



# UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA ACT GOVERNMENT

**A Civic Partnership Agreement to support Canberra's  
growth and development**





## MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

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**The University of Canberra and the ACT Government have a long history of cooperation and collaboration, working together to meet the needs of the communities we serve. Together, we aim to improve the lives and wellbeing of our people and develop Canberra as a knowledge city.**

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The University of Canberra has served the ACT region for more than 50 years, first as the Canberra College of Advanced Education (CCAЕ) and since 1990 after our incorporation as a University. Since 1970, we have graduated almost 100,000 alumni, the vast majority of whom have hailed from the broader Capital region. We are a fixture of this community.

As the only University established by Territory legislation, the University of Canberra (UC) has a special remit to serve the needs and interests of the ACT people, making us an important partner of the ACT Government. In addition to the critical role that we play in the provision of education services, we also contribute to the health and wellbeing, workforce, social and cultural needs of our region. These commitments are enshrined in our legislation, central to the institution that we are and will continue to be.

As we prepare for the coming decade – emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic and in conjunction with the delivery of UC’s Decadal Strategy, *Connected* – it is more important than ever that we reaffirm our partnership with our people and our community. This Civic Partnership Agreement is the mechanism through which we will define this commitment.

This Agreement signals the vision and intent of UC and the ACT Government to utilise our combined resources – physical and digital, infrastructure and capability – to support the sustainable growth and development of the Canberra region. Through a period of extensive consultation, we have defined five mutual priorities that will shape our focus and support engagement between our Parties over the coming five years and beyond. From these key domains will spring specific activities and initiatives that will work to address the critical challenges and needs of our community.

Our aim, in partnership with Government, is to succeed in positioning Canberra and the broader Capital region as an education and innovation hub. Though education is already a significant driver of the economy of our region, it is also important to recognise the broader role that UC can and does play in supporting the health and wellbeing of our population, and to give back to the community in which we are established.

We are proud to be the University of Canberra, for Canberra.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF MINISTER

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Canberra is one of the fastest growing cities in Australia. Over the past decade, our population has grown from around 370,000 to 460,000 and will soon reach half a million people. Much of this growth has been spurred by strong demand in our labour market, the strength of our higher education sector and Canberra's desirability as a place to live.

Canberra has emerged as the knowledge capital of Australia and a hub for innovation and creativity. In an environment of constant disruption and change, our commitment to adaptive, values-driven economic development sets us apart. Given the global competition for talent and investment, we must always do more to facilitate investment and attract and retain skills and talent.

The University of Canberra has played a central role in training and growing Canberra's education and health workforces since its establishment. It has been a vital partner in promoting the community's wellbeing through active and healthy living. It is a leader in fostering cultural understanding, social wellbeing, driving inclusivity. The university's value and contributions to Canberra and the region extend well beyond its campus and resonates throughout our communities and so has been essential in Canberra's attractiveness as a place to live, work, and study.

The ACT Government is investing in Canberra's future by leveraging our community's depth of skills and research capability, strong public sector, and thriving and innovative non-government sector. Partnering with education providers is a core pillar of our strategy to foster innovation and wellbeing in a sustainable, inclusive community.

With this agreement, the ACT Government reaffirms the university's role in growing and shaping our community, developing essential skills, and providing opportunities for Canberrans at all stages of their life's journey. The ACT Government commits to supporting the university by articulating and extending our existing partnership to identify and create opportunities for thought leadership, professional training, public engagement, and sustainability.

Canberrans have great reason to be proud of the achievements of their flagship university over its first 30 years, and the ACT Government will continue to support the University of Canberra in the years to come.

## OUR SHARED VISION

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**We are proud of where we have come from, but where to from here? Our shared vision is one of health and prosperity for our people, defined by sustainable growth and development, improved health and wellbeing, stronger connections to culture and place, and continued improvements in livability, specifically through the lens of education.**

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Together, the University of Canberra and the ACT Government will commit to actions across five mutual priority areas that we believe will leverage our respective positions for the betterment of our community. This Agreement lays the foundations to build the university's connection to the community, but it does not articulate everything we do or all the ways in which we will engage. This Agreement will grow over time, new priorities will emerge, and we will be ready to respond to new challenges as they arise. This Agreement reflects the ACT Government and university's intent to work in partnership in areas which will improve and embed the university's place in Canberra's community fabric. We will sharpen our focus on the needs of our local region and encourage our community to engage with UC in its aspirations as a civic university.

We will be driven by the following principles:

1. Connection to people, place, and culture;
2. Strengthening the connection between Government and the University;
3. Recognition of the University's special role in meeting the needs of the Canberra region; and
4. Reciprocity and value-add to the community.

Our areas of focus for future collaboration and cooperation are summarised below, with further detail and targeted actions built on within this Agreement.

1. Enable civic practice and contribute to thought leadership to enhance our place in and value to the community.
2. Drive knowledge-based economic growth and the prosperity of our region through education, training, employment and business development, realising the vision of the educated life.
3. Leverage our capabilities to support the community's wellbeing and better integrate the University's activities to promote a vibrant and healthy Canberra community.
4. Inform sustainable practices and effective policy and decision making to contribute to the ACT's environment, sustainability and innovation goals.
5. Enrich the social and cultural economy of Canberra and improve the region's global profile.

## OUR COMMITMENTS

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### 1. Enable civic practice and contribute to thought leadership to enhance our place in and value to the community.

UC provides thought leadership to our community and contributes to public discourse on the issues that matter. The University is a conduit connecting people with Government, facilitating the co-creation of policy and action research, and generating community buy-in on issues that have local and regional impact.

As the university for Canberra, UC plays an important role in leading conversations about the role of educational institutions in supporting our place. This Agreement will leverage the university's position to initiate activity that benefits the region and strengthens Canberra's positioning as a knowledge hub.

UC will:

- Develop a community engagement framework that underpins the University's civic commitments and provides a clear mechanism to document, assess and report on the University's external engagement function, enabling better public understanding of our role.
- Position UC as a leader of civic engagement through the development of community feedback mechanisms, enabling the community to engage in public debate on issues of importance to the local and regional community, as well as to access evidence-based research.
- Through various forums, including possible annual leadership symposium and regular policy forums, bring together government,

education, industry, and community leaders to discuss key policy, social and economic trends / matters.

- Facilitate a more active public engagement environment at UC to enable public access our academic, professional and student communities.
- Create more opportunities for consultation with the public on major activities and plans of the University, including our ongoing campus development.
- Model the principles of Narragunnawali (embracing Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing) and Galambany (working together to empower, connect and share knowledge) in all our engagement with Government, business, and community.

## 2. Drive knowledge-based economic growth and the prosperity of our region through education, training, employment and business development, realising the vision of the educated life.

Maximising Canberrans' potential is a high priority for both UC and the ACT Government. UC already plays a significant role in the education and training of our local population, but through this Civic Partnership we will seek to strengthen the university's connection to the community.

As articulated through the *CBR Switched On Strategy*, the ACT Government has a particular focus on positioning the Territory as a knowledge capital and emphasising the role of education and innovation in driving economic and social prosperity. The ACT Government and UC will work together to achieve this objective and guide our ongoing development as a knowledge hub.

UC will:

- Continue the provision of education services to our community, through undergraduate, postgraduate and short-course offerings, delivering the work-ready graduates needed to fulfil business and industry need in the ACT.
- Prioritise the needs of our community by reviewing and aligning our course and discipline mix to be informed (but not constrained) by local workforce need.
- Explore options with the ACT Government to increase public sector capability and create more streamlined pathways for UC graduates into the ACT public service, through the mutual development of work integrated learning programs, placements, and graduate employment positions with the ACT Government.
- Work with the ACT Government to identify gaps in current professional development and training across the Directorates and explore the opportunities for UC to address those skills needs.
- Establish a group of university, government, business and industry leaders, professional bodies and associations and community organisations to monitor workforce trends and analyse impact on the ACT economy and jobs landscape.
- Build on Brand CBR's work with the ACT Government for use with an international audience, contributing to a prosperous international education sector that forges strong and long-standing connections with partners across the globe.
- Directly support the Territory economy through the provision of jobs (academic, professional, and casual roles), including attracting and fostering talent from across Australia and the world to Canberra through higher education specialist roles.
- Support local business and industry by prioritising suppliers and contractors from the local region when engaging through UC procurement processes.
- Expand the university's partnerships with schools to create greater connections and pathways for students to accessing higher education and support the development and training of the teacher workforce.

**3. Leverage our capabilities to support the ACT Government's Wellbeing Framework and better integrate the University's activities to promote a vibrant and healthy Canberra community.**

As a civic institution, UC plays an important role in supporting the health and wellbeing of our community. This is achieved through primary education and training of the health workforce, partnerships with healthcare organisations and direct delivery of essential healthcare services to the community.

In addition to supporting the physical wellbeing of our people, UC is also uniquely positioned to lead initiatives and program focused on other aspects of wellbeing and community satisfaction. We will continue to investigate ways to improve social connection, identity and belonging, access and connectivity, living standards, safety and the time to *live life well*.

Through this Agreement, UC commits to increasing the university's opportunities to collaborate with Government and the community on further improving the physical and social wellbeing of all Canberrans.

UC will:

- Continue to develop plans for a Health Neighbourhood as part of the broader development of the UC campus, connecting with our existing health infrastructure such as the Health Hub and University of Canberra Hospital.
- Collaborate with regional communities and the NSW Government to map the emerging needs of our region's health workforce to ensure that the university can continue to provide the necessary supply of graduates and healthcare

professionals needed to service our community.

- Focus our health research partnerships on matters of relevance and contributing to positive outcomes to the local and regional community which we serve.
- Identify and pursue opportunities to co-design health research in areas which will improve community health and workforce effectiveness.
- Continue the development and implementation of the ACT Government Health and Wellbeing Framework, including the delivery of the *Living Well in the ACT Region* wellbeing survey.
- Support community participation in health and wellbeing initiatives designed by ACT Government through active promotion across UC networks.
- Promote the range of health and wellbeing services currently offered by UC that are accessible by the community.
- Develop mechanisms for the community to engage in conversations regarding health and wellbeing to break down barriers to accessing healthcare.



#### 4. Inform sustainable practices and effective policy and decision making to contribute to the ACT's environment, sustainability and innovation goals.

The ACT Government, through the *CBR Switched On* strategy, has a clear commitment to environmental responsibility and action. This is an objective that is supported and mirrored by the University of Canberra as an institution that seeks to reflect the values of its place and people.

The University of Canberra is uniquely positioned to support the ACT Government in meeting its aims to be a global leader in smart technology, clean energy and sustainable infrastructure through its research and business development capability.

Through this Agreement the ACT Government and UC will leverage the university's thought leadership capabilities to position Canberra as a model city of sustainability – social, economic, environmental and cultural.

UC will:

- Leverage our combined research, industry and community connections to attract new business and talent to the Canberra region with a focus on climate resilience, renewable energy, and zero-emissions infrastructure and public transport.
  - Ensure that all future campus development aligns with the ACT Government's values and commitments around sustainability and infrastructure, with a focus on the development of a 'green campus'.
  - Adoption and implement a net-zero procurement policy and zero-emission campus.
- Collaborate with the ACT Government to identify ways the university's campus can integrate with its surrounding environment and the Canberra city landscape to promote openness and accessibility.
  - Expand research and academic activity in alignment with the ACT Government's environmental and sustainability goals, positioning UC as a partner of choice for Government in meeting the challenges our community faces.
  - Establish opportunities for knowledge exchange across ACT Government and higher education – through secondments and contracts for ACT public servants and UC staff – to focus on the co-development of research informed policy and strategy.
  - Create opportunities for the university to engage with the community on developing a deeper understanding of sustainability initiatives and the issues that matter to people at a local level to generate community buy-in in our sustainability goals.



**5. Enrich the social and cultural economy of Canberra and improve the region's global profile.**

UC actively partners with the community to enrich the cultural life of Canberra and its communities. We celebrate the inclusiveness, uniqueness and diversity of Canberra's people and place, and we aim to reflect that in our shared mission and actions.

The university's Campus Masterplan outlines how UC plans to develop beyond its existing infrastructure for the benefit of both UC and the broader Canberra community. This Agreement seeks to leverage the university's growth potential and ambitions to support broader civic objectives.

Through this Agreement, UC and the ACT Government will work in partnership to support and develop the university as a centre of the social and cultural life of the Capital region. UC will champion our cultural and arts sector, create opportunities for sponsorships and partnerships, and contribute to the placemaking of Canberra.

UC will:

- Identify opportunities for investment in sponsorships and community partnerships with ACT Government and community organisations to support the delivery of events and activities, including expansion of the Stromlo Forest Park partnership, Canberra Business Chamber, Enlighten, the Multicultural Festival, Winter Innovation Festival etc.
- Work with ACT Government to deliver a business plan for a future Sports Hub on the UC campus, improving opportunities for professional and community sporting organisations in Canberra, as well as creating additional venue space for community events.

- Create opportunities for the community to engage in the campus life of UC, including the future development of facilities and infrastructure as part of the campus masterplan.
- Work with ACT Government and stakeholders to support the continued development of an innovative and distinctive Brand CBR that extends Canberra's reputations as an arts and culture capital.

## GOVERNANCE OF THIS AGREEMENT

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This Agreement will be governed by a Joint Working Group (JWG) comprising senior members from both the University of Canberra and the ACT Government.

From the University, the Agreement will be overseen by the Vice-Chancellor, with day-to-day management provided by the Government Engagement and Strategic Communications team within the Vice-Chancellor's portfolio. This will ensure close connection to the broader program of work related to the University's connection to Canberra.

From the ACT Government, this Agreement will be overseen by a person nominated by the ACT Government's Responsible Minister for the *University of Canberra Act 1989*, with day-to-day management provided by the Chief Minister's Treasury and Economic Development Directorate. This will ensure that the Agreement is promoted across all areas of Government.

The JWG will convene on a twice-yearly basis – hosted on a rotating basis by each Party – to discuss initiatives to be actioned under the Agreement, as well as success against current initiatives (as they are implemented). The JWG will also determine future priorities should the needs of the Parties change. The Parties will cover costs in relation to participating in the JWG meetings.

This Agreement is a high-level principles-based document and does not commit either Party to specific action/s. Rather it suggests the scope and nature of engagement that the Parties will engage in over the life of the Agreement. Specific actions that arise as a response to this Agreement will be executed under schedules to be tethered to this Agreement. This enables the Agreement to remain current and activities / initiatives to be delivered that have the highest value and return on investment. It also allows the Parties to be responsive to changing needs and priorities.

Additional schedules will be executed and overseen by the specific stakeholders involved in their delivery but reported back through the JWG. There is not a requirement that these stakeholder groups comprise members of the JWG, but the JWG should be involved in the scoping of such initiatives. Sub working groups may be formed for the delivery of major projects and initiatives that relate to this Agreement.

A substantive review of the effectiveness of the Civic Partnership will be carried out after year five of the Agreement.

## MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

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The JWG, through the management teams, will provide an annual report on activity that has been initiated or achieved under the auspices of this Agreement. This report will document the activities we have engaged in, the quantum of financial and in-kind support contributed by each party, and the deliverables of those activities in which we have engaged.

The report will be submitted to the ACT Government's Responsible Minister for the *University of Canberra Act 1989* alongside but separate to the university's Annual Report.

To supplement this annual report, UC will also:

- Undertake regular surveying and reporting with members of our community on the role and value of the University of Canberra to the region, including understanding of the cascading activities and contributions made to the community;
- Disseminate data related to the educational outcomes of our students, our campus development, business support initiatives, locally focused research outcomes and other relevant information; and,
- Undertake regular feedback sessions with Government, business, industry and community stakeholders on the corporate impact of the University and our identify opportunities for further collaboration and engagement.