

Statement of Cooperation

on creating a new university for the future in South Australia

Working together to progress the feasibility and business case of creating a leading, for purpose university dedicated to addressing educational inequality; conducting future making research of scale and focus; and partnered with communities and industry, to become a globally recognised powerhouse for innovation and economic development.

Note that a decision to proceed to form a new university is subject to the outcomes of the feasibility assessment and agreed business case and financial plan, including consideration of appropriate resourcing and government investment to ensure a successful and financially sustainable future university.






Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect Aboriginal Peoples as the state's first peoples and nations, and recognise them as traditional owners and occupants of land and waters in South Australia. Further, we acknowledge that the spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices of Aboriginal Peoples come from their traditional lands and waters, that they maintain their cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws which are of ongoing importance, and that they have made and continue to make a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the state.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal Peoples have endured past injustice and dispossession of their traditional lands and waters.

Context for Cooperation

With a shared ambition for the future of the university sector in South Australia, the South Australian Government, the Australian Government, the Council of the University of South Australia (“UniSA”) and the Council of the University of Adelaide (“UoA”) are working together towards creating a new leading contemporary university for the future in South Australia that would have global standing. The university for the future 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.

An aerial photograph of a city with a river, surrounded by green hills under a clear sky. The image is partially obscured by a white overlay on the right side.

Context for Cooperation

South Australia has excellent universities, each of which contributes to the state's economy by educating not only our young people, but people of all ages, transforming their lives. They also attract international students to study and live in Australia and undertake research that makes a significant contribution to South Australia's economy, society, environment and culture.

International education is South Australia's biggest services export at \$2.2 billion pre-Covid. A healthy university sector is essential for future prosperity, as jobs are increasingly dependent on qualifications, technology and innovation. Universities also drive technological progress and economic growth through research discovery and adoption.

South Australia has a once in a generation opportunity to create a university for the future that would transform the role that Australian universities play in providing equity and access to higher education for all and being globally recognised for future making research connected to industry.

The university for the future would be a magnet for domestic and international students. It would offer Australia's most accessible, contemporary, future focused teaching and learning with digital underpinning and nation leading student employment outcomes.

The university for the future 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. It would be a destination for the best global researchers and innovators driving the highest quality of multi-disciplinary research at scale in domains of focus, and provide appropriate training support.

The new university for the future would become a significant state and national engine for innovation and economic development.

Statement of Cooperation

This Statement of Cooperation sets out the commitment of the South Australian Government, the Australian Government, the Council of UniSA and the Council of the UoA to work together towards the next phase of the creation of a new university for the future in South Australia.

The partners to this Statement have a shared ambition to create a future university that will be transformative and build on the combined strengths and legacies of the existing institutions to make a significant impact for South Australia, Australia, and globally. The combined future university would be Australia's new for purpose university, which is a leading contemporary, comprehensive university of global standing.

The university for the future would strive to deliver an outstanding, accessible, and contemporary teaching and learning experience, drive world-leading and impactful research, and foster deep connections with local, national and global communities. It would aim to be a leading university across four objectives: contemporary and comprehensive education, impact, research excellence, and equity and access.

Equity and excellence are wholly compatible. Knowledge and the capacity for successful learning know no borders, race or class and access to the highest quality education should be within the reach of all Australians.

As such, the university for the future would unite the distinctiveness and strengths of both existing institutions, demonstrated across three core academic characteristics: Teaching and learning; Research; and Engagement. Each will be supported by shared infrastructure, strong digital capabilities, and career paths that enable people to perform at their best.

Actions

Parties to this Statement of Cooperation are prepared to act in accordance with the principles of collaboration, transparency and openness and action.

Government

The South Australian Government will defer the establishment of a South Australian university merger commission to the middle of 2023 or such later date (as determined by the South Australian Government).

In recognition of the significant benefits the amalgamation of UniSA and UoA will have for South Australia, including its economy, the South Australian Government has agreed to provide a financial contribution to maximise the transformational opportunities being pursued in the amalgamation. These arrangements will be developed further in coming weeks.

The Australian Government together with the South Australian Government will support the feasibility assessment and the development of an agreed business case and financial plan by providing relevant data and policy input as required. The Australian Government will also consider the potential model proposed for the operation of the university of the future in the context of the Australian Universities Accord process, which is to report to the Australian Government by the end of 2023.

Future University

If a formal decision is made to progress the university for the future, following the feasibility stage and approval of the business case and financial plan, it is noted that the Councils of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia have agreed the following:

- The combined university is intended to be operational from January 2026.
- There would be no net job losses as a consequence of creating the combined university.
- The combined university would be called 'Adelaide University'.
- A new brand would be developed for the combined university informed by market testing and brand experts, careful consideration of the appropriate recognition of the legacies of both institutions and the preservation of the favourable profiles of the existing institutions.
- The combined university would be created and governed by new legislation modelled in large part on the University of South Australia Act.

Future University

- The respective Councils of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia would continue to govern their respective universities until such time as the combined university commences operation.
- A Transition Council would be created with up to 14 members plus a Chancellor. Each existing university would nominate 50% of the members of the Transition Council.
- The University of South Australia would nominate the Chancellor of the Transition Council subject to consultation with the University of Adelaide.
- The Transition Council would determine the process and time frame to be used to identify and appoint a new Chancellor for the combined university whose term would commence not later than upon the commencement of the second year of operation of the combined university.
- The Transition Council would also commence and oversee an open and competitive process to appoint a Vice-Chancellor for the combined university.
- A co-leadership model would be implemented initially, with the University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide each appointing one of two co-Vice Chancellors.
- The co-leadership model would operate until the appointment and commencement of a Vice-Chancellor for the combined university.



A young man and woman are shown in profile, smiling and engaged in conversation. The woman is on the right, wearing a white t-shirt and a watch, and the man is on the left, wearing a blue t-shirt. They appear to be in a casual setting, possibly a university or office.

This Statement of Cooperation sets out the commitment of the South Australian Government, the Australian Government, the Council of UniSA and the Council of the UoA to work together towards the next phase of the creation of a new university for the future in South Australia.





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AUSTRALIA