

NSW Higher Education Strategy (2021–25)

NSW Government Action Plan: 2021



The NSW Higher Education Strategy (the Strategy) will drive strong and effective partnerships between government and the higher education sector.

The NSW Department of Education will work across government and with the sector to deliver on the Strategy's vision: *NSW Government is partnering with universities and other higher education providers in bold and innovative ways to address social, economic and environmental challenges, both locally and globally.*

What we have done

- Launched a comprehensive NSW Higher Education Strategy, co-designed with the sector.
- Established new mechanisms to engage with the university sector on the Strategy and a Cross-Government Steering Group to ensure a collaborative approach to its implementation.
- Undertaken a comprehensive environmental scan of priority projects currently underway between NSW Government and the sector. Universities and government agencies are already engaged in a wide range of partnerships and collaborative programs that will progress the Strategy's outcomes.
- Designed and launched the NSW Collaboration and Innovation Fund, which will support new, sector-led projects throughout the life of the Strategy.

What we will do

This document outlines specific initiatives the NSW Government will progress to support the actions under each of the five priority areas in the Higher Education Strategy. This includes:

- Delivering on existing commitments and working across government to ensure that these initiatives align to outcomes in the Strategy.
- Progressing new projects. For example, new procurement policies, a new Collaboration and Innovation Fund, scoping new work-integrated learning opportunities and piloting innovative new models of education.
- Identifying gaps or opportunities. Themed roundtables with stakeholders will identify new ideas and opportunities and undertake research and policy development.

This Action Plan focuses on initiatives that will be primarily driven by the NSW Government. It is acknowledged that across universities and higher education providers in NSW there is a range of activity, investment and collaboration underway that contributes to the Strategy's vision.

Priority Area 1: Develop and broaden post-school options to foster lifelong learning

People at all ages and career stages should be able to easily navigate the tertiary education system and access valuable qualifications that will help them achieve their career and education goals. With the emergence of new technologies and industries, it is crucial that all learners are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to adapt and be successful in a changing world.

Higher education, VET and industry are key partners in supporting these students. The NSW Government will support and facilitate new partnerships and the development of innovative education models that will deliver the education and training our citizens need now and into the future.

Actions	Initiatives & Milestones	Stakeholders
Simplify procurement arrangements between NSW Government, universities, and TAFE, for example through a pre-qualification scheme or preferred vendor list	<p>All NSW universities represented through NSW prequalification schemes (22.1% increase). When: By December 2021.</p> <p>A Research and Development (R&D) specific prequalification scheme scoped and under consideration by NSW Procurement Board. When: By December 2021.</p> <p>Standardised R&D funding deeds under development for use across government agencies. When: Developed 2021/22.</p>	<p>Lead: NSW Procurement, Investment NSW with R&D NSW</p> <p>Stakeholders: Treasury, NSW DoE, TAFE NSW</p>

Actions	Initiatives & Milestones	Stakeholders
<p>Establish protocols to facilitate partnerships between higher education providers, VET (including TAFE) and industry</p>	<p>Development of Innovation Partnership agreements with NSW public universities to acknowledge their contribution and commitment to NSW, align their capabilities/ strengths with NSW Government priorities and establish a framework for engagement. When: developed 2021.</p>	<p>Lead: Investment NSW Stakeholders: DoE, GSC, WPCA, RGDC, NSW Health, all NSW public universities</p>
	<p>Collaboration and Innovation Fund established to incentivise and facilitate higher education, industry and VET partnerships. When: Annually, 2021 – 2025. New funding rounds launched each year throughout the life of the Strategy.</p>	<p>Lead: DoE Stakeholders: TAFE NSW, Investment NSW, VET providers, industry partners, NSWVCC</p>
	<p>Institutes of Applied Technology at TAFE Centres of Excellence under development will demonstrate best practice VET, higher education and industry collaborations. When: Launching 2022. Meadowbank to open August 2022 and Kingswood February 2023.</p>	<p>Lead: TAFE NSW, DoE Stakeholders: University and industry partners, Investment NSW</p>
<p>Support new educational models that combine higher education, VET and TAFE</p>	<p>New Education and Training Model at the Bradfield City Centre supported by Government to adopt a micro-credential-based approach, allowing people to build knowledge, skills and experience aligned to employer needs. Delivered in partnership with industry, universities and TAFE. When: Launching 2021.</p>	<p>Lead: WPCA Stakeholders: DoE, TAFE NSW, universities, and industry partners</p>
	<p>The NSW Aerotropolis Multiversity, a collaboration between the UoN, UNSW, the UoW, WSU and TAFE NSW, to deliver new education, training and research centred on the future job needs of the Western Parkland City. When: First short courses to be delivered 2021/22.</p>	<p>Lead: DOE and TAFE NSW Stakeholders: WPCA, University and Industry partners</p>
	<p>New blended education pathways models funded by DoE that combine higher education and VET. Delivered as part of the Higher Education Strategy. When: Piloted 2021.</p>	<p>DoE, TAFE NSW, UOW, UTS</p>

Case Studies

Institutes of Applied Technology:

trialling new and innovative forms of education

The Institute of Applied Technology (IAT) will be a new model of tertiary education that fully integrates the theoretical study of university with the practical training of vocational education. IATs are a key recommendation from the Review on the NSW Vocational Education and Training sector, led by Professor Peter Shergold AC and Mr David Gonski AC.

The IAT model described in the report involves close collaboration between

registered training organisations, universities and industry to design and deliver courses that integrate practical employability skills with theoretical knowledge. It is envisaged that curriculum will be focused on NSW's emerging labour market needs.

The NSW Government will pilot the IAT model at TAFE sites in Meadowbank and Kingswood and a regional site to be determined.

DCJ Scholarships Program:

supporting young people to continue and complete their studies

The Department of Communities and Justice Scholarships program assists young people living in social housing and in out-of-home care who are enrolled in education or training to complete their studies by offering \$1,000 to help with educational expenses and secondary support services. Students in high school in Years 10, 11 and 12 may apply.

Students are able to receive continued funding for up to seven years as long as they remain in education and are still a social housing client.

Priority Area 2: Ensure wider participation in quality higher education

Higher education positively impacts the lives of our citizens. However, participation by students from equity groups and underrepresented regions is lower than for those from other backgrounds. Studying at university can be a transformative process, delivering tangible and long-term benefits for individuals and their communities.

The NSW Government will work with the sector to provide opportunities for all domestic students, no matter their background, to access higher education. Collaborative initiatives and programs that support achievement, aspiration, access and transition to higher education will be essential to this outcome.

Actions	Initiatives & Milestones	Stakeholders
<p>The NSW Government will partner with universities to champion NSW higher education to the Commonwealth to ensure sufficient funded domestic student places in NSW</p>	<p>Ongoing engagement between the NSW Government and NSWVCC on shared policy positions, with a focus on demand for places in Greater Western Sydney, including the Multiversity.</p> <p>Advocacy to the Commonwealth at a Ministerial and Departmental level.</p> <p>When: Ongoing.</p>	<p>Lead: DoE</p> <p>Stakeholders: NSWVCC, NSW universities, higher education providers</p>

Actions	Initiatives & Milestones	Stakeholders
<p>Develop and expand collaborative programs between education sectors to increase participation of underrepresented regions and equity groups in higher education</p>	<p>\$10M funding from the NSW Government towards the Indigenous Residential College at UTS. When: Open in 2024.</p>	<p>DoE, UTS</p>
	<p>\$8M funding for Country Universities Centres (CUC) to provide regional students studying remotely access to educational facilities and support staff. When: Five new centres delivered by 2023, three opened by the end of 2021.</p>	<p>Lead: DoE Stakeholders: CUC, Commonwealth Government</p>
	<p>Funding for the Regional Transitions to University Project: 'Re-inventing the Gap Year'. Resources to support regional high school students transition to university. When: Final report by early 2022.</p>	<p>Lead: DoE Stakeholders: USYD, UOW, UOC, Country Education Foundation</p>
	<p>Collaboration and Innovation Fund grant to the NSW Equity Consortium outreach program. Universities will partner with schools in Western Sydney to promote post-school options and improve student literacy skills. When: June 2021 until December 2025.</p>	<p>UNSW, UTS, MQ, TAFE NSW and DoE</p>

Priority Area 3: Drive job growth, skills and innovation

The higher education sector is integral to the NSW economy. The sector educates highly-skilled graduates, drives employment, innovation, entrepreneurship, industry collaborations, and contributes to Gross State Product. NSW Government and higher education providers will be key partners in addressing emerging challenges from COVID-19 and harnessing shared opportunities to develop a highly-skilled workforce in a rapidly changing world.

Leveraging higher education expertise and industry collaborations will be essential to move towards the goals of the NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint. To meet these, NSW will implement activities focused on reskilling and upskilling our citizens, driving precincts that encourage collaboration and the growth of start-ups, and utilising the expertise of our world class universities.

Actions	Initiatives & Milestones	Stakeholders
Support reskilling and upskilling displaced workers in NSW	The sector is supporting upskilling and reskilling opportunities for those impacted by COVID-19. This includes the rapid delivery of new undergraduate short courses.	NSW universities and higher education providers, Commonwealth Government
	Employers and workers will be linked to appropriate training, including higher education, through the Workforce Development team formed under Skilling for Recovery. Support ranges from advice on pathways between vocational and higher education, linking businesses to higher education providers and work/ work experience for university alumni.	DoE (TSNSW), Investment NSW

Actions	Initiatives & Milestones	Stakeholders
<p>Support the higher education and VET sectors as key drivers of multi-sector precincts</p>	<p>With over 35 precincts across NSW, several will be driven by VET and higher education partners. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Coast Education and Employment Precinct: securing a university partner to develop a campus in the Gosford CBD. • Tech Central, home to the biggest technology hub of its kind in Australia, will collaborate with university partners. • Westmead Health and Innovation Precinct: establishing a mixed-use, multi-disciplinary campus in Cumberland. <p>When: A Framework Deed signed in 2020 with USYD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiversity at the Aerotropolis, a new education, training and research approach for the Western City Parkland. <p>When: Launched in June 2021, course delivery from 2021.</p>	<p>Lead: Investment NSW, WPCA, GSC</p> <p>Stakeholders: NSW universities, TAFE NSW</p>
<p>Support initiatives and events to showcase or draw upon university expertise to address NSW Government priorities or challenges</p>	<p>A research impact showcase will be held at Parliament House to highlight successful cases of high-impact engagement and collaboration between NSW State Government agencies and universities.</p> <p>When: Late 2021.</p> <p>The Sydney Quantum Academy is harnessing NSW's collective university expertise to build a globally competitive quantum ecosystem in NSW and deliver a talent pipeline through education and training, including new PhD scholarships.</p>	<p>R&D NSW, Investment NSW</p>
<p>Increase opportunities across government for work-integrated learning for university students</p>	<p>The NSW Cyber Academy, with a grant from the Collaboration and Innovation Fund, will work with NSW Government and industry to develop apprenticeship-style internships.</p> <p>When: Design phase through 2021, course delivery to begin 2022.</p> <hr/> <p>Scope best practice work-integrated learning in NSW Government, e.g Transport for NSW Engineering Capstones, PSC Aboriginal Internship Program, DCS Industry Doctorates, NSW Health PhD Partnership Program, to identify future opportunities. This includes promotion of WIL opportunities to industry.</p> <p>When: By December 2021.</p>	<p>UOW, TAFE NSW, Investment NSW, DoE</p> <hr/> <p>DoE, PSC, DPIE, TfNSW, NSW Health, DCS, Investment NSW</p>

Priority Area 4: Strengthen collaborations to bolster research outcomes

NSW is home to world class research institutions. A strong, vibrant and high-quality research ecosystem is critical to driving the prosperity of NSW. Research translation delivers the new ideas, products and skills needed to address complex issues and improve social, economic and environmental outcomes for NSW.

The NSW Government will deliver initiatives to harness these strengths and translate research outcomes for public benefit. This includes building stronger research collaborations, working more closely on shared priorities, and partnering to attract a larger portion of Commonwealth Government research funding opportunities to NSW.

With the establishment of R&D NSW and the implementation of the Turning Ideas into Jobs: Accelerating research and development in NSW Action Plan, further collaborative opportunities to drive research translation and support future industries will be developed throughout the life of the Strategy.

Actions	Initiatives & Milestones	Stakeholders
Leverage the Public Policy Institute and cross-government Waratah Research Network, to invest in collaborative research around government priorities	<p>A new agency within Investment NSW, R&D NSW established to coordinate and drive translation and commercialisation of R&D, oversee the Waratah Research Network, deliver the Accelerating R&D Action Plan launched by the Premier in 2021, and ensure R&D is embedded in industry strategies and driving economic outcomes.</p> <p>When: From March 2021.</p>	<p>Lead: Investment NSW with R&D NSW</p>

Actions	Initiatives & Milestones	Stakeholders
	<p>As part of the R&D Action Plan there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online R&D ‘Matchmaking’ platform that will better connect research ‘sellers’ and ‘buyers’ and link researchers to research infrastructure and expertise. • A \$24 million Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program to provide competitive grants for SMEs to commercialise innovative solutions for discrete NSW Government agency problems. <p>When: Launched June 2021, grants awarded by October 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A \$28 million Bushfire Response Mission to promote new and emerging industries and technologies to better prepare the state for future bushfires. 	
	<p>NSW Institute for Public Policy is a collaboration between a consortium of NSW universities, seed funded \$10 million by the NSW Government. The Institute to officially launch in late 2021 and develop a social impact strategy with Government.</p> <p>When: Strategy by March 2022.</p>	<p>Lead: USYD, UTS and WSU with DoE</p> <p>Stakeholders: NSW Government</p>
<p>Review and simplify processes for university research procurement</p>	<p>See Priority Area 1, Action 1.</p>	
<p>Collaborate with universities to increase NSW’s competitive advantage in accessing Commonwealth and other funding</p>	<p>Research Attraction and Acceleration Program to provide annual funding for Research Innovation Networks (see Case Study) and co-investment in NSW-based research centres established under Commonwealth programs.</p> <p>When: New funding released annually.</p> <p>R&D NSW to host a ‘Competitive Advantage Summit’ with the Chief Economist.</p> <p>When: By end 2021.</p> <p>Waratah Scholarships to provide a top-up to PhD candidates in receipt of a Commonwealth scholarship and conduct research in a NSW Education priority area.</p> <p>When: Funding available until 2024.</p>	<p>Lead: R&D NSW</p> <p>Lead: NSW DoE</p>

Case Studies

Research and Innovation Networks: bringing the experts together

Funded and supported by Investment NSW, the Networks aim to build on the state's existing research and industry strengths, and drive innovation in sectors of strategic importance to NSW through collaborations between businesses, universities and government.

Four Networks have been established: the Smart Sensing Network, the Defence Innovation Network, Circular Economy

Innovation Network and, most recently, the Space Research Network.

R&D NSW is currently engaging with stakeholders to develop a new Network, the Decarbonisation Innovation Hub. Read more about the current and emerging Networks [here](#).

NSW Health Research Portfolio: funding the future of medical research

Through the Office for Health and Medical Research, NSW Health spends more than \$100 million a year to support high-quality medical research.

The connectivity of the state's health and medical research sector means that universities are involved in nearly all this research, even where the immediate

recipient of funding is another organisation type like a research institute or Local Health District.

Projects that receive funding range from COVID-19 research grants, cell and gene therapy grants, the Medical Devices Fund and the Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program. See more [here](#).

Priority Area 5: Position NSW globally by reinvigorating and diversifying international education and engagement

NSW hosts the largest market share of international students who come to Australia to study (a total of 286,803 students in 2019, representing 38% of international students in Australia). It is the State's largest services export, contributing over \$14.6 billion to the NSW economy in 2019, and supporting over 95,000 full-time equivalent jobs. Funding from international student fees also helps support university research and infrastructure, which benefit communities across NSW.

The NSW Government will work in partnership with higher education institutions to reinvigorate the sector, establishing offshore education-focussed roles in strategic markets under an expanded NSW international network. This work is vitally important because of the significant contribution international students make to NSW's economy and culture.

Actions	Initiatives & Milestones	Stakeholders
<p>Raise the international profile of NSW's higher education and research sector, by using its offshore presence and overseas delegations</p>	<p>The Global NSW Strategy will be supported by an expanded international network and an additional budget commitment for Study NSW.</p> <p>When: \$19M over four years.</p> <p>Expo 2020 Dubai, Study NSW and stakeholders to showcase NSW at the Australia Pavilion to help raise the profile of NSW as a first-choice study destination.</p> <p>When: October 2021 – March 2022.</p>	<p>Lead: Investment NSW (Study NSW)</p> <p>Stakeholders: Universities, Industry partners</p>

Actions	Initiatives & Milestones	Stakeholders
<p>Foster a collaborative approach to enhance the experience of international students across NSW</p>	<p>An updated digital platform, including course search function, to help showcase the unique, world-class education offerings of our study destinations.</p> <p>When: currently under development, expected completion date by end of 2021.</p> <p>Study NSW Partner Projects program – co-funded projects to support international education delivered in partnership with industry.</p> <p>When: Delivered annually.</p>	<p>Investment NSW (Study NSW)</p>
<p>Promote the global contributions of NSW higher education providers beyond their educational offerings</p>	<p>Leveraging an updated digital platform and establishing offshore roles under an expanded NSW international network. Study NSW will promote online and offshore, the contributions of NSW higher education providers and their networks, including their work fostering solutions through innovative research and the impact of their international student alumni on local and global communities.</p> <p>When: Starting 2021, rollout ongoing.</p>	<p>Investment NSW (Study NSW)</p>
<p>Work in partnership to ensure the safe return of international students to NSW</p>	<p>International student return pilot program has been developed in collaboration with education stakeholders to commence the return of international students to NSW as soon as possible.</p> <p>When: Pilot quarantine plan presented to Commonwealth in June 2021.</p>	<p>Lead: Investment NSW (Study NSW)</p> <p>Stakeholders: NSW Health, NSW Treasury, NSW Police, Universities, Industry partners, Commonwealth Government</p>

Timelines and Governance

NSW Higher Education Strategy Lifecycle

2021

- Launch of Strategy
- Consultation to establish cross-government & sector baseline partnerships
- Launch Collaboration & Innovation Fund
- Publish Action Plan 2021

2022

- Identify key gaps or emerging themes to be progressed
- Host themed roundtable with key stakeholders
- Publish Progress Report 2022

2023

- Midpoint evaluation of the Strategy's actions & stakeholder consultation
- Publish Progress Report 2023

2024

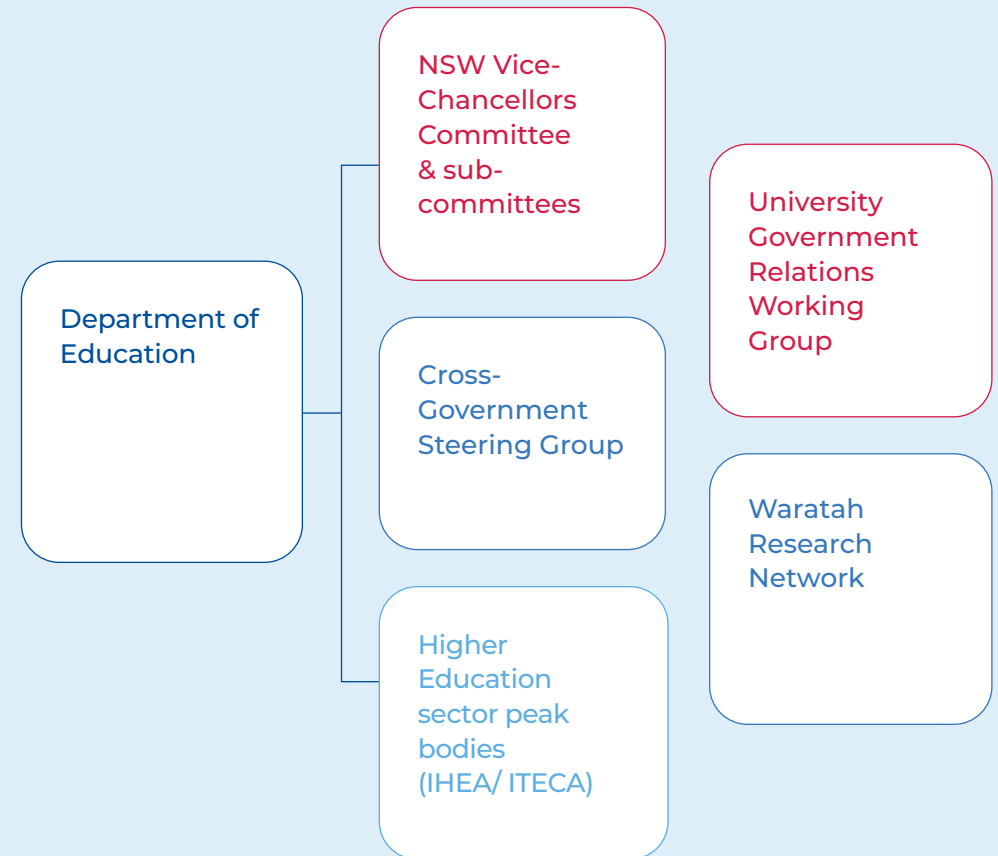
- Host second themed roundtable with key stakeholders
- Publish Progress Report 2024

2025

- Publish Final Progress Report
- Themed roundtable
- Stakeholder consultation on Strategy impact & future opportunities
- Evaluation of the Strategy

Stakeholders

The Department of Education is engaging with key stakeholders to ensure the Strategy delivers on its vision, a cross-government and cross-sector approach.



Appendix

Acronyms

NSW Universities

ACU – Australian Catholic University

CSU – Charles Sturt University

MQ – Macquarie University

ND – University of Notre Dame

SCU – Southern Cross University

UNE – University of New England

UNSW – University of New South Wales

UON – University of Newcastle

USYD – University of Sydney

UTS – University of Technology Sydney

UOW – University of Wollongong

WSU – Western Sydney University

NSW Government

DCJ – Department of Communities and Justice

DCS – Department of Customer Service

DOE – Department of Education

DPIE – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

DPC – Department of Premier and Cabinet

DRNSW – Department of Regional NSW

GSC – Greater Sydney Commission

HETI – Health Education and Training Institute

R&D NSW – Research and Development NSW

RGDC – Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation

TfNSW – Transport for NSW

WPCA – Western Parkland City Authority