

**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

THE NEW WAY TO DO UNI

RESEARCH AND IMPACT PLAN 2023–2028



Victoria University acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Bunurong/ Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the traditional owners of University land in Victoria, and the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation who are the traditional owners of University land in Sydney.



Paola Balla's Moondani Balluk design shows the embodying relationship between the University and Moondani Balluk and the meaning of 'embracing people' – being embraced by VU.

CONTENTS

Foreword from the Vice-Chancellor	3
Introduction from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Impact	4
Our Research with Impact Statement	5
Supporting VU's Strategic Plan	6
Key Thematic Areas	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Health, sports and wellness ◆ First Nations knowledge ◆ New generation skill and workforce impact ◆ Green research translation ◆ New frontiers in policy, advocacy and justice 	
The VU Real-World Researcher	10
Research Plan Enablers	11
People	12
Performance	13
Partnerships	14
Key Performance Indicators Summary	15



FOREWORD FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The release of our *Strategic Plan 2022–2028: Start well, finish brilliantly* was a significant moment for Victoria University (VU), as we began a new era in our rich history. With a new strategy comes a renewed and reviewed sense of purpose for all areas of our university, and our bold and focused research direction is outlined in the Research and Impact Plan 2023–2028.

One of the crucial elements of our new direction is our commitment to Protecting Country. The Strategic Plan recognises First Nations Peoples and Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies and ontologies, and that these belong within the practices of the University. Planetary health was, and still is, an important focus of our research but we have deepened this concept—ensuring we are inspired by First Nations Peoples who have proudly carried this responsibility for a very long time.

Impact is also addressed explicitly in this Plan. We have defined what it means for the University and ensured it is the stated outcome of everything we set out to do. At VU, we know impact cannot be achieved without deep alliances and partnerships. As we say in the Strategic Plan – we are a partnering institution, we cannot do it alone.

We have further work to do to achieve our ambitious goal to be a global leader in dual sector research. Our Research Plan 2023–2028 will play a key part in this process. This reflects our clear aspiration to be an institution based in the west of Melbourne, but with an unyielding focus on generating positive change—through research—in the world.

I am excited about where we begin, and what we can achieve.

Professor Adam Shoemaker
Vice-Chancellor and President



INTRODUCTION FROM THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR, RESEARCH AND IMPACT

At VU our researchers are proud of the impact their work has in both serving the community in the west of Melbourne, as well as nationally and globally. The *VU Strategic Plan 2022–2028: Start well, finish brilliantly* has a strong vision – ‘to be a global leader in dual-sector learning and research by 2028’, and sets a strategic driver of ‘Maximising Research with Impact’ in order to achieve this. The *VU Research and Impact Plan 2023–2028* articulates how we will deliver this over the next five years.

We embrace what makes our researchers unique – the VU Real-World Researcher captures the attributes that are vital to our approach to research with impact, and the way in which we work. Our commitment to Protecting Country, together with our focus in key thematic areas of research strength, place us in an excellent position to achieve our research aspirations. Our researchers play a proactive role in anticipating future issues and are adept at solving complex problems through their multidisciplinary approaches.

In our rapidly changing environment, we have anchored our plan around the key enablers of People, Partnerships, and Performance. As a global solutions hub based in the west of Melbourne, our research addresses some of the most significant problems of our time and aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We will leverage and develop existing and new partnerships to deliver on our impact agenda, and continue to deliver value to the communities we serve, and the world.

Just as we have successfully set out to be very different in our approach to education – with the first-of-its-kind First Year College and the revolutionary VU Block Model, both of which are incredibly successful – we are now forging our own path in research with impact.

Our Research and Impact Plan 2023–2028 proudly shows the way.

Professor Andrew Hill
Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Impact

OUR RESEARCH WITH IMPACT STATEMENT

At Victoria University, research with impact is the development and sustained application of ethical knowledge in all its forms, done in partnership and collaboration, to address the challenges of people, place and planet.

VU will be known as a global solutions hub based in the west of Melbourne, working with our partners in co-defining and co-creating research to address the needs of our communities locally, nationally and globally.

The University's strategic commitment to Protecting Country means we are guided by our inherent responsibility to First Nations Peoples in caring, knowing and protecting people, place and planet. Underpinning this is the commitment of VU to pursuing epistemic justice in research that is led by and agreed to by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and researchers. Our focus on Protecting Country addresses many of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

As an outstanding dual-sector University, VU embraces research which is strongly aligned to industry and society. Collaboration, including ongoing relationship building, mutual learning and interaction, inclusivity, and responsiveness, are keys to success and to guide future paths. The allocation of resources to support our research impact will be achieved through a consistent, enlightened, egalitarian and fair approach. The 'what people do together' to create knowledge is crucial – this is the VU Real-World Researcher.

For VU, research with impact is about taking that next step:

- ◆ more than knowledge but ethical knowledge;
- ◆ more than strengths but solutions;
- ◆ more than the West but the world; and
- ◆ more than us but together.

SUPPORTING VU'S STRATEGIC PLAN

In our *Strategic Plan 2022 – 2028: Start well, finish brilliantly*, we have a clear mandate to undertake research with impact, ensuring that outcomes benefit people, place and planet.

OUR VISION

TO BE A GLOBAL LEADER IN DUAL-SECTOR LEARNING AND RESEARCH BY 2028.



SUPPORTING VU'S STRATEGIC PLAN – STRATEGIC DRIVERS

To achieve our vision, we have identified five strategic drivers. The Research Plan contributes to all five drivers.

Doing dual differently

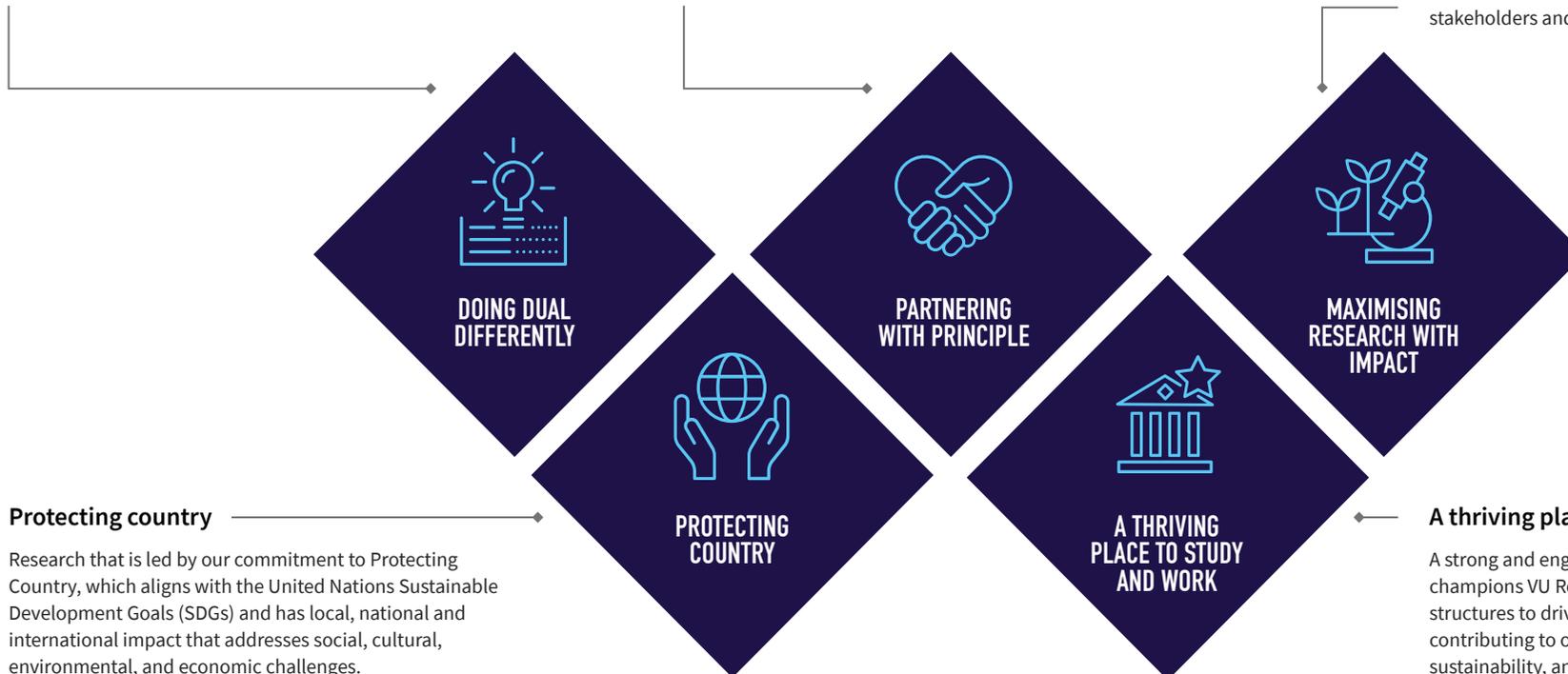
Dual-sector research with strong collaboration between the Higher Education and Polytechnic Colleges, ensuring opportunities for joint HDR supervision, obtaining joint project funding, mentoring, and finding creative ways for students to engage with research during their studies.

Partnering with principle

Developing new and existing partnerships and collaborations with industry, government, and the wider community in Australia and around the world – with mutual benefit and shared ethics and values. Enhancing our Flipped Campus model by ensuring ethical research connections with alliances co-located on campus.

Maximising research with impact

Achieving research distinction by investing in research infrastructure and focusing on three areas which align with the priorities in the Strategic Plan; People, Partnerships and Performance. To be world-leading in key thematic areas as well as realising commercialisation opportunities for our intellectual property, demonstrating impact for stakeholders and end-users.

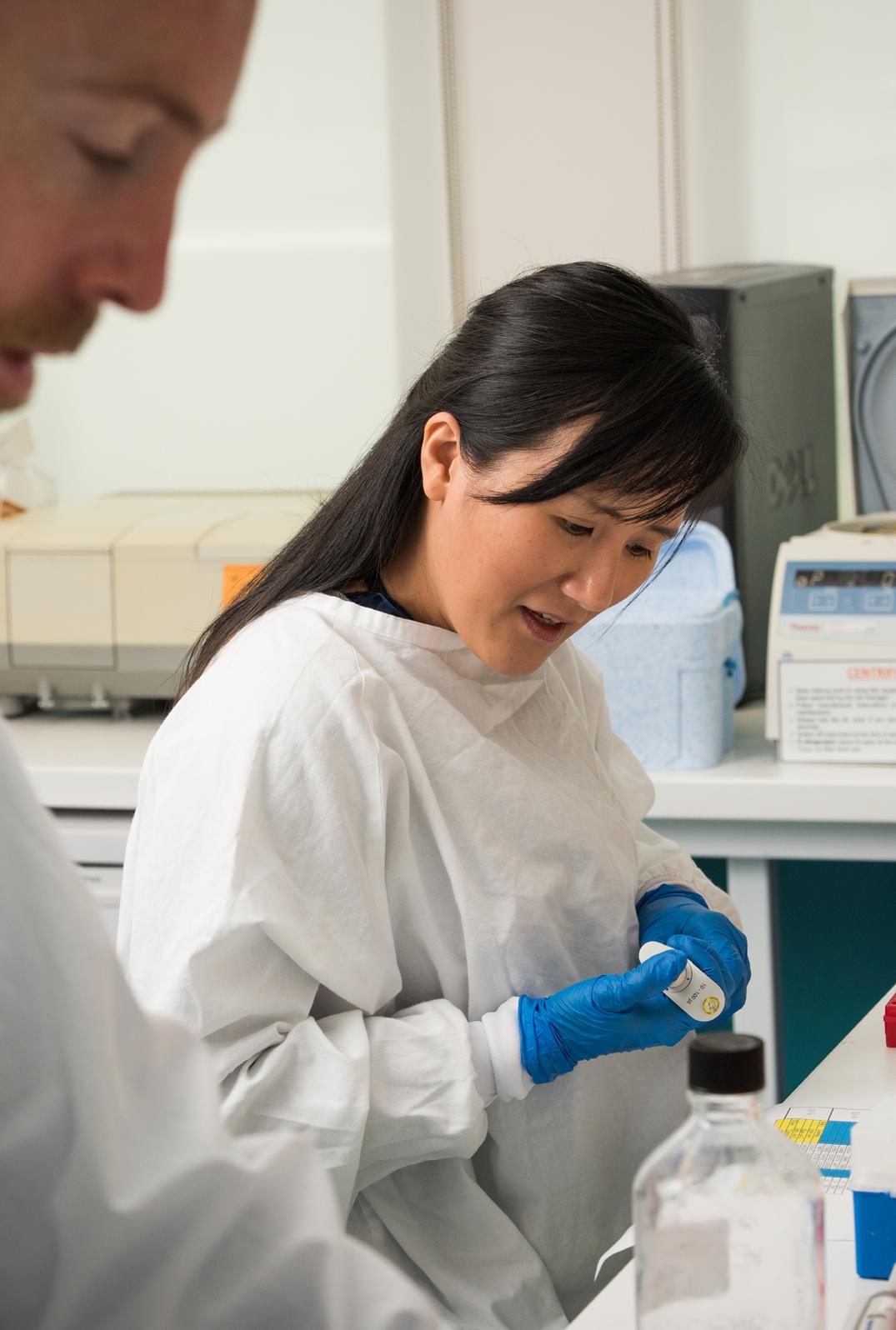


Protecting country

Research that is led by our commitment to Protecting Country, which aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and has local, national and international impact that addresses social, cultural, environmental, and economic challenges.

A thriving place to study and work

A strong and engaged research and academic culture that champions VU Real-World Researchers, with the right structures to drive high-performance and excellence, contributing to our financial and organisational sustainability, and enhancing our global reputation.



KEY THEMATIC AREAS

The University's Strategic Plan has identified five key thematic areas in which we aim to be world-leading. They give us focus, purpose, and reflect who we are and the impact we want to have on the world.

- 1 Health, sport and wellness**
Interdisciplinary approaches to transform health, sport, social inclusion and community wellbeing, in particular building on core strengths in translational health research by leveraging key assets such as the co-location with the new Footscray Hospital.
- 2 First Nations knowledge**
Connecting the deep knowledge, insights, and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to solve contemporary challenges.
- 3 New generation skills and workforce impact**
Creating solutions for developing the skills of the future to impact advanced manufacturing and service industries.
- 4 Green research translation**
Developing translational sustainable solutions to challenges in the natural environment.
- 5 New frontiers in policy, advocacy and justice**
Improving education, health, law, social inclusion and the economy by developing policy and thought leadership locally, nationally, and internationally.

ALIGNMENT OF KEY THEMATIC AREAS WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

		Health, sports and wellness	First Nations knowledge	New generation skill and workforce impact	Green research translation	New frontiers in policy, advocacy and justice
	1. No poverty			✓		✓
	2. Zero hunger				✓	✓
	3. Good health and well-being	✓				✓
	4. Quality education		✓	✓		✓
	5. Gender equality	✓				✓
	6. Clean water and sanitation				✓	
	7. Affordable and clean energy				✓	✓
	8. Decent work and economic growth		✓	✓		✓
	9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure			✓		✓
	10. Reduced inequalities		✓	✓	✓	✓
	11. Sustainable cities and communities	✓	✓			
	12. Responsible consumption and production				✓	
	13. Climate action				✓	✓
	14. Life below water				✓	
	15. Life on land				✓	
	16. Peace, justice and strong institutions		✓			✓
	17. Partnerships for the goals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



THE VU REAL-WORLD RESEARCHER

Research with impact cannot be achieved without an experienced and dedicated research community. Creating a great research environment to empower our people is fundamental to our Plan.

Who are the researchers who can lead the way to 2028?

The answer is The VU Real-World Researcher.

The VU Real-World Researcher is **authentically connected**, developing meaningful partnerships with partners and stakeholders at the local, national, and international levels; as well as having a genuine and deep understanding of the problems they are trying to solve.

They are **creative** and bring bold innovative solutions to research in our key focus areas, addressing significant problems of our time and contributing to global efforts through our partnerships and world-leading expertise. They embrace multidisciplinary and novel approaches to research.

They are **adaptable** and can respond to change, with an entrepreneurial mindset that capitalises on opportunities. The VU Real-World Researcher uses a proactive approach to engage with a wide variety of partners and stakeholders – identifying future issues and solving complex problems.

They are **passionate** about their research and the impact they can have on people and the world. They connect to societal issues through lived experience. They provide mentorship and leadership to build researcher capability at all levels, and focus on high-quality research, training and research leadership.

The VU Real-World Researcher is **ethical**, operating with integrity and adhering to the highest level of ethical standards. They are responsible in their research conduct, ensuring honesty, accuracy and respect at all times.

RESEARCH PLAN ENABLERS



**MAXIMISING
RESEARCH WITH
IMPACT**

PERFORMANCE

World-leading research and skills in key thematic areas relating to people, place and planet.



PEOPLE

PEOPLE

Develop and leverage our talent in research with impact.



PERFORMANCE



PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERSHIPS

Grow our scale through ethical, impactful, and mutually beneficial partnerships.

PEOPLE

DEVELOP AND LEVERAGE OUR TALENT

VU's researchers are a great source of expertise and pride. We have researchers who are renowned nationally and globally for their groundbreaking, impactful and distinctive work in key fields.



Impact agenda

VU researchers will be real-world researchers – adaptive, ethical and creative, with an authentic connection to the problems they are working to solve, and vital collaborators with industry and community.

Actions

- 1 Develop incentives to attract and retain high-performing researchers, and build research teams to deliver impactful research.
- 2 Develop a targeted approach to adjunct research appointments which align with the key thematic areas.
- 3 Develop a comprehensive HDR attraction and retention plan including; identifying pathways to doctoral degrees and to post-doctoral employment, scholarships and internships, and mentoring programs.
- 4 Support and increase doctorally qualified staff in key disciplines where numbers are low.
- 5 Implement a stronger culture to drive an uplift in research performance and excellence, focusing on quality research outcomes.
- 6 Ensure an inclusive research environment that builds on gender equality and diversity to encourage creativity, and deepen our ability to effectively tackle major societal problems.

Key performance indicators

INDICATORS	2022	2028 TARGETS
Graduate Research		
Commencing domestic and international HDRs	113	>140
Number of HDR completions	112	137
% Timely HDR Completions	baseline	80%
Publications		
Publications per Researcher FTE	2.16 (2021)	3.24
% Publications in top 10% Journals	27% (2021)	35%
Category Normalised Citation Impact (5 year)	1.1	1.6

PERFORMANCE

WORLD-LEADING RESEARCH AND SKILLS IN KEY THEMATIC AREAS

VU will be known as a global solutions hub. Our unique translational research capacity enables us to address complex challenges for and with impact.

Impact agenda



VU will be renowned as a world-leader in our key thematic areas, committed to Protecting Country and with a distinct research identity that is sought out by, and responds to, the needs of industry, community and government.

Actions

- 1 Continue to create a distinctive VU research profile by focusing effort and resources on our key thematic areas.
- 2 Increased collaboration with Higher Education/Polytechnic Colleges and with industry, through Centres of Excellence and other initiatives such as the Footscray Hospital co-location.
- 3 Ensure our commitment to Protecting Country (sustainability and the UN SDGs) delivers research with impact, through qualitative methods that align with a responsible approach to research evaluation.
- 4 Develop research outreach activities, including a research marketing and public relations plan, researcher communications support and training, and a rankings improvement plan.
- 5 Support our researchers and build their capability to compete for external research funding.
- 6 Ensure we have the right processes, systems and infrastructure (physical and digital) in place to deliver on our Research Plan.

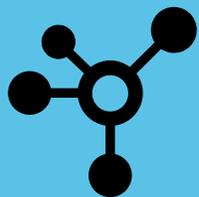
Key performance indicators

INDICATORS	2022	2028 TARGETS
Impact		
Times Higher Education World University Rankings	401 – 500 VU Peak (2018-2020): 301-350	301 – 350
Times Higher Education Impact Rankings	=79 VU Peak (2022): =79	Top 50
Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) or equivalent national assessment		80% of VU's assessed FoR (4 digit-level) rated at world standard (or equivalent) or above
National Impact Assessment		95% of VU's assessed FoR rated at medium and/or high impact
Research income		
Category 1 (competitive grant funding)	\$2.5m (2020)	\$5.0m

PARTNERSHIP

GROW OUR SCALE

As stated in our Strategic Plan 2022-2028 – we are a partnering institution, we cannot do it alone.



Impact agenda

VU will be an ethical partnering institution, with a scalable and sustainable network – building strong relationships and working collaboratively to solve complex problems.

Actions

- 1** Undertake collaborative research at scale with a focus on major alliances and strategic partnerships, and develop considered metrics to measure impact and engagement.
- 2** Establish umbrella agreements with partner universities and other research organisations in Australia and overseas, to increase scale of our activities and promote collaborative opportunities in our areas of research strength.
- 3** Become part of government 'infrastructure value chains' through research, teaching and skills development.
- 4** Promote two-way mobility of researchers and industry/community practitioners, and foster authentic collaboration, to increase our research impact and commercialisation goals.
- 5** Develop a research alumni plan to foster collaborative research networks, mentor emerging researchers and attract funding and research expertise.

Key performance indicators

INDICATORS	2022	2028 TARGETS
Graduate Research		
% HDRs with internship/scholarship	Baseline	30%
Research income		
Category 2–4 (industry/public sector/CRC/other funding)	\$14.4m (2020)	\$28.8m

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – SUMMARY

Note: Additional KPIs that are related to – but not exclusive to – this plan include; equity group participation and success metrics, gender pay gap, and female participation and leadership position metrics. These are reported against at the enterprise level, and are detailed in the University Strategic Scorecard.

PEOPLE

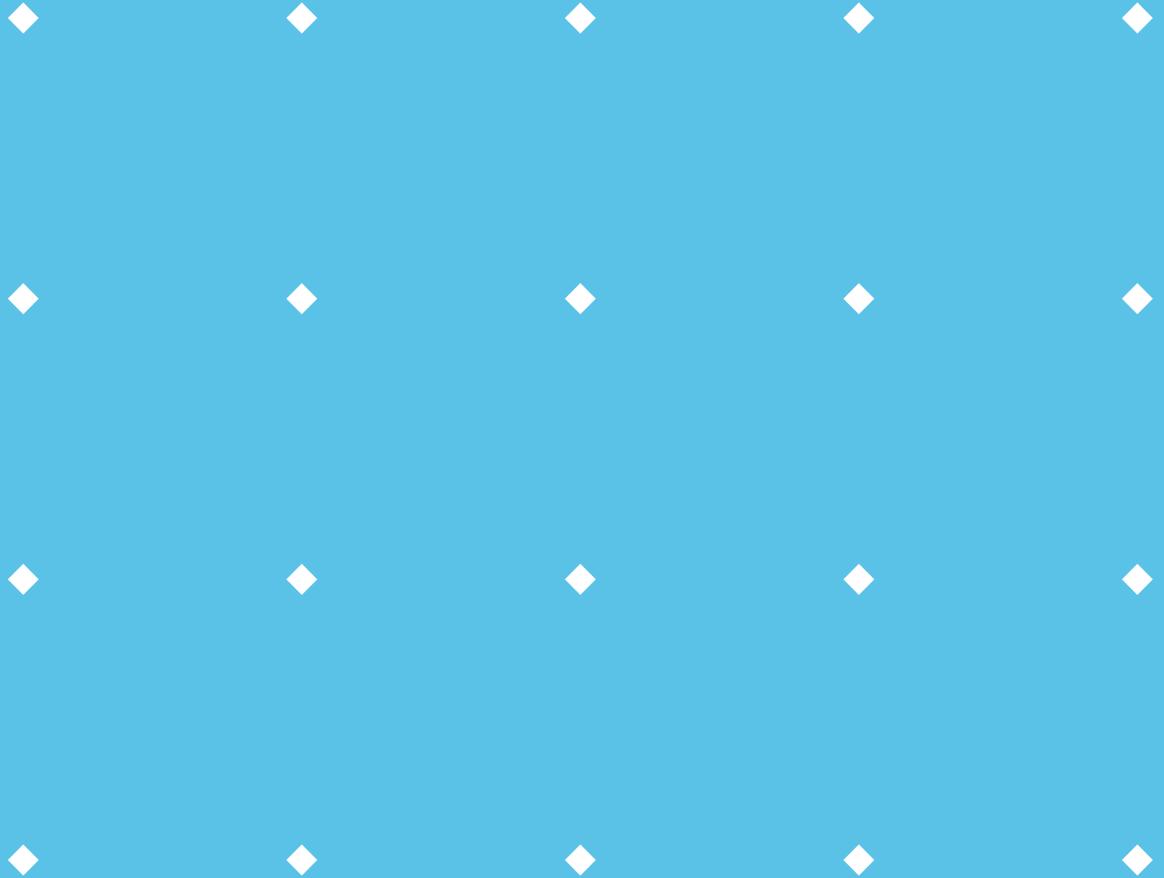
INDICATORS	2022	2028 TARGETS
Graduate Research		
Commencing domestic and international HDRs	113	>140
Number of HDR completions	112	>130
% Timely HDR Completions	baseline	80%
Publications		
Publications per Researcher FTE	2.16 (2021)	3.24
% Publications in top 10% Journals	27% (2021)	35%
Category Normalised Citation Impact (5 year)	1.1	1.6

PARTNERSHIPS

INDICATORS	2022	2028 TARGETS
Graduate Research		
% HDRs with internship/scholarship	Baseline	30%
Research income		
Category 2 – 4 (industry/public sector/CRC/other funding)	\$14.4m (2020)	\$28.8m

PERFORMANCE

INDICATORS	2022	2028 TARGETS
Impact		
Times Higher Education World University Rankings	401 – 500 VU Peak (2018-2020): 301-350	301 – 350
Times Higher Education Impact Rankings	=79 VU Peak (2022): =79	Top 50
Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA)	80% of VU's assessed FoR (4 digit-level) rated at world standard or above	
National Impact Assessment	95% of VU's assessed FoR rated at medium and/or high impact	
Research income		
Category 1 (competitive grant funding)	\$2.5m (2020)	\$5.0m



THE NEW WAY TO DO UNI

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Impact

+61 3 9919 5006

dvc.research@vu.edu.au