Australian Catholic University (ACU) was established in November 1990 through incorporation as a public company limited by guarantee, registered in the state of Victoria. It was subsequently recognised as a university under the Australian Catholic University (Victoria) Act 1991 and provides this report to the Victorian Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation.

The University was formed through the amalgamation of the Catholic College of Education (NSW), the Institute of Catholic Education (Vic), McAuley College (Qld) and Signadou College of Education (ACT). Today, ACU has six campuses nationally: Brisbane (McAuley at Banyo), North Sydney (MacKillop), Strathfield (Mount St Mary), Canberra (Signadou), Ballarat (Aquinas) and Melbourne (St Patrick’s).

A public university, recognised and funded by the Commonwealth Government, Australian Catholic University is open to students and staff of all beliefs.

Visit www.acu.edu.au/about_acu/publications to view this report online.

For more copies of this report or for enquiries, please contact: communications@acu.edu.au phone +61 (02) 9739 2091.

Letter of transmittal

31 March 2010

The Honourable Jacinta Allan MP
Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation
Level 36, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Minister

In accordance with the requirements of regulations under the Financial Management Act 1994, I am pleased to submit for your information and presentation to Parliament the Australian Catholic University Annual Report for the year ending 31 December 2009.

The Annual Report was approved by the Australian Catholic University Senate on 31 March 2010.

Yours sincerely

Brother R Julian McDonald CFC AO
Chancellor
## Contents

**Report of operations**

1 **Introduction**  
   Chanceller’s foreword 3  
   Vice-Chancellor’s report 4  
   Foundation 5  
   History 5  
   Objectives 5  
   Campuses 5  
   Faculties and areas of study 6  
   Growth 7  
   Highlights of 2009 7  
   New strategic plan 8  
   Planning with government 8  
   Strategic priorities implemented 9

2 **Governance**  
   Company structure 10  
   Senate members 10  
   Directors’ membership of external boards 11  
   Committees 11  
   Management structure 11  
   Principal officers of the University in 2009 12  
   Management structure under Vice-Chancellor 2009 15

3 **Mission and identity**  
   Mission statement 16  
   Directorate and institutes to enact Mission 16  
   Mission in undertakings 17  
   Community engagement 17  
   Public forums 19  
   Recognition 19  
   Eureka Prize winner 19

4 **Resources**  
   General income and expenditure 20  
   Australian Catholic University Foundation 20  
   Scholarships 22  
   Infrastructure 23  
   Libraries 24  
   IT and distance learning 24  
   Environmental sustainability 24

5 **Academic review**  
   AUQA audit follow-up 26  
   Government review visits 27  
   Alternative entry programs 27  
   New Memoranda of Understanding and partnerships 29  
   New courses 29  
   Course reviews 29  
   New faculty 29

6 **Students**  
   Student statistics 30  
   Student achievements 31  
   Student experience 31  
   Students in the community 32  
   Student support 32  
   Online services 32  
   Flexible learning 32  
   Equity and diversity 32  
   Education for Indigenous students 33  
   International programs 34  
   ACUcom 37

7 **Graduates**  
   Graduate statistics 38  
   Honorary doctorates 39  
   Graduates beyond campus 39  
   Graduate connections 39

8 **Staff**  
   Staff statistics 40  
   Staff policies 41  
   Significant appointments 42  
   Honours to staff 42

9 **Research**  
   Areas of research 44  
   Research statistics 44  
   Research grants and partnerships 45  
   Publications by staff 46  
   Visiting researchers 46  
   Looking to the future 46

10 **External relations**  
    Relations with government 48  
    Relations with stakeholders 48  
    Public relations 49  
    Community relations 49

**Financial reports**

1 **Directors’ report** 51

2 **Lead auditor’s independence declaration** 55

3 **Audited financial statements**  
   Income statement 56  
   Statement of comprehensive income 57  
   Balance sheet 58  
   Statement of changes in equity 59  
   Statement of cash flows 60

4 **Notes to the financial statements**  
   Statements of significant accounting policies 61  
   Revenue 67  
   Expenses 69  
   Finance expenses 72  
   Auditors’ remuneration 72  
   Cash and cash equivalents 72  
   Trade and other receivables 72  
   Other financial assets 73  
   Other investments 73  
   Other assets 73  
   Property, plant and equipment 74  
   Intangible assets 76  
   Trade and other payables 77  
   Employee benefits 77  
   Other liabilities 80  
   Reserves 81  
   Retained earnings 82  
   Commitments 82  
   Directors and key management personnel disclosures 83  
   Related parties 84  
   Financial Instruments disclosure 85  
   Equity 86  
   Notes to statement of cash flows 86  
   Acquittal of Commonwealth Government financial assistance 88

5 **Directors’ declaration** 98

6 **Independent auditors’ report** 99

7 **Disclaimer** 100

8 **Supplementary income statement**  
   Additional information 102  
   Compliance index 105  
   Victoria-specific index 108  
   Contacts and website 109
Chancellor’s foreword

This publication reports on the activities and position of Australian Catholic University (ACU) in 2009, the second year of the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Professor Greg Craven.

We started the year with evidence of strong growth in domestic enrolments and staff. Such growth, however, was but one focus of 2009. This was a year when the University put into place the plans and reviews which I had foreshadowed in my foreword to last year’s annual report.

The first two chapters of this document detail the actions taken to implement the strategic priorities nominated in the 2008 annual report, and underscore the significance of the Strategic Plan 2009-2011, the thematic sub-plans and the change in management structure, including the appointment of new Pro-Vice-Chancellors, and Directors reporting to them.

Major reviews were undertaken in 2009, including those of governance structures, ACUcom (our vocational training arm), international education, the Faculty of Business, the Early Achievers’ Program, the Office of University Properties and the University's branding and symbols.

Without repeating the Highlights of the year as listed on page 7, I would like to commend the Vice-Chancellor for his numerous initiatives, among which were the first full staff survey, with a 69 per cent response rate, and the launch of a monthly newsletter to staff, Communiqué, which kept all of us well informed on ACU matters throughout the year.

The new structures and organisations of 2009 were intrinsically linked to our identity and Mission. These included the first full year of operation of the new Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, an expression of our traditional strengths and a crucial part of a Catholic university’s very existence; a review and widening of our Pathway programs for university entry; the establishment of a new directorate of Identity and Mission, new institutes of Catholic Identity and Mission and of Public Policy, and the launch of the Centre for Indigenous Education and Research.

All of these initiatives aim to express our values through teaching, research and action for justice. In addition, their new staff join a strong ACU tradition of incisive commentary on Australian public life with all its practical and ethical challenges.

Reflection on life in the university community over the last twelve months has confirmed my pride in the many achievements of those who comprise Australian Catholic University. Many of these achievements have far-reaching significance. On page 33 of this report, for instance, is a quiet statistic which shows that of our Indigenous graduates from 2009, 100 per cent of those available for full-time employment were indeed in such by the time they were invited to complete a post-graduation survey. This represents a significant contribution in an area of considerable need in the community.

One of the great pleasures for a Chancellor is to preside over graduations and to see the evident delight and satisfaction of graduates in their achievement. This was never more obvious than at the 2009 graduation of husband and wife Jennifer and Michael Odur - Jennifer in nursing and Michael in business. The young couple, who arrived in Australia after 10 years in a Ugandan refugee camp, were among the first graduates of a collaborative project to help refugees gain university qualifications. This project is sponsored jointly by the Catholic Education Offices of the Diocese of Parramatta, the Archdiocese of Sydney, the Catholic Primary Principals’ Association, the Independent Education Union and Australian Catholic University.

The occasion was a clear demonstration of Australian Catholic University’s mission to make education more widely accessible and its commitment to the practice of community engagement.

In concluding, I express my gratitude to all those who have worked so generously and assiduously to make 2009, with its changes, challenges and expansions, a shining success in so many fields of endeavour. I offer this annual report of Australian Catholic University as a record of the life of an educational community we value so greatly.

Brother R Julian McDonald
CFC AO
Chancellor
Vice-Chancellor’s report

The year 2009 saw important changes to the structure and planning of Australian Catholic University, and this annual report documents these changes in some detail.

The year began with significantly increased enrolments. As I reported to Senate’s April meeting, our Commonwealth-supported load was up 15 per cent on the previous year, and our total commencing load up 26 per cent on 2008 figures. At the same time, ACU was carefully monitoring its international enrolments, as the global financial crisis was starting to affect most Australian universities.

The University will grow again next year to enable us, I trust, to develop into a university with a critical mass. It seems apparent to me that there is limited place for a small university with limited research that is spread across six campuses in three states and a territory. We must grow and we must develop a stronger focus on research. Our investment in research will continue to increase, with extra funds in 2010 and further funding in 2011. This is with the intention of rapidly increasing our research output and impact.

When the Senate during the year accepted the University’s Strategic Plan 2009–2011, I looked back at the foundation of the University and at its distinctive qualities, mindful of the Federal Government’s desire for universities to be distinct from one another.

I summarised our position in the following way, which served as a starting point for the year’s strategic planning:

Australian Catholic University represents the accumulated achievements of 150 years of Catholic tertiary education. Growing from a historic base in teacher education, it now educates more than 18,400 students across a variety of disciplines.

It is Australia’s only university with a profoundly national dimension, operating major campuses in three state capitals – Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane – as well as in the national capital of Canberra, and a regional campus in Ballarat.

The University’s teaching operations are closely focused on disciplines classically falling within the great Catholic intellectual tradition. These include theology, philosophy, education, health, the liberal arts and business. As a unifying theme, all are centred around human relationships.

Correspondingly, the University’s research is specialised in the areas of theology and philosophy, health (with a particular emphasis on care of the vulnerable), education, and the multi-disciplinary field of the common good and social justice.

The Chancellor has mentioned some of the changes and thorough reviews in 2009, including a new management structure, staff survey and newsletter, a new Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, a Directorate of Identity and Mission, Institutes of Catholic Identity and Mission and of Public Policy and a Centre for Indigenous Education and Research. There was also much planning in 2009 for a fifth faculty, that of Business, and for new courses in physiotherapy, both to begin in 2010.

I was particularly concerned during the year, not only with rationalising our structure and objectives, but with placing our University in the higher education landscape under the Bradley Review reforms. Our major growth in enrolments, our various pathways and access programs to encourage entry from a wider cross-section of the community and our strong record in Indigenous Australian participation all give me confidence that ACU is playing its role in this new era.

I believe that, over the period of the University’s Strategic Plan 2009–2011, we will face some key challenges. These will include further confirming our essential character as Australia’s leading Catholic university; achieving a dramatic increase in research productivity; undertaking major expansions of campus operations in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane; establishing a comprehensive planning culture; improving levels of student satisfaction; and successfully establishing new faculties and major degree programs.

During the year we received a number of Australia-wide awards, as well as many individual staff and student honours for learning and teaching, research and community engagement. I express my gratitude to all those staff members who contributed to achieving these successful outcomes. It gives me the greatest pleasure, however, to see the University continuing to produce well-rounded graduates in the great tradition of Catholic universities who, Catholic or not, value service, scholarship and conscience as part of their identity.
Foundation

Australian Catholic University (ACU) represents the accumulated achievements of 150 years of Catholic tertiary education. Growing from a historic base in teacher education, it now educates more than 18,400 students across a variety of disciplines.

It is Australia’s only university with a national dimension, with campuses in three state capitals – Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane – as well as in Canberra, and a regional campus in Ballarat. By Australian standards it is a medium-sized university but, with six relatively small campuses, it is able to offer personalised education to its students.

The University’s teaching operations are closely focused on disciplines classically falling within the Catholic intellectual tradition. These include theology, philosophy, education, health, the liberal arts and business. As a unifying theme, all are centred on human relationships.

Correspondingly, the University’s research is specialised in the areas of theology and philosophy, health (with a particular emphasis on care of the vulnerable), education and the multi-disciplinary fields of social welfare and social justice.

History

ACU opened in January 1991 following the amalgamation of four Catholic tertiary institutions in eastern Australia. It was recognised as a university under the Australian Catholic University (Victoria) Act 1991.

The institutions that merged to form the University had their origins in the mid-1800s, when religious orders and institutes became involved in preparing teachers for Catholic schools and, later, nurses for Catholic hospitals.

Through a series of amalgamations, relocations, transfers of responsibilities and diocesan initiatives, more than 20 historical entities contributed to the creation of Australian Catholic University.

Objectives

The objectives and powers of the University are provided through the Constitution of Australian Catholic University Limited, which was incorporated as a public company, limited by guarantee, registered in the state of Victoria, in November 1990. See www.acu.edu.au for a detailed list of the University’s objectives.

The University is a public university, recognised and funded by the Commonwealth Government and, as such, its students are eligible for the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS-HELP). It is open to students and staff of all beliefs.

Campuses

The University has six campuses in Australia (shown at right).
Faculties and areas of study

In 2009 Australian Catholic University offered courses at its Australian campuses and overseas for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, across four faculties. The curriculum was university-wide but not all courses were offered at each campus.

New courses

The Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, established by the University Senate in 2008, began offering courses in 2009.

The establishment of a fifth faculty, the Faculty of Business, has been passed by the University Senate and its courses are being planned for 2010.

The Bachelor of High Performance (Sport and Business degree) will also be available from 2010, combining the University’s expertise in exercise science and business and suitable for elite sportspeople and coaches.

The national School of Physiotherapy was launched in 2009. Physiotherapy courses through the Faculty of Health Sciences will be introduced at the Brisbane Campus in 2010 and at the North Sydney Campus in 2011, with an occupational therapy program to begin at the Melbourne Campus in 2011.

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Accounting
Arts
Asian Studies
Australian Studies
Behavioural Science
Business
Catholic Studies
Chemistry
Commerce
Communications
Computing
Counselling
Creative Arts and Culture
Drama
East Timor Language and Cultural Studies
Economics
Environmental Studies
Ethics
Gender Studies
Geography
History
Human Resource Management
Indigenous Studies
Information Systems
Interfaith Relations
Languages
Legal Studies
Liberal Studies
Literature
Management
Marketing
Mathematics
Media Communication
Ministry
Music
Performing Arts
Physics
Politics
Psychology
Science
Sociology
Social Sciences
Social Work
Study of Religions
Technology
Visual Arts and Design
Youth Work

Faculty of Education

Early Childhood Education
Educational Leadership
English as a Second Language for Teachers K–12 and for Adults
Inclusive Education
Disability Studies
Indigenous Education
Primary Teacher Education
Secondary Teacher Education
Religious Education

Faculty of Health Sciences

Exercise Science
Nursing
Nursing Leadership
Midwifery
Paramedicine

Faculty of Theology and Philosophy

Theology
Philosophy
Catholic Identity and Leadership
Practical Ministry

Teaching operations are focused on disciplines classically falling within the Catholic intellectual tradition … all are centred around human relationships
Growth

Domestic and international applications

While domestic applications for 2010 increased over the previous year, the Vice-Chancellor noted that international applications were “tracking lower than last year”.

Overall growth

The University was greatly encouraged by very strong growth in applications in 2009 for 2010. Steady growth over the past five years is evident from the key statistics below, and is forecast to continue following this increase in applications for 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total student headcount</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13,754</td>
<td>18,402</td>
<td>33.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equivalent full-time student load</td>
<td>9,529.59</td>
<td>12,911.72</td>
<td>35.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total staff FTE*</td>
<td>1,078.8</td>
<td>1,381.3</td>
<td>28.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total academic staff FTE*</td>
<td>600.6</td>
<td>734.2</td>
<td>22.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>$126.2m</td>
<td>$206.0m</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government grants (including HECS)</td>
<td>$83.1m</td>
<td>$147.8m</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees and charges</td>
<td>$24.2m</td>
<td>$37.5m</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>$19.0m</td>
<td>$20.7m</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*FTE = full-time equivalent

Highlights of 2009

Significant events during the year included:

- an increase in demand for ACU places, with first preferences up almost 21 per cent from the previous year, and total first preferences up by 32 per cent
- acceptance of the Strategic Plan 2009–2011 (see page 8)
- meeting of strategic priorities set in 2008 (see page 9)
- continued success of the University’s Early Achievers’ Program and of accessACU, designed to widen entry opportunities (see page 27), in line with recommendations of the Bradley Review of Higher Education
- a major review of the University’s governance, with a new organisational structure implemented (see page 15)
- increased emphasis on research, with a newly appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)
- the launch of the Centre for Indigenous Education and Research (CIER)
- the first year of operation of the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy
- the establishment of the Faculty of Business for 1 January 2010
- the launch of the national School of Physiotherapy, with courses in physiotherapy and occupational therapy to commence in 2010 and 2011 respectively
- a successful initial staff survey (with 69 per cent response rate) providing the basis for Human Resources follow-up presentations and an action plan
- plans for major expansion of the Melbourne Campus, to meet an increased demand for places.
New strategic plan

The year began with the draft Strategic Plan 2009–2011, and Transitional Plan 2009–2010 to guide the University’s direction while awaiting formal approval of the strategic plan. The transitional plan incorporated recommendations of the 2008 Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) audit.

The strategic plan, accepted in April by Senate, is prefaced by a vision statement which summarises the University’s position as:

- a Catholic university, within the Catholic intellectual tradition
- a public university open to all and public in its relevance
- a national university, with campuses in three states and one territory
- a university with a tradition of commitment to the common good.

Focus areas and goals

Focus areas of the plan are: theology and philosophy; health; education; and the inter-disciplinary focus of the common good and social justice.

Its strategic goals cover four areas:

- student experience
- research and knowledge transfer
- Catholic identity and Mission
- service delivery and enablers.

New planning office

The new Office of Planning and Strategic Management (OPSM) began operation at the beginning of the year, under Director Ms Evelyn Picozzi. It is responsible for monitoring performance against the strategic plan, in consultation with the executive and senior management of the University, as well as providing analysis of data to measure its objectives.

OPSM also ensures that the University is equipped to meet Federal Government reporting and monitoring requirements.

Subsidiary plans 2009–2011

A number of subsidiary plans were also put into place, as listed here.

Thematic plans for:

- community engagement
- finance and infrastructure
- identity and Mission
- Indigenous education and research
- information technology and communications
- internationalisation
- learning and teaching
- marketing
- people and culture
- research
- student life

Organisational plans for:

- each Pro-Vice-Chancellor’s area
- each directorate
- each faculty
- university-wide development

Operational plans for:

- each faculty, directorate and Pro-Vice-Chancellor area
- each campus

Master plans

Each campus is to have a formal master plan outlining current buildings and future possibilities for development, to ensure that the University capitalises on all opportunities to meet its strategic goals, especially in enrolment growth. The first of these master plans will be for the two Sydney campuses.

Planning with government

Bradley Review

Early in the year, senior staff members spent two days at the University Strategy Retreat, focusing on the Commonwealth Government’s Bradley Review of Higher Education, with its 48 recommendations, and the Cutler Review of Innovation.

The Vice-Chancellor also attended the inaugural Universities Australia higher education conference in March, at which The Honourable Julia Gillard presented the Commonwealth’s principle response to the Bradley Review.

Bradley Review enrolment aims

Deregulation, demand-driven focus

The University administration has acted in line with the new demand-driven system. While mindful of its competition and realising that enrolments may be less predictable in light of Bradley Review implications, it is pleased to have increasing enrolments, supported by a new articulated enrolment plan, as well as a new approach to strategic planning.

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted developments in planning:

“No that we have a robust set of planning documents, we will be able to make judgments regarding resource allocations in a more strategic manner.”
Increasing university access

In accordance with the Bradley Review’s aim of 40 per cent of 25–34 year-olds having a university degree, the University strategically monitored its enrolment figures in 2009 and planned further growth for 2010. With the volatility of international numbers, it was important for ACU to make sure that it grows in line with its draft enrolment plan and with the Commonwealth Government’s targets for university participation.

Increasing access for low socioeconomic status (SES) students

Another major recommendation of the Bradley Review was to aim for 20 per cent of students at universities to come from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Australian Catholic University’s response to low-SES access

In 2009, 16 per cent of ACU’s students were from a low-SES background. The University considers that it has prepared the way for wider participation with initiatives such as flexible entry, accessACU (see page 27), Clemente Australia (see page 33) and increased Indigenous enrolments (see page 33) and scholarships. In addition, during the year it put in place a new strategy for achieving this important long-term aim, as described below.

Draft Pathways Strategy 2009–2012

ACU Academic Board endorsed this strategy to enhance and expand the current initiatives for participation of students from low socioeconomic status, Indigenous or geographically remote background, consistent with the Commonwealth Government’s 2009 Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System policy.

Commonwealth compact

At the end of 2009 a draft compact of the University with the Commonwealth Government was finalised and provided to the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). This defined the funding and accountability framework for the implementation of equity initiatives and, from 2011, agreed performance targets.

Strategic priorities implemented

The 2008 Annual Report (page 8) listed strategic priorities of the Vice-Chancellor, which were implemented during 2009, as follows.

Priorities from 2008

• Re-emphasis on the connection of the Mission to our Catholic identity
• Establishment of the Office of University Properties
• Development of a strategic research plan for 2009–2011
• Establishment of the Office of Planning and Strategic Management
• Expansion of Early Achievers’ Program
• Focus on growth of enrolments
• Review of the roles of Pro-Vice-Chancellors
• New overall emphasis on student experience
• Establishment of a fourth faculty (of Theology and Philosophy)
• Founding of the Public Policy Institute to inform and influence public policy within a Catholic intellectual tradition
• Establishment of new courses in physiotherapy and occupational therapy

Action on priorities in 2009

• New Directorate of Identity and Mission and Institute for Catholic Identity and Mission (see page 16)
• Office of University Properties established, with university-wide campus development plans (see page 23)
• Research Thematic Plan accepted and new Pro-Vice-Chancellor in charge of research (see page 44)
• Office of Planning and Strategic Management established in January 2009 (see page 8)
• Early Achievers’ Program expanded successfully, with other programs to increase access (see page 27)
• Strategy to increase university size to a critical mass, a comprehensive three-year enrolment plan, focus on growth in domestic enrolments and stabilisation of international numbers
• Review of University governance and new organisational structure (see page 15)
• New Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students, Learning and Teaching) and new Office of Student Success
• Faculty of Theology and Philosophy in operation from the beginning of year
• New Public Policy Institute established, based in Canberra
• Launch of national School of Physiotherapy, with courses in physiotherapy to begin in 2010 and occupational therapy in 2011