



Murdoch University
Strategic Plan
2012-2017

Index

From the Vice Chancellor	4
Murdoch University: 21st century vision.....	6
About this plan.....	8
Internationalisation.....	10
Core priorities	
1. Research	12
2. Teaching and learning	14
3. Engagement	16
Enablers.....	18



Murdoch
UNIVERSITY



From the
Vice Chancellor

I am honoured to be leading the University into its 40th anniversary in 2015. The immediate future we face presents both challenges and opportunities. Above all, the world of higher education has gone 'global'. This strategic plan provides a decisive blueprint to meet this new reality. It identifies the key directions and activities Murdoch will need to pursue for it to be a strong performer in this new era. It is driven by the core goal of enhancing and advancing the quality and reputation of the University in coming decades. I firmly believe that this new Strategic Plan provides us with a strong compass to steer Murdoch in the next phase of its evolution.

Australian universities face testing financial times. The plan recognises the need to develop innovative strategies to secure a sound financial basis for the future growth, positioning, and relevance of the University. In the current era, non-traditional income-generating activity is crucial for ongoing sustainability, supporting excellence in research, and the enhancement of quality learning practice. At the same time, the strategic goals of the plan are underpinned by the enduring University values of scholarly integrity, equity and sustainability.

Since becoming Vice Chancellor in August 2011, I have set in train a range of initiatives to revitalise the University including the formation of a new Senior Leadership Group, the establishment of a university-wide commission to review our curriculum, the introduction of an expansive research collaboration scheme, the reorganisation of academic units, and the restructuring of professional services. This plan lays out how these initiatives, together with others, dovetail into an integrated vision for Murdoch over the next five years and beyond.

Our intention is that this Strategic Plan be a living, dynamic document. An ongoing evaluation of the strategies it advances will ensure continued relevance in the evolving global environment. I commend the Plan as a clear and focused strategy for the development of Murdoch as a high quality, research-led international University.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Higgott', followed by a long horizontal line.

Professor Richard Higgott
Vice Chancellor



Murdoch University: 21st century vision

Murdoch University is at a turning point in its short history. It now has to operate in an intensely competitive and dynamic environment. In this context there is a need to recognise that new strategies, indeed strategies very different from those adopted in our recent past, are needed to meet the challenges posed by the dramatic transformations underway in the higher education sector, both nationally and internationally. The aim of this document is to outline a coherent and aspirational strategy to make Murdoch a leading university in the East Asian region.

The University is named after the Scottish-Australian academic and essayist Sir Walter Murdoch. A great believer in the University ideal, Sir Walter applied his literary talent in regular columns in the Australian popular press for over fifty years. His journalism ranged from the everyday through to high culture, showing how critical thought could be translated into a widely accessible voice, both informative and engaging. At its foundation Sir Walter urged that Murdoch University 'had better be a good one.' Sir Walter's words and example encapsulate the fundamental ethos of the University as it pursues quality research and teaching while actively contributing to the wider community.

As a 'good university' Murdoch's mission is first and foremost to generate and disseminate knowledge. In keeping with the university idea it seeks: to advance social and scientific understanding; to empower students to undertake productive and fulfilling lives; to contribute to the betterment and sustainability of both our own and other societies.

Murdoch has a strong record in research, teaching and community engagement, providing the basis for the development of a 21st century agenda for the University. In each of these fields there are many avenues for advancement and it is essential to identify where and how the University can and will best focus its efforts. Any such efforts need to be guided by three core strategic objectives:

- the production of internationally competitive research
- the delivery of world-class degree courses
- the active promotion of societal engagement and knowledge partnerships at the local, national and international levels

Murdoch is a comparatively small university yet has significant strength in specific academic fields with great potential for development. This provides the impetus and capacities to drive a 21st century vision of Murdoch as a leading international research-led university pursuing excellence in select areas of knowledge production and dissemination.

In order to pursue this vision, the University needs talented people, up-to-date systems and adequate resources to undertake the actions required. These enabling capacities are crucial for the advancement of the vision and need to be finely attuned to its aims.

An international research university pursuing excellence in select fields of knowledge.

Murdoch University: 21st century vision

Strategic plan: 2012–2017 Internationalisation

Core priorities

Research
Teaching & Learning
Engagement

Enablers

Human Resources
Governance
Finance
Infrastructure

About this plan



This plan articulates a series of strategic statements to guide the University over the next five years. The underlying aim is to progress the vision of Murdoch as a high quality research-led international university.

The core priorities of Murdoch are threefold:

- Leading edge, blue sky and translational research
- High quality teaching and learning
- Strong societal engagement

The pursuit of excellence in all three of these priority areas is ongoing and is essential to the growth of the University's international reputation and resilience. The goals specified in this plan are indicative of Murdoch's commitment to this collective task and constitute a set of strategic steps aimed at developing the 21st century vision of the University.

Realising these ambitions requires strategic enablers. This entails the involvement of quality people who share the vision, governance structures that are agile and responsive, and an infrastructure that can facilitate and evolve according to developing strategic needs. The securing of greater coordination of, and collaboration between, professional management and academic governance is crucial to the successful implementation of the agendas identified in this plan.

Internationalisation is a key element in the overall strategy. It is central to both how Murdoch pursues its core priorities and how it goes about enabling them. From international research measures and teaching benchmarking, through the rejuvenation of its staff base via global recruitment and engagement, to international best practice in professional functions, the University has to ensure that its academic and professional operations are working at the highest possible levels. Higher education is now a global enterprise, and the University needs to adopt a thoroughly international outlook.

At the local level, the University will be a major player in the development of the Murdoch Activity Centre clustered around the Eastern Precinct (including the Fiona Stanley and St. John of God Hospitals) over the next five years. The overall project will embrace a wide range of activities including health and biomedical services, cultural amenity and events, and hospitality and commercial facilities. The University will bring its expertise and community ethos to this project across its three core activities of research, teaching and engagement. In terms of the Murdoch vision, the project offers the opportunity to demonstrate how a contemporary university can combine its core activities in a dynamic integrated manner.



Internationalisation



The character of the modern university and its operating environment is undergoing dramatic transformation. This is linked to trends in the global economy and in particular the centrality of new knowledge in economic productivity. Governments have become, and will continue to be, increasingly attentive to the knowledge-producing capacity of higher education as a key indicator of a nation's ability to participate in the global economy. Higher education is now seen as an essential component of a productive economy.

Universities educate and train the necessary human capital, develop research capacity, occupy a primary position as a source of new knowledge and technology transfer, and attract international investment and talent. In this context, internationalisation is no longer simply about securing an increased international student load. It is about the necessary widening of cross cultural experience and understanding. It is also about the need to compete for brainpower if the university is to successfully participate in the production and dissemination of codified knowledge in an increasingly globalised world.

This new dynamism in global higher education is more than evident in the Asian region and especially in East Asia. Education and research are developing at a fast pace in the wake of the economic powerhouses in the region. New higher education institutions are proliferating to meet the demand driven by the dramatic growth of the regions new middle classes. Major investment is being made in research and research training to sustain and advance economic and societal growth.

A key imperative for Murdoch is to ensure that it is equipped to survive and thrive in these new conditions. This requires the wholesale adoption of an international orientation in all aspects of what the University does and how it does it.

International connectivity is essential. It provides a global pool for the recruitment of offshore students, top academic staff, and skilled professional staff. It is a source of the latest leading-edge practices in pedagogy and provides a broad testing ground for evaluating performance measures. International research collaboration and cooperation is crucial in major advances in knowledge and innovation in the contemporary world. Up-to-date information and

communication technologies (ICT) are a vital component in all this, especially with the burgeoning online higher education agenda and in areas requiring sophisticated computational capacity. The University is committed to pursuing best practice in all its activities, academic and professional, and is determined to ensure that this is supported by a modern infrastructure including high quality ICT capability.

Murdoch considers internationalisation as a whole-of-university enterprise transforming what we do and who we are, modernising the institution into a high quality research-led international university for the 21st century.





Core Priorities

Research

GOAL: Murdoch will be a research-led university with a reputation for high quality international research in select areas of knowledge, engaging with significant social and scientific challenges of our time.

Murdoch has an impressive, track record for high quality research, especially in the area of translational research. The next five years will see a number of significant developments that will provide challenges but also opportunities for us to refocus, realign and grow our research and research training. Building our research capacity is essential if we are to enhance our local and international reputation and ensure our ongoing sustainability. The University will enhance existing areas of research excellence, restore some areas that may have stalled and actively pursue several new areas of research activity. But this will include a more strategic approach towards how we deal with our international reputation and the internal auditing of our current research performance.

In the recent Federal government audit of research excellence (ERA), Murdoch was rated as achieving world-class standard or above in over two thirds of the assessed areas, with particular strengths in some of the science disciplines. The University is determined to consolidate, enhance and advance its research standing in these areas through a range of mechanisms. Our research scope is not comprehensive in ambition. Rather the aim is to concentrate on a select number of research domains and to excel internationally in these areas.

Murdoch considers research as an integral component of its teaching and learning mission. Engagement with the latest research is seen as an important dimension of the educational experience as is exposure to active researchers. The

University is keen to instill the principles of research-led teaching and evidence-based practice across all of its degree courses.

The establishment of the Eastern Precinct within the Murdoch Activity Centre will provide unique research opportunities for the University, especially in the broadly defined fields of health, biomedicine and related areas. The concentration of specialised medical practices and leading-edge medical technologies in the precinct will generate a range of productive synergies in terms of both pure and applied biomedical research as well as facilitating high-level research training in these and other fields. The University is also committed to nurturing and developing its other areas of research strength along these lines. These various opportunities all present new prospects for knowledge partnerships with government, industry and the professions.

Murdoch has a long tradition of multi- and trans-disciplinary academic practice. Contemporary research questions and scientific puzzles are often complex and increasingly require large teams of scholars with varying specialisations. In the spirit of these traditions, the University is determined to promote research partnerships and collaborations, and especially those of an applied and translational nature, both within and beyond the university, with industry partners, government agencies and other universities and scholars from around the world.

Strategies

1. To concentrate on a select number of existing research areas, and maintain or attain international status in these areas
2. To establish a systematic and rigorous approach to internal and external auditing of research performance
3. To develop and support incentives to increase the number of competitive grant applications and their success rate
4. To encourage and enable the development of international research collaborations and partnerships
5. To provide a common framework for research mentoring and training



2017 Goals	Indicator
1. Identification of key research areas for strategic investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of key centres and research teams led and staffed by internationally established scholars
2. Establishment of a campus-wide external benchmarking culture with 80% of research assessed at world standards or better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Schools formally reviewed by 2015 Ranked in the top 400 universities (in reputable world ranking systems) Increase the number of publications in top journals
3. Formation of a well-resourced and pro-active Research and Development Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of an annual increment of quality research grant applications for Category 1 funding
4. Development of a program supporting national and international research collaborations with world leading scholars and universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 formal distinguished collaborators from international universities and formal collaborative links with researchers from top 300 universities
5. Creation of a high quality PhD and post-doctoral development environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of PhD students increased to 6% of total enrolments with at least one third international Number of postdoctoral fellows doubled from 2012 numbers





Core Priorities

Teaching & learning

GOAL: Murdoch will provide a rich and diverse academic learning experience with a curriculum integrally linked to quality research and up-to-date pedagogy, equipping students with life-long learning skills and the capacities to successfully engage in a global world.

The University has a proud reputation of quality teaching, interdisciplinary studies and a strong commitment to access and equity. These remain integral characteristics of a Murdoch education. However the higher education sector is undergoing dramatic shifts and Murdoch confronts an array of new conditions. The capacity to deliver high quality academic courses is now subject to numerous constraints and challenges ranging from diminished public funding and escalating costs, through to new forms of student engagement and shifting global labour markets.

While universities periodically review their curriculum, current circumstances demand more. On the one hand there are the requirements imposed by government compliance as well as new demands coming from students and employers. On the other hand, the very processes of knowledge production and dissemination in the information era are recasting how people access, analyse, absorb and communicate information. The great challenge for the contemporary university is to successfully combine these various dimensions into coherent academic courses that meet 21st century needs. The University has thus embarked on a wholesale review of its undergraduate and postgraduate coursework offerings in a Curriculum Commission. This is part of a larger revitalisation of what we deliver and how we deliver it. This process of renewal aims to ensure that Murdoch's reputation for high quality teaching and learning is strengthened across all of its courses and with student cohorts, be they internal or external, onshore or transnational. This must be, of necessity, a permanently evolving process.

An emerging challenge for all universities is the effect of technology, especially in regard to the growth in the online delivery of subjects and courses by prestigious international universities. Murdoch is closely monitoring these trends and is evaluating how and where it may fit into these new markets. The general modernisation of the University's ICT capacities is an important preparatory measure in anticipation of potential engagement in this field.

As part of the renewal process, the University is reviewing its transnational educational operations offshore (TNE). The aim is to transition to a higher quality TNE model in which the delivery and oversight of courses is more closely controlled by Murdoch faculty. The goal is to enhance Murdoch's reputation as a quality provider, rather than simply a volume provider, in offshore markets, especially in South East Asia.

A further major initiative is the establishment of a new professional graduate school, the Sir Walter Murdoch School of Public Policy and International Affairs. The School will offer professionally focused masters coursework degrees and higher degree research courses that will combine theoretical and applied analytical training in public policy and management with area and policy specific concentrations. It will be a central component of a revitalised Business School. The new Graduate School will have a strong international orientation and offer students a range of international study options. This development will be geared towards positioning the University as a serious provider of professional graduate education in state, national and international markets.

Strategies

1. To develop relevant curriculum sensitive to contemporary societal needs and labour markets
2. To deliver a distinctive and rewarding student experience
3. To provide high quality courses that optimise graduate outcomes
4. To offer world-class postgraduate coursework programs
5. To continue to build on Murdoch's commitment to access and equity



2017 Goals	Indicator
1. Full implementation of the recommendations of the Curriculum Commission	• First graduating classes from Murdoch's new undergraduate degrees
2. Improve quality of teaching and overall student satisfaction across all fields of education at Murdoch	• Murdoch's national ranking on scales for Good Teaching and Overall Satisfaction, across all fields of education
3. Improve graduate employment outcomes	• Murdoch's national ranking on Generic Skills and Graduate Destinations
4. A suite of professional postgraduate coursework programs in a vibrant graduate environment: The Sir Walter Murdoch School of Public Policy and International Affairs	• Financially viable postgraduate coursework programs and internationally diverse student body
5. Improve recruitment and progression rates of under-represented groups in the student cohort	• Progression and retention rates of under-represented student cohorts





Core Priorities

Engagement

GOAL: Murdoch will continue to communicate and engage with its various communities at the local, regional and international levels, cultivating knowledge partnerships, participating in mutual endeavours, and contributing to public debate and cultural enrichment.

The University has long been active in societal and community affairs. It has made significant contributions in the areas of environmental sustainability, animal welfare and social reform. Murdoch faculty members have been regular commentators and interlocutors on matters of public concern and debate. Over the years the University has been actively involved in engaging with local regional communities as well as with government and industry. And it has maintained a strong commitment to sponsoring and nurturing alumni networks and activities.

The University will continue to pursue these traditional connections. It will also enhance and extend its engagement activities consonant with contemporary circumstance. Modes of engagement with government, industry and community are multiplying as new possibilities for meaningful communication and interaction emerge. In this regard the University has an important and responsible role to exercise within society.

In the current information era, nearly everyone has access to a vast array of data and information. While universities may no longer have the near exclusive hold on knowledge that they once might have had, they nonetheless still play a crucial role in the circulation of knowledge and its uses. Universities have the conceptual capacities to assess and evaluate knowledge claims and understand how information is transformed into sustainable knowledge with practical applications.

Murdoch is committed to making good use of its knowledge brokerage capacities in active partnerships with local communities, government and industry, regional organisations and international forums. The University is particularly keen to make substantial contributions to the development of applied public policy in consort with communities, industry and other societal actors, from the local to the regional. The First Murdoch Commission on the topic of 'Western Australian in the Region' is indicative of this commitment.

Strategies

1. To intensify and diversify community partnership activities, particularly in the Peel-Rockingham region
2. To extend government and industry relationships through joint ventures and other collaborative projects state wide
3. To enhance current alumni programs, especially in terms of international networks and events
4. To promote and support faculty contribution to public debate and culture
5. To develop a strong institutional profile in the areas of translational research and applied public policy

2017 Goals	Indicator
1. Promotion and cultivation of educational aspiration among under-represented groups in the university system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rise in interest and entry into post secondary education courses among under-represented student cohorts
2. Development of a range of partnerships and mutual projects with government and industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint venturing with public health authorities and/or commercial interests developing and utilising research and training facilities in the Murdoch Activity Centre
3. Further development and enhancement of alumni activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross linking regional alumni events with professional networks Customised programs for ongoing education and access to Murdoch's knowledge base
4. Recruitment and mentoring of academic and professional staff as regular media contributors across diverse platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased presence of Murdoch voices in media; for example, University sponsored outlets such as <i>The Conversation</i>
5. Completion of the First Murdoch Commission on Western Australia in the region. Launch of a Second Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of the first Commission report in Australia and in the East Asian region. Selection of a topic for the Second Commission





Enablers

The University is dedicated to fostering talented people and harnessing the resources necessary to realise the ambitions of the Murdoch 21st century vision

In order for the University to pursue the goals outlined in this plan, it requires talented and committed people who share the Murdoch vision and the means to support their efforts. The enabling capacities of a skilled and nimble workforce, responsive governance structures, financial sustainability and up-to-date infrastructure are crucial for the advancement of the vision. The enabling capacities need to be in sync with, and supportive of the delivery of the vision.

1. Human resources

At its core a research-led international university needs high performing academic and professional staff. Murdoch is committed to building a dynamic workforce in which the University's objectives and individuals' goals are closely aligned. In this regard the University is determined to recruit only the best people with the best fit across its organisational domains. It is serious about retaining high quality academic and professional staff, and ensuring that productive and diverse career paths are open to them. It is important that incentive and reward structures are closely linked to clear performance expectations to harmonise individual effort with institutional goals. The University recognises the need to invest in its human capital through ongoing career development programs, up-scaling skill sets, mentoring leadership, and cultivating a motivated agile work culture. These goals are enhanced by the pursuit of staff diversity and social inclusion.

2. Governance

University governance and management is a collective enterprise requiring the combined efforts of academic and

professional staff working together with common purpose. The success of the Murdoch 21st century vision depends on professionalism in academic governance on the one hand, and the wholehearted embrace of the academic mission in the University's professional practices on the other. The University has a determination to ensure that effective and efficient management is open, and both responsible and responsive to the whole of the University community through the development of transparent and accountable processes and mechanisms. It places great importance on the need for decision making to be informed by sound evidence-based rationale, strong analytical argument and input from the University community. The ongoing evaluation and review of Murdoch's performance in all areas is seen as key to keeping the University on track with its strategic goals.

3. Finance

Like all Australian universities Murdoch must confront the challenge of constrained government funding. This requires a concerted effort to develop new and innovative ways to fund the ongoing operations of the University. Murdoch is embarking on the rigorous pursuit of new fee income opportunities generated from postgraduate coursework programs and other developments. It will also actively pursue revenue opportunities arising with the development of the Eastern Precinct as well as joint venture possibilities based in knowledge partnerships with industry further afield. While the University will continue to seek donations, bequests and sponsorships, it will also pursue new, smart and inventive ways to diversify its income streams.

4. Infrastructure

The University has a number of new and exciting infrastructure prospects emerging as the Eastern Precinct project unfolds and the Whitby Falls estate is integrated into the University's operations as part of its multi-campus profile. There is a great need to renew and upgrade both the physical and operational infrastructure of the University. The University is focusing on the need to modernise its operational systems and its University wide ICT capacities to ensure that the necessary 21st century tools are in place to facilitate the University's diverse functions and activities. High quality ICT capability is an essential tool in research, teaching and professional operations in the contemporary university. Modes of teaching and learning are undergoing significant transformation requiring the refurbishing of older spaces and the creation of newer amenity including online facility. Keeping Murdoch's research at the cutting edge, especially in the sciences, is always a challenge but the Eastern Precinct, if used to its fullest advantage, holds promise for joint venturing on infrastructure in this regard.

Strategies

1. To recruit, develop and retain high performing academic and professional staff
2. To restructure University governance and management into a more responsive, effective and integrated set of processes and activities
3. To develop non-traditional lines of revenue for the University
4. To update Murdoch infrastructure to meet the demands of a contemporary university

2017 Goals	Indicator
1. Modernisation of staff recruitment, training, performance and evaluation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalisation of dynamic recruitment processes that seek only the best people from the widest possible pool • Appraisal and promotion linked directly and formally to a clear set of academic/professional performance criteria and institutional expectations • Greater provision of in-house and external programs to support and encourage professional and career development
2. Revamping and revitalisation of governance and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic governance joined-up with professional management at all levels • Transparency in decision making underpinned by robust analytics and evidence-based processes • Articulation of clear performance measures to evaluate organisational effectiveness • Adoption of a formal accountability framework to monitor and assess the translation of the University's core strategic goals at all operational levels
3. Diversification of the University's income streams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in postgraduate coursework fee income • Development of knowledge partnerships and commercial ventures in the Eastern Precinct • Ongoing program to increase donations, bequests and sponsorships
4. Upgrading of physical and operational infrastructures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refitting of research, teaching and learning facilities to cater for new practices • Refurbishing of organisational systems to increase responsiveness, efficiency and agility • Ongoing development of a high quality ICT capability

Murdoch University Strategic Plan 2012-2017



90 South Street Murdoch WA 6150
1300 MURDOCH (1300 687 3624)
www.murdoch.edu.au

Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication was correct as at 30 September 2012, but is subject to amendment without notice. The University reserves the right to cancel, without notice, any units or courses if the number of students enrolled in these falls below limits set by the University.

© 2012 Murdoch University

This publication is copyright. Except as permitted by the Copyright Act no part of it may in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or any other means be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or be broadcast or transmitted without the prior permission of the publisher.

Printed on environmentally friendly paper