

Modern buildings of the Melbourne Campus in Victoria Parade Fitzroy.



Strategic priorities

The *Strategic Plan 1999–2008* came to an end this year. It was updated mid-term following the 2002 Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) review of the University. The plan sought to bring a Mission-based focus to all the activities of the University and to set a large number of strategic priorities to advance the University over this 10-year period.

The *Strategic Plan 1999–2008* had identified the following priorities among 24 goals:

- enhancing the Mission-based focus of all the University's activities
- implementing different mechanisms for University funding that relate meaningfully to and derive benefit from the Crossroads policy initiatives that have just been formulated
- conducting ongoing structural reform
- targeting internationalisation and international education more effectively
- placing an increased emphasis on flexible learning
- working to enhance and further integrate the culture of research within the University
- increasing the range and depth of community engagements and collaborative partnerships
- enhancing ACUcom activity (see page 37)
- embedding quality more obviously across all the University's endeavours and working to communicate efficiently a sense of that to all staff and to all units
- developing a "culture of evidence" across the University in support of its decision making.

Most of the main targets were achieved, substantially achieved or, in some instances, over-achieved (for example, growth in non-Government revenue). As the 2008 AUQA review noted, however, reporting against all of the 24 indicators was not achieved, due to the absence of comprehensive data for a number of the indicators and in some instances the lack of specificity of the indicator.

The new Office of Planning and Strategic Management (OPSM) will be responsible for ensuring the analysis of data for measuring strategic objectives.

The Faculty of Education's *Teaching and Learning Plan (2006–2008)* also drew to a close, with an acknowledgement of substantial progress in each of the targeted outcomes:

- students demonstrate progress towards the achievement of graduate attributes
- academic programs reflect the Mission of the University
- academic staff demonstrate quality teaching and learning.

Government reviews

The University contributed full submissions to the Bradley and Cutler reviews of higher education. In addition, the Vice-Chancellor joined 13 other vice-chancellors of non-aligned universities, comprising a critical mass of Australia's higher education sector, to express their wish for a future government plan for the tertiary education sector that is equitable, visionary and sustainable.

The Vice-Chancellor made public comments on the Bradley Review when it appeared in December 2008. He approved of the emphasis on wider, more equitable access to tertiary education and on an overall quality system, rather than an over-concern with world rankings for a small number of universities, and agreed with the necessary hope for major increases in federal funding. He did, however, foresee major consequent disadvantages from a suggested voucher system of funding for students, which is likely to affect smaller, regional and more vulnerable universities.

The Cutler Review gave a compelling argument for extra funding of Australian universities since, as Federal Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Minister Kim Carr said, "by international standards (of innovation) we have been slipping: if we don't improve we won't be able to maintain living standards." Cutler recommends the distribution of more than \$600 million in research block and research training funding on real research performance, as measured by the government's Excellence in Research for Australia audit.



strategic plan

developed for 2009–2011

Planning for the future – proposed strategic directions

Vice-Chancellor's initiatives

In 2008, the new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Greg Craven, established an Office of Planning and Strategic Management (OPSM). A draft *Strategic Plan for 2009–2011* has been prepared. Building on the experience of the previous plan, this one is shorter, with a more manageable number of targets and corresponding indicators. It is designed to give very clear guidance as to the directions of the University and the expectations of organisational units and staff.

New strategic priorities have been set for research and internationalisation, and several major internal reviews initiated for such areas as management structure, the disciplines of nursing and exercise science, marketing and the ACUcom arm of the University.

In addition, a new *Learning and Teaching Plan for 2009–2011* was adopted, reflecting renewed focus on graduate attributes, generic skills, improved learning outcomes for students and professional development for staff.

For the year of 2008, the Vice-Chancellor produced a paper titled *Implementation of 2008 Strategic Priorities*, which noted:

- a need to re-emphasise the connection of the Mission to our Catholic identity
- the establishment of an Office of University Properties
- the development of a strategic research plan for 2009–2011
- the establishment of the Office of Planning and Strategic Management to implement the plan
- the introduction in 2008 of the Early Achievers' Program (see page 27)
- a need to focus on growth of enrolments
- a need for a review of the roles of Pro-Vice-Chancellors
- a need for a new overall emphasis on student experience
- the establishment of a fourth faculty (of Theology and Philosophy) for 2009
- the founding of a Public Policy Institute in Canberra to begin in 2009, with Professor Father Frank Brennan SJ as Director, to inform and influence public policy from within a Catholic intellectual tradition
- the establishment of new courses for 2010 in physiotherapy (in Brisbane and North Sydney) and in 2011 occupational therapy (in Melbourne).

