

Research and Impact Plan

2023–2030

Update

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Country is alive.

Country is here and now and not some relic of the past.

We acknowledge and pay our deep respect to the Ancestors, Elders, and families of the Traditional Owners on all of our campuses – the Kulin Nation (Melbourne campuses), the Eora Nation (Sydney campus) and the Yugara/Yugarapul and Turrbal Nation (Brisbane campus).

At Victoria University (VU) we honour Indigenous cultures. Everything we do and every decision

we make is underpinned by a commitment to Protecting Country.

Country is both a place of belonging and a way of believing, as well as contributing to the conservation of critical environmental and diverse cultural assets.

It is a community-driven movement towards long-term social, cultural, physical, and economic prosperity and sustainability.

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 2022–2030: Start well, finish brilliantly* sets a bold vision – to be one of the leading impact-driven universities in the world by 2030 – and identifies ‘Maximising Research with Impact’ as a core strategic driver in achieving this.

This updated VU Research and Impact Plan 2023–2030 articulates how we will deliver on this vision over the coming years. It reflects not only our continued ambition but also our alignment with the updated Strategic Plan and its extended timeframe.

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 on 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 updated Research and Impact Plan 2023–2030 proudly shows the way.

Professor Andy 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 recognised as a global solutions hub, grounded in place and connected to the world. From its base in Melbourne, the University works with partners locally, nationally and internationally to co create research that responds to the complex challenges facing communities, societies and the planet.

The University's strategic commitment to Protecting Country reflects our inherent responsibility to First Nations Peoples in caring for, knowing and sustaining people, place and planet. This commitment guides how VU approaches research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and researchers, ensuring that research is conducted in ways that are respectful, responsible and accountable. Through this focus, Protecting Country directly contributes to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

As an outstanding dual sector university, VU advances research that is deeply connected to industry, communities and society. Collaboration—through long term relationships, mutual learning, inclusion and responsiveness—is fundamental to impact and to shaping future pathways. Resources to support research impact will be allocated through a consistent, enlightened and fair approach, recognising that knowledge creation is a collective endeavour. What people do together matters—this is the essence of VU Research.

VU's research is:

- More than knowledge — it is ethical, responsible and grounded in care;
- More than strengths — it delivers solutions to real world challenges;
- More than place — it is globally connected and globally relevant; and
- More than us — it is created *together*.

Supporting VU's Strategic Plan

In our *Strategic Plan 2022 – 2030: 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 one of the leading
impact-driven universities
in the world by 2030



Supporting VU's Strategic Plan – Strategic Drivers

The Research and Impact Plan directly contributes to the VU five Strategic Drivers:



Learner-centred for life

Providing innovative, dual-sector learning that adapts to every stage of life and career. It leverages the VU Block Model®, digital innovation and AI to deliver flexible, global and equitable education, ensuring graduates achieve meaningful careers and embrace lifelong learning.

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.



Partnering with principle



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.

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.



Protecting country



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

VU will be a world leader in research excellence across six key thematic areas:

1 **Innovating education and future-proofing Australia's workforce**

Research that enhances education delivery, improves student outcomes, and aligns with future workforce needs.

2 **Sport that inspires elite performance, community participation and healthy living**

Research that advances elite sports performance, sports technology, community health, and participation.

3 **Health and wellbeing solutions**

Solutions for chronic disease prevention, mental health, health equity, and integrated care models.

4 **Transforming communities through policy, practice and governance**

Research on public policy, governance, social innovation, and community-led transformation.

5 **Smart, sustainable and liveable cities**

Research on sustainable infrastructure, resilient built environments, and technology-enabled systems.

6 **'By community, for community' First Nations Knowledge**

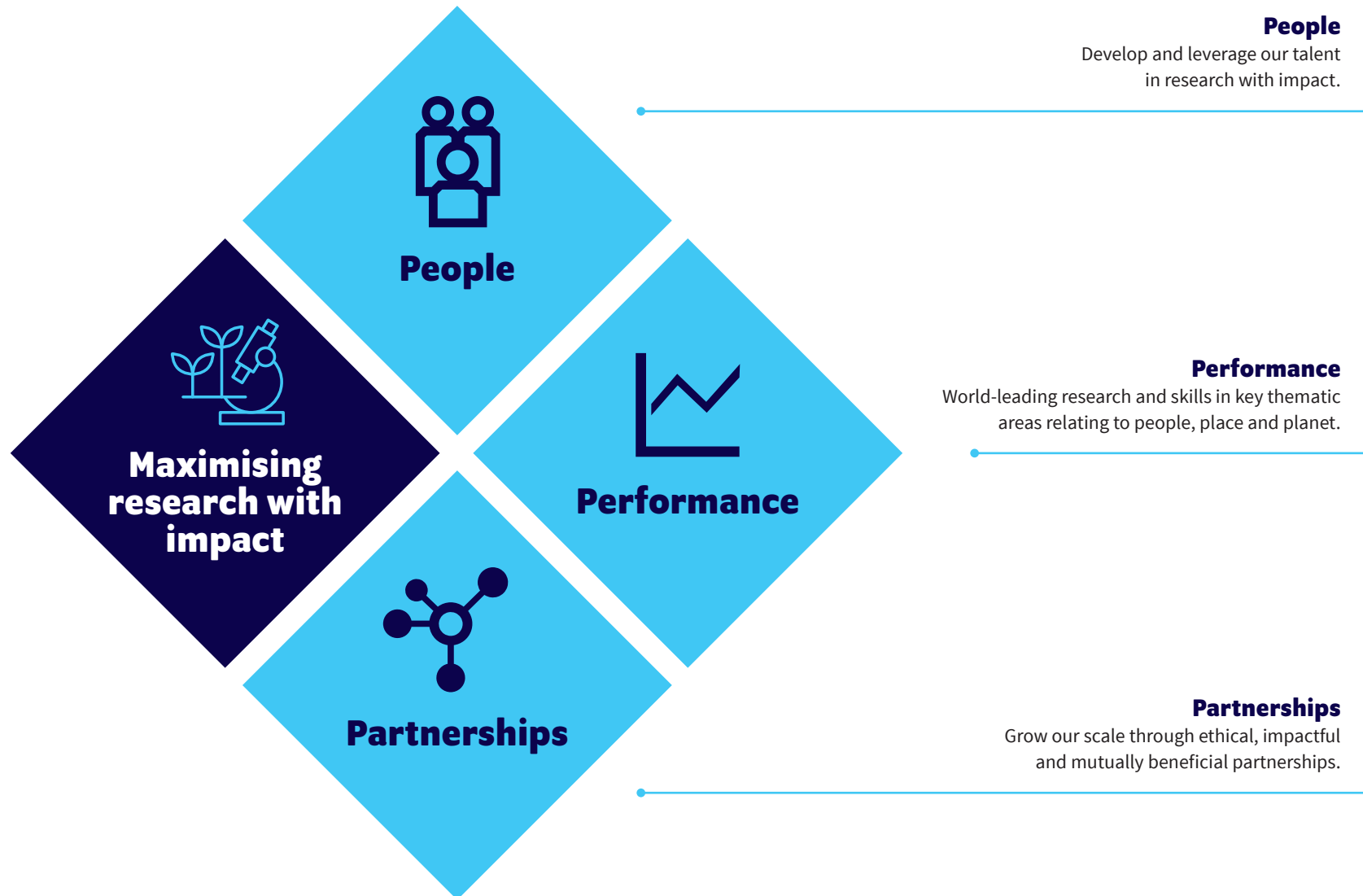
Research that is led by, or in partnership with, First Nations communities, ensuring knowledge sovereignty and cultural impact.



Key Thematic Areas – Detailed

Indicative research topics include:					
1. Innovating education and future-proofing Australia's workforce	Innovative pedagogies and Block Model® teaching and learning models, including approaches that improve access, participation and success for diverse learners	Future skills, micro-credentials and lifelong learning systems that support evolving workforce needs	Dual-sector (Higher Education–VET) education models and workforce pathways	Artificial intelligence (AI), education technologies, learning analytics, including the international student experience and equity considerations.	Labour market forecasting, skills policy and education-to-employment pathways
2. Sport that inspires elite performance, community participation and healthy living	Athlete health, biomechanics and performance analytics, including injury prevention and human–surface interactions in sport	Sports analytics, wearable technologies and AI-enabled performance modelling	Sport participation, safety and inclusion, including accessible sport through urban design and community programs	Sport, health and urban environments, examining the role of sport and physical activity in population health	Sport as a driver of social, cultural and economic outcomes, including participation, policy and community engagement
3. Health and wellbeing solutions	Preventative health and chronic disease management	Allied health, nursing, exercise science and rehabilitation	AI and data-enabled care, including clinical decision support and predictive health analytics		
4. Transforming communities through policy, practice and governance	AI, digital governance and data-driven public sector transformation	Social policy reform and program evaluation	Governance, regulation, justice and equity	Community-led research and place-based interventions	
5. Smart, sustainable and liveable cities	Urban analytics, digital twins and smart infrastructure systems	Climate and disaster resilience, energy security and circular economy	Sustainable infrastructure and resilient built environments	Advanced transport systems, optimised logistics and supply chains	
6. By community, for community' First Nations Knowledge	Community-led, strengths-based research	Treaty, truth-telling and self-determination	Aboriginal women's leadership and activism	Indigenous knowledges informing policy, health, education and sustainability	Indigenous data sovereignty and ethical use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, including protecting Country
Artificial intelligence (AI) is a key cross-cutting research capability at Victoria University, enabling applied research impact across our six research thematic areas. VU researchers apply AI and data-enabled technologies to address real-world challenges in areas such as education, health and wellbeing, sport performance, public policy and sustainable cities. AI capability is developed and applied responsibly, with a strong commitment to ethical AI, Indigenous data sovereignty, and the protection of Country, culture and community knowledge in digital systems.					

Research Plan Enablers



Research and Impact Plan Enablers



People

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.

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.

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.



Performance

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

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 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.

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.



Partnerships

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

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.

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.

Key Performance Indicators

The Research and Impact Plan 2023–2030 will track progress through core research, performance indicators, supported by enterprise-level equity, participation in leadership measures reported through the university strategic scorecard.



Graduate Research

Building a stronger HDR pipeline, and completion profile.

Indicator	2023 baseline	2030 target
Commencing domestic and international HDRs	86	>120
HDR completions	85	>100
Timely HDR completions	Baseline	80%



Research Income

Growing competitive, industry, public sector, and other research funding.

Indicator	2023 baseline	2030 target
Category 1 competitive grant funding	\$1.5M (2023)	>\$5m
Category 2–4 (industry/public sector/CRC/other funding)	\$18.1M (2023)	>\$28.8m



Impact

Embedding societal-impact case studies across the thematic areas.

Indicator	2023 baseline	2030 target
Comprehensive societal-impact case studies	2026: Framework embedded with ≥6 pilot case studies	2030: >10 case studies per thematic area



Publications

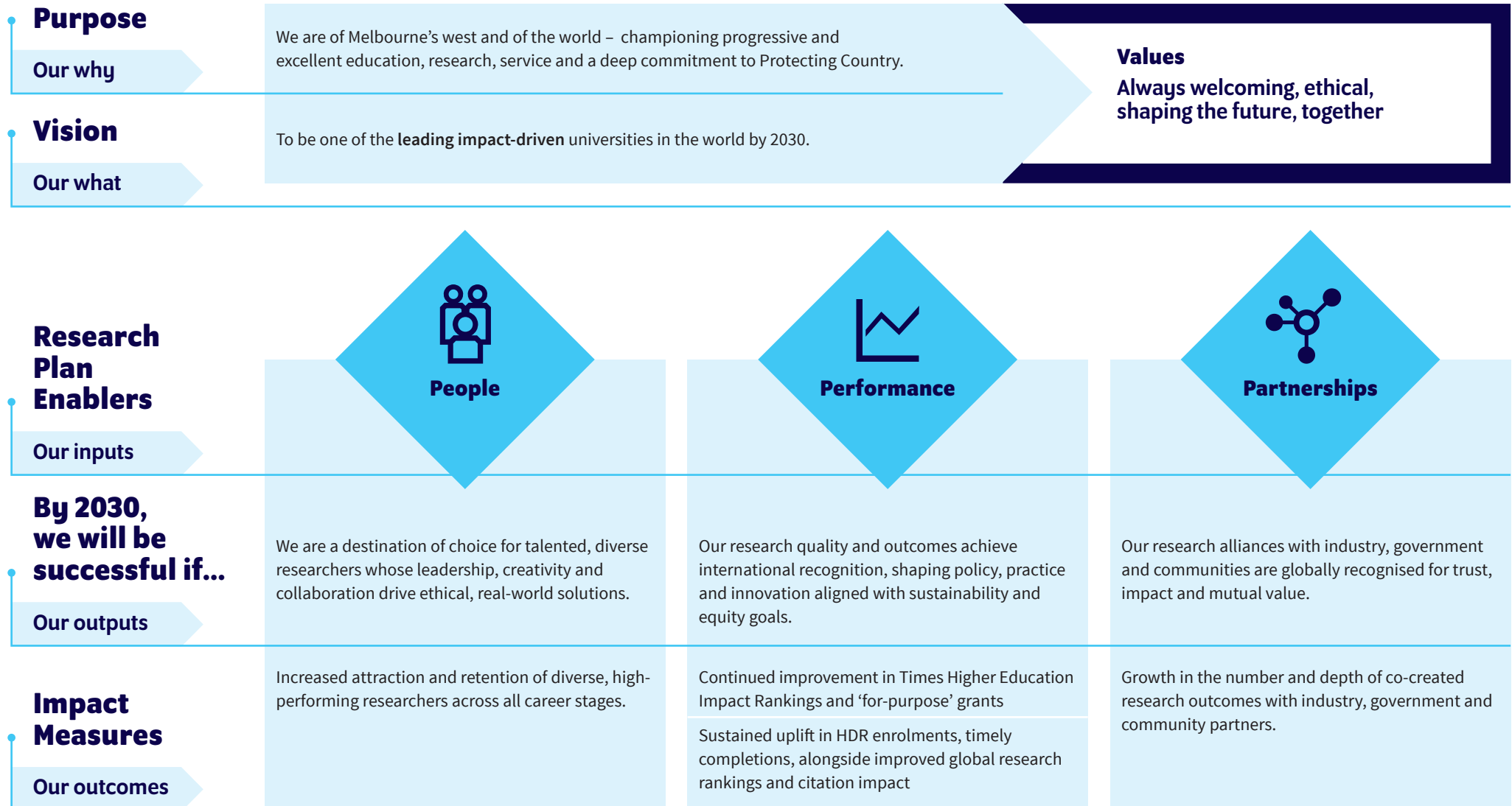
Increasing publication, quality, reach and citation performance.

Indicator	2023 baseline	2030 target
Category normalised citation impact (5 year)	1.3	1.6
Publications in top 10% journals	18.4%	25%

Additional KPIs relating to equity, group participation and success, the gender pay gap, and female participation and leadership are reported at enterprise level through the University Strategic Scorecard.

VU Research and Impact Plan on a Page

2022–2030: Start well, finish brilliantly



VU Strategic Plan on a Page

2022–2030: Start well, finish brilliantly

Purpose	We are of Melbourne's west and of the world – championing progressive and excellent education, research, service and a deep commitment to Protecting Country.				Values Always welcoming, ethical, shaping the future, together
Our why					
Vision	To be one of the leading impact-driven universities in the world by 2030.				
Our what					
Strategic Drivers					
	Learner-centred for life	Protecting country	Partnering with principle	A thriving place to study and work	Maximising research with impact
Our inputs					
By 2030, we will be successful if...	We harness our dual-sector strengths and smart technology so our students can start well and finish brilliantly – with a profound impact on students from equity backgrounds.	We are a truly progressive, First Nations-led and inspired institution, shaping a fairer and more equitable backyard, frontyard and world.	We cultivate a diverse, strategic network of ethical alliances and partnerships – built on deep, authentic collaboration – with enduring outcomes for our students, communities and reputation.	We are excellent, focused and brave – a destination University for emerging leaders and diverse talent, bringing the best of the west to the world.	Our research delivers measurable and creative solutions, attracting collaborators who seek to amplify real-world impact through shared expertise and purpose.
Our outputs					
Impact Measures	Leading equity participation and success rates	Sustain and strengthen external accreditation for core social and equality benchmarks	Partnership advocacy, with measurable gains in reputation, trust, and perceived value.	Leading student experience across TAFE and Higher Education	Continued improvement in Times Higher Education Impact Rankings and 'for-purpose' grants
	Increased graduate employment				
Our outcomes					

For more information, contact:

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Impact

Phone

+61 3 9919 5006

Email

dvc.research@vu.edu.au

Postal Address

Victoria University
PO Box 14428
Melbourne VIC 8001

vu.edu.au