



# ACU Sustainability Report 2021

Caring for our  
common home





# Message from the Vice-Chancellor and President

Australian Catholic University (ACU) acknowledges the importance of responsible and ethical management for the long-term success of the university and the protection of the environment. We are committed to the highest standards of ethical behaviour and, for many years now, have made a concerted effort to educate, research and demonstrate sustainable practices across our eight campuses.

Our university is a community of staff, students and partners dedicated to making a real and positive difference, with care and concern for our common home. We are a university of and for people, with a deeply woven dedication to ethics, the dignity of the human person and the common good. Our commitment to the common good informs all our endeavours and inspires our relationships and networks both in Australia and internationally.

The *ACU Strategic Plan 2020-2023* introduced the concept of 'stewardship' alongside 'sustainability' within Goal 6: Service, Stewardship and Sustainability. The development of the ACU Stewardship Strategy is underway and will clearly articulate how stewardship applies to ACU. We look forward to sharing this with our community in 2022 and to consolidating this meaningful expression of our mission.

The *ACU Sustainability Report 2021* showcases and reaffirms our ongoing commitment to care for our common home. Through our teaching, learning, research and community engagement, we are dedicated to making a positive difference in society and to the lives of individuals with whom we interact. As a Catholic university, we embrace the words of Pope Francis in *Laudato si'* and use them to guide our efforts in supporting the common good and pursuing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Z. Skrbis'.

**Professor Zlatko Skrbis**  
Vice-Chancellor and President  
Australian Catholic University



# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the First Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways. We recognise their spiritual and ongoing cultural connection to Country.

We respectfully acknowledge Elders past and present and thank them for their wisdom and guidance as we walk in their footsteps.

*Artwork designed for ACU by Gilimbaa*

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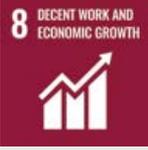
## Caring for our common home

ACU has a strong commitment to sustainability. Our approach to sustainability is grounded in our Catholic mission and the university's values, acknowledging the indivisible link between social, economic and environmental sustainability and our university's future. We recognise our responsibility and have developed a university-wide framework to deliver a better and more sustainable future for our common home, built upon two transformative prescriptions for a better world: Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato si'* and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

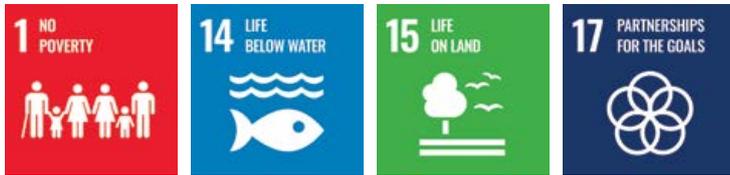
Addressed to 'every person living on this planet', Pope Francis's *Laudato si': On the care for our common home* captures the interconnectedness of social, economic and environmental justice in building and protecting our common home. The encyclical on integral human development adds to the Catholic Church's body of teaching. Highlighting global inequality, it calls for a transformation of our societies and individual lifestyles. It is a profound call for change.

The United Nations' SDGs are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. Both the *Laudato si'* and the SDGs call for a more equitable, inclusive and sustainable world.

# Laudato si' and the Sustainable Development Goals

LAUDATO SI' THEMES	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS				
Shared humanity and our common home					
Tackling pollution and climate change					
Clean, safe water for all					
Biodiversity and protection of natural ecosystems					
Health, education and social cohesion					
Human dignity and the common good					
Inclusive economic and labour markets					
Sustainable urban environments					
Local, national and international dialogue					
Institutions, legal and regulatory frameworks					

# Shared humanity and our common home



## IMPACT THROUGH EMPATHY

The **ACU Strategic Plan 2020 - 2023: *Impact through empathy*** dedicates the university to 'the pursuit of knowledge, the dignity of the human person and the common good'. Its title, *Impact through empathy*, reflects our intent to make a positive, lasting and measurable difference to our students, staff, communities and societies.

Drawing on Catholic traditions and belief in the dignity of the human person and the common good, ACU commits in the plan to creating opportunity by increasing participation and outcomes for those from low socio-economic and other disadvantaged communities, to translating research into economic, social, environmental and cultural impacts to advance social progress, and to taking bold and decisive action on environmental, social and economic sustainability.

## THE CORE CURRICULUM

ACU's **Core Curriculum** is part of all our students' education, providing each student with the opportunity to reflect on our shared humanity and the common challenges we face in modern society. Students engage with principles that include: the dignity of the human person, solidarity, the common good, rights and responsibilities as well as stewardship of the earth.

As part of the Core Curriculum, each student partakes in a discipline-specific community engagement unit of study, working with communities that experience disadvantage and marginalisation. This equates to approximately **3,500 students** undertaking a community engagement placement each year. ACU staff are also encouraged to participate in community engagement, with a Community Engagement Time Release program available to support staff in accessing five days of community engagement (pro rata) per annum. Partnering with community organisations is key to these engagements and addressing disadvantage.

## MODERN SLAVERY IMPACTS

As a Catholic university, we have a particular role to play in upholding the inherent dignity of each human being. This not only includes those with whom we study, work and engage, but also extends beyond our campuses. We take actions to support fair treatment and decent working conditions for all people and acknowledge the indivisible link between environmental sustainability and the impact of modern slavery. The theme of **Sustainability Week 2021**, 'Modern slavery impacts', recognised ACU's deep commitment to preventing and ultimately eliminating the impact of modern slavery on its operations, business partnerships and supply chain.

## VETERAN ENTRY PROGRAM

ACU empowers student veterans to realise their academic goals. ACU's Veteran Entry Program (VEP) recognises time served and leadership roles held within the Australian Defence Force as credit towards university admission. In addition, ACU's Veteran Transition Program supports student veterans as they transition from the military to studying at ACU with a free, two-week preparatory program. Delivered by ACU Education Pathways, the program equips student veterans with the skills to succeed at university study by helping them to develop self-efficacy, a sense of belonging and expanded peer networks.

## ACU SUSTAINABILITY WEEK

ACU held its second Sustainability Week in October 2021 to coincide with the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, the patron of ecology. It featured a range of activities around this year's theme, 'Modern slavery impacts', to inspire and engage ACU students and staff in caring for our common home and to celebrate the steps we are taking as a university community to prioritise sustainability. More than **2,600 users** interacted with a dedicated internal Workplace group during the week and **80 attendees** participated in a live panel discussion. A number of virtual forums showcased how ACU is working towards the SDGs and encouraged our community to act to achieve a better world.



### FIRST PEOPLES

ACU aims to be a leading public university in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education. Access to quality higher education underpinned by academic, spiritual, pastoral and cultural support is core to our university’s engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. First Peoples students are eligible for access to tailored courses, scholarships, student services and facilities from ACU. In 2021, nearly **two per cent** of ACU’s domestic bachelor students are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, with the university’s target to grow participation rates to **three per cent** by 2023.

### ACCESS AND EQUITY

Education is for everyone. ACU has a range of programs that support educational access and participation for students from disadvantaged and under-represented groups, including students from low socio-economic communities, refugees and Australia’s veteran community. In 2021, nearly **11 per cent** of ACU’s domestic bachelor students are from low-socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds with a 2023 target of **14 per cent**.

### LAUDATO SI'

“The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development [...] Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world’s poorest.”

Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, page 12, My appeal [13]

### BY THE NUMBERS

**1.7%** of our students identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



**10.9%** of our students are from a low socio-economic background



**42** student veterans participated in the Veteran Transition Program in Professional Term 2



ACU works with **more than 30** other Catholic entities as part of the Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network



# Tackling pollution and climate change



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Energy efficiency is a key principle of ACU's environmental management, leading to ACU becoming the **most energy efficient university** in Australia\*. It is twice as energy efficient as the Australian university sector overall and around three times more efficient than the sector's heaviest energy users. This has helped ACU not only to constrain its greenhouse gas emissions, but also shrink its energy costs per student to among the lowest of any Australian university.

ACU's Properties and Facilities staff pursue the university's energy efficiency goals daily through their operation of heating, cooling and lighting systems and the construction and renovation of buildings to high standards of sustainability.

## EMISSIONS

In 2021, ACU generated approximately 30,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) from its direct use of electricity, natural gas, refrigerant gases and vehicle fuel, as well as its use of goods and services from its entire supply chain. These indirect sources of greenhouse gas emissions include air travel, catering, construction of new buildings, office equipment, waste disposal and consultancies. ACU's 2021 emissions were around 8,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e lower than in 2020, because in 2021 ACU for the first time purchased 100% renewable electricity.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

In 2021, ACU's Australian campuses became powered by 100 per cent renewable electricity. This supply of renewable power was rolled out over six months, commencing with Brisbane Campus in January, followed by the Miguel Cordero student residence in March, and the remainder of ACU's campuses in July. ACU's purchase of 100 per cent renewable electricity eliminates the university's single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions: the electricity derived from the combustion of fossil fuels. In a typical year, electricity from fossil fuels contributed at least 15,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas to ACU's carbon footprint.

## CARBON OFFSETS

ACU updated its Travel Policy in 2021 to require the offset of greenhouse gas emissions from staff air travel. ACU will purchase these offsets from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that generate carbon offsets through their traditional land management practices. To raise the funds to purchase the offsets, ACU applies a levy on every air travel journey equal to four per cent of the ticket cost.

In 2022, ACU will increase the quantity of offsets that it purchases as well as diversify the sources of its offsets as part of its project to achieve **carbon neutrality**.

## CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges we face in the 21st century. ACU's teaching unit *GEOG206: Climate change: past, present and future* introduces students to our planet's climate system and examines what is driving current and future climate changes. The unit considers a range of responses to climate change, focusing on international environmental treaties, international and Australian policy approaches to global warming, as well as mitigation and adaptation strategies. Other teaching units include *GEOG204: Environmental sustainability: the global challenge*, which introduces students to the principles, theory and actions of environmental sustainability.

## ORGANISATIONAL ETHICS AND THE PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT

Associate Professor Stephanie Collins from the **Dianoia Institute of Philosophy** is applying her work in organisational ethics to the Paris Climate Agreement. Her project, 'Organisations' wrongdoing: from metaphysics to practice', is funded by an Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Early Career Researcher Award and explores issues such as enforcement of carbon emission targets, alongside other case studies of corporate self-regulation by states and businesses.



### EARLY MODERN EUROPEAN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Professor Susan Broomhall in the **Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences** is leading a new ARC study of early modern European management of water and forests. Drawing from legal, economic, scientific, literary and artistic sources, the research will show how past practices and mindsets still shape present responses to environmental challenges.

### OCEANS, FORESTS AND REEFS

Dr Killian McQuigley in the **Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences** is engaged in studies of the oceans and sea level rise through his work in environmental humanities. Dr Kathryn Banawanth is exploring the political economy of natural resources and environmental politics in Latin America. Professor Iain McCalman continues his longstanding research in the future of corals and reefs.

#### LAUDATO SI'

“When we speak of the ‘environment’, what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it. Recognizing the reasons why a given area is polluted requires a study of the workings of society, its economy, its behaviour patterns, and the ways it grasps reality.”

Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, page 104, Environmental, economic and social ecology [139]

### BY THE NUMBERS

**100%** renewable electricity by July 2021



**100%** carbon offset of all staff air travel



**No. 1** energy efficient university in Australia\*



**55%** cut to carbon emissions from electricity use



\* Tertiary Education Facilities Management Association Annual Survey 2021

# Clean, safe water for all



## WATER EFFICIENCY

ACU overall is highly efficient in its use of water. We use less than half the amount of water per student compared to sector average, although this does vary across our campuses. For example, Brisbane Campus, with its large sporting fields and lawns, uses nearly twice as much as the sector average, but Melbourne Campus, on a densely built urban site, has only 10 per cent of Brisbane Campus's water use.

ACU's water efficiency is supported by three pillars:

- **Rainwater harvesting**  
We have installed more than 660,000 litres of water-tank capacity across all our campuses, capturing rainwater harvested from building roofs. Rainwater is used to flush toilets and irrigate campus gardens, helping reduce our consumption of mains water.
- **Water efficient appliances**  
A range of water-efficient appliances, such as low-flow showerheads, waterless or low-flow urinals, dual flush toilets and drip irrigation systems, have been installed across all campuses.
- **Drought-tolerant landscaping**  
Many of the plants in ACU's campus grounds are chosen to minimise their need for water. This helps to reduce campus gardens' need for water as well as make them more resilient during periods of low rainfall.

## BY THE NUMBERS

ACU consumes **<4 kilolitres** of water per full-time student



ACU's water consumption is **half** the sector average



## BRISBANE CAMPUS WATER MANAGEMENT

ACU's Brisbane Campus has a high demand for water because of its large expanses of lawn, sporting ovals, gardens and relatively high student load. These same factors increase the campus's vulnerability to natural cycles of drought, which are expected to intensify as the climate changes.

For this reason, ACU has increased its focus on water management in Brisbane. This is already delivering results: in the 12 months to September 2021, the campus recorded the lowest water consumption since 2018, saving **10 million litres of water** compared to 2020, and nearly 45 million litres compared to 2019.

The impact of COVID-19 has contributed to some of these savings, but campus facility managers saved most of the water through systematic improvements. These included the elimination of leaks, refurbishment of air-conditioning systems which use water to aid cooling, and innovative operation of air-conditioning units.

### LAUDATO SI'

"Even as the quality of available water is constantly diminishing, in some places there is a growing tendency, despite its scarcity, to privatize this resource, turning it into a commodity subject to the laws of the market. Yet access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity."

Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, page 23, The issue of water [30]

# Biodiversity and protection of natural ecosystems



## WASTE REDUCTION

Over the past five years, ACU has reduced its waste generation per student by around **60 per cent**. ACU now produces among the lowest amounts of waste per student in the sector (only three universities generate less waste per student) and our waste generation per student is less than half the sector average.

There are a few reasons for this achievement:

- Staff and students have become more mindful consumers. While the change has been incremental, it is clear that ACU's bins now contain less of every type of consumer waste; in particular, food containers, plastic water bottles and food.
- ACU learning, teaching and operations no longer rely on paper. Staff and students have learned to study, teach, research and work online, leading to much less paper waste per year.
- ACU's facility management teams have radically improved their focus on waste management day to day, helped along by smarter cleaning and waste contracts that require material efficiency.

## ACU'S BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

ACU's campuses are in a mix of inner city, suburban and regional locations. Numerous studies have shown that biodiversity can flourish in all locations, including high-density urban locations, with green spaces and enhanced biodiversity crucial to health and wellbeing. ACU's biodiversity project aims to understand and support our campuses' biodiversity, particularly through the design of our campus grounds and the operation of our campus buildings. ACU is increasing the drought-resilience of every campus and reducing dependence on mains water.

## BY THE NUMBERS

Reduced amount of waste by **60%** since 2016



ACU's recycling rate is **60%**



### LAUDATO SI'

"The earth's resources are also being plundered because of short-sighted approaches to the economy, commerce and production. The loss of forests and woodlands entails the loss of species which may constitute extremely important resources in the future, not only for food but also for curing disease and other uses.

[...] It is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential "resources" to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost for ever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity [...] We have no such right."

Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, page 24, Loss of biodiversity [32, 33]

# ACU's sustainability bonds



## A WORLD FIRST

ACU has issued sustainability bonds to raise funds for projects aligned with the university's commitment to securing a sustainable future. In 2017, ACU secured \$200 million through the sale of bonds to some of Australasia's biggest institutional investors. ACU was the first organisation in Australia and the first university globally to issue a sustainability bond under the sustainability guidelines issued that year. A further \$50 million bond was issued in 2020.

## GREEN AND SOCIAL BOND PRINCIPLES

The university adopted an innovative approach to combine green and social bond principles established by the International Capital Market Association. Our sustainability bonds support projects that reflect our mission in delivering positive social and environmental outcomes. This includes contributions to our research institutes to finance health and education research programs that aim to benefit vulnerable people.

**Green bonds** are used to support projects with an environmental objective, such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, resource conservation, biodiversity, and pollution prevention and control.

**Social bonds** aim to address or mitigate a specific social issue and/or seek to achieve positive social outcomes. A social issue is one that threatens, hinders, or damages the wellbeing of society or a target population within it.

## SUSTAINABLE USE OF FUNDS

We invest the funds raised through the sustainability bonds in the environmentally sustainable development of our campuses as well as in research that delivers a positive social impact. Campus development projects eligible for sustainability bond funds must have a minimum 5-Star Green Star rating or meet the Low Carbon Buildings criteria of the Climate Bonds Standard. Research projects eligible for sustainability bond funding must be in the areas of education, health care or gender equality.

## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE CAMPUSES

The proceeds of ACU's sustainability bonds have been used to finance or refinance many of ACU's sustainable building and community projects, including buildings on Melbourne, Brisbane, Ballarat and Canberra campuses, as well as the Institute of Positive Psychology and Education and the Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research. The remaining funds, totalling \$36.2 million, are to be used for the completion of the Saint Teresa of Kolkata Building on our Melbourne Campus.

## SUPPORTING RESEARCH WITH SOCIAL IMPACT

ACU's sustainability bonds also fund key social research programs that focus on improving the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in society, including research from two of ACU's leading research bodies: the Institute for Positive Psychology and Education (IPPE) and the Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research (MMIHR).

**IPPE** conducts research into physical and psychological wellbeing, resilience and self-concept, and measures of psychosocial outcomes. The institute's researchers have been awarded more than 70 ARC grants. Among its many current research projects are those that focus on youth at risk of dropping out of school, the impact of Indigenous education programs, and the psychological wellbeing of school principals.

**MMIHR** conducts research that discovers and promotes effective strategies to create a healthier Australia. The institute brings national and international health experts together with leading organisations to conduct research that transcends discipline-based boundaries. MMIHR's research spans the fields of exercise and nutrition, bone health and fractures, and the interaction between behaviour, urban environments and cognitive health.



## BY THE NUMBERS

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ACU Sustainability Bond value **\$200 million** (2017) plus **\$50 million** (2020)



**\$111 million** contribution to construction of 5-star Green Star Saint Teresa of Kolkata Building



**First university globally** to issue a sustainability bond under the new sustainability guidelines



**\$27 million** contribution over three years to finance health and education research programs that aim to benefit vulnerable people



# Health, education and social cohesion



## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Education is for everyone. Through our dedicated First Peoples directorate and Pathways directorate, ACU strives to remove barriers to university participation. We foster excellence in learning and teaching, student success and community engagement for marginalised people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can live, work and study in their own community, thereby supporting First Nations students from regional and remote areas of Australia. We support all disadvantaged students with a variety of courses, scholarships and student services. ACU is developing a whole-of-university approach to widening participation to ensure equity is embedded within and across all functions of the university.

## RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING PROJECT

ACU's commitment to be the destination university for veterans and their families has led to the development of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Veterans project, which aims to support those transitioning out of the military by formally acknowledging rank and training completed during their service as part of the application process.

The credit mapping framework will effectively slash the duration and cost of a degree at ACU and have the potential to launch confident, skilful and job-ready veterans sooner into their new careers. RPL for Veterans was funded by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and ACU is the first university in Australia to offer the service to Australian Defence Force members.

## QUALITY EDUCATION

ACU's **Faculty of Education and Arts** enrolls the largest number of teacher education students in Australia. With a focus on social justice, community engagement and lifelong learning, ACU provides graduates with the skills and knowledge to teach the next generation's students. Designed in conjunction with our industry partners, our courses (early childhood, primary and secondary education, inclusive education and disability studies and leadership development) incorporate the latest in pedagogical innovation.

## HEALTH WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

ACU's **Faculty of Health Sciences** staff and students strive to improve the lives of others through the provision of world-leading health care, guided by the values of excellence, dignity and engagement. Many of our courses have a clinical placement component where students apply their skills in the real world through professional experience with our health partners or in our own health clinics.

ACU educates the largest number of nursing and midwifery students in Australia, contributing to the health workforce of the future. Trained to support people at their most vulnerable and promoting wellbeing for all, ACU's health graduates make a tangible difference to the lives of individuals and communities.

## LITERACY AND WELLBEING

Professor Rhonda Craven, Director of the **Institute for Positive Psychology and Education**, is investigating preschool oral language, literacy, numeracy and wellbeing interventions for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian students. The ARC-funded project seeks to reduce the socio-economic costs of literacy and numeracy failure and strengthen both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

### LAUDATO SI'

“If we want to bring about deep change, we need to realize that certain mindsets really do influence our behaviour. Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature.”

Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, page 157, *Educating for the covenant between humanity and the environment* [215]



### HEALTH RESEARCH IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

Research into physical activity gained worldwide attention amid a global pandemic. **Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research** Professor Jim Sallis co-authored a paper in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* identifying the benefits of physical activity for COVID-19 patients. Conducted with US healthcare partner Kaiser Permanente, the study compared hospitalisation rates, intensive care unit admissions and mortality and found that consistently meeting physical activity guidelines was strongly associated with a reduced risk for severe COVID-19 outcomes among infected adults.

### GLOBAL EDUCATION

Two ARC-funded projects in the **Institute for Learning Sciences and Teacher Education** are generating new knowledge on the role and expertise of teachers in global education systems. Dr Jessica Holloway is comparing the relationship between schools, teaching and democracy in Australia, the UK and the US. Dr Steven Lewis is researching how new forms of digital education data and software platforms – including the OECD's PISA4U, Apple Inc.'s Apple Teacher, and the European Commission's eTwinning – are reshaping how schooling is known, practised and governed in Australia, the US and Europe.

### BY THE NUMBERS

**#1** nurse educator in Australia



**No. 1** midwifery educator in Australia



**No. 1** teacher educator in Australia



**>30,000** work integrated learning opportunities for ACU students each year



**60%** of ACU bachelor graduates are graduates in health professions



**21%** of ACU bachelor graduates and **56%** of ACU master graduates have teaching qualifications



Ranked **18th** in the world for nursing\*



Ranked **46th** in the world for education\*



# Human dignity and the common good



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FOR THE COMMON GOOD

ACU and the **Order of Malta**, a Catholic lay religious order, have partnered on a range of life-changing engagement initiatives that work with groups who experience disadvantage and marginalisation. Through the alliance, ACU students will access expanded community engagement placement opportunities with a range of Order of Malta programs, including Community Care Vans for people experiencing homelessness, the Coats for the Homeless initiative, and camps for people with a disability. Order of Malta volunteers can also participate in ACU-led community engagement initiatives. The Order of Malta and ACU are planning to collaborate on a co-led community hub that connects ACU staff, students, and Order of Malta members to engagement where it is most needed.

## GENDER EQUALITY

ACU's commitment to gender equality, diversity and inclusion is grounded in the university's mission. Our leading-practice workplace benefits and family-friendly employment provisions supporting gender equality have been recognised, with the university receiving the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) **Employer of Choice for Gender Equality** citation on 10 consecutive occasions. Our Vice-Chancellor Professor Zlatko Skrbis is recognised as a WGEA Pay Equity Ambassador.

ACU continues to progress the achievements of its Gender Equality Strategy by:

- employing approximately **60 per cent** of women in leadership and management roles.
- offering a leading practice parental leave policy and associated entitlements for both women and men
- providing access to flexible work practices
- committing to gender pay equity and conducting an annual pay gap analysis
- providing 10 days' paid leave for staff experiencing domestic violence.

## PHILOSOPHY AND CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

ACU's education programs are infused with the ethos and principles of Catholic Social Teaching, which emphasise human dignity, commitment to the common good and the rights of all with a particular focus on the poor and vulnerable members of society, and stewardship of the planet's resources.

Philosophy and ethics are also central to ACU research; for example, in the work of ACU's **Plunkett Centre for Ethics**, which is devoted to the study and teaching of ethics in clinical practice and biomedical research, the Dianoia Institute of Philosophy and the **Queensland Bioethics Centre**. The latter is a collaboration between the Archdiocese of Brisbane, ACU and several Queensland healthcare organisations, with a focus on high-quality research, education and consultancy in the area of bioethics.

## DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Seven community-initiated research projects to improve safety, education and employment will receive funding from ACU's Stakeholder Engaged Scholarship Unit (SESU). The projects were chosen following a competitive selection process and represent different areas of need across Australia. The funding will enable university-community partnerships on short-term collaborative research, with measurable impacts for the partners as well as the communities they serve. Project collaborations include:

- Catholic response to family violence (Caritas Australia, Catholic Social Services Australia and Catholic Health Australia)
- digital teaching strategies for adult learners at beginner-level English (Carringbush Adult Education)
- Domus Links: modern anti-slavery training for the future workforce (Archdiocese of Sydney's Anti-Slavery Taskforce)
- impact of a peer-group program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mums (Gunawirra)
- impact of employment-focused interventions for people from a refugee or migrant background and for people living with a disability (SydWest Multicultural Services)



- implementing a trauma-informed model of care in the Emergency Department (St Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne)
- Xavier School of Preaching for the Church of the 21st century (Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn).

#### THE DIGNITY OF ALL VOICES

Two new ARC-funded projects in the **Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry** are uncovering the voices of women and disabled people in the ancient world. Dr Kylie Crabbe’s study of early Christian protagonists seeks to show how disability functions in historical sources and their receptions over time. The research will also contribute to contemporary reflection on the nature of impairment considering urgent questions arising from the Disability Royal Commission and COVID-19 measures. Dr Dawn LaValle Norman is exploring how women’s voices served as intellectual role models in ancient philosophical dialogues. Her work explains the long history behind modern gender disparity in the study of philosophy.

#### REFUGEE AND DISPLACED VOICES

In the **Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences**, Dr Mary Tomsic is collaborating with South Sudanese child refugees and their families, in partnership with Kids Own Publishing, to publish books about the experiences of children written by children. Dr Anh Austen Nguyen has partnered with VietSpeak and several community groups to promote and foster Vietnamese bilingualism in ensuring Vietnamese language, community and culture is fostered and sustained. Dr Rachel Stevens’ research on asylum seekers on bridging and temporary visas examines impermanence among temporary asylum seekers in the Australian community.

#### BY THE NUMBERS

**832** students provided financial relief since 2020 through the Student Urgent Relief Fund



**20** Creating Opportunity Fund Scholarships awarded to enable higher education for the disadvantaged



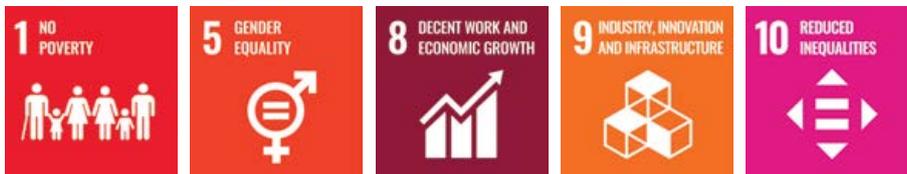
#### LAUDATO SI'

“We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.”

Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, page 104, Environmental, economic and social ecology [139]

\* Leiden Rankings 2020

# Inclusive economic and labour markets



## ERADICATION OF MODERN SLAVERY

With our focus on stewardship and caring for human dignity and the common good, ACU is taking decisive action on the eradication of modern slavery. We participate in the modern slavery risk management program through the **Australian Catholic Anti-slavery Network**, identifying risks of modern slavery and taking steps to ensure all our supply chains are slavery-free.

Our Vice-Chancellor Professor Zlatko Skrbis has been appointed a member of the Domus 8.7 committee and is personally committed to promoting awareness of modern slavery practices and acting to support those affected. Our university has also committed to submitting an annual **Modern Slavery Statement** that will report on the risks of modern slavery in our operations and supply chains, and the actions we have taken to address those risks.

Part of this commitment has been introducing the modern slavery training modules developed by the Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network and the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. ACU has also taken a further step in our procurement processes to hold our partners, suppliers, vendors and tenderers to the same standard by making these modules available to anyone who wishes to engage with ACU commercially. These small but important measures contribute to the collective action we take every day as a university community in supporting Pope Francis's call to action in *Laudato si'* (LS 146): "Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act."

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

At ACU, we are committed to supporting and encouraging an inclusive work environment that respects and values individual difference. This is aligned with the university's mission, which expresses a fundamental concern for social justice and the dignity of all human beings. ACU's **Equal Opportunity Policy** supports the principles of equity in employment and education for its staff and students. Employment practices are fair, equitable and merit based. The university promotes an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment.

## CULTURAL INCLUSION

ACU is a culturally inclusive space for staff and students and is committed to being a leading practice employer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our key principle of ACU's **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employment Strategy** is to retain and continue to expand our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and reach the national parity rate of **3 per cent** employment through a range of proactive recruitment initiatives and cultural supports.

## SUPPLY NATION

ACU is a proud member of **Supply Nation** with the aim of increasing Indigenous engagement through procurement. As part of our **Reconciliation Action Plan**, we actively seek to increase engagement with Supply Nation vendors and monitor and measure the dollar value of procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.

## CO-LAB SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SERIES

Co-Lab is ACU's entrepreneurship and innovation hub. It aims to support and develop fledgling businesses and small-medium enterprises through the sharing of resources, knowledge, research and expertise. ACU Co-Lab has established multidisciplinary collaborative spaces in Strathfield and North Sydney to facilitate sustainable partnerships with organisations to support and strengthen local networks of entrepreneurs and enhance innovation in product and process development.

Co-Lab's new Social Enterprise Series is a free eight-week in-depth learning program, delivered online, designed to educate future global change-makers about the practical components of establishing or growing a thriving social enterprise. Industry experts will walk attendees through the key components of building an enterprise that has a positive social impact. Attendees will then be encouraged to put their newly learned skills to work by crafting a video pitch for the chance to win the inaugural Social Enterprise Award, which offers \$10,000 to kickstart their project. The series will be delivered by sector leaders in social enterprise education, innovative partnerships and cause driven crowdfunding platform StartSomeGood.



## BY THE NUMBERS

**15** new Supply Nation vendors engaged during 2021



**1.5%** of staff identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



## CLEMENTE AUSTRALIA SUPPORT IN LOCKDOWN

Through the Clemente Australia program, ACU provides individuals experiencing disadvantage with a university-level humanities education. This program aims to empower Australians experiencing challenging life circumstances and to break cycles of poverty, inequality and injustice. On completion of four Clemente subjects, students graduate with an ACU Certificate of Liberal Arts. These units can be credited towards an ACU undergraduate degree when students continue their studies. During COVID-19 lockdowns, Clemente moved to online Zoom classes. These classes have created small online learning environments, whereby students, program advisors and volunteer learning partners can connect during what can be a difficult and isolating time.

## LAUDATO SI'

“The social dimensions of global change include the effects of technological innovations on employment, social exclusion, an inequitable distribution and consumption of energy and other services, social breakdown, increased violence and a rise in new forms of social aggression, drug trafficking, growing drug use by young people, and the loss of identity. These are signs that the growth of the past two centuries has not always led to an integral development and an improvement in the quality of life. Some of these signs are also symptomatic of real social decline, the silent rupture of the bonds of integration and social cohesion.”

Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, page 32, *Decline in the quality of human life and the breakdown of society* [46]

# Sustainable urban environments



## SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS

ACU recognises that most of its environmental impacts arise from the operation and use of its buildings. This is why, for the past decade, the university has constructed only highly sustainable buildings and applied sustainable design principles to renovate and refurbish its existing buildings.

In 2020, ACU advanced the construction of the largest capital project in its history, the Saint Teresa of Kolkata building at our Melbourne Campus. The 13-storey building is designed to achieve a **5-Star Green Star** rating, indicating Australian excellence in sustainable design and construction. It will include integrated solar power, a bike arrival station, green walls, storm water collection tanks, high-performance windows, an abundance of natural light and views, low-emission cement, and above 90 per cent recycling and reuse of its construction waste.

ACU has three buildings already certified under the Green Star rating system. These include one the first university buildings to achieve a 6-Star rating, Melbourne's Daniel Mannix Building, as well as Canberra's Veritas Building and Ballarat's St Brigid's School of Health Science.

Meanwhile, our Brisbane Campus is home to the Mercy Building and the Saint John Paul II Building, which have enhanced the campus's water conservation through integrated storm water capture and enabled the campus to reduce its annual energy consumption despite an increase in its floor space.

## SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Travel to and from ACU's campuses is a significant source of the personal environmental impacts of staff and students – and by extension, of our environmental impact as an organisation.

To help staff and students mitigate these impacts, ACU has established a **Green Travel Policy** and campus green travel plans to assist students and staff to choose more sustainable modes of transport. All campuses have access to public transport, but access varies from very high at Melbourne, Blacktown and North Sydney campuses, to modest at other campuses. To improve the links between public transport and campuses, ACU invests heavily in shuttle buses at Strathfield and Brisbane campuses, and at all campuses we provide end-of-trip facilities such as bike lock-up points, lockers and showers to support walking and cycling.

ACU also participates in annual events that promote cycling, such as **Ride to Work Day** and the **Biketober Challenge**. We also provide videoconferencing capabilities to every ACU desktop and mobile device so that ACU staff have a practical alternative to travelling between campuses.

## BEHAVIOUR, ENVIRONMENT AND COGNITION RESEARCH PROGRAM

The **Behaviour, Environment and Cognition Research Program** uses data from national and international studies to explore the interaction between urban environments, lifestyle behaviours, and physical and cognitive health across the lifespan. Population ageing and urbanisation are two major global and national demographic trends. These are important phenomena as there is growing evidence that the urban built environment plays a key role in shaping physical activity behaviour. As a result of this evidence, national and international urban and health policy documents have identified environmental changes as effective strategies to create healthier societies.



### IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLLUTION ON COGNITIVE HEALTH

Professor Ester Cerin from the **Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research (MMIHR)** is co-leading a study of neighbourhood impacts on cognitive health in the UK and Australia. The project, ‘Environment and Pollution on Cognitive Health (EPOCH): Building the knowledge base through international collaboration’, is jointly funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council and United Kingdom Research and Innovation. It will estimate optimal levels of environmental attributes for cognitive health in older adults to inform relevant urban planning, environmental protection, and transportation guidelines and policies for the creation of age-friendly, healthy and sustainable urban environments.

### INTERNATIONAL MIND, ACTIVITIES AND URBAN PLACES STUDY

The International Mind, Activities and Urban Places (**iMAP**) study, in MMIHR’s Behaviour, Environment and Cognition Research Program, seeks to investigate how our neighbourhood and other places we regularly visit interact with lifestyle to impact brain health and psychological function in middle to late adulthood. The international cohort study based in Melbourne, Barcelona and Hong Kong will develop recommendations for planning authorities and individuals for delaying cognitive decline and optimising cognitive health as people age. International collaborators on this project include the Barcelona Institute for Global Health, the University of Hong Kong, the University of California – San Diego, and The Pierre Louis Institute of Epidemiology and Public Health.

### BY THE NUMBERS

Our Green Star-rated buildings have avoided **1,500 tonnes** of greenhouse gas emission, or **6%** of ACU’s annual total



Secure bike parking for **>300** bicycles, with another **160** installed by 2022



#### LAUDATO SI’

“Many cities have become unhealthy to live in, not only because of pollution caused by toxic emissions but also as a result of urban chaos, poor transportation, and visual pollution and noise. [...] We were not meant to be inundated by cement, asphalt, glass and metal, and deprived of physical contact with nature.”

Pope Francis, *Laudato si’*, page 31, Decline in the quality of human life and the breakdown of society [44]

# Local, national and international dialogue



## LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

ACU is Australia's only national university, with **seven Australian campuses** across four states in Brisbane, North Sydney, Strathfield, Blacktown, Canberra, Melbourne and Ballarat. Alongside our local and national presence, we also have a **campus in Rome**, Italy, bringing together researchers and students from all over the world. International placements are available for students in all faculties, making the ACU student experience truly global.

ACU's new Blacktown Campus welcomed its first students in 2021. The campus is named in honour of St Josephine Bakhita, patron saint of Sudan and victims of slavery.

ACU's research institutes bring together **world-class researchers** to foster a rich and thriving research environment that produces internationally recognised standards of research. With a research strategy focused on areas of specialisation related to our mission and identity, ACU has achieved research excellence in our priority areas of education, health, theology, philosophy and other liberal arts. Convened by ACU's leading research institutes, international seminars are regularly hosted at ACU's Rome Campus, providing a forum for international collaboration.

## GLOBAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

ACU has entered a partnership agreement with Fundación Scholas Occurrentes (Scholas) that will enable universal teachings of encounter to enrich education programs and promote interdisciplinary research and practice. The partnership agreement and launch of Scholas in Oceania was part of a global event which celebrated the creative power of young people. With this new partnership, the Scholas network now spans all six continents. Joining with Scholas enables education and research pathways at ACU that directly respond to Pope Francis's call for 'Universities of Meaning' that address the health, social, cultural and ecological crises of today. The partnership commits to fostering education and promotes collaboration among the university's students on issues related to citizen awareness and politics, value cooperation and solidarity.

## PALLIATIVE CARE DIALOGUE

The **PM Glynn Institute**, ACU's public policy think tank, launched its report *A Snapshot of Palliative Care Services* in Australia together with a series of five podcasts. It has made a significant contribution to public discussion about palliative and end-of-life care. The report's launch attracted national and international attention in both Catholic and mainstream media and its author, Dr Cris Abbu, was also interviewed on ABC radio in Brisbane with paediatric palliative care specialist Dr Anthony Herbert. The report has been picked up in policy and parliamentary discussions as well. Catholic Health Australia cited the report in its submission to the review of proposed assisted dying laws in Tasmania earlier in the year, and Dr Abbu presented the report's findings and recommendations to MPs in the Parliamentary Friends of Palliative Care group in the New South Wales Parliament.

## STRATEGIC ALLIANCE OF CATHOLIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES (SACRU)

ACU is one of eight founding members of **SACRU**, along with Boston College in the US and six other Catholic universities from Europe, South America and Japan. The inaugural SACRU Research Student Seminar was held in 2021 on the theme 'A sustainable future: research delivering impact for the 21st century'. More than 20 graduate research students representing the partner universities shared how their research connects with one or more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of *Laudato si'*.

## LOCAL AND NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

ACU has also joined local networks of government, industry and universities. The **Waratah Research Network** in New South Wales connects multiple state government departments with industry and public universities to improve social, economic and environmental outcomes for NSW. The Victoria-based **Defence Science Institute** partnership brings ACU together with other Victorian and Tasmanian universities to deliver research expertise to the defence and national security sector.



#### BY THE NUMBERS

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**Research excellence**  
in our priority areas of  
education, health, theology,  
philosophy and other liberal  
arts

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Founding member of the  
Strategic Alliance of Catholic  
Research Universities  
**(SACRU)**

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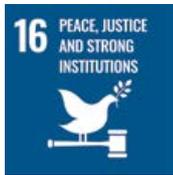
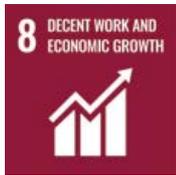


#### **LAUDATO SI'**

“I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.”

**Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, page 12, My appeal [14]**

# Institutions, legal and regulatory frameworks



## PEACE AND JUSTICE

At the heart of ACU's **Thomas More Law School** seeks to develop confident, responsible and ethical law graduates committed to upholding the rule of law and promoting personal dignity, thriving communities, and the common good. Our Bachelor of Laws is a global, ethical and practical qualification designed to give students the skills to build a satisfying legal career and at the same time consider community wellbeing.

## PRO BONO SERVICE

ACU provides pro bono services for the public good to:

- individuals who can demonstrate a need for legal assistance but cannot obtain Legal Aid or otherwise access the legal system without incurring significant financial hardship
- individuals or organisations whose matter raises an issue of public interest which would not otherwise be pursued
- charities or other non-profit organisations which work on behalf of low income or disadvantaged members of the community or for the public good.

Through our pro bono program, Thomas More Law School students have delivered more than 20,000 hours of pro bono service.

## REFUGEE LAW PROJECT

ACU law students are working to provide justice to the most marginalised in our community by providing pro bono legal assistance to asylum seekers who are having their application reassessed by the courts. Law students assist with reviewing documents and identifying legal details that can help strengthen grounds for appeal. The students then give their recommendations to a group of pro bono lawyers, who can quickly assess the applications' merit, and then represent asylum seeker cases in court. A number of appeals have been lodged based on these recommendations and the project has secured a major court win for an asylum seeker facing deportation.

## POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY

ACU is a regular contributor to public policy development in the areas that impact ACU and the higher education sector more broadly. ACU makes contributions to government at both the federal and state levels, in the areas and jurisdictions in which it operates. During 2021, ACU made submissions to:

- the Department of Education, Skills and Employment consultation on a Higher Education Research Commercialisation Intellectual Property Framework
- the University Foreign Interference Taskforce (UFIT) consultation on draft refreshed Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector
- the Australian Government's Quality Initial Teacher Education Review, to attract high-quality candidates into teaching and equip them to become highly effective teachers
- the Federal Government consultation on a new Australian Strategy for International Education 2021-2030
- the TEQSA consultation on a draft legislative instrument pertaining to the assessment of research quality at Australian universities
- the University Research Commercialisation Scheme Taskforce consultation on university research commercialisation.

## MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE PARTNERSHIP

ACU has launched a partnership with the Marrickville Legal Centre to run a fortnightly telephone advice service. This service is staffed by volunteer lawyers from ACU's Office of General Counsel and offers free advice and assistance on employment law and underpayment matters.



## BY THE NUMBERS

>**40** recommendations made to a panel of pro bono barristers to legally assist asylum seekers through ACU's Refugee Law Project



>**20,000** hours of pro bono service delivered by Thomas More Law School students



## THOMAS MORE LAW SCHOOL RESEARCH CLUSTERS

ACU's **Faculty of Law and Business** has a thriving and highly regarded research community. Research within the faculty focuses on substantive themes closely aligned with the mission of ACU. Our commitment to social justice, public service, human dignity, and ethical practice is reflected in our research into some of the most challenging and important societal issues confronting today's scholars, practitioners and policymakers. The Thomas More Law School hosts three research clusters in human rights, access to justice, and commercial law and just societies.

## CHILD PROTECTION, STATUTORY SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

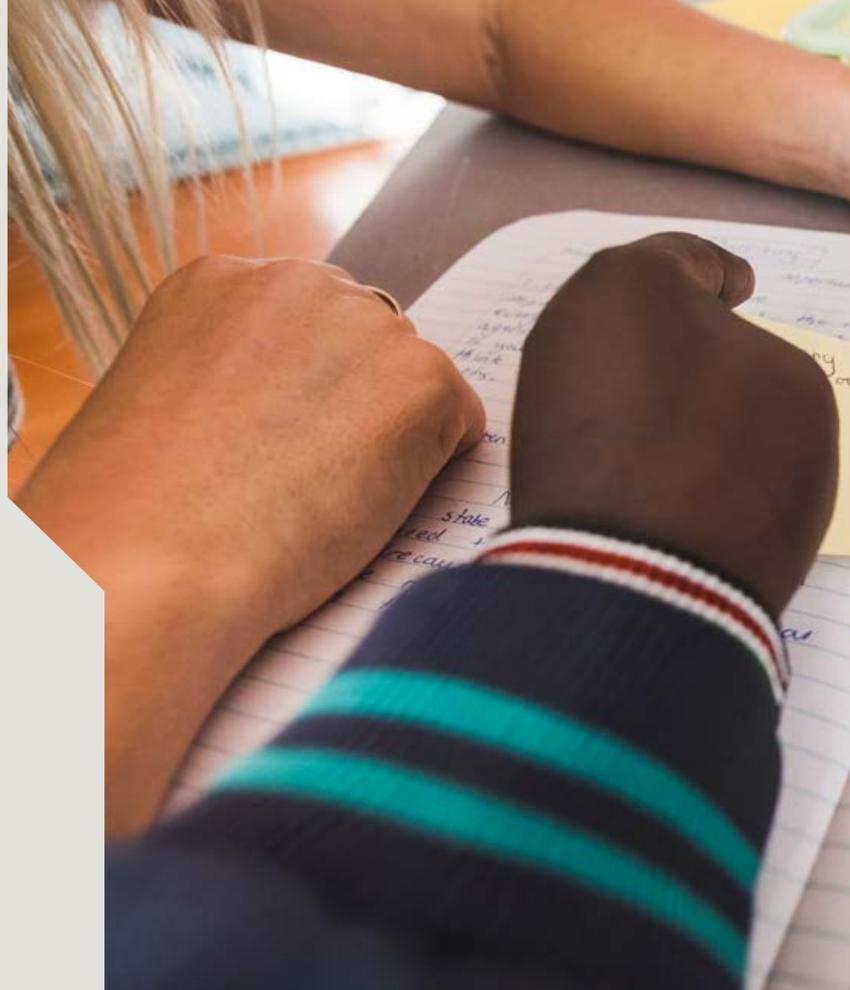
ACU's **Institute of Child Protection Studies** aims to enhance outcomes for children, young people and families through quality research, program evaluation, training and community education, advocacy and policy development in the area of child, youth and family welfare. The institute's work has a real impact on critical community issues and public policy, including two recent reports for the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse: *Our Safety Counts* and *Taking Us Seriously*.

## LAUDATO SI'

"There is a growing jurisprudence dealing with the reduction of pollution by business activities. But political and institutional frameworks do not exist simply to avoid bad practice, but also to promote best practice, to stimulate creativity in seeking new solutions and to encourage individual or group initiatives."

**Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, page 130, Dialogue for new national and local policies [177]**

# The year ahead – activities and plans for 2022



## COMMITMENT TO LAUDATO SI'

ACU has committed to be part of a global implementation plan led by Pope Francis and inspired by *Laudato si'*: *On Care for Our Common Home*. ACU will create a seven-year *Laudato si'* action plan that will be integrated through research learning and teaching, and will form engagement with respect to the seven *Ladato si'* goals: response to the cry of the earth; response to the cry of the poor; ecological economics; adoption of sustainable lifestyles; ecological education; ecological spirituality; community engagement and participatory action.

## LEARNING AND TEACHING

ACU's **Core Curriculum** is a unique educational program through which all ACU students engage with the key questions of ethics, rights and responsibilities that underpin calls-to-action like the *Laudato si'* and the UN SDGs. In 2022, the university will implement the next iteration of the Core Curriculum, with innovation in digital delivery and intensification of the focus on ethics. ACU will also implement a new set of graduate attributes, featuring 'impact' as one of the attributes, with its focus on each graduate's ability to make an impact at a local and global level.

## RESEARCH

Under an expanded Research and Enterprise Portfolio, ACU aims to address some of the wider social challenges articulated in *Laudato si'* and the SDGs. A key focus in 2022 will be partnerships that positively impact the health outcomes of our communities, including a new Health Research Precinct based at ACU's Melbourne Campus in collaboration with St Vincent's Institute for Medical

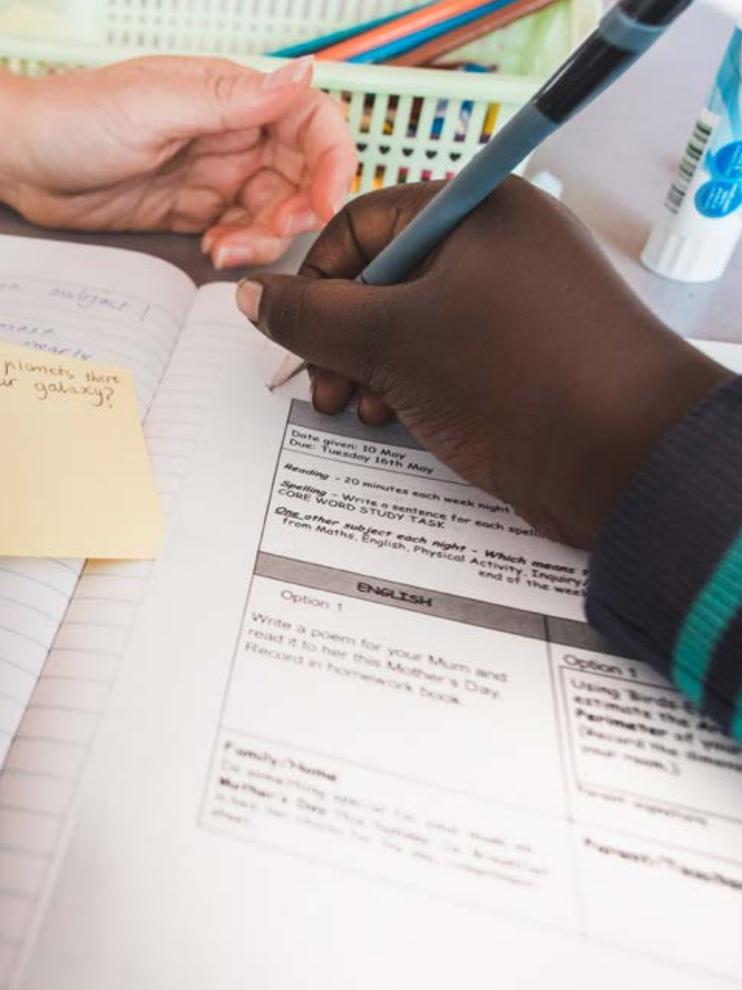
Research. The centre piece of the precinct will be a state-of-the-art human metabolic chamber designed with colleagues at Maastricht University. The chamber and related laboratory facilities will enable academic and industry partners to tackle the causes, prevention and treatment of life-threatening conditions like obesity and diabetes.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At ACU, we value community engagement as a key means of advancing our mission in serving the common good and enhancing the dignity and wellbeing of people and communities. It is integral to our teaching, learning and research. All ACU students undertake community engagement as part of the Core Curriculum, giving them first-hand experience of the challenges faced by marginalised communities and an appreciation of the value and dignity of all. In 2022, ACU will provide scholarships to commit students more deeply to community engagement through involvement with programs and partners, and deliver on-campus events designed to inspire our students to respond to entrenched disadvantage, injustices and underlying social issues they witness in their communities.

## STEWARDSHIP

ACU is developing a stewardship strategy. The concept of stewardship resonates strongly with ACU's unique mission and focus on the common good, human dignity, and acting in truth and love. Our students already identify with the mission via the Core Curriculum units they study, and a stewardship strategy will provide a meaningful expression of the mission in action for staff. Stewardship is about our culture: how we study, work, lead and engage with each other and operate in a collective way.



## OPERATIONS

ACU's operational sustainability program during 2021 has prioritised carbon management and maintained its ongoing work to limit the costs and impacts of waste generation and water and gas consumption. ACU's operations teams will continue in 2022 with the implementation of initiatives that aim to reduce the university's environmental footprint, including:

### 1. Carbon management and emission reduction

#### Electricity consumption

On 1 July 2021, ACU's campuses became powered by **100 per cent renewable electricity**. This initiative eliminates the single largest source of ACU's annual greenhouse gas emissions.

#### Staff air travel

The **four per cent carbon offset levy** applied to all staff air travel bookings from 1 January 2021 has raised approximately \$16,000 to pay for carbon offsets for those flights.

#### Food waste

To manage emissions from food waste, ACU has entered a new national waste contract and procured bins and signage to support food waste collection at all campuses. The impact of COVID-19 has delayed the national roll-out of the program due to limited staff and student attendance on campus. The program is being revised, and a state-by-state roll-out is now planned, commencing with Brisbane Campus.

### Carbon neutrality

ACU has engaged the consultancy 100% Renewables to assist us to obtain **nationally certified carbon neutrality**. The project has two components:

- a full greenhouse gas audit and its third-party verification, completed in December 2021
- the bulk purchase of carbon offsets and the subsequent certification of ACU's carbon neutrality, to be completed no later than June 2022.

### 2. Sustainable utilities

#### Waste

ACU generated just 173 tonnes of landfill waste in 2021, its lowest amount in more than a decade. The absence of staff and students from campus is responsible for the majority of this reduction, mostly through reduced food waste. The introduction of food waste collection on campus from late 2021 will assist to lock in these gains in 2022 and beyond.

#### Gas

The university's gas consumption is similarly at low levels (half of 2019 levels), assisted by the absence of staff and students from Melbourne, Ballarat and Canberra campuses in particular. It is expected that a return to normal campus occupancy in 2022 will increase gas demand substantially.

#### Water

ACU's water consumption fell substantially in 2021, because of the pandemic and because of improved operational water efficiency at Brisbane Campus, ACU's major source of water consumption.. Water use at Brisbane Campus fell by 7,500,000 litres through improved irrigation, leak prevention and air-conditioning strategies.



# Our governance

ACU is committed to environmental and social sustainability at the highest levels of the organisation. Our *ACU Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023* defines ‘service, stewardship and sustainability’ as one of six over-arching strategic priorities. Our approach is guided by Pope Francis’s *Laudato si’* encyclical as well as the targets set in the UN SDGs. We have given life to those commitments by establishing a whole-of-university sustainability program, which brings together and grows our impact across education, research, engagement and university operations. The program is governed by a Sustainability Program Control Group, drawn from members of the Senior Executive Group and jointly sponsored by our Provost and Chief Operating Officer. The Chair of Academic Board is also the chair of the Sustainability Program Control Group.



# Our principles

At all times, ACU staff and affiliates will behave in a way that upholds our mission both as individuals and as representatives of the university. We are committed to the following principles.



## Respect

We are guided by a fundamental concern for justice and equity and for the dignity of all human beings. We are committed to creating a safe and inclusive place of work, teaching and learning, where we treat all people with courtesy and sensitivity.



## Courage

We are committed to the highest standards of ethical behaviour and the effective management of the organisation and its staff. Staff and affiliates are encouraged to be proactive, seek to continuously improve, and to suggest new and innovative approaches.



## Honesty

We act on the fundamental principles of honesty and integrity. We are an institution devoted to the pursuit of excellence in student learning and teaching, research and service. We respect the value and dignity of each person.



## Sustainability

We acknowledge the importance of responsible and ethical management for the long-term success of the university and the protection of the environment. It is the behaviour and actions of our staff and affiliates that make ACU an outstanding organisation.



## Prayer for our earth

All-powerful God,  
you are present in the whole universe  
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,  
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live  
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,  
help us to rescue the abandoned  
and forgotten of this earth,  
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,  
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  
that we may sow beauty,  
not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts  
of those who look only for gain  
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  
to be filled with awe and contemplation,  
to recognise that we are profoundly united  
with every creature  
as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle  
for justice, love and peace. Amen

*Pope Francis, Laudato sí'*

# Sustainable Development Goals

	SDG 1 – No poverty	End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
	SDG 2 – Zero hunger	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
	SDG 3 – Good health and wellbeing	Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.
	SDG 4 – Quality education	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all.
	SDG 5 – Gender equality	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
	SDG 6 – Clean water and sanitation	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
	SDG 7 – Affordable and clean energy	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
	SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
	SDG 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.
	SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities	Reduce inequalities within and among countries.
	SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
	SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
	SDG 13 – Climate action	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
	SDG 14 – Life below water	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
	SDG 15 – Life on land	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
	SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
	SDG 17 – Partnerships for the goals	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

A full list of targets for and details of the social, environmental and economic challenges covered by each goal can be found at [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/)

The *Laudato si'* encyclical can be found at [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html), with a summary provided in [www.catholic.org.au/commission-documents/bishops-commission-for-justice-ecology-and-development/laudato-si/1711-encyclical-summary/file](http://www.catholic.org.au/commission-documents/bishops-commission-for-justice-ecology-and-development/laudato-si/1711-encyclical-summary/file)



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