

Sustaining Success 2021-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY With respect for Aboriginal

Preamble

This strategic plan, Sustaining Success 2021–2026, makes clear the values that underpin the core business of Western Sydney University, namely education, research, scholarship, innovation and service. The plan reinforces that the University is a values-based and ethical organisation, and a leader in sustainability.

We are recognised as the leading advocate for the Western Sydney region and as a dynamic young global university. Our growth and transformation are pursued in service of our communities and alertness to the challenges and uncertainties they face. Our recovery and renewal will build on the strengths of our foundation to realise the ambitious goals of this strategic plan.

Sustaining Success 2021–2026 is framed by the values of Boldness, Fairness, Integrity and Excellence. These values define the University and what we do. The realisation of the values is guided by the principles of Sustainability, Equity, Transformation and Connectedness.

The goals of the strategic plan will be achieved through two overlapping stages of recovery and renewal. Recovery focuses on strengthening and consolidating the student experience. Furthering collaborative education and research initiatives that make the University a leader in sustainability will be critical, as will the promotion of Indigenous partnerships. This stage will also focus on the pursuit of regional and international engagement and the quality and culture of our workplace. The subsequent renewal stage will expand recovery initiatives to effect change for those who study, live and work in Western Sydney and the broader communities - local, national and global - in which we engage.

Sustaining Success 2021–2026 defines the future direction and priorities for the University. It maintains momentum and clarity during a period of uncertainty and ambiguity. It commits us to shared values, principles and actions fundamental to the University and region. We will remain committed to our core values while rethinking the role and position of the University locally, nationally and globally.

cultural protocol and out of recognition that our campuses occupy their traditional lands, Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Eora, Dharawal and Wiradjuri peoples. We thank them for their support of our work in their lands.







BOLDNESS

We demonstrate boldness when we

- commit to ensuring that our actions are aligned with our words
- generate alternative solutions to complex problems
- position the University at the forefront of change through education, research, innovation, partnerships and engagement
- re-define the role of the Australian metropolitan university and co-create the future economic and cultural landscape of Western Sydney.

Boldness in our thinking and actions makes a difference in the lives of others.

FAIRNESS

We support fairness when we

- pursue the University's Indigenous Strategy with commitment and dedication
- widen participation of students and safeguard gender equity, diversity and inclusion of staff
- produce graduates who are agents of positive social change with a focus on research that achieves positive impact across our region and globally
- promote inclusive decision-making, with broad communication and consultation that brings all levels of the University into our ethical decision-making framework.

Fairness in the policies and practices of the University impacts our staff and students and the broader community.



INTEGRITY

We ensure integrity when we

- pursue knowledge through experiment and debate adherent to ethical and legal standards
- foster principled and informed open debate on all aspects of knowledge and society
- ensure our behaviours inside and outside the University are defensible and embedded in ethical practice
- disseminate our research, scholarship and public discourse in a variety of ways.

Integrity through academic freedom fosters a respectful environment for robust debate and a diversity of ideas to solve complex social, educational and research challenges.

EXCELLENCE

We achieve excellence when we

- deliver and ensure a personalised student experience that promotes lifelong learning through an innovative partnership-based curriculum and flexible modes of delivery
- recognise and reward high quality teaching and research
- engage our students as partners in their educational journey
- provide professional growth opportunities for students, staff and community partners.

Excellence through empowerment is embedded in what we do and how we do it. The impact of this approach is evidenced in the behaviours of our staff, students, partners and the communities in which we engage.





Principles

SUSTAINABILITY

The University is committed to sustainability. We work to ensure a better quality of life for all, now and in the future, in a just and equitable manner, while living within the limits of supporting ecosystems. We also recognise that to contribute to sustainability more broadly, we must be a sustainable University with a robust financial position.

To realise the principle of **Sustainability**, we

- **1.1** prioritise learning and research that promotes the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the sustainability of the environment
- **1.2** encourage global engagement that links to approaches to sustainability
- **1.3** design our campuses, facilities, policies and working practices in ways that are committed to addressing environmental concerns
- **1.4** ensure our graduates are highly employable because of their awareness of, and commitment to, sustainability.

The University is committed to working responsibly – from a sustainability standpoint – as we deliver *Sustaining Success 2021–2026*. We continue to pursue environmental, social and economic sustainability through our curriculum, research, engagement, operations, policies and built environment. Western's commitment to sustainability, assessed through our contribution to the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is recognised for our work towards climate action, sustainable cities and communities, poverty and gender equality. In 2020, the University ranked third overall in the world for performance against the SDGs through the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings.

GOAL 1

Through curriculum reform, research and innovation, engagement activities, operational efficiency and development of our built environment, the University will retain THE Impact Rankings within the top 10 overall globally.

EQUITY

The University will maintain a long-standing commitment to enhancing the lives of our students, people and communities by promoting fairness, social justice and opportunities for success.

To realise the principle of **Equity** we

- **2.1** recognise the cultures, contributions and achievements of First Nation peoples through prioritising programs for everyone that are inclusive and personally transformative
- **2.2** achieve diversity in the composition of the student body and academic and professional staff through inclusive recruitment practices
- **2.3** provide support to students and staff from all backgrounds to ensure personal, academic and professional growth and success
- **2.4** value and actively encourage the intercultural competency skills of students and staff.

The University is committed to equity and diversity with fairness. We have a proud record of advancing gender equality through representation of women in leadership positions, reducing the gender pay gap and promoting workplace flexibility. The University provides opportunities for inclusive recruitment, development and promotion of students and staff with a goal of increasing these opportunities.

To ensure belonging for Indigenous students and staff, and to demonstrate 'belonging' to non-Indigenous students and staff, we acknowledge Indigenous history on the campuses, accompanied by curricula and training that expand understanding of Indigenous culture.

TRANSFORMATION

We are redefining the role of Australian universities through transforming the University and the communities we serve for the betterment of those communities. Through Western Growth we are co-creating the cities of the future across the region. Our transformation endeavours will inspire our students, staff and communities to transform themselves.

To realise the principle of **Transformation** we

- **3.1** deliver transformative education and student experiences through innovative applied curricula, and proactive, customised engagement
- **3.2** expand existing and emerging places of research excellence to deliver impactful research informed by partnering with research end-users
- **3.3** collaborate in the development of Western Sydney's city centres and growth precincts into smart and connected communities
- 3.4 build meaningful connections and knowledge sharing with industry and non-profit organisations to drive economic reform, social mobility, infrastructure developments, authentic community engagement and urban regeneration.

The University, through our educational and research concentrations, is an agent of transformation. Our staff, students and partners co-create educational experiences and research programs that inspire transformation for students and communities. We will also reframe what employability means by promoting the importance of capacities, alongside skills, as essential attributes in career success and job creation. The educational attainment, diversity, employability and life experiences of our graduates will increasingly transform the spaces in which we live and work.

GOAL 2

As a globally recognised university of and for the Western Sydney region, we will set the benchmark for diversity, inclusiveness and equity.

GOAL 3

The University's high-quality research will collaboratively address global challenges and inform our innovative and flexible curriculum, ensuring highly employable graduates are recognised for their ability to create sustainable futures through local and global leadership.

CONNECTEDNESS

The University is embedded in the economic, cultural and social growth of the Western Sydney region, building a more equitable and sustainable society for our students, staff and communities. The University is connected internally and externally to ensure transparency and to deliver innovation, excellence and quality in all aspects of practice and life.

To realise the principle of **Connectedness** we

- 4.1 align structures, curriculum, research, student and staff experiences to the University's mission and values, and partner and collaborate with communities that build capability and transform regions
- **4.2** ensure student learning is connected and contributes to the needs of the communities we serve
- 4.3 engage with communities to co-produce solutions to the interconnected challenges facing society within and outside of the Western Sydney region and provide our students with experiences that leverage our regionality and produce graduates who contribute both locally and globally
- **4.4** develop precinct research profiles to create a suite of cohesive partnerships across the University and within local communities and to prioritise those that are nationally or globally recognised and contribute to high-quality teaching and research.

The success of the University's recovery and renewal depends on the connectedness of its people, place, technology and systems. Western Growth delivers digitally enhanced, highly collaborative, community embedded facilities for innovative and flexible teaching and learning, and research. The University's campuses are geographically dispersed, but our shared values and dedication of service to our students, partners and communities will bring cohesion and connectedness.





Enablers



The University has a proud history of serving the Western Sydney region and the world. Our people embrace this ethos of service. The technologies and systems that support the University are tied to the region and are critical to our educational infrastructure and engagement strategy, Western Growth. The strategic plan re-affirms our commitment to a connected culture, one that empowers our entire community, enabling them to contribute to recovery, renewal and sustained success.

Success is dependent on attracting, retaining and empowering a high-quality, diverse workforce; people who commit to, and demonstrably strengthen, the pursuit of our mission. Connectedness across the campuses, Schools, Institutes and portfolios of the University is critical in making the most of collaborative potential. Genuine partnership between professional and academic staff is crucial to creating a workplace that promotes happiness and wellbeing.

We will empower our staff to work collaboratively across the University and to prioritise a culture of high-quality teaching and research. To encourage innovation, consistent effort and high quality performance, we will maintain our commitment to recognition and reward systems that provide clear incentives for initiative, innovation and excellence. Building a cohesive, entrepreneurial and progressive culture is critical to sustaining the success of the University while at all times reflecting our values and principles.

Using a regular and comprehensive staff engagement survey, we will work to improve levels of staff satisfaction in our commitment to gender equity, diversity and inclusion as reflected in our culture, processes and policies.

PEOPLE

- → **Operational plans:** People Strategy; Gender Equity Strategy
- → **Decadal strategies:** Sustainability; Western Creative
- → **Measures:** M1, M3, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9

PLACE

The University is an integral part of the fabric of Western Sydney. It is an engaged, accessible, and collaborative accelerator of positive transformation in our region. We enrich and are enriched by our communities, and this reciprocal connection to Western Sydney differentiates us from other universities.

The University is the leading place-maker for the region. Western Growth, the University's industry-partnered infrastructure development and urban renewal program, catalyses industry development and city centre revitalisation. Western Growth provides the University with the resources to support its mission and a community balancing rapid economic growth with heightened uncertainty.

The continued development of our campus network – increasingly pursued in partnership with peer universities, TAFE NSW, local secondary schools and industry – will ensure the physical environments we create are technology-rich research and teaching and learning environments that are flexible, shared and accessible.

The communities of Western Sydney are our partners in generating positive change nationally and globally. We engage with Western Sydney as co-creators of economic, social and cultural advancement through innovation, understanding and the pursuit of mutually beneficial goals.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

Our students' learning and success are fundamental to our mission. *Sustaining Success 2021–2026* extends the University's commitment to a student-centred approach by responding to the challenges and opportunities afforded by the expected disruptions to the future of work. Through the learning experiences the University offers, our students are equipped to shape communities as future thinkers, innovative entrepreneurs, global citizens and sustainability advocates.

The University's technology-rich learning and teaching experiences are informed by a research enhanced curriculum that facilitates employability.

Our programs are characterised by innovation and cocreated in embedded settings with students, industry and community partners, with impact and influence that extends nationally and globally.

PLACE

- → Operational plans: Western Growth; Community Engagement; Partnerships
- → **Decadal strategies:** Sustainability; Flight Path; Western Creative; Western Health; Agritech
- → Measures: M2, M3, M9

LEARNING AND TEACHING

- → Operational plans: Education Strategy; 21C Strategy
- → **Decadal strategies:** Sustainability; Western Health; STEM; Indigenous
- → **Measures:** M1, M7, M8, M10



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The University's student communities are diverse. We provide them with the academic, technological, social and physical environment that enables their participation in the full student experience. Western *Growth* is transforming how students learn, engage with academics, and collaborate inside and outside of the University, helping them to develop capacities to succeed in their work and life.

Quality teaching is central to the overall student experience, but also critical is an accessible, engaging, inclusive and life-long learning environment for our student communities. The University provides academic, social and cultural programs that appreciate the value and potential of the individual.

We also recognise that teaching is underpinned by quality and impactful research. We are committed to excellence in research training and increasing the number of research students.

The University also supports an inclusive culture for our students, reflective of the intellectual growth made possible through diversity of opinion, ideas, experience and circumstances. These are characteristics of the student experience fundamental to the University, and they are promoted and celebrated accordingly as enriching and defining facets of the student journey.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

The University's research is of the highest quality and has regional, national and global impact. The research themes of environment and sustainability, education and work, health and wellbeing, and urban living futures and society demonstrate our commitment to multidisciplinary approaches to tackle contemporary grand challenges.

We collaborate with First Nation peoples, regional, national and international communities to contribute to their economic, social and environmental wellbeing. Our research reflects our commitment to equity and sustainability.

The key to success is partnering with end users, those who will apply the University's research outcomes and those for whom our research makes a difference.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- → Operational plans: Western Success, Graduate Employability Strategy
- → **Decadal strategies:** Sustainability; STEM
- → Measures: M1, M2, M4, M7, M8

RESEARCH & INNOVATION

- → Operational plans: Research Strategy Plan; Partnership Strategy
- → **Decadal strategies:** Sustainability; Western Health; Western Creative; Flight Path; STEM; Indigenous
- → **Measures:** M1, M6, M9, M10

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

The University is recognised for our graduates and their ability to manage a disrupted future of work. We develop global citizens through curricula shaped by diverse cultural perspectives and knowledges.

Through our globally mobile graduates and international program – focussing on partnerships, research collaboration, and curriculum codevelopment – the University will expand its contribution to the international community.

Our ethos of service is tied to putting research and teaching into action. We are recognised for mutually beneficial partnerships which contribute to high-impact research and are known for teaching that delivers value for partners and their communities. The University is unambiguously global. We are expanding international engagement and forging new partnerships and networks in key areas. This brings greater depth, experience and connectedness to our endeavours in Western Sydney. The University is of, and for, Greater Western Sydney, but with authentic global relevance and recognition.

INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

The University acknowledges Indigenous history on our campuses so that all staff and students experience a strong sense of acceptance and belonging. This is accompanied by research-informed curricula and training that expands the understanding of Indigenous culture for the entire University community.

We are uniquely located to lead efforts in bridging the tertiary attainment gap in partnership with Western Sydney's Indigenous community. Indigenous student success is supported by an extensive network of Indigenous research, leadership and representation. Our Indigenous research, undertaken by Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, is co-created with the communities where it is located, and is committed to making a positive difference to the lives of the communities within which it is engaged.

- → Operational plans: Indigenous Strategy
- → Decadal strategies: Indigenous
 - → Measures: M4, M5, M9

TECHNOLOGY AND SYSTEMS

The University's digital systems are widely recognised as sector leading. They deliver enhanced efficiencies, improved student experiences and more effective teaching and research environments. New systems will enhance our capacity to reach and have impact on a greater number of students across Australia and globally.

Through Sustaining Success 2021–2026, we will engage with major technology partners in completing a comprehensive renewal of our key enterprise systems and campus infrastructure. The University's commitment to a rich technology-enhanced learning experience is recognised internationally. It is exemplified by the innovative learning spaces, informal student spaces and engaged activities across a renewed campus network, national and international.

Technology and systems are a key focus of the Western Growth strategy and major projects. The University's 'hybrid flexible' approach provides a broader student learning experience and will continue to complement our expanded online educational activity in partnership with Online Education Services.

FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

Our financial stability is the platform for our success. Careful financial management coupled with shared financial competency will ensure the University's ability to grow with the needs of our communities and achieve our mission.

Western Growth will assure the future of the University, contributing to a financial corpus that will seed innovation in teaching, research and strategic projects while providing financial security. From this strong position, our University will attract public and private sector partners to further our development.

Strong financial systems guided by sector-leading expertise will continue to support the University's financial robustness. The continuous improvement of these systems will generate new insights and enable informed financial decision-making.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT INDIGENOUS

- → Operational plans: Global Futures Strategy; Research Strategy Plan; Education Strategy
- → **Decadal strategies:** Sustainability; Flight Path
- → **Measures:** M7, M8, M9, M10

TECHNOLOGY & SYSTEMS

- → **Operational plans:** Digital Roadmap/Master Plan; Western Growth Strategy; Education Strategy
- → **Decadal strategies:** Sustainability; STEM; Flight Path
- → **Measures:** M3, M6, M7, M8, M10

FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

- → Operational plans: Western Growth Strategy; Finance and Resources Portfolio
- → Decadal strategies: Flight Path
- → Measures: M2, M3, M9

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Measuring Success

The University will evaluate its success in realising the goals of *Sustaining Success 2021–2026* by measuring the extent to which we:

- **M1.** Grow the University's reputation
- **M2.** Adopt energy renewables in campus operations and advance toward carbon neutrality in 2030
- **M3.** Demonstrate financial resilience and robustness by growing the University corpus and maintaining liquidity
- **M4.** Increase the proportion of our students who are Indigenous
- **M5.** Represent gender equity, diversity and inclusion in our culture, workforce, processes and policies
- **M6.** Improve our research quality and impact
- **M7.** Increase the retention of our domestic and international students and the quality and employability of our graduates
- **M8.** Improve student satisfaction, engagement, support and belongingness
- **M9.** Deliver positive impact for, and with, our communities and partners through social, economic, cultural and place-based transformations
- **M10.** Expand the proportion of curricula and microcredentials that are co-created with industry and community partners

Appendix 1:

MEASUREMENT MATRIX

The University's values permeate all of our actions. The enablers in *Sustaining Success 2021–2026* – of people, place, learning and teaching, student experience, research and innovation, global engagement, Indigenous perspectives, technology and systems, and financial resilience – will be embedded within the operational planning framework.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS 2021–2026: MEASUREMENT MATRIX

Our Mission

Starting in Western Sydney, our students will succeed, our research will have impact and our communities will thrive through our commitment to excellence, sustainability, equity, transformation and connectedness.

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Principles Goals		Success Measures		
P1.	G1.	M1.		
Sustainability We work to ensure a better quality of life for all, now and in the future, in a just and equitable manner, while living within the limits of supporting ecosystems.	Through curriculum, research, engagement, operations and built environment, the University will retain THE Impact Rankings within the top 10 overall globally.	M2. Adopt energy renewables in campus operations and advance toward carbon neutrality in 2030 M3. Demonstrate financial resilience and robustness by growing the University corpus and maintaining liquidity Enablers: E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, and E9		
P2.	G2 .	M4.		
Equity We maintain our long- standing commitment to enhancing the lives of our students, people and communities by promoting fairness, social justice and opportunities for success.	As a globally recognised university of and for the Western Sydney region, we will set the benchmark for diversity, inclusiveness and equity.	Increase the proportion of our students who are Indigenous M5. Represent gender equity, diversity and inclusion in our culture, workforce, processes and policies Enablers: E1, E4, and E7		

Principles	Goals	Success Measures		
P3.	G3.	M6.		
Transformation We are redefining the role of Australian universities through transforming the University and the communities we serve for the betterment of those communities. Through Western Growth we are co-creating the cities of the future across the region. Our transformation endeavours will inspire our students, staff and communities to transform themselves.	The University's high-quality research will collaboratively address global challenges and inform our innovative and flexible curriculum, ensuring our highly employable graduates are recognised for their ability to create sustainable futures through local and global leadership.	M7. Increase the retention of our domestic and international students and the quality and employability of our graduates M10. Expand the proportion of curricula and microcredentials that are co-created with industry and community partners Enablers: E1, E3, E4, E5, E6, E8, and E9		
P4.	G4 .	M8.		
Connectedness We are embedded in the economic, cultural and social growth of the region, building a more equitable and sustainable society for students, staff and communities.	The University will expand our collaborative delivery of technologyrich, flexible and high amenity facilities for teaching and learning, research and engagement, making a measurable difference to the wellbeing, prosperity, health and culture of the communities within which we are embed and engaged.	Improve student satisfaction, engagement, support and belongingness M9. Deliver positive impact for, and with, our communities and partners through social, economic, cultural and place-based transformations M10. Expand the proportion of curricula and microcredentials that are co-created with industry and community partners Enablers: E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, and E9		

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Appendix 2:

TARGETS AGAINST MEASURES

	Measure	Method / Source	Baseline	Mid-cycle	Target
M1.	Grow the University's reputation	THE Young Universities ranking	=36	25	15
		THE Impact ranking	3	Top 10	Top 10
M2.	Adopt energy renewables in campus operations and advance toward carbon neutrality in 2030	Proportion of renewables used in University's energy supply	<5%	40%	100% renewable energy
M3.	Demonstrate financial resilience and robustness by growing the University corpus and maintaining liquidity	Year on year growth in University Corpus Liquidity (current ratio)	CPI +3.0% Liquidity ratio >2	CPI +3.5% Liquidity ratio >2	CPI +4.0% Liquidity ratio >2
M4.	Increase the proportion of our students who are Indigenous	Proportion of Indigenous students to total students, headcount and EFTSL	1.7%	2.5%	3%
M5.	Represent gender equity, diversity and inclusion in our culture, workforce, processes and	WGEA compliance report / % of women in Manager positions or higher	53.9%	>50%	>50%
	policies	MyVoice Survey: Diversity	92% favourable	>90%	>90%

	Measure	Method / Source	Baseline	Mid-cycle	Target
M6.	Improve our research quality and impact	Excellence in Research Australia	85% of assessed four digit FoRs are world standard or above	85% of assessed four digit FoRs are world standard or above	90% of assessed four digit FoRs are world standard or above
		Engagement and Impact Assessment	34% of case studies assessed High across Engagement, Impact, and Approach to Impact	34% of case studies assessed High across Engagement, Impact, and Approach to Impact	53% of case studies assessed High across Engagement, Impact, and Approach to Impact
M7.	Increase the retention of our domestic and international students and the quality and employability of our graduates	Annual Course Reports /DESE Graduate Outcome Surveys	79% retention 85.5% undergraduate medium term full time employment	81% retention 87.5% undergraduate medium term full time employment	83% retention 89.5% undergraduate medium term full time employment
M8.	Improve student satisfaction, engagement, support and belongingness	Voice of Students Survey Student Feedback on Units	Net Promoter Score: 23	Net Promoter Score: 25	Net Promoter Score: 27
M9.	Deliver positive impact for, and with, our communities and partners through social, economic, cultural and place-based transformations	Biannual Partnership and Engagement Survey	New Survey	New Survey	New Survey
M10.	Expand the proportion of curricula and microcredentials that are cocreated with industry and community partners	Proportion of units and courses with industry participation	12.5%	50%	75%

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Appendix 3:

GLOBAL RANKINGS

TYPE OF RANKING		BASELINE	MID-CYCLE	TARGET
THE World university ranking	THE 100 under 50 universities ranking	36	25	15
	THE Impact ranking	Top 10	Top 10	Top 10
	THE overall ranking	251-300	251-300	200-250
QS World University ranking	Top 50 under 50 and next 50	61-70	61-70	51-60
	Number of subjects ranked in the top 200	9	11	12
	QS overall ranking	451-500	451-500	401-450
Academic ranking of world universities	AWRU overall rankings	301-400	301-400	251-300



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