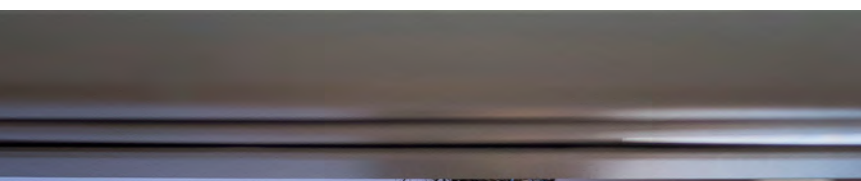




# In service of a flourishing humanity

Research and enterprise  
vision 2033



# Our research and enterprise vision

## In service of a flourishing humanity

To enable thriving communities, flourishing lives, and ethical futures through world-class knowledge creation and translation.

## True to mission, guided by vision

As a Catholic university, ACU is committed to respecting the dignity of every person and to serving the common good, through research and enterprise guided by Vision 2033.



*We are proud to hold the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, which highlights our leadership in integrating teaching, research and service with the needs and aspirations of communities and affirms our role as an engaged university that generates knowledge and translates it into meaningful impact for human flourishing.*



**Professor Abid Khan**  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,  
Research and Enterprise

As the world faces cascading challenges that threaten human dignity and the common good—from inequities in education and health, a growing mental health crisis, democratic erosion, displacement driven by conflict and climate insecurity, and the ethical disruption of artificial intelligence—universities must act to shape the conditions in which people and communities can truly flourish.

In this context, ACU is uniquely positioned in the sector to promote human flourishing, authentically understood—as Pope Leo XIV has stated—as the full development of the human person: physical, social, cultural, moral and spiritual. Shaped by the Catholic intellectual tradition and informed by the social teaching of the Church, we will be distinct in delivering leadership and practical solutions that promote human flourishing locally, nationally, and across the Asia-Pacific.

Centred on six core themes and enabled by six strategic priorities, ACU will focus its expertise where it can have the greatest impact through foundational and translational research, teaching and engagement, place-based innovation, and mission-driven partnerships—advancing human flourishing in tangible, enduring and globally connected ways.

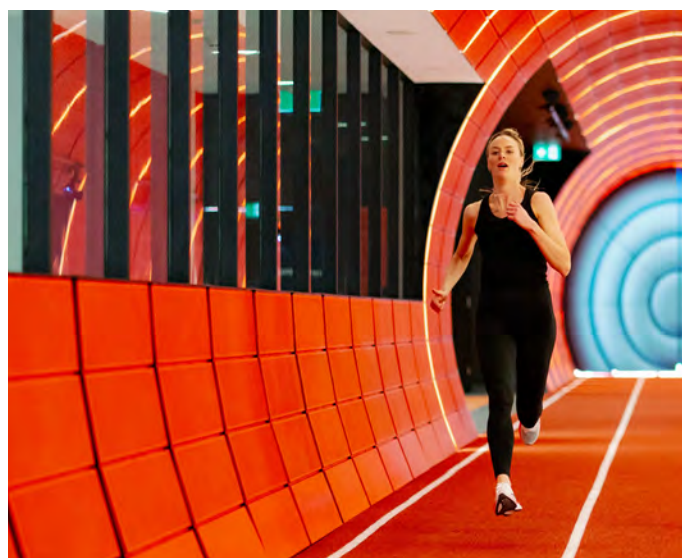


# Becoming a global leader in human flourishing

## Scaling our excellence in human flourishing

ACU invests in the human capital that underpins Australia's social fabric. We form the teachers, nurses and allied health professionals essential to the nation's future workforce. We rank among the global leaders in disciplines central to human flourishing, including education, nursing, psychology, philosophy, theology and religious studies, and sport and exercise science. And we are growing our graduate research cohort to equip the next generation to address society's most urgent challenges.

To advance our leadership in human flourishing, however, we must now build additional institutional capability to translate our excellence in foundational research and research training into mission-aligned programs—harnessing strengths across disciplines and campuses, preparing the ground for large-scale projects and commercialisation, and deepening strategic partnerships with key collaborators to extend our policy influence and scale human flourishing solutions.





## Globalising human flourishing

Leveraging this stronger foundation, ACU will become a recognised world leader in human flourishing, known for translating mission driven research into tangible social policy and entrepreneurial outcomes.

Through faculty led themes, ACU will build critical mass in areas where we can shape global agendas and influence systems that matter to human flourishing. We will expand our sphere of influence across Southeast Asia and the broader Asia Pacific through place based partnerships, bilateral programs and regionally relevant innovation. And we will develop large, multi partner initiatives that translate research into policy reform and responsible commercial ventures ensuring that our scholarship delivers impact at scale. By 2033, this approach will deliver sustained excellence across the research value chain and position ACU as a trusted global leader in service of a flourishing humanity.





# Six core themes



## Education ecosystems for flourishing through the lifespan

### Advancing education, empowering futures

We advance the entire education ecosystem – students, teachers, principals, families and support systems – through research across the lifespan. By strengthening every link in this system, we create educational institutions at the heart of thriving communities and human flourishing.




## Religion, meaning and social cohesion

### Open hearts, open minds

We leverage research into religion and meaning to understand their influence on social cohesion. We examine both the positive contributions of religion to society and the tensions it can generate, exploring the role of faith in fostering dialogue and friendship across difference.




## Ethical business, technology and governance

### Decisions for dignity

We tackle complex challenges at the intersection of business, technology, politics and society through environmental, social and governance research that places human needs at the centre of decision-making and strengthens ethical, inclusive and just institutions.





 **First peoples' self-determination**

**Respecting voice, upholding rights**

We are committed to research that supports the self-determination rights of First peoples, including the right to maintain cultural traditions and identity.

 **Care economy**

**Caring for those who care**

We drive innovation in the care economy to meet the evolving needs of our community. The care economy encompasses the provision of care services, both paid and unpaid, that are essential for the daily wellbeing and functioning of individuals and society.

 **Peace and solidarity**

**Together, for good**

We confront the urgent challenge of protecting our common home by working to bring the whole human family together (*Laudato Si'*, 13). Upholding the dignity of each person, we draw on wisdom across religious and spiritual traditions to promote peace and solidarity for the flourishing of all life.





# Strategic priority 1: Mission-driven research

ACU's mission-driven research affirms human dignity and the common good, leveraging the long history of Catholic understanding and complementing this with other faiths. We integrate teaching, foundational and translational research, and engagement to address societal challenges and promote the flourishing of all. Human flourishing is at the heart of our mission, guiding our efforts to create knowledge that uplifts individuals and communities through people-centred approaches to wellbeing, equity, and purpose.

## **PRIORITISED BY:**

- Leveraging whole of university community, including early career and graduate research cohorts.
- Fostering research translation and policy impact for people-centred solutions.
- Networks of domestic and international partners devoted to human flourishing.
- Embedding human flourishing framing and outcomes into funding submissions.



## Strategic priority 2: Interdisciplinary solutions

We foster collaboration across disciplines to develop holistic solutions co-created with community, industry, and government. By bringing together diverse fields of expertise, we ensure that our world-class research reflects the complexity of human experience and delivers integrated and enterprising solutions to support flourishing across all dimensions of life.

ACU's interdisciplinary projects – such as those combining theology, psychology and digital health – demonstrate our capacity to address complex human challenges through collaborative inquiry.

### PRIORITISED BY:

- Building and sustaining new interdisciplinary areas to drive human flourishing research.
- Supporting mission-aligned, team-based projects through seed funding and mentoring.
- Growing interdisciplinary research at scale through faculty-led themes.
- Resourcing for STEMM and humanities programs, including training in interdisciplinary design and outcomes.

# Strategic priority 3: Community-engaged outcomes

We put communities first through co-designed research that ensures relevance, impact, and mutual benefit, especially in areas of health, education, and social cohesion. Our people-centred approach ensures that communities are not just beneficiaries but active collaborators in shaping research that meets their aspirations and enhances their capacity to thrive.

ACU's Carnegie community engagement classification reflects our embedded engagement practices and service initiatives such as community-led health research and education equity programs that are mission-aligned and mutually enriching.

## PRIORITISED BY:

- Embedded engagement through long-term partnerships with communities, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Central focus on supporting research translation and commercialisation initiatives that benefit communities, including tools and allocation for external engagement activities.
- Co-design adopted across research and teaching programs.
- Impact evaluation frameworks connected to established international best practices.



# Strategic priority 4: Global partnerships for impact

Strategic relationships with international institutions advance research, translation and education, supporting long-term programs aligned with our mission. These partnerships enable us to share and grow knowledge globally, ensuring our human flourishing agenda resonates across cultures and contributes to inclusive global development.

ACU's global collaborations, including joint research centres and exchange programs, extend our impact and reinforce our commitment to shared flourishing, especially in our Asia-Pacific region.

## PRIORITISED BY:

- Whole-of-university relationships with select Catholic and other international institutions, led by research but extending to translation, commercialisation, community engagement, and teaching and learning.
- Focused sustainable relationships aimed at developing long-term research programs around core themes.
- Resourcing researchers and educators to create joint projects and publications.
- Globally connected virtual and physical experiences – supported by structured HDR and staff mobility programs – to attract sponsored PhD cohorts through partnerships with aligned international schemes.





## Strategic priority 5: Empowering a culture of excellence

We invest in research training and professional development to grow a diverse and capable research community. Our commitment to human flourishing is reflected in our support aimed particularly at early career and higher degree researchers to become ethical leaders and innovators who understand and respond to human needs.

ACU's integration of service-learning into academic programs exemplifies our mission of preparing graduates for societal impact through interdisciplinary experience and real-world engagement.

### **PRIORITISED BY:**

- Growth in HDR enrolments and completions toward the sector median, including through widened representation.
- Support schemes for new ECR pathways, starting with our best HDR graduates.
- Training research leaders with proven skills in program management, capability development, succession planning, and governance developed via leading a major program of research excellence.
- Communities of Practice linked to external networks, alumni, and leaders, including development of contemporary co-curricular skills.



## Strategic priority 6: Activating place-based innovation

We will activate ACU precincts as place-based innovation districts that bring together research, enterprise, education and community partners to address complex societal challenges. Grounded in our mission, these innovation districts support foundational and translational research and social enterprise development that generate tangible outcomes for underserved populations.

ACU's innovation districts move beyond passive co-location to function as active ecosystems, aligning shared research platforms, workforce development and enterprise pathways to accelerate collaboration, attract investment, retain talent, and embed ACU capability for sustained real-world impact.

### **PRIORITISED BY:**

- Developing innovation districts through industry co-location, active orchestration and deep engagement with government and community partners.
- Establishing shared research and innovation platforms within districts that enable collaboration and leverage ACU capability and productive assets.
- Sustaining large-scale district-based programs through Category 2 and 3 research funding, enterprise pathways and demonstrated social and economic impact.
- Supporting the progression and retention of HDR and ECR talent into district-based research, innovation and delivery roles, strengthening workforce pipelines.

“Authentic human  
flourishing stems from...  
the full development of a  
person in all dimensions:  
physical, social, cultural,  
moral, and spiritual.”

**Pope Leo XIV**



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