

# Launch of the 2050 Alliance – Universities for students, communities and the future

27 May 2026

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Nine Australian universities have today launched the 2050 Alliance to build a better future for students and communities across Australia.

The Alliance is committed to achieving the national goal of increasing tertiary attainment to at least 80% of the working-age population by 2050, to ensure that all Australians have the opportunity to obtain the knowledge and skills they will need for a brighter future. Reaching this target promises to add \$240 billion to Australia's economy by 2050.

This national uplift will require expanding access to higher education for under-represented communities, supporting more students to succeed and sharing the knowledge and research that will power innovation. Across Australia, the universities in the 2050 Alliance are embedded in the communities that will determine whether we achieve these national targets.

The Alliance was launched by Minister for Education the Hon Jason Clare MP, who said “Almost one in two young people in their 20s and their 30s have a university degree today. But not everywhere. Not in our outer suburbs and not in regional Australia. The 2050 Alliance will help change that.

“The Universities Accord sets an ambitious target for 80% of the workforce to have a tertiary qualification by 2050.

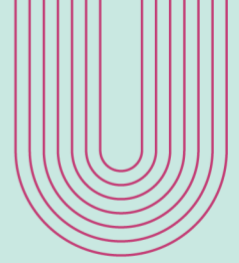
“2050 Alliance Universities are going to do a lot of heavy lifting in getting us there.”

The founding members of the 2050 Alliance are the Australian Catholic University, Flinders University, Griffith University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Murdoch University, University of Canberra, Victoria University and Western Sydney University.

Together, they currently teach more than 285,000 students across more than 65 campuses in inner city, suburban, regional and remote Australia.

2050 Alliance Chair, Distinguished Professor George Williams AO (Vice-Chancellor of Western Sydney University) said that today's launch comes at a time of major change in Australia's university system.





“We are in the middle of the biggest transformation in our higher education system since the 1980s,” he said. “There is no time to waste – the decisions we make today will determine whether we meet our 2050 goals. The time is right for universities to come together with a clear focus on the public good – serving our students and communities, and helping to deliver on major national priorities including intergenerational equity and productivity growth.”

2050 Alliance CEO Paul Harris said that the work of the group would be characterised by constructive engagement with government to achieve long-lasting reform.

“We are already working with the new Australian Tertiary Education Commission on our shared goal of a bigger and fairer university system that sets Australia up for the future,” he said. “Our Alliance will be a leading positive voice for higher education and research policy that benefits all Australians.”

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