Sub Cruce Lumen: light under the Cross. Against the vast Australian skies the University of Adelaide shines as a beacon bright as the Southern Cross: it illuminates new knowledge and is a lodestar of enlightened learning for South Australia and the world.

In a rapidly changing environment, the University of Adelaide is clear about its goals and intentions. It draws strength from its founding values as it fulfils its future research and teaching aspirations. It faces resource challenges with imagination, and invites its external supporters in government, industry, the professions, its alumni and the community to share in advancing its mission.

The University was founded in 1874, and the decade commencing in 2013 will take it to the eve of the 150th anniversary in 2024. This Strategic Plan sets out how the University wishes to be seen at its sesquicentenary—as an international institution that distinctively embraces the ideal of the research university, where the excitement, vitality and passion of the search for new knowledge is one in which all students participate; as an enlightened and tolerant community where able students can find support, whatever their background or circumstances; and as a place where the Kaurna people, original custodians of the land on which the campuses now rest, are acknowledged and their culture respected.

Professor Warren Bebbington

Vice-Chancellor and President

December 2012
From 1874

The Founding Vision

The University of Adelaide was founded with a noble goal: to prepare for South Australia young leaders shaped by education rather than by birth or wealth. The university would reflect the values of South Australia itself—a distinctively progressive and democratic way of life, in a settlement free of Old World social and religious inequalities.

That this would stamp on the University a spirit of free inquiry was the dream of its first Vice-Chancellor, one of Adelaide’s pioneers, Dr Augustus Short (1802-1883). Short had studied and taught at Christ Church Oxford; one of his pupils had been future British Prime Minister William Gladstone. But instead of Oxford’s narrow classics curriculum, Short wanted a University open to investigation of new fields—the sciences, modern literature, art and moral philosophy among them. Also unlike Oxford, where religious tests had prevailed, the university would be secular: there would not be church-owned residential colleges on campus, as at the universities at Sydney and Melbourne; Adelaide’s spirit would be of liberty and discovery, immune from intolerance or external influence.

Thus Adelaide forged a new frontier in higher education—one that broke from the privilege and traditions of Britain’s ancient universities. Scholarships were offered for competition by any South Australian resident, regardless of background.

The first students were not the sons of wealthy British gentry but the locally-born middle class, and before long included women, who took degrees at Adelaide 40 years before they could at Oxford.

The professors were recruited internationally, and one, Sir William Bragg, won the Nobel Prize in Physics (with his son Sir Lawrence). The initial funds for chairs and key buildings came from donors, and Short sought public supporters by demonstrating the University’s value to the community through public open days, fora, and long-running evening public lectures.

Thus were formed Adelaide’s distinctive features: a student body of democratic breadth, a staff of international distinction, a spirit of freedom to investigate new fields, a sense of importance to the community, and a goal to prepare educated leaders.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the graduates continued to become educated leaders, and eventually one—Howard Florey—led the isolation of penicillin, perhaps the most important scientific discovery ever made by an Australian. It was a dazzling climax to the University’s founding era.
By 2012
Growth, Progress, Renewal

In 2008 the University adopted a five-year strategic plan, *Building a Great University*. By 2012 it had significantly improved its research performance and built impressive new facilities at North Terrace, Waite and Roseworthy, funded by a near doubling of its student numbers. The University became Australia’s top performer on a per-capita basis in attracting national competitive research grants.

Five multi-disciplinary Research Institutes were established to work on major problems, and in 2010 all became associated with Excellence in Research for Australia’s top 5-rated disciplines. The University’s research income increased to $170 million p.a. by 2011, at an average rate of 12% p.a. over the plan period, one of the highest growth rates over the period in the Group of Eight (Go8) universities.

The University continues to embrace a democratically broad student body: its enrolment includes not only some 60% of the brightest school leavers in South Australia, but also many students who entered via an array of alternate pathways it had established. It has a strong indigenous presence, and 14% of its students are of low socio-economic status—the largest such enrolment in the Go8 universities. With nearly 30% of its students and a large contingent of its staff being recruited internationally it has also become one of the most cosmopolitan public universities in Australia.

The outlines of the founding vision could still be traced beneath the multi-layered surface of the University’s appearance. The University’s continued success in the preparation of educated leaders was manifest in the present Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Premier of South Australia, Prime Minister of Australia and President of Singapore; over 150 of its alumni and staff became members of Australia’s learned academies, and two won the Nobel Prize in the past seven years.

A commitment to excellence in teaching has brought forth many learning and student experience initiatives, and the 2012 Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) results now reflect their success: after a period of trailing behind its peers, its CEQ results are now equal to or better than those in the other Go8s. Some of the initiatives, like Hub Central, can lay claim to national student learning leadership. And its importance to the community is evident in the many public programs it presents, from Research Tuesdays to public lectures and concerts, from its Northern Suburbs pathways initiatives to its Port Augusta centre, and the Advisory Boards and industry links maintained in several faculties. The University arrived in 2012 with much achieved.
The New Challenges

Much will change in the coming decade. Internationally higher education is now being reshaped by globalisation and the digital revolution, while at home familiar patterns in the university sector are being remade by many pressures, including far-reaching intervention by government.

The landscape for higher education will be more challenging: with enrolment caps for universities removed there will be heightened competition for students from both local universities and emerging international providers, public and for-profit. Prospective students will be increasingly consumer-oriented, influenced by university rankings and with greater expectations of a focus on graduate career-readiness in their study. Many will be working already, and their interest in flexible delivery outside the traditional academic calendar will grow. And Commonwealth government intervention in university standards and programs will continue, through mechanisms like the Tertiary Education Qualifications and Standards Agency and the AustralianQualifications Framework, yet the security of government funding for universities will be destabilised by mixed economic prospects and the examples of worrying funding declines in the UK, USA and Europe.

Abroad, Europe and the USA now compete aggressively for a larger share of the global student market, and with its high dollar and reputation for visa difficulties and student security problems, Australia will soon be outpaced. Meanwhile, Asian universities advance rapidly in quality and capacity, diminishing the reasons for their students to study abroad. International student numbers will continue ebbing across Australia, while in South Australia projections for the domestic school-leaver pool over the decade are static. University costs will continue to rise, but student expansion will no longer be reliable as a key budget driver.

For researchers it will be a time of expanding equipment costs and escalating pressures from grant agencies and the international ranking environment. High-quality computational and communications infrastructure will increasingly underpin a number of research disciplines, and the growing volume and complexity of research data will become an even more dominant driver of change. Governments around the world will increasingly tie public funding to achieving research outcomes in areas of societal and technological need and inter-disciplinary approaches will accompany a new focus on addressing global challenges.

Finally, there will be the unending digital transformation of educational delivery, of which the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are merely the latest example. Students already conduct their lives through Facebook, Twitter, the World Wide Web and online services: they will expect universities to deal with them online too.

The University of Adelaide’s new Strategic Plan must be attuned to all these shifts in the environment, the student market and the technological means of delivery.
Yet anxieties about the shifting environment need not inhibit the University’s vision and strategy. Change itself can be a creative force. More than ever a university with a clear identity and sense of purpose will flourish in changing times.

During mid 2012 the University spent three months in conversation with its staff and students, its alumni and external supporters, about its challenges and opportunities for the coming decade. They discussed a series of questions addressing goals that would rekindle its vision. They sought strategies that would:

> assert a distinctive Adelaide educational proposition
  - creating a compelling, uniquely Adelaide educational experience
  - producing in our graduates the core skills and attributes employers want

> reach out to a still broader student body
  - providing flexible learning and e-learning to meet new student needs
  - articulating pathways and support for the disadvantaged
  - expanding internationally in innovative ways

> remake our academic recruitment internationally
  - adding research leaders and research networks where they are needed
  - attracting tomorrow’s leaders —outstanding research students—domestic and international
> **enliven a spirit of freedom to investigate new fields of learning**
  - interweaving our major research questions into undergraduate teaching
  - addressing problems creatively, across discipline boundaries
  - supporting discovery in long-term, basic research

> **embolden our focus on learning and teaching excellence**
  - recapturing the excitement of discovery in teaching
  - simulating the small cohort experience
  - lifting our Study Abroad and internship participation

> **rekindle our importance to the community**
  - showing how our research addresses problems of critical public concern
  - communicating vividly our success in producing independent, educated leaders

> **reanimate our quest for the resources we need**
  - creating research partnerships with government, industry and peer universities, domestic and international
  - winning major support from alumni and philanthropic supporters
The union of teaching and research, combined in a search for impartial truth, was fundamental to the modern research university ideal. A small group of students, meeting to work at the discovery of new knowledge under expert guidance, was the centerpiece of the university experience.

Yet in Australian and UK universities from the 1980s, with the massive growth of university enrolments and the addition of many applied disciplines, research became increasingly detached from teaching, and a division was created that has widened ever since. Today despite oppressive research pressures on staff, research is almost wholly absent from Australian undergraduate teaching.

There is thus an opportunity for at least one Australian university to become a model of the teaching/research union, to show how universities can recapture what was once the defining characteristic of the research university. This does not mean merely inviting students to study an individual topic in depth, with initiative and creativity. In a true research university, the study of existing knowledge is secondary to the making of new knowledge. Moving away from knowledge delivery, now increasingly eroded by the universal availability of free online content, a university should focus on the essence of what research offers: the rigour of the scientific method, the search for empirical evidence, the beauty of logic and of patterns, the value of innovation, the creativity of problem solving and the intrinsic worth of knowledge. The University of Adelaide will return research to undergraduate teaching, so that every student in every program comes to experience the scholarship of discovery as the highlight of their learning experience.

For many undergraduate students, this will take the form of an individual research project in their final year, for which the preparatory research skills and experience necessary will be built through smaller exercises in the earlier years of their course. For those students who demonstrate readiness for independent work at admission, there will be an Advanced Bachelor program in every faculty in which research projects are introduced from the first year.

As a key format for delivering undergraduate research, the university will commit to increasing the centrality of small-group learning, in which students address the scholarship of discovery with other students and a staff mentor. While content will increasingly be delivered in other formats, every student in every program should experience such small-group discovery as a key part of their learning experience.

Committing to small-group discovery has implications for our course offering. Some subjects that flourish effectively without a research basis may increasingly be left to other institutions with different missions. Some specialised research interests of individual staff will thrive through individual research projects in the revised undergraduate core courses rather than through free-standing electives where few students enrol.
The origins of small-group discovery are in the Humboldt research university model of 19th-century Germany, when such education was expensive and restricted to the socially privileged. A challenge for Adelaide will be to find ways to avoid being drawn into spiralling costs or social restriction: finding imaginative ways to make small-group discovery more available in a large university of limited resources, and finding more scholarships for students in need will be key to the process.

Crucial also to the research university idea are academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The University of Adelaide’s voice will need to be heard more often in public debate when government policy or external priorities threaten to intrude into an agenda that should be driven by curiosity, originality and the development of disciplines.

Operational Objectives and Targets

To revive small-group discovery in this way has far-reaching consequences. It means setting operational objectives and targets which will refocus some academic programs, redeploy some institutional teaching resources and recalibrate enterprise systems to measure new outcomes for staff, students and our external stakeholders. Beginning in 2013 the University will produce triennial Operational Plans, updated annually, setting out the objectives and short-term targets needed to realise the goals of the Strategic Plan over the decade.
To retain and enhance its attraction to students in the increasingly competitive environment ahead, the University of Adelaide needs to offer a compelling, irresistible educational proposition.

An approach which recaptures the union of teaching and research, features the small-group experience and offers a suite of Advanced Bachelor programs for those ready for more independent work will be key to its differentiation. But there must be more—the approach also needs a distinctive international experience, work experience, and a commitment to enhanced online resources. In 2013 a Beacon of Learning Taskforce will work with each faculty to plan for these changes and their rollout from 2014.

Central to the research university idea is the quality of the student experience. An Adelaide Student Experience Charter will set out the kind of campus experience we shall commit to providing. This will include standards for student: staff ratios and for contact with academic guides and mentors. It will also include a clear statement of the Adelaide Graduate Attributes that sets out the values and skills employers can expect from all Adelaide graduates. The Taskforce will then work with Faculties to embed these values and skills in every program. We will also ensure Adelaide students are ready for graduate employment through a Graduate Career Readiness Program, offering tailored work-experience and career mentoring in the workplace.

Another key attribute of the Adelaide experience will be inculcating a sense of global citizenship. The Asian Century is upon us and we will seize learning opportunities arising from Asia’s geographical proximity, combining all that is best from western intellectual traditions with the diverse forms of knowledge of Asia. We will foster intercultural competence, based on participation in Study Abroad or in a new Host Program for international students. Experience abroad will be deemed an essential part of the necessary breadth of skills and knowledge that defines a future leader, and understanding of indigenous issues and culture will also contribute to the sort of intercultural competence the University will aim to foster in its graduates. The Charter will commit to every student completing one of these—graduate work experience/career mentoring, study abroad, or an International Student Host Program.

Each of these innovations involves a new external engagement opportunity—developing multiple alliances with graduate employers willing to participate in the Graduate Career Readiness Program, and recruitment of a cohort of Adelaide families ready to participate in an International Student Host Program. In both of these programs alumni volunteers will be invited to provide the core resource. For the expanded Study Abroad Program, the University will sign strategic partnerships with a small number of key universities, carefully
selected in the USA, Asia and Europe to offer specific programs enabling the exchange of sizeable groups of students. These initiatives will be fully operational by 2015, so all students entering from 2013 have the chance to experience them.

Adelaide will remain a campus university, for the scholarship of discovery involves personalised learning which happens best face-to-face. But prospective students need confidence their learning will be better supported by digital learning resources. Where high-quality content can be effectively delivered online with demonstrable pedagogical integrity it will be, to free staff time for small-group discovery where the focus can shift to learning and problem solving. Working students will greatly value the flexibility such multimodal delivery formats bring them. During the Plan period the University will treble its expenditure on IT learning support and e-learning, and ensure that all new and existing teaching staff undertake development to better engage with digital learning.

Meanwhile, the University will build on its founders’ commitment to creating a student body of democratic breadth. A fundraising campaign will be launched to double the number of scholarships for students of disadvantage, for students of ability from remote and regional areas or from backgrounds that would otherwise prevent their aspiring to study at Adelaide. Flexible delivery such as intensive mode and online formats will also help the University meet the needs of students unable to attend the campus for reasons of personal circumstance.

A shift towards the educational proposition described above involves obvious challenges. Creating a menu of Advanced Bachelor programs, embedding graduate career-readiness attributes, and offering small-group discovery across the university will require imaginative planning, detailed attention to disciplinary differences, and some changes to admission requirements. Resources will need redirection from less strategic uses into developing study abroad assistance, needs-based scholarships, enhanced IT and e-learning, and administering the International Student Host and Graduate Career Readiness Programs.

And over time, teaching patterns will alter. As more content becomes delivered online, staff will have more time to devote to students, especially in small-group settings. Hours of work will become more flexible as the academic calendar and timetable respond to changing content delivery modes. As staff increasingly focus their specialised interests through leading discovery in core courses rather than in small electives, the total subject offering will likely contract. But this will likely increase rather than diminish the opportunities to explore a staff member’s specific discipline interests, albeit within more focused, more manageable workloads.
A Beacon for Research and Research Training

In its founding era, Adelaide recruited its academic staff internationally, and championed their investigation of new fields. Today, we need to recapture that boldness, the capacity to attract international research leaders, and to nimbly adapt to major new research challenges. We also need to recruit and retain the next generation of research leaders—excellent research students.

In 2013-15 we will enhance our research capacity by adding at least 10 more internationally high-impact research professors in fields of our research strength. The focus here will be on attracting high citation researchers who count amongst the top 1% in the world in their fields.

High citation researchers can also be developed through research student recruitment and effective student retention strategies. We will double the number of full PhD scholarships to attract more front-rank PhD students internationally. A Beacon of Research Taskforce will be formed in 2013 to design and implement these initiatives.

The new approach, reviving research in undergraduate teaching through small-group discovery, will be most effective if leading research staff is seen in the classroom. The Beacon of Research Taskforce will seek ways in which students at every level can hear from the University’s brightest researchers.

The Taskforce will also take steps to better embrace the State innovation agenda, the national research priorities, and seek to persuade business and government of the contributions we can make to their own plans. This will include an agenda to intensify collaboration between researchers and industry, to assist in translating research outcomes into increased productivity for our region, and having researchers coalesce around “wicked problems” and grand challenges, such as food security, sustainable energy, and abundant clean water.

A central Interdisciplinary Research Investment Fund will be established, to facilitate nimble and adaptive responses across discipline boundaries to emerging social, economic and environmental questions of high public importance both to our region and internationally. The small-group discovery model will also provide opportunities for elements of the great challenges at the international level to be included in the undergraduate curriculum.

But with the huge cost of research infrastructure necessary to addressing many of today’s major research problems, no university can work alone. It is vital that our researchers have access to major national and international research facilities. Partnerships, which bring together research teams of equal strength, across university, government and business organisations and across international boundaries, can magnify the work of any single university. And by being part of a global...
collaboration, we can also ensure our researchers are able to access the best facilities in the world.

The University will commit to a policy of forming research partnerships where it can find partners of equal or better strength, and where the whole partnership is demonstrably greater than the sum of the parts. As a first step, the Working Party will advise on developing by 2015 at least five high-profile international research networks with front-rank partners abroad for its key research concentrations. Some of these may leverage the strategic alliances being built for the enhanced Study Abroad program. The networks will be supported by a Staff Mobility Scheme, to facilitate international movement of staff between partner institutions.

The University has all the elements of a global partnership at its Waite campus, where research departments, research institutes, and the R&D arms of government and business in the agricultural, food and wine field are colocated. In 2013, it will propose leverage of these organisations and selected international partners into a Waite consortium, which will likely become one of the most powerful concentrations of agricultural, food and wine research in the world.

We all hope international university ranking systems will improve their reliability in the coming decade, but no university can ignore their already significant impact. The rising importance of national performance assessments and international rankings around the world, including the ERA in Australia, has led to accelerating demand and greater competition for highly talented staff and students. In 2013 the Beacon of Research Taskforce will develop steps to ensure that our research strengths are fully recognised in the ranking tables. As well as recruitment of research leaders, there will be an incentive funding for more strategic publishing, enhanced grant writing support, individual staff development and more effective goal setting at the school and individual level. We will take steps to have, by the end of the decade, at least 80% of our research fields ranked 4 or 5 in the ERA, and achieve an international ranking better than 150 in the ARWU (Shanghai Jiao Tong) ranking tables.

From its founding the University recognised its international reputation was associated with its research quality, and that there are timeless factors associated with engendering excellence in research. Attracting and retaining outstanding research staff and higher degree students, providing access to top-quality research facilities and infrastructure, supporting research excellence and having the capacity to respond rapidly to new research opportunities will all ensure Adelaide burns brilliantly as a research beacon into the future.

Partnerships, which bring together research teams of equal strength, across university, government and business organisations and across international boundaries, can magnify the work of any single university.
Small-group discovery will set the university on a path of improved quality rather than growth in the coming decade. Successful transformation in a university requires imaginative, skilled people, innovative thinking in our processes, responsive services and resources, effective systems that encourage relevant measurement, and a productive partnership between central administrative units and academic divisions. It also requires that we inspire and engage our external supporters.

Becoming a beacon for small-group discovery will mean many challenges for university services and resources. Most critically, success will depend on the capability of our people. Whilst we must develop recruitment practices that strive for excellence, we must also develop our people to adapt to the new ways of working and lead the transformation required. We will also need to reanimate and re-energise the support the University has traditionally enjoyed from external stakeholders.

We will need to find ways of recognising and rewarding staff who wish to contribute more to teaching than research. With their supervisors, staff will need to be able to set their work objectives on a continuum between research and teaching, and be appraised accordingly. Moreover, we will need to address the makeup of our staff and the conditions in which they work. Adelaide has a number of challenges in the gender balance, diversity and age profile of its workforce, and also in human resources systems and procedures not optimal for a leading Go8 university. The University will set targets for addressing these progressively across the planning period.

We will need to rethink the way we timetable and allocate space, and the way we populate the academic calendar. Seminar rooms will be in much greater demand, often in evening or other non-traditional hours. Lecture theatres may be needed for core teaching only in certain weeks, freeing them up for an expansion of teaching in intensive mode, blended mode or other innovative delivery methods. Once the Beacon of Learning Taskforce finishes its work in 2013, a university working party on academic timetabling, space allocation and calendar planning will need to rethink the University’s use of space.

We will also need to reanimate and re-energise the support the University has traditionally enjoyed from external stakeholders. We will enhance participation of our large and ever-growing alumni through more intentional communications, events, and benefits. A major philanthropic campaign will be launched to mark the 140th anniversary in 2014, seeking to double our donation income and treble the endowment from our alumni and those in the community who wish to advance our cause. We will also develop a coordinated Stakeholder Management Plan aimed at engaging
better with leaders of government, business and the community. This will also help communicate our research discoveries and capabilities to the community, and create a climate in which government and business might support our capital program more actively.

We will take a fuller part in the national policy debate about higher education, to seek to remove the constraints that prevent leading universities in Australia competing with their peers abroad. These include moderation of the increasing government intervention in planning, course design and academic standards.

The new Adelaide educational proposition and recovery of the founding vision will also mean revisiting our current and successful brand campaign to align it with the new narrative. Part of this will involve featuring the qualities Adelaide city offers to students who come here, as one of the most appealing university towns in the world. Rebranding and enhanced marketing will also contribute to our retention of a student profile of high international student enrolment and expanding graduate fee-paying coursework enrolment.

The university is already undertaking rigorous reviews of its administrative units and rolling out a more transparent budget model. It will commit to ongoing regular benchmarking and optimisation of its administrative organisation and systems. To ensure we achieve our goals, we need a balanced score card, which will set out clearly the targets to be achieved and who will be accountable. To develop this, a third Taskforce will meet from 2013 to identify and establish the metrics and a process by which the University will manage its transformation.

The University budget will also require a willingness to evaluate and innovate in the coming decade. As well as trebling our expenditure on IT and e-learning, introducing new research scholarships, international research staff recruitment, and an interdisciplinary research fund, we plan to build a number of new facilities, most urgently a new integrated medical, nursing and dental school, developed in partnership with our clinical titleholders, to relocate our clinical schools to the new Royal Adelaide Hospital precinct at the western end of the CBD. We will need new development on campus, new leasing off campus, and the intensification of use of existing space. These aspirations will require more capital works funding over the next Plan period than current forecasts predict we will have. Several of the initiatives mentioned above will contribute to expanding our resource base, but we will also review our investment policy, our approach to cost containment, to debt financing, and other ways of funding our aspirations.

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Towards 2024
Adelaide Shining

As the foregoing makes clear, the challenges ahead in the higher education environment are great. But the University of Adelaide is fortunate in its setting, its historic heritage, its robust financial health, and its standing in the community. Today the city of Adelaide is amongst the world’s most appealing university towns—safe, pollution-free, a relaxed city of 1.1 million set between pristine beaches and scenic hills. The University’s North Terrace Campus opens into the city on its southern border, it flanks the State’s Art Gallery, Museum, Library, Botanical Gardens, and Zoo on its western and eastern borders, while its northern border runs down to the picturesque banks of the Torrens River. Its setting boasts a unique concentration of cultural institutions and civic amenities.

The University enjoys deep-rooted support from the South Australian community, expressed in generous bequests of the attractive buildings and historic Chairs that give the campus character, and in the willing time and interest given it by so many of the State’s leading citizens, as well as by its large alumni group around the world. It has robust financial health and one of the strongest cohorts of international students anywhere in the nation. Given these advantages and the dedication and loyalty of its staff, Adelaide can unquestionably fulfil its aspirations.

In this Strategic Plan, Australia’s third oldest university commits to a distinctive approach which recaptures the ideal of the research university, and seeks an internationally-focussed staff and a tolerant, progressive student mix which will prepare students for global citizenship in an increasingly borderless world. It will be a university true to its historical roots, yet passionately committed to its role in producing graduates destined to play leading parts in the Asian Century.

To succeed in the coming decade we will need to recapture the combination of teaching and research excellence with civic engagement, of local enlightenment with international renown which animated the University’s early days, so that it becomes by 2024 no less than Australia’s most distinctive university, set in Australia’s most civilised of cities.

Given these advantages and the dedication and loyalty of its staff, Adelaide can unquestionably fulfil its aspirations.