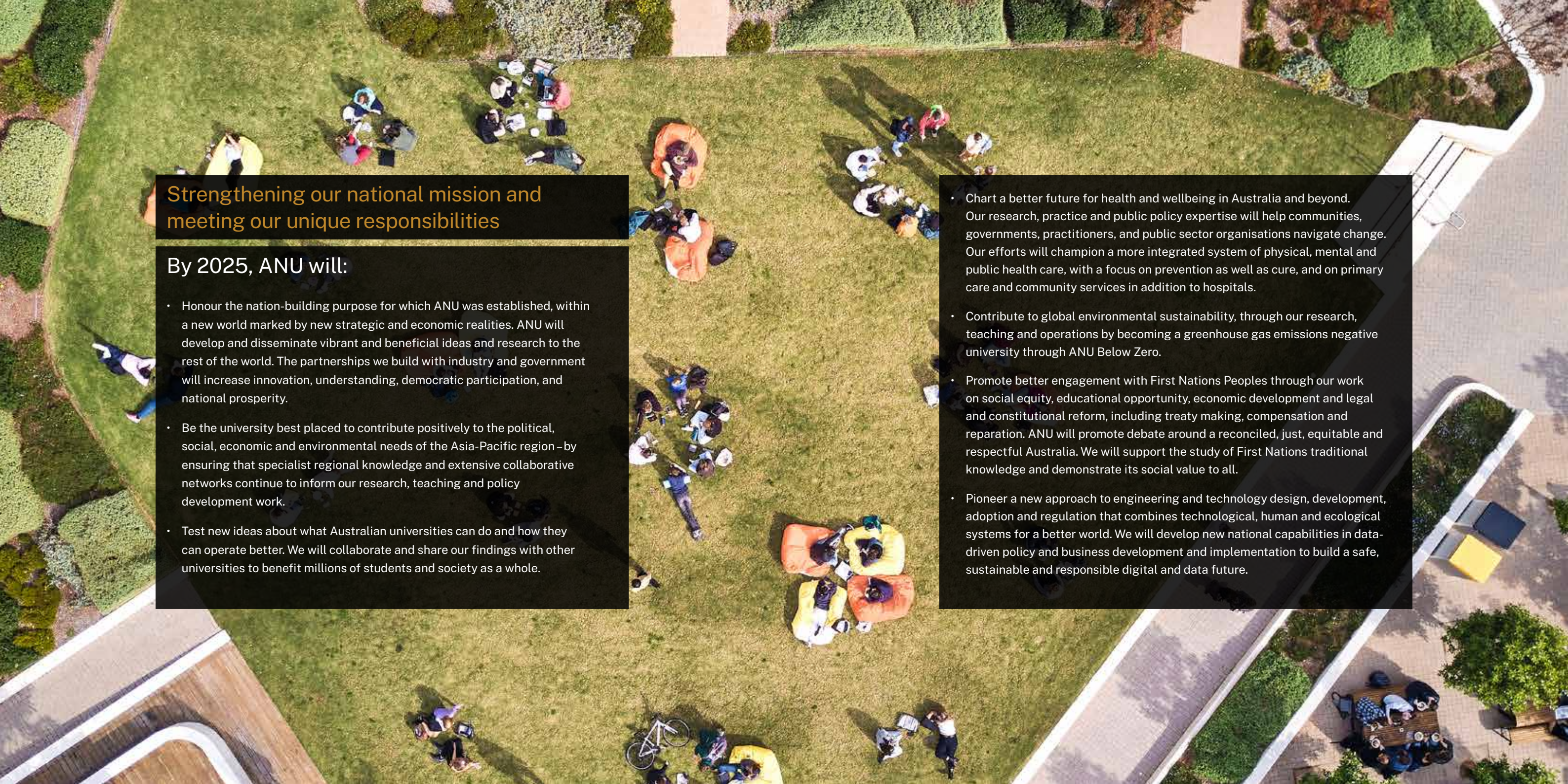


vibrancy of our community. We will, as ever, pursue reconciliation with First Nations Peoples and respect diversity in all its forms.

Our work will set the standard of excellence and enable our nation to prosper and to flourish, helping to create new globally competitive job-creating

industries and businesses, solve intransigent societal problems, and address environmental sustainability.

Our strengthened national university will make itself essential to the future prosperity of Australia and its region.



## Strengthening our national mission and meeting our unique responsibilities

### By 2025, ANU will:

- Honour the nation-building purpose for which ANU was established, within a new world marked by new strategic and economic realities. ANU will develop and disseminate vibrant and beneficial ideas and research to the rest of the world. The partnerships we build with industry and government will increase innovation, understanding, democratic participation, and national prosperity.
- Be the university best placed to contribute positively to the political, social, economic and environmental needs of the Asia-Pacific region – by ensuring that specialist regional knowledge and extensive collaborative networks continue to inform our research, teaching and policy development work.
- Test new ideas about what Australian universities can do and how they can operate better. We will collaborate and share our findings with other universities to benefit millions of students and society as a whole.

- Chart a better future for health and wellbeing in Australia and beyond. Our research, practice and public policy expertise will help communities, governments, practitioners, and public sector organisations navigate change. Our efforts will champion a more integrated system of physical, mental and public health care, with a focus on prevention as well as cure, and on primary care and community services in addition to hospitals.
- Contribute to global environmental sustainability, through our research, teaching and operations by becoming a greenhouse gas emissions negative university through ANU Below Zero.
- Promote better engagement with First Nations Peoples through our work on social equity, educational opportunity, economic development and legal and constitutional reform, including treaty making, compensation and reparation. ANU will promote debate around a reconciled, just, equitable and respectful Australia. We will support the study of First Nations traditional knowledge and demonstrate its social value to all.
- Pioneer a new approach to engineering and technology design, development, adoption and regulation that combines technological, human and ecological systems for a better world. We will develop new national capabilities in data-driven policy and business development and implementation to build a safe, sustainable and responsible digital and data future.



Vice-Chancellor's Residence.

Canberra House.

University House.

Administration and temporary buildings of the John Curtin School of Medical Research.



The Research School of Physical Sciences.

The Research Schools of Social Sciences and Pacific Studies.

Temporary medical workshops building and excavations for the permanent building of the John Curtin School of Medical Research.

*Early 1952*



# Conducting research that transforms society and creates national capability

Research at ANU will be excellent in all areas we pursue, delivered in a culture of academic freedom and collaborative, ethical enquiry. Consistent with the mandate provided by our National Institutes Grant, ANU will undertake large scale research on behalf of the nation, continue to ensure that foundational research is central to our academic activities, and proactively share the stories of our discoveries.

We will focus resources on the research areas in which we lead Australia and the world, while ensuring simplified and quality systems and services support all research activity and collaboration.

Our main areas of research focus will include:

- a core of fundamental sciences, social sciences, and humanities that advance human knowledge
- the study of Asia and the Pacific, including our region's languages, cultures, societies, economies, security, politics and law

- applied areas of engineering and technological, health and medical, and economic disciplines to underpin Australia's future prosperity and contribution to global issues
- working across disciplines to deepen our understanding of the world's ancient and modern cultures, people, democracy, and integrity and public trust
- crucial areas of emergent national need, including national security, resilience, climate change adaptation, the environment, health systems, critical minerals, cybernetics and data
- public policy priorities, including those that are of interest and relevance to the Commonwealth

Scholarship at ANU will be uniformly excellent and internationally benchmarked. It will fearlessly challenge orthodoxies and seek to transform and benefit our society through



cooperation with academic, government, community and private sector partners. The University will maintain a strong emphasis on fundamental research but ensure research is appropriately commercialised and translated into public use, uninhibited by disciplinary conventions.

We will use innovative methods to attract and support outstanding early- and mid-career researchers to

renew the University and ensure the next generation of academic expertise is supported to succeed.

ANU will partner with First Nations communities to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and culture into our research and teaching programs, and work together to strengthen the cultural, social, economic and political strengths which we can all learn from.

## Conducting research that transforms society and creates national capability

### By 2025, ANU will:

- Collaborate with and advise partners to inform and create social, economic and cultural benefit for all of society.
- Create nationally and internationally significant research infrastructure and make it accessible to all.
- Translate and communicate our research and knowledge into a wide range of societal benefits. We will create at least one major transformational societal outcome that has its origins in our academic work.
- Shape the national and global debates through the work of leading experts and public intellectuals.
- Collaborate with our Asian and Pacific neighbours on research that addresses emerging regional issues.
- Be recognised for the outstanding support and opportunities provided to early and mid-career academic staff. We will give the next generation of ANU researchers the space and support they need to become leaders in their disciplines.
- Provide incentives for our staff to work in new ways and bring fresh perspectives to the work they do. Our technical and professional staff will be recognised for the crucial work they do to enable the University to fulfil its research mission.
- Ensure our degrees, including our undergraduate programs, are enriched by the research our academics undertake. The ANU PhD will be the most empowering in Australia and one of the most valued in the world. The research experience and professional development that we provide will prepare our PhD graduates to excel in a wide range of international careers.



# Delivering a student experience equal to the world's best

ANU graduates will be educated and supported to make the world a better place on their terms and for their times.

They will be among the best minds of their generation, drawn from across the nation and the world. Our mandate to represent Australia in all its diversity will be reflected in our revolutionary nationwide admissions model.

The education our students engage in will be intellectually stimulating and broad. It will include disciplinary depth and transdisciplinary breadth to provoke critical thinking and problem solving. It will join academic and experiential learning to encourage our students to employ their knowledge in local, national and global contexts. Our students will be digitally literate and the way we teach them will reflect contemporary ways of learning. Our students will be encouraged to engage in rigorous, free debate, to dissent from orthodoxies, and to pioneer innovation.

The education we provide will be linked to the new frontiers of ANU research. Academics who translate outstanding research into great teaching will be highly esteemed and rewarded.

Our campus culture will be vibrant, inclusive to all and defined by the practice of supporting our students along their journey at ANU. We will invest strongly to reimagine and remake the way we serve and support our students, pursuing a seamless and quality experience from pre-enrolment to graduation and beyond as part of their alumni membership. Our systems and infrastructure across campus will continue to be renewed to ensure a contemporary, quality and enabling experience. Underpinning that experience will be membership of an ANU community that values and respects individuals. ANU will challenge and encourage students to explore their potential in a safe, welcoming community enriched by unique academic, social and cultural opportunities.





## Delivering a student experience equal to the world's best

### By 2025, ANU will:

- Be the nation's preferred university for students, offering an outstanding campus life and residential experience in the heart of the national capital.
- Provide seamless services from pre-enrolment through to graduation and alumni engagement. Our student-facing communications and services will lead the sector in their simplicity and accessibility.
- Be open to students from the widest possible range of backgrounds and perspectives. The threshold for ANU membership will be talent and potential.
- Deliver academically rigorous, inspiring courses that are enriched by world-leading research and distinguished from other universities by their small classes, quality teaching and flexible, interactive delivery.
- Create a campus environment – including a digital environment – that treats ANU students as individuals, builds on the collective capability of the students, nourishes their intellectual curiosity, supports their success, and protects their welfare.
- Build distinctive non-degree offerings that engage the creativity and talent of our entire community.

# Being a standard-bearer for equity and inclusion

The University's academic renewal will be matched by a comprehensive cultural renewal. We will be distinctively inclusive and equitable, and the wellbeing of our community will be of paramount importance.

We will be a uniquely respectful place to work, study, socialise and live – a culture that will extend to our important on-campus residential communities. Our student and staff profile will reflect the full diversity of modern day Australia, ensuring a wide range of perspectives and an enriched campus environment.

We will do this by retaining the human scale of our University and by investing in the creation of a positive culture characterised by respect, collaboration, equity and diversity. Gender equity will continue to be an essential goal of the University. We will listen and conduct rigorous research into student and staff

wellbeing, promote cultural change, and build more high quality and informed services. We will ensure our physical and digital campuses will be welcoming and accessible to all University members equally, inclusive of ability, gender, cultural or social background.

Our approach to inclusion will be highly proactive and innovative. ANU will be a national leader for the recruitment of Indigenous, rural and low-SES students. We will offer support that will enable every student to overcome any barriers they may face and achieve their full potential. Our staff recruitment practices and services will be reshaped to attract, support, and recognise outstanding talent from a wider diversity of cultural, ethnic and gender backgrounds, including at senior staff levels. We will strengthen and refresh our approach to staff performance development and promotions.



## Being a standard-bearer for equity and inclusion

### By 2025, ANU will:

- Be recognised for providing a distinctively inclusive, supportive and collegial environment in which to learn and work.
- Be a demonstrated champion of our institutional values.
- Refresh our digital strategy and campus planning processes to reflect these values. Whether on-campus or online, the education and services we provide will be accessible to all, inclusive of ability and background.
- Enhance the social cohesion and wellbeing of our community through evidence-based strategies. We will also prioritise a collegial culture among our staff community.
- Be the leading Australian research-intensive university measured by recruitment and support of students from Indigenous, rural and low-SES backgrounds.
- Renew our recruitment practices to drive our equity and diversity goals, with particular emphasis on the staff journey, including development, performance and promotions.
- Have enriched data capability to ensure our decision making leads to greater equity and diversity.
- Have a working environment equal to the best in the world to increase staff happiness and productivity, and enable the University to better attract, support and retain outstanding people.
- Have zero tolerance for behaviour that falls below our standards and contravenes our values, and effectively and justly deal with such behaviour when it occurs.



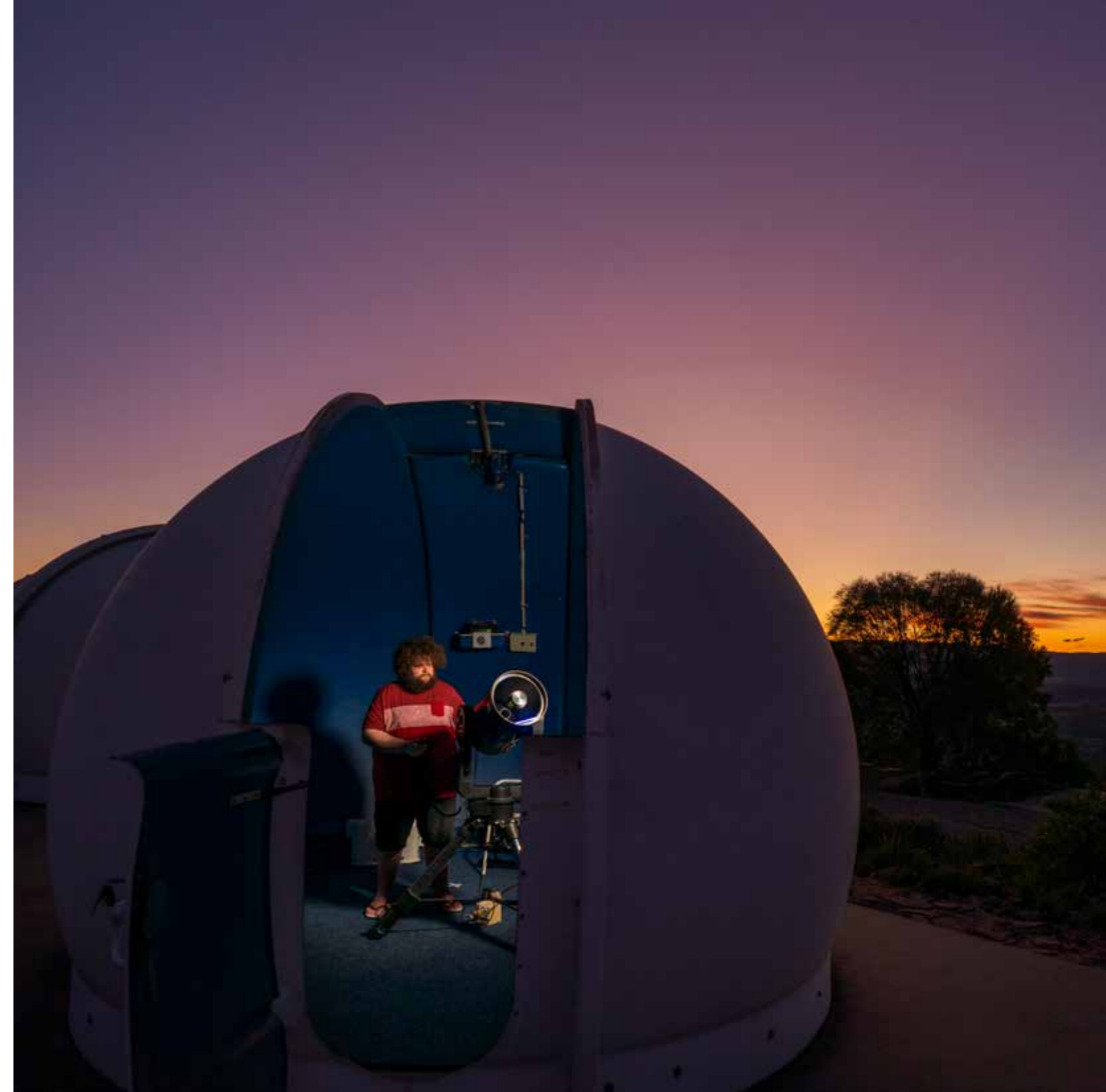
# Measuring our success

The long-term ambitions listed below will guide activity at the University and will be used to measure our progress in 2025.

- Be second to none in Australia in all areas where we conduct research.
- Be a catalyst for societal transformation.
- Provide a distinctively inclusive, supportive and collegial environment in which to learn and work.
- Be the preferred university in Australia for students.
- Deliver exceptional graduate outcomes in Australia.
- Strengthen strategic government partnerships.
- Reflect and value the diversity of Australia.
- Be a trusted national institution.

## Supporting operational plans

This document will be supported by capabilities, structures, and operational and thematic plans that will enable delivery of the objectives outlined in this ANU Strategic Plan.









Australian  
National  
University