

Comprehensive Summary – Creating a university for the future ‘White Paper’

Feasibility Assessment

Creation of a *University for the Future*

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Joint Project Management Office



University of
South Australia



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

Summary - Creating a university for the future ‘White Paper’

Vision and Ambition

The shared vision and ambition for the future of the universities of South Australia and Adelaide is to create a new leading contemporary university that would have global standing and be ranked in the top one percent of universities globally. A new *Adelaide University* will be dedicated to ensuring the prosperity, well-being, and cohesion of society by addressing educational inequality, through its actions and through the success and impact of students, staff and alumni.

Adelaide University would unlock benefits far beyond collaboration and scale, making transformational investments in both teaching and research more feasible, would be a stronger magnet for domestic and international students and creative and talented staff, and would conduct outstanding future making research of scale and focus. The curriculum would have a digital underpinning, and *Adelaide University* would become Australia’s most connected university – partnered with the communities it serves and an engine for innovation and economic development.

Executive Summary

With a spirit of ambition for the future for each of our institutions and for South Australia, our universities have come together to consider an opportunity – whether to create a university for the future that combines the best of the present, in support of the policy intent of the State Government. This paper analyses in broad terms what that university of the future might look like, how we might transition on that path, what the investment required would be and what risks we might face along the journey.

Combined, we can build a University which seizes the opportunities that lie before us.

Both our universities are nationally and globally respected institutions, which undertake world class research and have educated hundreds of thousands of citizens to create an outstanding cohort of alumni. We have each emerged from the shock of the Pandemic in positions of relative financial and institutional strength. Separately, the future of each of our universities would continue to build incrementally on that strength.

Nevertheless, combining the strengths of our institutions would unlock benefits far beyond collaboration and scale, making transformational investments in both teaching and research more feasible than they would be for each institution individually. These investments, once realised, would make the combined University a stronger magnet for domestic and international students, as well as for creative and talented staff – creating a flywheel which would drive a step change compared to where our institutions are separately today.

Combined, we would build a for purpose university – a leading contemporary comprehensive university of global standing.

We would be dedicated to ensuring the prosperity, well-being, and cohesion of society by addressing educational inequality, through our actions and through the success and impact of our students, staff and alumni. Partnered with the communities we serve, we will conduct outstanding future-making research of scale and focus.

Our combined institution and its graduates would be ready to shape the future of the State, the nation and the world.

The future University would pride itself on offering Australia’s most accessible, contemporary and future-focused teaching and learning experience to both domestic and international students. We aim

to be ranked **top in Australia for student employment outcomes** and in the **top 5 for student experience**.

To achieve these goals, **we intend to make substantial investments over five years to design digital, modular, adaptable, and stackable curriculum**, creating more flexibility for students than ever before in how they choose to study, and more opportunities for flexible entry and graduation paths.

Combined, we would deliver a **comprehensive contemporary** curriculum across a wide range of fields of study for life-long knowledge seekers and aim for the future University to participate in as many fields of study as we individually do today.

We would develop particular focus on programs which respond to South Australia and the nation's skills shortages and which are connected to industries central to our economic growth. Our programs would be **integrated with industry** and create the opportunity for students of all levels and fields to engage with industry, including through placements or internships. Every student at the University would have an experience with **entrepreneurship** during their program. We would **teach what we research**, embedding key research topics and methodologies into the curriculum.

Every course would have a digital underpinning. We would have a sophisticated digital delivery capability that will enable an enhanced and consistent learning experience for students regardless of their physical location and an overall mix of delivery modalities for their educational experience. Our **online curriculum will be the highest quality in Australia** – and we aim to deliver inclusive online education to more students than any other Australian university.

Combined, we would transform the role that Australian universities play in providing equity and access to higher education for all.

Equity and excellence are wholly compatible – knowledge and capacity for successful learning know no borders, race or class. **More students from a low socioeconomic background would learn and complete degrees at the University than at any other higher education institution in Australia.** Through both our physical reach across South Australia, as well as our commitment to innovative online education, we would become one of the nation's top five educators of students in regional and rural areas.

For tens of thousands of years, First Nations Aboriginal people in South Australia have come together to teach, create and discover knowledge. Our universities today are committed to reconciliation and addressing generations of injustice, but we believe this is only the beginning.

Our University will work to **embed Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and learning across our activities** and would aim to **become the university of choice for First Nations people across Australia.**

To assist delivering these objectives, we would aim to **invest \$100 million in a dedicated endowment over our first five years of operation to support the access for and participation of student equity groups in the University.**

Combined, we aim to be globally recognised as Australia's leading future-making research university.

The University would work across the full value chain of research from discovery to translation and commercialisation, and across a breadth of domains from science, technology, engineering and maths to humanities and social sciences, and achieve recognition for delivering world class research in areas that are a high priority for the State.

Combined, **we would be ranked in the top 1 per cent of universities globally – and will work to be recognised among the world's top 100 universities on an ongoing basis.** Our research focus

would be multidisciplinary, and dynamically informed by South Australia's evolving economic and social priorities:

1. Defence & national security
2. Space & advanced technologies
3. Energy & resources
4. Food & food security
5. Health & wellbeing
6. Emerging & critical technologies, such as quantum and cyber
7. Creative and cultural industries

Close collaboration with industry driven by a strong fundamental capability would secure further investment from government, business and private stakeholders, **elevating Category 2-4 research funding**. The University would aim to be **ranked first in Australia for industry income in research** or for commercialisation outcomes.

We would aim to become the **destination of choice for the best global researchers, innovators, thinkers and entrepreneurs in our priority areas**, driving in-depth, and the highest quality of, multi-disciplinary research at scale in domains of focus, and provide **appropriate training support**. We would invest on an ongoing basis to retain and attract leading academics and their teams to the University to drive excellence in research and education.

The University will deliver **top higher degree by research programs to supply the higher degree qualified researchers across our broad discipline areas necessary to drive the development of the State and the nation's knowledge intensive industries**, such as hi-tech, defence, health and biomedical science, and maximising the opportunity for translation and spill over of research into industry.

Combined, we would become Australia's most connected university – partnered with communities we serve and an engine for innovation and economic development.

As South Australia continues the decades-long shift of its economy towards knowledge intensive industries, its universities become ever more central to driving economic and equitable growth. There is the potential for the step change that we make as a University to **translate into a step change for our knowledge intensive industries**.

Through the transformational investments that we would make in learning, teaching and research, we will build deep connections between the combined University, industry and government to create Australia's most connected university – and maximise the translation of every dollar invested to value for the South Australian community and its economic and social wellbeing.

Through increasing the number of skilled and qualified workers and the development of industry ecosystems, which integrate research and enterprise, we would aim **to increase the number of South Australians employed in high-value, high-wage jobs**, which require a Bachelor's degree or higher **and increase the measured economic complexity of the South Australian economy**.

The University **would encourage commercialisation and entrepreneurship across all sectors** and build a highly connected and integrated pipeline of research activity and workforce development, from discovery to translation. We would work with Australian and global industry to understand, shape and address the most important questions and challenges facing society.

Importantly, the University would – in its own right – become an economic powerhouse for the State. On day one, the **University would be the largest services exporter in South Australia** and one of the largest exporters overall.

Through driving further attraction of both international students and talented researchers, the University would grow as a **magnet for attracting some of the best and brightest global citizens** to the State.

The combined university presents particular opportunities for **private sector investment to revitalise the Adelaide CBD precincts around our campuses along North Terrace** through attracting more companies to South Australia and their research and development activities. Adelaide would become an even more cosmopolitan, globally connected city, benefiting from an increase in international students who bring with them their ideas and culture, creating an attractive, open, vibrant place to live and work, while **our regional footprint will ensure workforce, research and innovation needs are met across the State.**

Combined, we would be financially sustainable, strong and able to invest, but significant one-off investments in integration will be needed to reach that steady state.

Establishing and realising the potential of the combined University will require significant one-off and ongoing investments to fund transition and transformational change.

While the combined University may be able to fund some of the investment, funding support will be required for one-off investments across transition and transformation from the South Australian and Australian Governments to deliver the intended benefits.