

The University of Adelaide: Strategic Plan to 2030

Introduction

The University of Adelaide was founded in 1874 “to prepare for South Australia, young leaders shaped by education rather than birth or wealth in a settlement free of old world social and religious inequalities”. The third university in Australia, one of only four founded before Federation, we approach our 150th year proud of a lustrous history, while aware that our mission for the next decade must be fashioned by response to the social, economic and technological challenges that have emerged in the early decades of the 21st Century.

Our University has much to celebrate in a history rich with achievement. We have fostered the careers of leaders who have shaped social and cultural advance, including five Nobel Prize winners. Through world-leading research, the University has been instrumental in the creation of new knowledge and new uses for knowledge, advancing industry and creating opportunity. Our education programs, evolved in response to community need across more than a century, have improved the prospects and lives of over 140,000 learners. Outstanding global recognition and rankings have enabled the South Australian community to connect with the wider world, as we have welcomed to our mission individuals and corporations from across the globe. For more than 140 years the University of Adelaide has been central to the creation and dissemination of knowledge locally, nationally and internationally, and to developing socio-economic prosperity for South Australia and Australia.

The University of Adelaide is proud of its past yet resolute in its purpose as a future maker. At this moment in time the University is challenged to pursue change even as it embraces history; to draw from values and tradition which have stood the test of time in the pursuit of further excellence matched to the needs and aspirations of the broader community. Our response must be informed by the manifold changes confronting society including;

- *The need for economic transition:* The disruption of existing industries/employment by technology and resource limitation creates the need for new industries and jobs
- *The imperative of social transformation:* The changing nature of work places a premium on education, and creates a need for a form of tertiary education that reaches more members of society and that prepares graduates for more meaningful participation
- *The impact of globalisation:* Human knowledge, wisdom and economic prospect are no longer privileged, but globally held, so that increasing value will be placed on institutions that can bring international opportunity to local communities
- *The pervasive nature of technological disruption:* Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and Big Data will continue to disrupt existing socio-economic constructs, *and*
- *The pursuit of sustainability:* The diminishing availability of natural resources places constraints on traditional social models and creates the need for new and sustainable options.

Our Strategic Plan explains how the University of Adelaide will transform from being a *commentator on society* to becoming a *participant in society*, vested with delivering social and economic benefits to South Australia and beyond. We commit to listening to, and hearing, the voice of community and industry, and to working with community to identify and support the education and research endeavours of greatest value and impact.

Our Strategic Plan affirms the University’s commitment to the production of new knowledge and

outstanding graduates, recognising that these activities remain core to our mission and will be of critical importance in a world increasingly shaped by knowledge and its applications. Our future research and teaching will be informed and responsive to contemporary circumstances, community aspirations and societal needs.

Our Strategic Plan recognises that the University exists in a world of global competition and limited resources. To thrive in such an environment we must have the courage to maintain our pursuit of excellence but also to define those areas in which our activities can have greatest impact. We accept the need for focus - leveraging special opportunities matched to history, geography, demography or economic opportunity – and for openness and a willingness to share resources for maximum benefit.

Our Strategic Plan describes the leadership role the University must play in a complex, modern ecosystem. Internationally regarded, globally connected universities that align creativity and discovery with education and community need are the key to socio-economic prosperity; the University of Adelaide, building on an outstanding pedigree and performance, is uniquely positioned to serve this role for South Australia.

Vision and Mission

The University of Adelaide will realise its purpose as a catalyst of knowledge creation and innovation, as an engine of social advancement, and as an active participant in the local, national and global economy. Our University will be known as a social, cultural and academic thought leader, accessible to the community and responsive to societal needs. The University will draw on its heritage as it aspires to design and build a better future for all.

To achieve this vision in a time of technological disruption, societal change and unrestricted access to information, the University will invest in three key endeavours that will support our community through the next wave of socio-economic development:

1. Fostering and delivering greater human capital – by expanding the cohort who can benefit from the knowledge and wisdom available within the University
2. Facilitating innovation and extracting greater social and economic dividends from our research – in support of existing and future industries, and social advancement
3. Developing an international presence and connections – enabling us to act as a conduit for knowledge, people and corporations, connecting our State to a globalised world.

These initiatives will assist in enabling the necessary transition of the South Australian economy, transform lives, open opportunities, and build a better future for our students, staff, businesses, and the community.

Five Pillars to Greatness

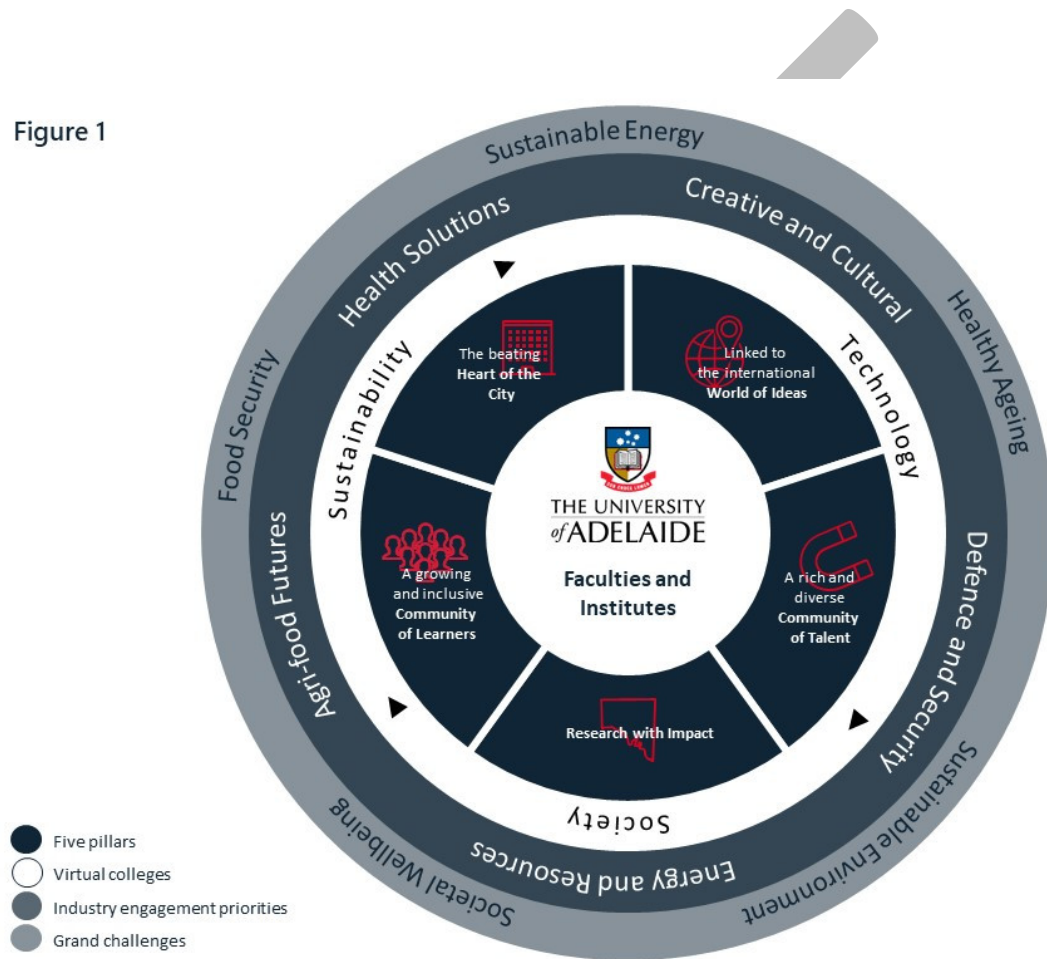
Five pillars (Figure 1) define our Strategic Plan, priorities that will inform the trajectory of the University of Adelaide in the years to 2030.

- *Connected into the International World of Ideas*

- *A Rich and Diverse Community of Talent*
- *Research that Shapes the Future*
- *A 21st Century Education for a growing Community of Learners*
- *The Beating Heart of the City*

The five pillars are the interface between our capabilities, manifested by our Faculties and Research Institutes, and the key education and research challenges faced by our evolving world.

Figure 1



1. Connected into the international world of ideas

In a globalised economy access to the world of ideas, a source of knowledge and human capital, is critical for local socio-economic benefit. The University of Adelaide, as a truly global institution, has unique potential within South Australia to leverage culturally diverse staff and student bodies, and outstanding reputation reflected in all three leading world rankings, to connect South Australia to the world and the world to South Australia.

Globally Geared

A long history of international engagement, including participation as one of only eight universities in the Colombo Plan, sees an extensive network of more than 140,000 alumni distributed across 134 countries, with a particular focus in Asia. Many are in positions of influence. The number of international students attracted to a University of Adelaide education, currently 30% of our student body, continues to increase. Our staffing profile is among the most diverse in the Australian sector, with half of our academic staff born overseas or holding dual citizenships. The reputation and rankings of the University make us an attractive partner for many of the world's most prestigious higher education institutions and research centres.

The University of Adelaide will continue to build to a globally integrated and culturally diverse University community, attractive to staff and students alike, connected to the world by people and partnership.

A Culturally Diverse Student Body

A truly international university welcomes a student body representative of global diversity. International students enrich the social environment of the University, the city and the state. An awareness of, and respect for, diverse cultures, ethnicities, and geographies is an important component of civil society, and a diverse student body plays an important role in developing our students as global citizens with leadership aspirations to experience, participate in, and influence, the world stage. Relationships formed at University persist for a lifetime, and become a foundation for international participation.

We aspire to an international cohort that is increased in size, hailing from a broad range of cultures, and distributed more widely into programs across all Faculties and Research Institutes. Students will be attracted by our international reputation and will seek access to the specialised knowledge we offer and the opportunities our University opens up for them. Equally, students will be attracted to a city that is both liveable and affordable. Increasingly, these students will find their way to the University of Adelaide through long-term partnerships established with universities in other countries that share our priorities and expertise.

International Partnership

Partnerships with like-minded institutions internationally provide a means to overcome limitations associated with our physical location and resource base, and will enable our researchers to collaborate and compete at the highest levels.

We will prioritise long-term relationships with universities and research providers who share our research and industry engagement interests. Connection to global knowledge through partnership will bring tangible outcomes, including welcoming world-leading experts to Adelaide to share with peers; the expansion of our research capabilities through cross-institutional teams; access to global competitive sources of funding; the acquisition of resources from international consortia; the sharing of complementary infrastructure; and a continuous flow of new people, new ideas and new processes to enrich our State.

Within the University's portfolio of research there also exist many opportunities to partner with international corporations. Partners will be attracted by our research excellence and by the ready access we can facilitate to skilled graduates – the workforce of the future – in a globally competitive market for talent and human capital.

Alumni Engagement

The University of Adelaide's overseas alumni retain regard and affection for their *alma mater*. In many ways, this is the most personal relationship the University can enjoy with international societies and economies. Closer engagement with our graduates will bring authenticity to our international orientation, strengthen our knowledge of external trends and bring a sharper global perspective to our community. Alumni can be our most effective advocates and act as agents of influence within their communities. As role models and as mentors they also have much to offer by way of advice, experience and wisdom to students during their study and beyond.

We will create new opportunities to refresh the relationship of alumni with their *alma mater* through events both offshore and within the University, especially around our 150th celebrations in 2024.

Global Outreach

The University of Adelaide offers world-leading expertise and programs. New pedagogies, such as online education and MOOCs, will provide the necessary platforms to expand our international reach for these programs, taking specialist Adelaide capabilities to the world and further enhancing our international profile and reputation.

2. A Rich and Diverse Community of Talent

Universities are defined by their people, staff, students, supporters and alumni alike. Our destiny will be shaped by those who choose to work or study with us, for whom we aspire to be a global destination of choice. Excellence requires nothing other than the best minds, working together alongside each other, infused by a culture that ensures they remain productive, focused, motivated and energised.

A Talent-based Institution

A great university must be an organisation that unashamedly seeks and sustains talent. We must relentlessly draw outstanding individuals from across Australia and around the world, by leveraging the twin attractions of a prominent world ranking – derived from cutting-edge research, quality teaching, and a global outlook – and a highly desirable lifestyle in a very livable city. Active recruitment of the best minds, regardless of location, is a starting point for success, a way to enrich our community and achieve our ambitions. Under the banner of excellence, we must also pursue the expansion of our Indigenous cohort, a greater gender balance and joint appointments with industry and other research providers.

A Culture that Supports the Academic Mission

Our commitment to capturing talent starts but cannot end with recruitment. Rather, the University must ensure it will nurture and sustain staff so they maximise their performance and that of their institution.

We recognise that creative and enterprising people will thrive in a culture that encourages ambition, facilitates participation, and celebrates success. We aspire to a culture founded in excellence, respect and collegial decision-making. Our culture will value:

- academic freedom
- articulate and polite debate
- respect and support for the perspectives of others
- transparency, wide consultation and communication

- informed and evidence based decision-making, and
- the ability to coalesce as one around a chosen and agreed course of action.

Ours will be a culture where people want to perform at their best not only because it is expected of them, but because it is what they want to do; a culture that is defined by a willingness to serve and a sense of mutual obligation. Success will itself be a shared endeavour, assisted by clear performance standards that respect the diversity of missions across our institution, and are compatible with a world-class university. Particular attention will be directed towards the development of leadership across the Academy and professional staff, recognising that engagement with strategy and development of capability is key to our ambition.

Animated by a shared ambition to help overcome society's grand challenges, our staff will be motivated to contribute to the University's overall success as much as their own.

A More Diverse Student Body

The development of talent through our teaching and research programs will become even more important as society adapts to the demands of the information economy, with those entering the workplace predicted to experience multiple career changes and face technological disruption across their working lives. The University must play an expanded role in preparing students for this future, welcoming back past students who need to reskill or upskill, and engaging a wider student cohort from industry as they seek to develop their capabilities in a fast-changing world of work.

As we identify and nurture talent from a greater number of sources, we expect to serve a more diverse student body drawn from a range of backgrounds that will include:

- South Australian school leavers – including 'first in family', regional and Indigenous students
- Interstate school leavers – attracted by our unique offering of programs and degrees, especially in key domains of prominent expertise, industry engagement and research leadership
- International students – at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, from non-traditional source countries, attracted by the prospect of studying with the best in their fields of interest
- Cohorts of students from industry – seeking to find knowledge and develop skills in a rapidly changing environment
- Mature aged students – including professionals seeking conversion qualifications, and
- Online students, especially in the postgraduate space, many of them from interstate or overseas.

The profile of our staff, the quality of our teaching, research and infrastructure, the relevance and quality of our programs and courses, and the prestige of our brand, combined with a safe and cost-competitive capital city destination, will all play a part in attracting growing numbers of talented students from all corners of the globe. Our learners, in turn, will become highly sought after assets for society, business and government, wherever they choose to live. The human capital they offer is an essential building block for the economic and social wellbeing of the world, and the community in which we live.

An Expanded Community of Talent

The University of Adelaide community extends beyond those directly employed or studying with us. Our mission is also enabled by those who identify with our ambitions and give of their time and wisdom.

We will expand and support our affiliate staff, a cohort drawn from the professions and industry,

nationally and internationally. They will be welcomed into our community, and recognised for their valuable contribution.

Our greatest societal impact is arguably the contribution of University of Adelaide alumni, concentrated in South Australia but increasingly found across Australia and the globe. We can do more to build their allegiance to our community and welcome them into the life of the university. In turn, we can anticipate their support for our future endeavours, through student mentorship, insights into social and industrial trends, volunteering, assistance with community engagement and communication, and financial support to enable our strategy.

3. Research that shapes the future

A strong commitment to research excellence has defined the University of Adelaide's history. We are South Australia's sole member of the Group of Eight, Australia's research-intensive universities. Our research mission will be increasingly important in a world defined by accelerated knowledge creation and transition to an information-based economy. Economic advance will require a stronger nexus between our research programs and the needs of the local economy, and a greater ability to leverage creativity and knowledge for the benefit of existing industries and the creation of new economic opportunities. Closer integration of research and education programs will be the foundation of a new generation of entrepreneurs who can translate new knowledge to societal benefit.

International Standing

Our institutional reputation, the passport to global participation, is predominantly founded on our research excellence. We will continue to support and grow research excellence across the institution, and we reaffirm a commitment to our share of the ever-growing store of human knowledge. Our research excellence will underpin our ability to partner with international universities, research users such as corporations, and to attract scholars of high standing. The University of Adelaide aspires to be part of a global exchange of knowledge, learning, business engagement and investment opportunities, beneficial to our community.

Scale and Focus

Global competition demands that we have the courage to focus our resources in areas of specific opportunity. We reaffirm our commitment to a suite of world-leading Research Institutes (Figure 2). These Institutes, brought into closer alignment with Faculties, will operate at the international forefront of their fields, and will leverage the University's research agenda, through the building of cross-disciplinary teams, to achieve their goals.

The number and identity of these Institutes will be flexible with time and opportunity. They currently include:

- The Environment Institute
- The Australian Institute for Machine Learning
- The Institute for Mineral and Energy Resources
- The Robinson Research Institute
- The Waite Institute
- The Institute for Photonics and Advanced Sensing

Support for Industry Development

To maintain competitiveness in an international marketplace, South Australian businesses and industries need to be powered by world-class research. Closer alignment between industry need and our research programs will be enabled by establishing a repertoire of Industry Engagement Priorities (Figure 2), oriented to support the major players in the South Australian economy. Co-chaired advisory boards will provide a mechanism to identify industry priorities and, through the support of a Business Development capability, to translate priorities into projects and teams. Initially these will comprise:

- Agri-Food Futures
- Health Solutions
- Defence, Cybersecurity and Space
- Sustainable Energy and Resources
- Creative and Cultural industries.

Targeted research in priority areas will lead to the translation of research outcomes into solutions of direct social, economic and technological impact. Research will focus on real world problems, identified in partnership and addressed by multidisciplinary research teams drawn from Faculties, Institutes and external partners. An international strategy founded on partnerships with universities and corporations that share these priorities can ensure that world-leading scholarship informs our endeavour. Solutions, founded in research, will have application locally, but also nationally and internationally.

While informed by industry need, our broader research mission will continue to contribute to the grand challenges of our time, helping to solve those problems that confront humankind and to accelerate social advancement.

Impact Powered by Cross-Disciplinary Interaction

The University of Adelaide is a comprehensive university with world-leading capability in many areas that will transform the nature of research and our ability to extract socioeconomic return. We identify special opportunity from harnessing the intellectual breadth of the university, making available to our researchers those formative or disruptive capacities that can future-proof their programs and facilitate translational success. These include;

- Technological advance; the transformational impact of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data
- Social licence; the need for innovation to be guided by economics, legislation, entrepreneurship and social engagement
- Sustainability: the requirement for solutions to match a resource-constrained world

Three virtual Colleges (Figure 2), of Technology, of Social Impact and of Sustainability, will be formed within the University. These will be cross-Faculty units, drawing on our existing expertise in each of these fields, making available across the Faculties and Institutes those technologies and capabilities as required.

A Research Ecosystem that Encourages Entrepreneurship

The high cost of research infrastructure, an important determinant of academic attraction, demands a strategic approach within the University and in partnership with others. Infrastructure will be prioritised to

support the development of complex intellectual ecosystems, which will provide space and resources for research and teaching, and which University researchers will populate alongside other researchers, corporations and research providers, research trainees and future research users. These will be thematic in nature; technology at Lot Fourteen in central Adelaide, medical at Adelaide Biomed City, and agriculture at Waite and Roseworthy.

There is further educational value in physical spaces where businesses and industry co-locate and thrive in close proximity to research facilities, and where students and staff cooperate in solving problems of direct economic and social significance. A mixed environment which sees staff, students and entrepreneurs sharing social spaces and ideas, where internships form part of learning, and where commercialisation is integrated seamlessly with discovery, will help to underpin the industries of the future, weaving together the fabric of social and technological innovation, contributing to a more flexible and adaptable workforce.

4. A 21st Century Education for a growing Community of Learners

Our education mission will be increasingly important in a world defined by technological disruption and transition to an information-based economy; in the interests of improving lives and delivering better community outcomes universities are challenged to increase access to the ever-growing store of human knowledge. Curriculum and pedagogy must be reconsidered, made more accessible and relevant to a broader and more diverse range of students. There will be special opportunities for research-intensive universities, like the University of Adelaide, to align education with the creativity and power of research, providing an education tailored to the enquiring mind and a workforce defined and valued for their intellectual flexibility and rigour.

Access and Opportunity

The benefits of Higher Education are broadly distributed; improved productivity and economic performance benefit society, while individuals realise higher salaries and work satisfaction, stronger performance on a range of social indicators, and enhanced health and longevity. Economic trends suggest that these dividends are only likely to increase as economic transition to the information age places a greater premium on education and knowledge, and as technological disruption reduces semi-skilled employment and requires continuous upskilling of the workforce. Access to a University of Adelaide experience will therefore be expanded to satisfy the growing need for Higher Education in tomorrow's society.

We will continue to grow the cohort of school leavers applying to the University through SACE, and investigate new mechanisms that add nuance to traditional ATAR-based entry, seeking a closer match between the aspirations and abilities of students and their education futures. An intense campus-based experience and face-to-face tuition will continue to be a priority for those students able to participate in this way. Indeed, we reassert the value of a campus-based student experience, bringing education into juxtaposition with a rich social experience shared with other students and staff. Clubs and societies, social spaces and events each have a part to play in developing the individual; our campus and curriculum must be configured to facilitate such interaction.

We will enrich our local cohort with interstate and offshore campus-based experiences, and diversify our teaching to include online delivery and blended learning. This will make a University of Adelaide education available to a broader range of students, including those unable to participate in full-time or

Adelaide-based study. This will be of particular importance when expanding the international reach of programs where Adelaide capability leads the world. Regardless of their mode of study, our students must have easy access to high-quality academic and pastoral support. Partnership with the student body itself will help us to identify how this can be made real.

Flexible Curriculum

The curriculum of a great 21st century university should underpin its critical role as a social enabler and determinant of human capital. Our curriculum will be developed around four key principles:

- Quality
- Flexibility
- Relevance
- Inclusion.

The discipline- and profession-based content required for preparation of the future research workforce and professional accreditation will be maintained within the curriculum but placed within a context that recognises the need for breadth and employability skills.

The curriculum will be designed to ensure our graduates are able to seek wider career paths and to take advantage in the unpredictable workforce of the future. To equip our learners to adapt and succeed in fast-changing environments, this will include access to modules that expand intellectual breadth, including different traditions of thought, and to interdisciplinary studies.

Units focused on improved employability will offer the opportunity to experience work-integrated learning, with internships available in all programs. Likewise, to prepare our learners for a future that is fundamentally global, we will offer a range of opportunities for experiences abroad, from study tours to embedded semesters, or transcontinental degrees. Programs that articulate the technological, analytical and humanistic capabilities critical to the future of all graduates will be made available through the Colleges of Technology, of Social Impact and of Sustainability.

Comprehensive and customised offering

A comprehensive range of disciplines will be maintained, but accessibility, flexibility and relevance will be improved by a curriculum that is increasingly modular in structure. Students will be able to assemble degrees that integrate specialist content and broader capabilities in the interests of their own aspirations. Multiple entry and exit points will expand those cohorts who can benefit from a University of Adelaide education. Customised pathways will allow learners to demonstrate their suitability and preparedness for entry into more advanced or professional programs, matching educational progression to performance rather than ATAR or prescriptive entry requirements. Modularisation of undergraduate units and a richer array of postgraduate programs, including more professionally aligned Honours degrees, will respond to the growing needs of those within the workforce or seeking employment who require understanding of new advances in their field, technological or otherwise. A flexible timetable and pedagogy will make it possible for students to balance study, work and social activities

Recognising the importance of education and workforce to those industries that dominate the local economy, we will offer a range of courses and programs targeted at each of our Industry Engagement Priorities, from the undergraduate 'classic' Bachelor, to stackable postgraduate modules that will enable

learners to transition into these industries from other sectors.

Reflecting this broader concept of our educational philosophy, our curriculum will be co-created with relevant stakeholders, including students and leading thinkers in the public and private sectors.

5. The Beating Heart of the City

The majority of the University of Adelaide student and staff body is located in the centre of Adelaide, a beautiful and affordable city regularly ranked internationally for liveability. Our location, and the ecosystem that has grown around us over more than a century, provides us with a unique opportunity to engage with the life of the city, and to bring together learning, research, culture, entertainment and sport in the heart of the city of Adelaide. Our physical presence can be a metaphor for the prominent and embedded role we seek to play in our State.

Welcoming and Engaging Campuses

The historic core of the University of Adelaide is a beautiful and compact campus located centrally within the Adelaide CBD and adjacent to the River Torrens. Recent times have seen an expansion to the west to the Adelaide Biomed City campus adjacent to the Royal Adelaide Hospital, and further afield to agricultural campuses at Waite and Roseworthy.

The physicality of our campuses must reflect our aspiration for closer engagement with, and relevance to, our community. We will make our campuses physically and intellectually available to the public, welcoming those with an interest in the activities of the University, and outside the 9-5 'working day' and the standard teaching year. We will open our campus perimeters, encouraging a flow of people through our grounds onto campuses reconfigured to offer new social spaces, a variety of experiences, better recreational facilities, state-of-the-art sports facilities, and public art. The University's North Terrace campus will become a vibrant hub within the city centre, a destination for everyone, including school children, cultural connoisseurs, tourists, business leaders, athletes, future students and more, as well as our staff, their families and existing student cohort. Equally, Waite and Roseworthy can be places that draw together their communities through events and social gatherings that foster a sense of belonging.

A Publicly Spirited and Engaged Community

The University is the natural intellectual centre for the city, a place within Adelaide where the future is created and debated. Our intellectual and cultural reach must expand to include greater numbers of members of our broader community through public lectures, panel discussions and conversations with leading thinkers drawn from our own staff and visiting scholars, and regular displays of art and collections, concerts and plays, and student projects. Partnerships with the Adelaide Festival and Adelaide Fringe will bring annual opportunity for deeper integration of the University of Adelaide with some of the world's premier festivals.

Those visiting our campus will be made aware of our history, accomplishments and mission through signage and wayfinding that speaks to those things of which we are proud. We can also do more to acknowledge that we stand on Kurna land, affirming through infrastructure the story and custodianship of country by the Kurna people.

We aspire to greater spatial coherence throughout our campuses, fostering a sense of place and of

belonging, with social spaces that will be used by staff, students and the public alike. In this way, we can increase the number and diversity of people enriched by, and benefitting from, the life of the University.

Colocation and Precincts

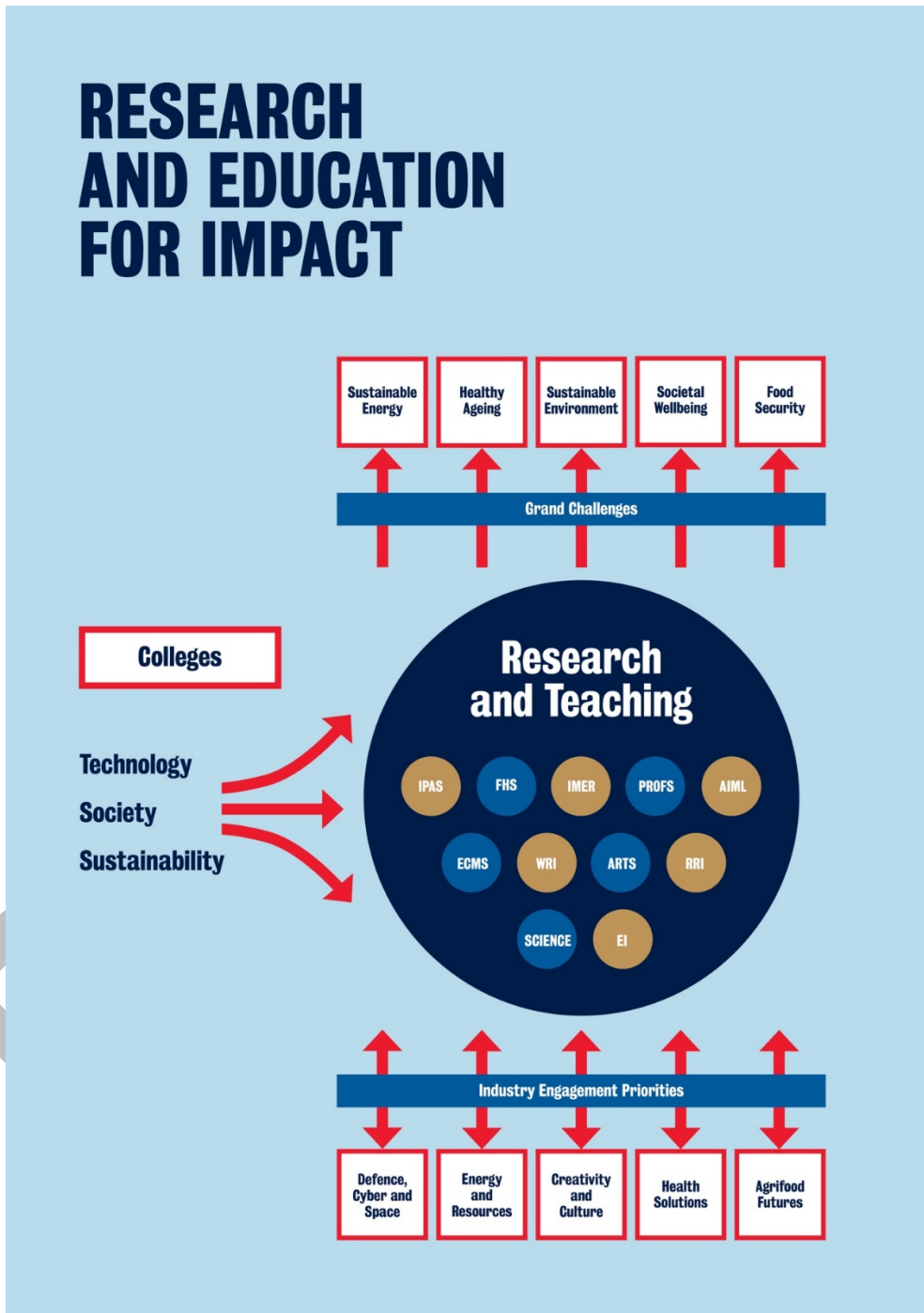
Modern education is not exclusive but draws on the environment and community in which it is based. Our city campuses are embedded in a rich social environment that includes the major cultural and sporting assets of the city, in close proximity to the social, business and political centres of the city, and the emerging technology precincts at the Biomed City (Health) and Lot Fourteen (Technology). The University is linked to the world through 10 Gigabit internet and across Adelaide and the CBD by public transport to our doorstep.

The cultural and intellectual complexity of central Adelaide can be transformative for the city, refashioned to create one of the world's most attractive university cities. We will seek to develop the partnerships and contribute to the governance that can make long-term planning towards this ambition possible.

South Australia lacks the research-led corporations that can enrich the teaching and research programs of the University and generate substantial economic benefits for the State. We will identify and attract to our campuses those corporate partners with cognate interests who recognize the quality of our graduates and research programs. Complex intellectual ecosystems embodied in partnerships and world-class infrastructure will be curated at Waite, Roseworthy and in the CBD, privileged environments for the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge.

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Figure 2. The Intellectual Ecosystem of the University of Adelaide



The research and teaching capacity of the University is organised into Faculties (blue) and Institutes (brown). Industry Engagement Priorities inform university programs in areas of importance to the South Australian economy, adding to a broader mission that adds to the store of human knowledge through the Grand Challenges of our time. Research and teaching programs are likely to be impacted by Technology, and increasing recognition of the importance of Social License and Sustainability, made available across the university through virtual Colleges.