

**DISCUSSION PAPER**

May 2017

**Future Ready 4.0:  
La Trobe University's next  
Strategic Plan**

A strategy to reshape our University in a period  
of ceaseless change

## A message from the Vice-Chancellor



2017 marks two milestones in La Trobe's history. The first is the 50th anniversary of the enrolment of the first students at La Trobe. In such a year, it is fitting that we take stock of the university's achievements of the last half century. The second is that 2017 is the final year of our current strategic plan, Future Ready, which means that we now have an opportunity to look ahead and plan for the next phase of the university's growth and development. 2017 is thus a year of looking back, and of looking ahead.

There is a huge amount of which to be proud from the last 50 years. La Trobe is now a university that - almost uniquely - combines globally recognised research excellence with being one of the country's most

diverse and inclusive universities. We intend to build on this achievement.

Future Ready has delivered significant benefits for the university. Most, but not all, of its aspirations have been realised. Some of the themes of Future Ready remain just as important now as they were five years ago, but others need to change in response to dramatic shifts in the world in which our university operates. By responding in the right ways, we can seize the opportunities these changes present and mitigate any threats they might pose. This discussion paper has been prepared to encourage and inform discussion about these important issues to assist with the development of our next strategic plan. It is now offered to the entire La Trobe community for comment.

One of the big successes of Future Ready has been to restore the university to a secure financial footing, and this allows us to plan ahead with greater confidence and ambition. It's going to be a big job, but I know we can succeed. Our history, which we celebrate this year, shows that La Trobe has always been willing to challenge convention and revisit the normal way of doing things. We must maintain that inventive tradition and turn it to our benefit in this era of rapid change by reshaping what a great university can look like in these fluid times.

At the heart of this paper lies the proposition that we need to reshape what it means to be an excellent university in an era of ceaseless change.

The paper spells out some ways in which we can do this I look forward to hearing what you think

**Professor John Dewar**  
Vice-Chancellor and President

# 1 Reshaping our university

This year La Trobe turns fifty. It will be a celebration of an extraordinary success story, in which we have grown from ‘an elegant sheep station’ of just 552 students (as one early visitor put it) into a major higher educational presence with more than 36 000 students, world-class research centres covering the humanities to sport and the hard sciences, and a respected voice in public debates.

Getting to this point has taken a lot of hard work by generations of La Trobe students, academics and staff. The last five years have been particularly positive, during which the university has expanded further and climbed the world academic and research rankings, guided by our five-year plan, Future Ready. We’re in the top 400 in all three global rankings and have thirty fields of research now rated above world standard. We now need to consider our strategy again.

The direction we take is informed by two things: our past and our future. La Trobe’s early reputation was of a radical place—one that sought academic excellence and opportunity for all. As the celebrations of our origins this year have shown, we were a place of protest against injustice and war, and a place that attracted people who otherwise may not have gone to university. We were proud to represent the people of the northern suburbs, unfashionable though that may have been. We were also known for teaching and research excellence.

The legacy of this past is that we aren’t afraid of change or of reaching for even higher quality. This is now a crucial legacy indeed, because we inhabit a world of ceaseless change—disruption—which calls for agility. The future therefore suits us.

Universities are among the most disrupted organisations of all, and it’s not hard to see why and how. Digital technologies are changing the ways we teach and partner to do research. Workforce change is challenging our qualifications, demanding new skills and knowledge from graduates. This is taking place in an economy in which up to 40 per cent of all jobs are in danger of being replaced by automated systems in the next ten to twenty years—an economy that will also require an extra 2.1 million tertiary-educated workers by 2025. It is also an economy that isn’t offering huge increases in public funding, meaning we will have to seek new sources of revenue.

To navigate that future, we are developing a new strategy, which will build on Future Ready, to further exploit our advantages to make ourselves stronger.

The strategy asks us to think about reshaping our university while staying true to our Future Ready vision, with its aspiration for La Trobe to ‘be a place where social inclusion and globally recognised excellence come together for the benefit of our students and our communities’.

The old universities have had a monopoly on the definition of what constitutes a ‘great university’ for too long. Their version is too wedded to the symbols and academic approaches of the past, too aloof from our wider society, and excludes too many people.

We call the new model University 4.0, or the ‘ecological university’. It must be one that combines teaching and research excellence with a strong connection to the communities it serves. It must address the needs of the world with its research and work in close partnership with government, business and the community to address the major issues facing our local people and our world.

This discussion paper spells out a number of ideas that might combine to create this new type of great university we aspire to be. The major ideas are:

- 1. Positioning La Trobe as the pre-eminently ‘connected’ university in the higher education sector to become the unrivalled partner of choice.**
- 2. Transforming the experience of our students and improving their satisfaction by taking a student-first approach to everything we do.**
- 3. Continuing to attract new students from non-traditional backgrounds, including those from Indigenous, first in family and low-SES backgrounds, the regions and overseas.**
- 4. Attracting more postgraduate coursework and international students.**

5. In a world in which credentials tend to have shorter shelf-lives, offering trusted new, career-specific credentials to attract those already in the workforce needing to upgrade their skills to keep up with technological and workforce trends.
6. Creating a better consumer experience for digitally-connected and time-challenged students—through more flexible course structures and blended modes of delivery, and by providing a smooth and efficient hand-off between digitally-delivered and face-to-face courses.
7. Building La Trobe’s reputation for the employability of its graduates by ensuring our qualifications provide the skills and personal attributes employers are increasingly demanding, and by becoming a ‘trusted talent adviser’ providing lifelong support to our students and alumni to help them keep up with changes in the world of work.
8. Using our Bundoora, City and regional campuses to co-locate with industry partners to support innovation, business creation and employment opportunities for our graduates and the communities that support us—building on our successes with the R&D Park and the La Trobe Accelerator Program.
9. Completing the transformation of La Trobe from a university with multiple campuses into ‘one university with many campuses’—to provide consistency in the quality of education and research regardless of where it is takes place and make better use of our local connections with regional industry and communities for place-based research and teaching specialisation.
10. Transforming the Bundoora campus into ‘a global exemplar of a digitally connected university city of the future’.
11. Constant improvement of our teaching and research, with new forms of support for our academic staff to help them retrain and to work in different ways, including in secondments to our industry partners.
12. Constant improvement of our internal university systems.
13. Continuing to strengthen the financial position of La Trobe, and to future proof the university's revenues by investing in new educational technologies to position the university to take advantage of the likely disruption of the university business model.

Please give us your feedback. La Trobe can only thrive in the future if it draws on the ideas and commitment of all our members—students, staff and partners.

## 2 Introduction and overview

This paper draws on insights from our staff, students, alumni, industry and community partners. It has been guided by the University Council and developed in more detail by the Senior Executive Group and Senior Leadership Group, with the assistance of Deloitte and a voluntary Working Group of the Senior Leadership Group.

The release of this discussion paper is intended to stimulate discussion among the wider La Trobe community in advance of a proposed release of a new strategy in mid-2017.

To get feedback, short discussion questions are posed following each section of this paper. An on-line submission platform will be made available at [www.stratplan.latrobe.edu.au](http://www.stratplan.latrobe.edu.au) for input and comments.

Alternatively comments can be provided in writing to [stratplan@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:stratplan@latrobe.edu.au) by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

### 2.1 OUR STORY AND FUTURE READY

2017 marks 50 years since the first 552 La Trobe students enrolled in 1967.

Today our university educates more than 36 000 students—including more than 8000 international students from over 110 countries.

Since its foundation, La Trobe has sought to be different. We were created to broaden participation in higher education amongst communities in Melbourne's north and regional Victoria. We pursue world-class research that aims to make a difference to some of the world's most pressing problems.

A number of Australian universities attempt to pursue combined missions of accessibility and excellence, but we are one of the most successful. We have become a place where social inclusion and globally recognised excellence come together for the benefit of our students and our communities.

Adopted in 2012, Future Ready aimed to make La Trobe one of the top 3 universities in Victoria, one of the top 12 nationally and one of the top 500 internationally. It defined 36 goals in research, learning and teaching, and campuses and communities, to be achieved by 2018.

Future Ready adopted four pillars to guide the university:

- outstanding student experience;
- student employability;
- research excellence; and
- brilliant basics.

We have achieved 28 of the 36 goals we set in Future Ready, including, for example, achieving our highest ever international research rankings, with 30 fields of research now rated above world standard (compared to a target of 24). We have exceeded our goal of being in the top 500 universities in the world and now rank in the top 400 universities in all three major global rankings.

We celebrate such successes but know there is still significant scope for improvement. For example, we have not achieved 8 of our 36 Future Ready goals, including important targets for student load growth, the quality of our student experience and graduate employment. Future Ready set our aspiration to be one of the top 3 universities in Victoria, one of the top 12 in the country, and amongst the top 500 in the world. We have achieved the last of these, and are close to the other two on many measures of research performance. We believe that '3/12/500' remains an appropriate and achievable ambition for La Trobe, with the possible addition that we should aim to be the best (number one) in the country in some disciplines for our teaching, research and external engagement; and we can now realistically aim to be amongst the top 300 in the world: '1/3/12/300'.

As we develop our next strategic plan, we will retain the successful elements of Future Ready while responding to the new and emerging challenges discussed in Section 3. We will set out an ambitious agenda for our university's future based on the sound foundations provided by Future Ready.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COMMENT – OUR STORY SO FAR AND PROGRESS TO DATE**

- What have been the greatest strengths of our Future Ready strategy?
  - Which Future Ready strategies should we retain in our next strategic plan?
  - Any other comments on this introduction and overview?
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## 3 Context for a new strategy: the changing higher education landscape

The world has changed since 2012. We must adjust our strategy where necessary, while retaining the best of what we already have.

This section provides a summary of some of the external changes to which our next strategic plan must respond.

### 3.1.1 The ‘Digital Age’

Digital technologies such as the Internet, mobile connectivity and social media have radically transformed how societies relate to knowledge and access information. Connectivity has democratised information, meaning what used to take hours of research at a library can now be accessed by anyone with a smartphone. Ideas can be shared with anyone and everyone around the world in seconds.

The ‘Digital Age’ is changing the role of higher education in the creation and dissemination of knowledge as well as the way in which individuals consume and access their knowledge: increasingly, the role of universities is to curate knowledge and to make it useful. It is leading us to challenge the role and suitability of existing forms of credentials and higher education qualifications in preparing graduates for a rapidly changing world of work. Two-thirds of current workers are predicted to change their industry sector and role within the next ten years, and universities have to figure out the best way to help them.<sup>1</sup>

The higher education sector should expect profound digital disruption in the short to medium term, although this may be spread over a longer period than some other sectors owing to the influence of regulation and government policy.<sup>2</sup> Overall, the effect of digital disruption on higher education is predicted to be a ‘long-fuse, big-bang’, with profound disruptive effects to the sector in the short to medium term.<sup>3</sup>

### 3.1.2 Graduate employment

Employment outcomes for recent higher education graduates are at their lowest since the 1970s. Only 68 per cent of graduates are working full-time four months after graduating compared to 89 per cent less than ten years ago.<sup>4</sup>

These deteriorating results are occurring while the demand for higher education grows. This apparent paradox can be explained as the effect of a combination of growing higher education participation and a mismatch between graduates’ skills and the needs of the economy.

### 3.1.3 The rise of the ‘knowledge economy’

Australia, like other developed nations, is fast transforming into a ‘knowledge economy’ where knowledge is being used to generate economic value. Continuing computerisation and automation will have a dramatic impact on existing professions. It is estimated that 40 per cent of Australia’s workforce—more than five million people—could be replaced by automated systems and computers within the next ten to twenty years.<sup>5</sup> New roles and professions are being created and disciplines are being combined or redefined. The pace of change in the world of work our graduates will enter is increasing, and traditional assumptions about pathways into and through the workforce will be profoundly challenged.

### 3.1.4 Jobs of the future

Recent research by the Foundation for Young Australians (*The New Work Mindset*, FYA New Work Order Series) identifies a significant gap between the enterprising skillset required by employers and the qualifications now being attained by young Australians. Analysis of over 2.7

<sup>1</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/economics/articles/future-inc-series-caanz.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/building-lucky-country/articles/digital-disruption-harnessing-the-bang.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/building-lucky-country/articles/digital-disruption-harnessing-the-bang.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.flinders.edu.au/sabs/nils-files/publications/working-papers/WP%20228%20Has%20the%20graduate%20job%20market%20been%20swamped.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ceda.com.au/research-and-policy/policy-priorities/workforce>

million job advertisements by the Foundation has revealed seven new job clusters in the Australian economy:

- generators – jobs that require a high level of interpersonal interaction in retail, sales, hospitality and entertainment.
- coordinators – jobs that involve repetitive administrative and behind-the-scenes process or service tasks.
- informers – jobs that involve professionals providing information, education or business services.
- carers – jobs that seek to improve the mental or physical health or well-being of others, including medical, care and personal support services.
- designers – jobs that involve deploying skills and knowledge of science, mathematics and design to construct or engineer products or buildings.
- artisans – jobs that require skill in manual tasks related to construction, production, maintenance or technical customer service.
- technologists – jobs that require skilled understanding and manipulation of digital technology.

The report concludes that the skills required in many jobs are portable to other jobs. On average, when a person trains or works in one job, they acquire skills for thirteen other jobs. This leads the report to argue that ‘rather than choosing an occupation with an unbroken path to seniority, a young person could think about developing a portfolio of skills that opens doors to a group or “cluster” of jobs that demand very similar skills.’ We need to respond to this reality.

### 3.1.5 Global economic growth and the rise of Asia’s middle class

Higher education is Australia’s largest service export. Notwithstanding an increasingly competitive international sector, the scope for Australian universities to meet the growing needs of a new wave of international students is substantial and extends to online education delivered offshore.<sup>6</sup>

### 3.1.6 International student mobility

The number of internationally mobile students in the world grew from 1.8 million in 2000 to 3.4 million in 2011.<sup>7</sup> This growth should continue as the middle and upper-middle classes of source countries expand further. Local and global economic performance will influence the rate, country of origin and country of destination of this growth.

Recent political developments in the USA and Britain, Australia’s competitors in the international student market, may encourage students look for more welcoming countries such as Australia.

It is anticipated that China will remain the largest source of students over the next five years, with India, Indonesia, Vietnam and Pakistan becoming more important.<sup>8</sup>

While the undergraduate and postgraduate mix has fluctuated over the last ten years, the clear trend since 2011 has been an increase in postgraduate coursework students.<sup>9</sup> This may indicate a mix of: (1) migration-driven demand, where masters courses such as professional accounting and construction management are directly linked to the skilled occupation list; and (2) a growing trend in source countries like India for students to complete undergraduate degrees at home and postgraduate courses overseas to increase their employability in their home market.

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016

<sup>8</sup> British Council, 2014; Australian Education International, 2016

<sup>9</sup> Higher education Statistics 2016

### 3.1.7 Higher education funding arrangements

The end of the mining boom and the ageing of Australia's population has created a medium-term to long-term structural fiscal challenge for the Australian Government.<sup>10</sup> Although higher education funding is only a small part of total expenditure, it will not be immune from spending cuts.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, a more populist Senate cross bench will make this harder to achieve.

The resulting likelihood is continuing uncertainty in government policy with only incremental change in the short to medium term. Government appears unlikely to introduce a cap on student numbers, suggesting any savings will need to come from a combination of reducing funding rates over time for Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) and changes to student contributions under the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP).<sup>12</sup> Universities are also likely to face greater pressures to make students more employable. The net result is that students may be asked to pay more, and universities may be held much more accountable for student employment outcomes.

### 3.1.8 The demand-driven system

The growth in participation in higher education by traditional high school leavers has slowed as the demand-driven system for higher education matures. As participation growth slows, universities will increasingly compete with each other for market share. Poorer performing universities will become financially vulnerable. The school-leaver undergraduate market will become increasingly competitive. Meanwhile, demand from mature age students for first degrees has declined dramatically in recent years. Any government increase in student contributions or requirement for faster repayment of debt may further suppress demand.

Students across Australia are increasingly entering university from non-traditional pathways, including through direct applications and articulations from sub-bachelor programs, and from vocational education providers.<sup>13</sup>

New providers continue to enter and disrupt the Australian higher education sector, with tailored offerings in niche markets.<sup>14</sup> These competitive forces are likely to increase over time.<sup>15</sup>

### 3.1.9 Future growth

The inadequacy of government funding of teaching and research means that all universities will continue to seek scale and growth. The growing competitiveness of the school leaver market, and the slowing of the demand-driven system, means that La Trobe must look elsewhere for that growth. Potential further growth in higher education participation is likely to come from:

- non-traditional participants in higher education (such as regional students and those from lower-socio-economic backgrounds) where participation rates have risen in the past few years, but still have potential to improve. Participation rates in communities served by our regional campuses still remain well below that of Melbourne and other capital cities.
- full fee paying international students (see 3.1.6 above) and coursework postgraduate students (see 3.1.10 below).

### 3.1.10 Postgraduate students

As undergraduate degrees become more common and graduate employability continues to decline, more graduates will embark on postgraduate degrees to advance their careers. As the employment market changes, many graduates already in the workforce, or those who have recently left the workforce, will require new skills.

An increase in postgraduate numbers will become an important source of future growth. La Trobe is currently a small player in the postgraduate coursework market, but with significant potential to expand. Targeting domestic and international postgraduate students will require a

<sup>10</sup> [http://archive.treasury.gov.au/igr/igr2010/report/pdf/IGR\\_2010.pdf](http://archive.treasury.gov.au/igr/igr2010/report/pdf/IGR_2010.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-05/government-committed-to-university-funding-cuts/7299508>

<sup>12</sup> <https://grattan.edu.au/report/mapping-australian-higher-education-2016/>; and <https://grattan.edu.au/report/shared-interest-a-universal-loan-fee-for-help/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://grattan.edu.au/report/mapping-australian-higher-education-2016/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.afr.com/news/policy/education/ducere-and-canberra-uni-launch-unique-mba-20140914-jeod4>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.education.gov.au/report-review-demand-driven-funding-system>

significant shift, over time, in all aspects of university operations. Postgraduate students will typically have higher and different expectations than undergraduate students. For example, many graduate students will prioritise ‘accreditation’ over ‘education’. They will require a clearer return on investment that will deliver a personal advantage in their career or in the sector (or job cluster) they wish to enter. This will involve many considerations based on individual preference and circumstances, including brand, reputation, course duration, convenience, flexibility and mode of delivery, price, links to industry and the nature of the qualification achieved, including industry-accredited micro-credentials.

## 3.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FUTURE

### 3.2.1 The role of universities in preparing graduates for the knowledge economy

It is estimated that the transition to a knowledge economy in Australia will require approximately 2.1 million more university qualifications (for both undergraduates and postgraduates) in 2025 than were needed in 2015. The five industries projected to need the largest increases in skilled graduates over the next ten years are: education and training; health care and social assistance; professional, scientific and technical services; public administration and safety; financial and insurance services.<sup>16</sup>

In responding to this demand, students will require universities to address the growing gap between the skills they are receiving and the skills their employers are demanding. This will mean a greater focus on transferable skills, adaptability and problem solving rather than preparing students for the specific occupations and roles we know today.

In contrast to specific, theoretical higher education skills, employers increasingly require graduates to possess a greater amount of tacit knowledge acquired through networks, practical learning and immersion in a community of like-minded individuals. Employers are increasingly requiring skills such as leadership, entrepreneurship, complex problem solving and critical thinking. Many large employers (such as PwC, EY and Penguin Random House) no longer require a degree as a prerequisite for employment.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.2.2 On-demand learning – the ‘digilogue’ experience

Students have an expectation of flexible course structures and blended modes of delivery that mix on-demand digital learning with more traditional (analogue) face-to-face and peer-to-peer classroom learning. Futurist Anders Sorman-Nilsson calls this the ‘digilogue’ consumer experience, combining digital with analogue, with and a seamless hand-off between the two.<sup>18</sup>

New higher education providers are exploring novel ways of delivering teaching and learning to students in an increasingly global and borderless higher education sector. Disruptive examples include Udacity’s ‘Nano degrees’, which are tailored to meet specific skills in Data Science and Machine Learning,<sup>19</sup> and the Minerva project’s globally connected, digitally immersive college degree experience.

### 3.2.3 Research and translation

The significance of university research to the economy and society will continue to increase in the transition to a knowledge-based economy as our communities look to universities to provide the platform for the next wave of economic growth and jobs creation. The result will be a much more active pursuit of the application and impact of university research, through deep industry partnerships, accelerator programs, incubators and the like. This is reinforced by the fact that technological innovation now happens much faster and at a smaller scale than in the past; the old methods of translating university research to commercial outcomes now just take too long. This creates a need and a space for the rapid stimulation of ideas and their translation to commercially successful applications. This is reflected in the Australian Government’s National Innovation and Science Agenda (NISA).

<sup>16</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/economics/articles/importance-universities-australias-prosperity.html>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/ernst-and-young-drops-degree-classification-threshold-graduate-recruitment>

<sup>18</sup> <http://odemmanagement.com/speakers/anders-sorman-nilsson.html>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.udacity.com/courses/data-science>

Gaining an international reputation for research excellence will help universities develop partnerships with government, community and industry, as well as attract domestic and international students.

### 3.2.4 University 4.0 and excellence

Taking all of these factors into account, it has been suggested that the successful university of the future, “University 4.0”, will be a:

1. **customised, on-demand educator** – providing on-demand learning offered in multiple modes, with a smooth and effective hand off between those modes.
2. **trusted certifier** – moving away from degrees as the only form of credential, towards a more mixed offering of degrees plus shorter cycle qualifications and credentials, allowing universities and employers to respond to the shorter shelf life of valuable knowledge and skills.
3. **trusted talent advisor** – offering a stronger focus on life-long career management for students while they are at university and when they become alumni. This will go beyond ‘careers advice’ in its traditional forms of the past, and will extend to ensuring that students have the skills they need before and after graduation to successfully navigate the new world of work—for example, by topping up standard university qualifications with short cycle qualifications throughout a working life as needed to fix identified skills gaps.
4. **physical site for collaboration and research** – becoming physical sites of co-location and collaboration with industry and other partners for research and innovation, including as brokers of relationships between young entrepreneurs and potential mentors, supporters and funders.

This new character of the future university will overlay the university’s more traditional role as a place for knowledge generation, transmission and critique, without obliterating it.

The remainder of this paper seeks to test some strategic propositions that could form the core of the university’s next strategic plan. It seeks to combine the most effective aspects of *Future Ready*, while laying the basis for a flourishing future as a university that is able to rise to the challenges of University 4.0.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COMMENT – OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

- What trends and external forces will be most important for La Trobe to consider and actively respond to in our next strategic plan?
  - What are the biggest opportunities for La Trobe to increase enrolments and revenue, and what challenges will that create?
  - What will La Trobe need to change or do to more effectively to respond to the challenges presented by University 4.0?
  - What do we need to do to become the university of choice for delivering the skills and attributes required for the jobs of the future?
  - What should we do to help our students and alumni upgrade their knowledge and skills to meet the demands of a rapidly changing economy?
  - Any other comments on this section?
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## 4 Our mission/purpose and vision

### 4.1 LA TROBE'S MISSION/PURPOSE, VALUES AND CULTURE

Our next strategic plan must have a clear mission or purpose statement outlining **why we exist**. It should capture the essence of the institution we are and want to be.

The mission gives expression to our shared values, particularly our history of:

- inclusiveness, equity and social justice.
- pursuing excellence in everything we do.
- championing our local communities in Melbourne's north and the regions.
- proudly being different and non-traditional.
- being willing where necessary to disrupt the normal way of doing things.

The mission should also build on *Future Ready's* desire for us to 'be the difference' by displaying four cultural qualities:

- **connected** – connecting the students and communities we serve to the world outside.
- **innovative** – tackling the big issues of our time to transform the lives of our students and society.
- **accountable** – striving for excellence in everything we do, holding each other to account and working to the highest standard.
- **care** – caring about what we do and why we do it. We believe in the power of education and research to transform lives and global society. We care about being the difference in the lives of our students and communities.

After much discussion, a consensus has emerged that our mission must combine three things: (1) research excellence in many disciplines; (2) nurturing extraordinary and energetic individuals who achieve success for themselves and others; and (3) providing unprecedented access to higher education for those previously denied it. The development of knowledge and people enables us to address the major issues of our time and promote development of the local communities we serve.

A consensus has emerged around the following draft Mission Statement:

- ***A world-class university for everyone who aspires to make a difference in the world through excellence in teaching and research.***

Alternatives could include:

- *Expanding knowledge and every type of mind so individuals, communities and the planet can thrive.*
- *Advancing knowledge to help shape the future for our communities.*

### 4.2 LA TROBE'S VISION

Our vision statement should capture the essence of our aspirations for La Trobe in a way that provides direction for our strategy and a point of focus for the efforts of the wider La Trobe community.

After much discussion, a consensus has emerged that our vision should capture four elements of La Trobe's activities: (1) being connected with local, national and international communities and partners; (2) acknowledging that we will continue to be scholarly and creative in our teaching, research and professional activities; (3) building on our reputation and achievement for combining excellence and inclusiveness; and (4) articulating our ambition to redefine what it means for a university to be excellent as we create a new kind of university capable of adapting successfully to the disruptions underway in the higher education sector.

An emerging suggestion, not yet universally agreed or accepted, is:

- ***To reshape what it means to be an excellent university in an era of ceaseless change.***

Alternatives include:

- *A connected scholarly and creative community committed to being a great university of a different kind.*
- *A connected scholarly and creative community at the forefront of research and teaching.*
- *To reshape our university as a connected scholarly and creative community committed to teaching and research excellence in an era of ceaseless change.*

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COMMENT – OUR MISSION AND VISION

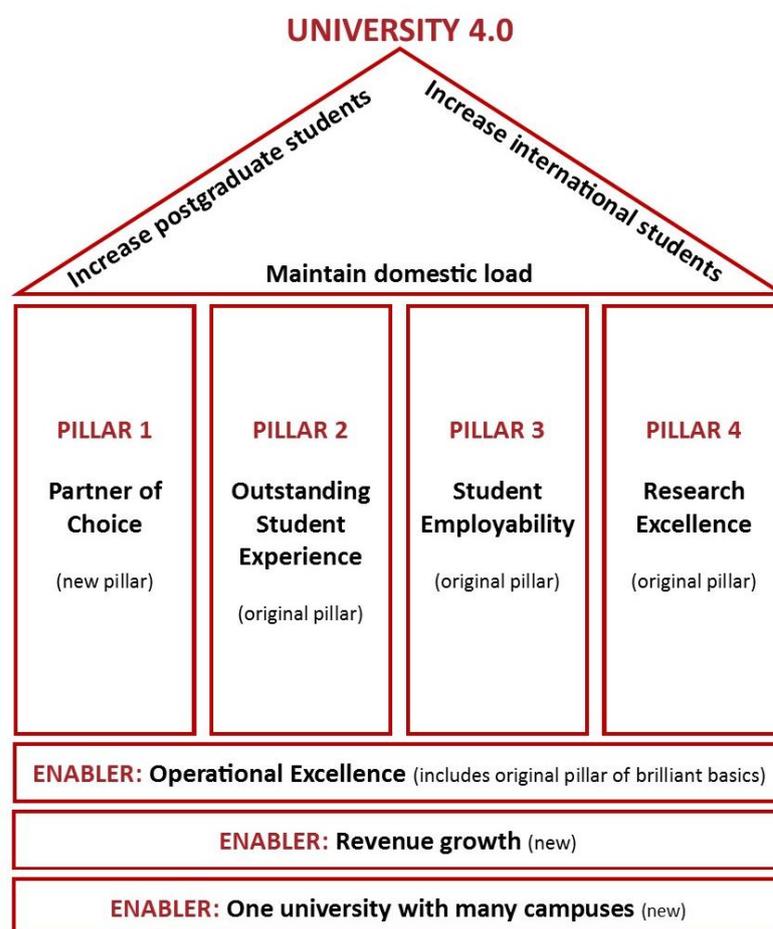
- Do any of these emerging mission and vision statements satisfactorily capture La Trobe’s legacy, while also pointing to a bold and ambitious future?
  - What is missing and what should be altered or removed?
  - What alternative wording would you recommend?
  - Any other comments on this section?
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## 5 Proposed structure for a revised strategy

There is a consensus within our Council, Senior Leadership Group and staff that the four pillars of *Future Ready* have served us well and will continue to do so. There is also general agreement that we need to place additional emphasis on:

- becoming the partner of choice.
- recognising the importance of our regional presence.
- evolving ‘brilliant basics’ into operational excellence in everything we do.
- revenue growth to provide the discretionary funds needed to create University 4.0.

This discussion paper therefore proposes we retain three of the original four pillars (‘Outstanding student experience’, ‘Student employability’ and ‘Research excellence’); add a new fourth pillar (‘Partner of choice’); evolve the ‘brilliant basics’ pillar into a cross-cutting enabler for the strategy (‘Operational excellence’); and add two new enablers (‘Revenue growth’ and ‘One university with many campuses’).



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COMMENT – STRATEGY STRUCTURE

- Will this proposed structure work to deliver our vision and mission? What changes would you recommend?
- How can the outcomes required from each element of this strategy be most effectively measured?
- Any other comments on this section?

## 6 Pillar 1: Partner of Choice

### 6.1 CONNECTEDNESS

Emphasising connectedness will assist La Trobe to position itself as the pre-eminently 'connected' university of Australia, well equipped to rise to the challenges of University 4.0.

#### 6.1.1 Industry connectedness

Recent market research has emphasised the advantages of strong connections with industry and community, including increased appeal to prospective students.

La Trobe is already deeply connected to industry, with one of the highest proportions of industry end-user research income of any Australian university. We are comfortably number three in Victoria for total and per-capita research income derived from industry.

We have a large R&D Park that is attracting increasing interest from industry partners, and the La Trobe Accelerator program, which has started bringing innovation and entrepreneurship to all of our campuses.

La Trobe's ambition *to become a global exemplar for a digitally connected university city of the future* shows how seriously we take innovation through partnership with industry. The mutual benefits of this initiative for research, industry and local communities will be considerable.

#### 6.1.2 Regional connections (see 12 below)

La Trobe's regional presence and our 'one university, many campuses' model will allow us to better connect with local industry, TAFE and community.

Our master planning process will also allow us to develop our campuses for industry and community partnerships, including the 'smart cities' approach contained in our plan to develop the Bundoora campus as a living laboratory for a digitally connected university city of the future.

### 6.2 BECOMING THE UNRIVALLED PARTNER OF CHOICE

The modern university of the future will have deep partnerships with governments, industry and the community. Partnerships will play a big role in making La Trobe a great university in an era of ceaseless change. A strengthened emphasis on partnerships will build on the existing *Future Ready* aim of developing 'game changing partnerships' with industry, government and the broader community.

Our focus on being the connected, 'unrivalled partner of choice' speaks to a wide range of potential partners, including:

- **students and alumni** – by partnering with La Trobe as their trusted learning advisor.
- **industry** – by contributing to our learning and teaching design and partnering with our researchers for commercial and non-commercial reasons.
- **education providers** – by providing pathways to further qualifications and careers for students, using the relationships with industry, government and local communities that each provider brings.
- **research institutions** – by collaborating with research on the major issues for society.
- **community** – by supporting local development and providing a range of community sporting, cultural and recreational facilities.
- **government** – by supporting local and regional economic development in the transition to a knowledge economy and collaborating on key research and innovation activities.
- **philanthropy** – by supporting a range of university priorities, including equity scholarships, research excellence and new infrastructure, to benefit students and staff.

To become a partner of choice, we must be open and responsive. Each and every interaction will build our reputation for establishing and delivering trust-based relationships. Partnerships require an investment of time and resources on both sides. While our focus will be on the results these partnerships can achieve to deliver our mission and vision, we also need to understand the objectives and drivers of our partners and how the partnership can provide shared value (both financial and non-financial).

Being the *unrivalled* partner *chosen* by these groups will build La Trobe's reputation for achieving excellence by producing mutual benefits for all parties, including good careers, innovative and successful businesses and rising economic growth.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COMMENT – PARTNERSHIP

- Which elements of being 'connected' are most important for La Trobe's future?
  - What should La Trobe do to distinguish itself as the 'unrivalled partner of choice'?
  - Any other comments on this section?
-

## 7 Pillar 2: Outstanding Student Experience

*Future Ready* placed La Trobe students at the heart of everything the university does. ‘La Trobe students,’ it said, ‘will have an outstanding experience, from first enquiry through to employment and beyond. Prospective students will choose us because we are at the centre of important social, economic, environmental, political and scientific developments; because we will partner in their learning; because we are flexible and innovative in our modes of delivery; because of our technology and facilities; and because our staff and systems offer seamless support.’

As recommended in our consultations, this pillar maintains that pledge and gives it sharper focus. La Trobe’s performance in the national Student Experience Survey is below the national average in overall satisfaction in all but four of our twenty major teaching disciplines. Clearly, improving student satisfaction is now a major priority (see 7.1.2 below).

Current and future students will increasingly measure the quality of their education by the quality of their overall experience and by our ability to provide a flexible learning environment that permits smooth and effective hand-offs between multiple modes of delivery. Students will expect the latest technology, systems and physical learning environments to underpin the delivery of the highest quality teaching.

### 7.1 DELIVERING HIGHER EDUCATION OF EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY AND WHICH IS VALUED BY STUDENTS

#### 7.1.1 What we need to keep doing

La Trobe already offers sector-leading learning and teaching through established partnerships with industry and educational providers. Our partnerships with Open Universities Australia, Navitas and TAFE institutes have expanded our reach to students across Victoria and Australia. La Trobe has one of the most diverse student cohorts in Victoria, reporting the highest number of students from low-SES backgrounds and on-campus regional students in the state. According to a recent report published by the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training, our commencing bachelor level domestic students have very good four-year completion rates, almost four percentage points higher than the national average for public universities.<sup>20</sup>

Our Essentials—‘Global citizenship’, ‘Sustainability thinking’ and ‘Innovation and entrepreneurship’—are points of distinction for La Trobe and important components of our social contract with our students and communities. The work that has been undertaken to incorporate these into all courses provides the foundation for their future development in partnership with students and employers.

According to the Student Experience Survey (SES) data, our undergraduate students have a strong sense of belonging and enjoy the discussions they have and the work they do with other students in class, on campus and online. QILT also reports that our undergraduate students rank us above the national average on learner engagement.<sup>21</sup>

#### 7.1.2 New directions and opportunities – improving teaching quality and student satisfaction

As noted above, La Trobe’s performance on measures of teaching quality and the overall student experience are nowhere near as good as they should be. Student satisfaction will therefore be given the highest strategic and operational priority. We will work together until we are amongst the Top 12 universities nationally.

Improving student satisfaction results is everyone’s responsibility, and every member of staff should ask themselves how their work is contributing to it. Managers should include ‘student experience’ in their Career Success discussions and should aim to build a culture of expectation around the issue, including appropriate recognition and rewards.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.education.gov.au/completion-rates-cohort-analyses>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.qilt.edu.au/>

A number of initiatives have been put in place to improve teaching and learning quality and the overall student experience. These include significant investment in teaching spaces and campus infrastructure; recruiting sector-leading staff; the development and implementation of the Digital Learning Strategy; the development of new supporting programs for professional development for teaching staff, including the Teaching Scholars Development Program, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Fund, and the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme; the implementation of the Subject Improvement Program; the development of a student engagement app to support students in navigating La Trobe systems throughout their studies; and the launch of the Employability Program, Career Ready Advantage, through which we have expanded our careers services to students (see 8 Student Employability below).

Following a thorough analysis of the SES data, including at the discipline level, and an associated consultation process with staff and students, we will embark on a number of targeted new initiatives to improve teacher quality and student satisfaction outcomes.

We will continue to recognise and reward excellence. La Trobe's teachers will be active members of communities of practice focussed on continuous improvement in the quality of our teaching and learning. The emphasis to 2020 will be on using data, emerging technologies and new models for teaching and learning. Undergraduate and postgraduate coursework offerings will be informed by industry, be work-relevant and student-focused. We will employ design thinking in the construction of educational experiences across different modes of delivery and we will involve students in our efforts to improve teaching, building on recent initiatives such as the Subject Improvement Program and the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme.

We know that the knowledge, skills and attributes required for graduates to become productive members of society are changing rapidly. Universities cannot predict or guarantee the jobs of the future, but we can prepare graduates for the future workforce by providing them with adaptive, on-demand learning that enhances their general skills and capabilities.

This means a greater focus on 'enterprise skills' like communication, collaboration, leadership, entrepreneurship and complex problem solving. It will also require a life-long journey of learning, as students, alumni and other members of the workforce return to higher education for up-skilling or re-skilling, including shorter-cycle qualifications and learning programs developed with industry partners.

## **7.2 PROVIDING A FLEXIBLE, STUDENT-FIRST LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

Traditional models of higher education delivery are being disrupted by technological, social and environmental change. This is necessitating additional flexibility in course offerings, including increased demand for personalised courses, convenient modes of course delivery, high quality learning experiences and improved employment outcomes.

New providers and new business models are already emerging to threaten the viability of traditional university business models. But the same digital disruption that is driving changes in student expectations and employer demands can provide the tools for universities to respond successfully. Digital technologies increase the opportunities for flexible delivery. The use of data we have available helps support students at critical points in their study, while simultaneously building their capacity to monitor and manage their own learning. There are new and exciting opportunities for partnerships with other education providers, industry, employers, community members, students and alumni to improve our responsiveness to disruption.

### **7.2.1 What we need to keep doing**

La Trobe has already embraced the application of technology to improve the quality and flexibility of teaching and learning through the creation of quality blended learning environments. As part of the Digital Learning Strategy we have transformed the teaching of over 200 subjects in the last two years and explored innovative applications of existing and emerging learning technologies in a range of different discipline areas.

Through La Trobe Online we have further extended our capacity to provide courses and subjects that cater to the needs of students in the digital age; to provide opportunities for education to those who would normally not access it; and to attract new students and alumni seeking to combine work and study to advance their careers.

A small but growing portfolio of online courses and subjects has been launched including the new sector-leading online *Masters of Cybersecurity*. We have partnered successfully with Open Universities Australia in the development and delivery of the *Bachelor of Food and Nutrition*, which has grown much faster than anticipated, demonstrating our capacity to build on existing strengths to create new and innovative courses.

### 7.2.2 New directions and opportunities

The provision of flexible and effective student-first learning will improve the experience of current La Trobe students and lower the barriers to participation for potential future students. It will also extend our geographical catchment for potential students.

This requires that we design our subjects and courses so that students can learn anywhere, at any time convenient to them and in ways that maximise the learning benefit of their experiences. Learning environments will include high levels of interaction between students, teachers and domain experts to produce unique questions and answers while challenging and extending students' thinking. Learning and assessment activities will be authentic, experience-based and assured. Students will not only learn about the domain of study, they will learn about themselves as learners, ensuring that they are well prepared to thrive in a rapidly changing world of work. Students will be our partners in many innovative ways, becoming co-creators of their own unique learning experiences. Proven and emerging technologies can be combined to create novel learning experiences that fit in flexibly and effectively to their everyday lives and are highly relevant to their future careers.

### 7.2.3 Non-traditional sources

Growth in student numbers will increasingly come from non-traditional sources, where the barriers to learning in traditional modes are high and there is a strong need for high quality, flexible and expertly curated courses. La Trobe will consequently need to avoid unconsciously treating all students as Year 12 leavers. Postgraduate and mature age students, for example, are more likely to prefer flexibly delivered courses, co-designed with industry, that will help them improve their skills and employability and navigate the rapidly shifting landscape of work.

As existing employees identify skills gaps that are holding back their careers, providers will increasingly offer targeted up-skilling courses of varied duration and credentials. Becoming a trusted lifelong learning adviser to our alumni (see 6.2.1 below), will position La Trobe to both provide this type of training and broker relationships with other providers.

### 7.2.4 Indigenous strategy

La Trobe is proud to have exceeded 100 new Indigenous enrolments in 2017 and to have reached our *Future Ready* goal of population parity one year ahead of target. However, there is much more we can and will do, including for example, introducing new scholarships, sharing our ground-breaking 'Wominjeka La Trobe' course with other institutions and piloting a new *I-Aspire* program to support a pipeline of Indigenous secondary students into higher education at La Trobe.

Specifically, La Trobe has committed to the Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2017-2020<sup>22</sup>, which, among other things, seeks to achieve a growth rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in university at 50 per cent above the rate of non-Indigenous students and sets a target of equal success and completion rates for Indigenous students to non-Indigenous students in the same fields of study over the next decade.

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<sup>22</sup> See <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/>

## 7.2.5 Exploiting the full potential of our multiple campuses

La Trobe will continue to move away from the old model of largely separate campuses offering different courses, to become a more connected network providing greater course choice, an increase in co-location and collaboration between the university and industry, and linking students and entrepreneurs with greater numbers of potential mentors, industry partners and employers (see 12 below).

To enable a flexible student experience across all campuses, our processes, systems and technology will need to deliver consistent teaching and learning and access to specialised expertise. While we need to deliver the highest standards at all our campuses, we also need to acknowledge and respond to local variations in relationships, resource deployment, context and opportunity. Agility, innovation and flexibility will be required to ensure location-specific actions deliver the same high quality across the university.

## 7.2.6 Delivering flexibility

Increasing the flexibility of course offerings, contact hours and the way we deliver content will also include:

- broadening student exposure to cross-disciplinary learning.
- partnering with other institutions to deliver specialised content.
- supporting smooth and effective transition between digital and face-to-face delivery.
- providing spaces for interactive learning.

La Trobe may also consider expanding the number of alternative pathway programs for students through innovative partnerships with TAFE and other education providers and community organisations, and by redesigning models of articulation to better support students.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COMMENT – STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- How can La Trobe improve student satisfaction results in line with our target to be among the Top 12 universities nationally?
  - How can La Trobe improve the student experience through new models of learning and teaching, including new modes of delivery?
  - How can La Trobe improve the quality of our learning and teaching and improve graduate employment outcomes?
  - What new credentials should La Trobe develop, and how should these be delivered?
  - How can we provide pathways for a diverse range of students (e.g. mature age and international students with English as a second language) to enrol and succeed in higher education at La Trobe?
  - How can we achieve the ambitious targets set in the Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2017-2020?
  - In answering these questions, please consider:
    - What is La Trobe already doing that we should continue to support?
    - What should change about our current strategy?
    - What should we stop doing?
  - Any other comments on this section?
-

## 8 Pillar 3: Student Employability

### 8.1 WHAT SHOULD WE KEEP DOING

The skills and attributes of La Trobe graduates will make them stand out in an increasingly competitive and constantly evolving employment market. This will include work-integrated learning with our industry partners and a career-ready program to help students manage their careers and develop the qualities employers now highly value. These will embrace cognitive flexibility, social intelligence and transferable ‘enterprise skills’ like communication, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, creativity and digital and financial literacy.

La Trobe has invested heavily in *Career Ready at La Trobe*—an employability strategy pursuant to one of the existing four pillars of *Future Ready*. *Career Ready Advantage* was launched at our city campus on Thursday 9 March to benefit our students as they prepare for their future career through:

- curriculum innovation to incorporate employability skills and an entrepreneurial attitude.
- building the employability brand of our students.
- increasing the number and quality of work-related experiences.
- using external partnerships.
- improving student employability experiences and results.<sup>23</sup>

La Trobe has developed the sector-leading *Career Ready Capability Framework* to focus on the skills (cognitive flexibility, social intelligence and career management) and personal attributes (resilience, curiosity, passion and empathy) that are now of most importance to employers.<sup>24</sup> Our approach is consistent with the findings of the Foundation for Young Australians, which advocates providing students with a suite of skills—technical, foundational, enterprise and career management—that will help them navigate their way through the future employment market. The Foundation estimates that today’s young people may need to change jobs as many as 17 times and across 6 different industry sectors throughout their careers.

Students at La Trobe will be supported as they engage in a valuable range of experiential learning and extra-curricular activities through a partnership with LinkedIn learning and the establishment of a dedicated *Career Ready* support team.

### 8.2 NEW DIRECTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

We understand that students desire an education that will:

*‘build my knowledge, skills and networks so that I am sought after by employers and have a life filled with career opportunities and increased earning potential.’*

La Trobe will tailor our credentials to suit the demands and expectations of students and industry. We will launch new credentials that address specific skills gaps and employer expectations, including short cycle awards and micro-credentials.

We will build on our relationships with students, alumni and industry to become a ‘trusted talent adviser’. We will provide lifelong support to help our students and alumni keep up with changes in the world of work—by offering tailored short courses to bridge the gap between pre-existing qualifications and the new skills that will be required for as yet unknown new roles and new technologies. This is exemplified by our partnership with LinkedIn, which provides our students with access to short courses that fill in skill gaps and make them more employable.

We will foster and cultivate a thriving alumni network and provide a model of continuous engagement for La Trobe graduates throughout their entire careers.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/news/articles/2017/release/career-ready-initiative-kicks-off-50th>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/students/careers/career-ready>

We will continue to embed innovation and entrepreneurship in our curriculum and will offer students the opportunity to become entrepreneurs in their own right through the support of the La Trobe Accelerator Program offered across all our campuses.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COMMENT – STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY

- How can La Trobe ensure that the student experience gives students the knowledge, skills and networks that will make them sought after by employers and give them a life filled with career opportunities and increased earning potential?
  - How can La Trobe tailor credentials to suit the demands and expectations of students and industry?
  - How can La Trobe build on our relationships with students, alumni and industry to become a 'trusted talent adviser'?
  - How can La Trobe support innovation and entrepreneurship for our students?
  - Any other comments on this section?
-

## 9 Pillar 4: Research Excellence

*Future Ready* states ‘La Trobe will be globally recognised for its excellence, creativity and innovation in relation to the big issues of our time. We will be among the best in the world in our chosen areas of research focus, and we will attract outstanding research partners to work with us.’

This pillar recognises the success La Trobe has had to date in achieving research excellence. We should continue to improve our institutional ranking through our research quality and impact. We should continue to foster cross-disciplinary collaborations, increase research income (including Category 2-4 income) and improve the HDR experience.

La Trobe will continue to identify our research areas of strength and concentrate our investment in these areas of excellence. This will include targeted recruitment of top research talent and building partnerships with leading international research and innovation institutions, companies and organisation.

We will identify and support research specialisations that take advantage of our regional footprint and the opportunities provided by concentrations of research talent from La Trobe, industry, community and three tiers of government.

We will work with industry partners to develop a global exemplar of the digitally connected university city of the future and we will become a leading precinct for R&D collaborations as significant industry partners co-locate at our campuses. The La Trobe Accelerator Program will support entrepreneurship, innovation and commercialisation on all of our campuses.

### 9.1 EXTENDING OUR GLOBAL RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

La Trobe’s reputation will continue to be tied to internationally recognised excellence in research. Research excellence will attract student load and new industry partners. To improve our research reputation, La Trobe needs to attract top researchers and research projects from throughout the world.

#### 9.1.1 What we need to keep doing

La Trobe has a strong and growing reputation for delivering excellence, creativity and innovation to address end-user research needs.

La Trobe ranks in the top 400 universities in the world in all three of the major global university rankings. This provides momentum for the University to extend its global reputation for research excellence.

La Trobe University is clearly number three in Victoria in total and per-capita research income—largely as a result of our success in attracting ‘engagement’ income (category 2-4 research income), broadly to be interpreted as end-user research income. Our strategy will recognise that partners seek to work with the very best and that continued research excellence is a central part of any engagement strategy. La Trobe’s ambition will recognise that engagement and excellence go hand-in-hand.

La Trobe is among the world’s elite institutions in more than a third of subjects assessed in the 2016 QS World University Rankings. We featured in the top 100 global universities in History (number 7 in Australia), Sociology (also number 7 in Australia), and Communication and Media studies (number 16 in Australia). Seven La Trobe subjects were in the world’s top 200 list: Linguistics, Agriculture, Psychology, Accounting & Finance, Education, Law and Politics & International Studies.

The ERA tells us that our research excellence leads Victorian and Australian universities in several intellectually and economically significant fields. Based on the number of top ratings, we are:

- first in Australia for Agricultural and Veterinary Studies and the only top-rated university in Australia for Physiology.
- first in Victoria for Archaeology, Analytical Chemistry, Transportation & Freight, Biological Sciences, Microbiology, Physiology, and Agricultural & Veterinary Sciences, including Crop and Pasture Production.

- equal first in Victoria for Political Science, Tourism, Social Work, Soil Sciences, Animal Production, Human Movement & Sports Science, Plant Biology & Zoology, Neurosciences, Nursing, Nutrition & Dietetics, Other Medical & Health Sciences, Statistics and Physical Sciences, including Condensed Matter Physics and Optical Physics.
- top three in Victoria for Accounting, Auditing & Accountability, Banking, Finance & Investment, Pure Mathematics, Inorganic Chemistry, Medicinal & Biomolecular Genetics, Anthropology and Linguistics.

There are prominent examples of high value external partnerships now underway, including AgriBio and the School of Cancer Medicine:

- The \$288 million Centre for AgriBioscience (AgriBio), which officially opened in 2013, is a partnership with the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. This world-class research facility houses 400 world-leading scientists working to contribute to the task of sustainably feeding the world's growing population through improving soil performance, developing high value crops, designing healthier diets, producing seeds that are a higher yield and improving animal health against parasitic organisms.
- The School of Cancer Medicine is located within the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute at the Austin Hospital. Researchers and clinicians work together to translate scientific discovery into new treatments for the ultimate benefit of patients with cancer.

The La Trobe Institute for Molecular Science (LIMS) is another prominent example of significant infrastructure investment to support research. Launched in 2009, LIMS pursues research excellence in six areas of research strength: cancer, infection and immunity, neurobiology, molecular design, molecular imaging and molecular sensing. Approximately 400 La Trobe academics, research fellows, postgraduate students and support staff are based at the Institute, with an important regional node of scientists working at La Trobe's Bendigo campus.

## 9.2 BE A WORLD-LEADER IN RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

There may be a perceived tension in our research priorities. International research rankings are driven largely by Category 1 funding (which is designed to drive citations and refereed publications), whereas achieving ambitious goals relating to research income and end-user research and engagement are best met through Cat 2-4 income. La Trobe University needs to ensure that we value and celebrate all forms of research activity - excellence as well as engagement. It may be possible to be excellent but not engaged; it is certainly not possible to be engaged without being excellent.

### 9.2.1 What we need to keep doing

Our **Research Focus Areas** (RFAs) have been extremely effective at concentrating research effort in our areas of excellence and the areas in which we intend to make a difference. They have also been highly effective in developing new partnerships across disciplines and with external partners, and our consultation to date suggests that they have become an externally visible signature for La Trobe's approach to supporting research.

The RFAs have certainly become emblematic of La Trobe's interdisciplinary approach to research and teaching and our ambition to be at the centre of important social, economic, political and scientific developments. Our emphasis on developing partnerships with industry, other research organisations, local advocacy groups, government organisations and international development agencies gives graduate researchers the opportunity to collaborate with industry and beyond, further developing their employability and increasing the real-world effectiveness of their research.

La Trobe already has a very good reputation for partnering with industry, educational providers, government and community organisations. Our profile of industry-derived funding is more similar to that of an ATN university such as RMIT or UTS than an IRU university such as Flinders.

Our impressive ranking and discipline-based achievements are described in 9.1.1 above.

## 9.2.2 New directions and opportunities

La Trobe should aspire to a world leading reputation in effective research translation, engagement and impact. There is significant potential for La Trobe to build its profile as a connected university with strong links to industry and the community.

Our research performance and end-user impact are much stronger than our reputation would indicate. We need to acknowledge and celebrate our achievements and successes more effectively.

Increasing our end-user engagement will, if managed well, provide a variety of benefits. Our research will address the most pressing questions of our partner organisations, thereby demonstrating both engagement and effectiveness. Our students will connect better with potential future employers and their priorities.

The success of our RFAs (see 9.2.1 above) has prompted some internal questions about whether some or all of the RFAs might transition into more formal structures such as institutes or centres. This is a discussion that will be more actively pursued throughout the consultation process that follows from the release of this discussion paper.

We will open up our campuses to co-location and co-creation with industry. The La Trobe Accelerator program will unleash the latent entrepreneurship and innovation in Victoria's regions. We will use our extraordinary land base in Bundoora (1.5 times the size of the Melbourne CBD) to develop transportation infrastructure and health precincts. La Trobe's R&D Park will become a dynamic entrepreneurial research and innovation precinct attracting new partners, tenants and industries to the Bundoora campus.

The La Trobe Research and Innovation Precinct (LTRIP) is an integral part of La Trobe's Master Plan to develop the Bundoora campus into 'a university city of the future'. This will create exciting opportunities for our researchers, teachers and students to immerse themselves in industry through programs of integrated learning, secondments and industry PhDs. LTRIP will support economic and jobs growth, promote private sector investment into science and research and contribute to building the Australia's workforce of the future.

This model of co-location and co-creation with industry will be transferrable to the campus network and will be supported by the La Trobe Accelerator program. For example, the master planning process in Albury-Wodonga is well advanced and includes a number of opportunities for industry and research collaboration suited to local needs.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COMMENT – RESEARCH AND TRANSLATION

- How can La Trobe continue strategically to improve the productivity, quantity, and impact of its research?
- How can La Trobe increase the level of engagement and collaboration in our research through partnerships? Who should we be partnering with and in what areas?
- How can La Trobe improve the impact and interdisciplinary approach of our Research Focus Areas?
- How can La Trobe use its regional presence to further increase the reach and impact of our research?
- Any other comments on this section?

## 10 Enabler 1: Operational Excellence

The *Future Ready* commitment to ‘brilliant basics’ is often interpreted too narrowly—as having relevance only to systems and processes. But to be the university we want to be, we need operational excellence in every part of our activities: teaching, research and the administration that underpins them. By rebadging the ‘brilliant basics’ pillar as a cross cutting enabler, and renaming it as ‘operational excellence’, we want to send a clear signal that excellence must apply across all systems, processes, services, technology and people, with the ultimate aim of improving teaching and research.

This specifically acknowledges that La Trobe is a large and complex institution, all parts of which need to work together to achieve excellence in everything we do. We need to ensure that we are student-focussed and are supporting our staff to give our students the very best. We need to ensure our cultural qualities – connected, innovative, accountable and caring – underpin our actions and behaviour to deliver our expectations for operational excellence.

For the purposes of this discussion paper, the remainder of this section will focus on La Trobe as an employer of choice.

### 10.1 THROUGH OUR PEOPLE AND INFRASTRUCTURE, BECOME AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

#### 10.1.1 Background

Australian universities are experiencing increasing local and global competition for the best staff. At the same time, the way we work is changing rapidly. The nature and types of jobs are shifting, and the expectations of our students and partners are rapidly evolving. New ways of organising the way we work are affecting all of us. The changing expectations of universities associated with University 4.0 mean that roles for staff will require a suitable mix of increasing specialisation while also maintaining the flexibility to meet rapid changes in expectations. More diverse career paths will need to be developed, recognised and rewarded.

We will attract and retain the best people we can and deploy their talents in imaginative ways to constantly improve results for our students, partners and communities. To do this, we will become an employer of choice, and a workplace that encourages individuals to achieve personal career success in their areas of expertise while feeling part of a dynamic and welcoming scholarly community.

We will provide the digital and physical infrastructure that will allow our students, our staff and our partnerships with industry, the community and governments to thrive.

#### 10.1.2 What we should keep doing

We will build on La Trobe’s inclusiveness and collegiate culture to respond to change and disruption.

The university’s history is one of consistently addressing the real and pressing needs of the world around us—through scientific and social research, inclusive approaches to teaching and by leading the way in our own behaviour. When we develop new and innovative courses, such as our online nutrition and dietetics course, or our cyber security courses, we lead the sector and bring industry and students with us. This is the sort of real-world engagement and agility that is needed as we reshape what it means to be a great university and then become one. While there is much yet to do, significant work has commenced—for example in our building program and our ambitious plan to build a state-of-the-art Sports Park as stage one of developing the digital university city of the future at Bundoora. Comparable ambitions are being developed in our master planning processes for each of our regional campuses.

### 10.1.3 New directions and opportunities

Our goal is to create an environment that makes us an employer of choice for academic and professional staff.

We recognise that our systems, processes and infrastructure are in need of modernisation and improvement. We will identify when our systems, processes, services and infrastructure are inadequate to support our staff in performing their roles. We will reward staff who identify and take ownership of problems and challenges to develop lasting solutions.

While there have been many improvements over the last 5 years, there is still some way to go before our systems, processes, services and infrastructure are fully user friendly and are operating at the level they need to. We will ensure that all of our systems and business processes are clearly focused on the needs of those using them, rather than the convenience of those who provide them. We will draw on the best of new technology available, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, to ensure that our staff and students are as well supported as possible.

We will provide a comprehensive suite of support services for staff across all our campuses. Those services will be supported by intuitive and easy-to-use smart city technology available at all our locations and remotely.

We will continue to develop a working environment that supports our staff to contribute to university improvement in their areas of expertise, with opportunities for feedback, reward and progression. Improved attention will be given to the needs of early career academics.

We will continually examine the effects of shifting trends and practices in employment and teaching on our workforce, and reflect these changes in new and emerging roles, ways of working and course delivery. Where roles need to become more specialized, we will ensure that they are properly supported and rewarded.

We will ensure professional development opportunities are tailored to the needs of all staff as we adjust to the challenges of University 4.0. We will give our staff the support they need to operate effectively within an ever-changing environment. Where possible, we will provide staff with the flexibility they need to specialise in either teaching or research for time periods that suit their career aspirations. We will, where possible, support staff who may want to devote time and energy to specific projects for specific periods—for example to industry funded or located research. We will also provide professional development and support to staff to learn the skills required to successfully partner with industry and make best advantage of the new technologies we introduce.

We will continue to build a staff culture that emphasises everyone's duty to maintain our university as a place where we are connected, we are innovative, we are accountable and we care.

We will modernise and develop our physical infrastructure to improve the staff and student environment, support research and teaching, foster innovation and open our campuses to meet community needs.

We will ensure all our academic staff have the skills and supports they need to educate and train students for existing job clusters and the jobs of the future. We will deliver this education and training in a manner consistent with the idea of University 4.0: customised, on-demand, offered in multiple modes, with a smooth and effective hand-off between those modes.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COMMENT – OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

- How can La Trobe further build on our culture to become an employer of choice?
  - How can La Trobe build on the investments it has made in digital and physical infrastructure to create a unique experience for staff, students and partners?
  - What can La Trobe do to better support workforce agility, innovation and development?
  - How can La Trobe support our staff to teach the new skills and attributes required for the job clusters and jobs of the future, and in a manner consistent with the University 4.0 ideal of customised, on-demand education?
  - Any other comments on this section?
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# 11 Enabler 2: Revenue Growth

Revenue needs to increase to provide the necessary discretionary funding to deliver on the aspirations in this strategy. While alternative sources of funding will be explored, revenue growth during the period of the new strategy will be delivered by growth in student load in three areas:

- growth in enrolment and retention of postgraduate coursework students, including domestic and international students.
- growth in international students, including postgraduate coursework students (see 3.1.10, above).
- maintaining and increasing our share of domestic undergraduate students.

The delivery of student load in these three areas will provide the discretionary revenue we need to support the strategic investments required to deliver our mission and vision. Revenue growth from student load will be a consequence of, and dependent on, the effective delivery of operational excellence and our four pillars.

We will also explore the best ways to identify and develop new revenue generating activities for the university, using the opportunities created by digital technologies, and the demand for new types of credential. We could do this through the creation of a separate entity that would be given the job of experimenting with new ideas, akin to Google X or Navitas Ventures. Successes can then be brought back into the university.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COMMENT – REVENUE GROWTH

- What are the main barriers and enablers to growth?
  - What are some alternate ways for La Trobe to generate revenue growth, other than through increased student load?
  - What do we need to do to become a more postgraduate-friendly university?
  - Any other comments on this section?
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## 12 Enabler 3: One university with many campuses

La Trobe's campuses outside Melbourne serve four main purposes:

- to create educational opportunity – on campus, online or a mixture of both.
- to engage in research that builds on La Trobe's strengths and which addresses a mix of local, regional, national and international issues.
- to contribute to managing the impact of economic change and workforce transformation in the regional communities we serve.
- to be a catalyst of ideas, debate and cultural vitality for our local communities.

Our campuses provide a world-class university experience at a local level, enriched by their distinctive student body and connections with their local communities.

Our campuses outside Melbourne bring diversity to the university's student population by greatly adding to the numbers of our regional, first in family and Indigenous students. They also enable us to innovate in content and delivery, innovations which can be fed back into the university as a whole.

### 12.1 WHAT WE NEED TO KEEP DOING

Discussions among our Council and staff have clearly identified La Trobe's network of campuses as a great differentiating feature for us. La Trobe's inclusive character derives in large part from our regional campus network. Without our regional campuses, the profile of La Trobe University would be very similar to other Melbourne metro-based universities. La Trobe's multiple campuses directly address inequity and improve access to higher education for the local communities.

Each of our campuses provides economic, social and cultural infrastructure for the local communities we serve, with close ties and deep connections with local industry, local government and local community organisations.

Many of our regional students cannot leave home for a variety of reasons. For these students, our regional campuses are the only pathway to an on-campus higher education experience. For many other students, we provide a local or regional alternative to relocating to Melbourne. We know that our regional graduates are far more likely to stay and work in regional and rural areas than those who relocate to Melbourne. In this way, we make a significant contribution to addressing the brain drain from our regions by the development of a skilled professional workforce to serve the current and future workforce needs of regional and rural Australia.

The engagement of our staff and students across multiple campuses with local industry, government and cultural institutions provides unique opportunities for students and academics to connect with local partners and to access grant programs designed to support regional communities, innovation and development. Some major innovations have been shaped by and respond to our network of connections:

- Aspire, our ground-breaking early offer scheme, originated from discussions with principals in regional Victoria. Uptake of Aspire is higher in regional Victoria than in metropolitan regions.
- Our MBA offers a model of local delivery through networking campuses and integration of block mode delivery.
- Our place-based subjects are now offered on all campuses, in block mode. Subjects like Writers in Action, Exhibiting Culture, Encountering Aboriginal Victoria, and Alpine Ecology provide opportunities to all La Trobe students to experience a unique, rich, place-based learning.
- The co-location of our smaller campuses with TAFEs has led to the development of our innovative dual enrolment programs. These innovations have in turn enabled us to expand our regional reach in Victoria, including partnerships with Wodonga TAFE, Bendigo Kangan Institute, Sunraysia Institute of TAFE (SuniTAFE), Mildura and Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE (GOTAFE) and Shepparton.
- The TAFE partnership model, originally developed for our regional campuses, has recently been extended to southeast Melbourne through the establishment of a deeper partnership with Chisholm Institute.

## 12.2 NEW DIRECTIONS OR OPPORTUNITIES

'One university with many campuses' defines La Trobe as a connected network of campuses throughout and beyond Victoria. This envisages more extensive collaboration within and between campuses so we can bring a more comprehensive range of courses and research to our regional communities.

### 12.2.1 Teaching and learning

Our teaching and learning can be tailored to the needs of local communities and local industry. Because our regional campuses offer teaching on a smaller scale, there are opportunities to experiment in our teaching methods and modes of delivery. By drawing on place-based resources, we can improve outcomes in specific locations and across our network. Our regional campuses can become test-beds for the use of new technologies and methods of delivery to continue to address the low participation rate in higher education in our regions.

We will offer degrees in each of the following categories across our campuses outside Melbourne:

- degrees offered at all La Trobe campuses, usually those in high demand areas such as Business, Education, Nursing and Human Services.
- degrees offered only at our regional campuses, such as Agribusiness, tailored to the workforce needs of our regional communities.
- place-based subjects offered at specific campuses that appeal to students from across the La Trobe campus network, such as those offered as part of cultural festivals and exhibitions.
- dual enrolment programs offered in partnership with TAFE, particularly in areas of workforce shortage.
- online degrees offered through La Trobe Online, and open to students irrespective of location.

We will, wherever possible, extend our short course, micro-credentials and executive education offerings to regional students and communities, and we will continue to offer our 'Regional Promise' whereby students at our regional campuses are guaranteed an internship or work placement as part of their degree.

We will continue to advocate for the creation of the Murray Darling Medical School to address the rural doctor shortage, and to offer talented regional and Indigenous students the opportunity to study in, and then to serve, their local communities as skilled medical professionals.

### 12.2.2 Research

Regional communities face significant challenges arising from climate change, the management of natural resources and related social consequences. Regional communities also require new skills for those who work locally as well as for those who live in the country but work in the city.

Our researchers have much to offer to address these challenges and opportunities. We will develop areas of research focus for each of our campuses and develop close industry partnerships drawing on researchers from across La Trobe's network.

Our campuses are sited close to some of the most important industries in regional Victoria, especially those relating to agriculture, water and human and health services. We can build on this physical proximity to develop close partnerships for research purposes. Our campuses can become sites for the physical collocation of industry with the university, particularly at the Bendigo and Albury-Wodonga campuses, where we have significant space to support industry partnerships and collaborations.

### 12.2.2 Community connections

La Trobe is home to some of the country's leading public intellectuals and scholars, and we have connections to many more. We are able to draw on these networks and our physical campuses to create stimulating events and to become an influential contributor to the local and national debate about the future of regional Australia.

Through our sponsorship and educational programming, we can deepen the reach and impact of cultural events and institutions in our regions. Regional Victoria is home to some of the most successful cultural institutions and festivals in Australia—including the Bendigo Art Gallery and Writers Festival, the Murray Art Museum Albury (MAMA), the Shepparton Festival and the Mildura Writer’s Festival. This provides opportunities for our students to become deeply engaged through a mix of educational programs and work-integrated learning opportunities.

We will continue to offer place-based programs that run alongside major cultural events to add to their quality and reach and demonstrate the role a university can play in the intellectual and cultural life of our regional communities.

We will continue to offer financial and educational support to the region's most significant events and organisations and we will continue to advocate for policy reform that will benefit our regional communities, including by organising events that stimulate, challenge and inform the national conversation about regional Australia.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COMMENT – ONE UNIVERSITY WITH MANY CAMPUSES

- What are the most important results we must deliver consistently across our network to achieve our promise of ‘one university with many campuses’?
  - What are the processes, systems and practices we will need to adapt to deliver these consistent results?
  - What opportunities can our regional presence enable, either locally or across our network?
  - Any other comments on this section?
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## 13 Comments and next steps

This discussion paper encourages all members of the wider La Trobe community to contribute to the development of our next strategic plan, which will take effect from 2018. But it is only the start. Over the course of 2017, our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we look forward to hearing your views on the challenges, opportunities, and areas of focus for La Trobe that have been outlined here. A number of forums will be established for you to give feedback.

You can respond directly to this paper by using the on-line submission platform that will be available at [www.stratplan.latrobe.edu.au](http://www.stratplan.latrobe.edu.au).

Alternatively comments can be provided in writing to [stratplan@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:stratplan@latrobe.edu.au) by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

The next steps in bringing the new strategic plan to finalisation and release will be:

- face-to-face consultation sessions at each campus.
- analysis of all comments and feedback received for consideration for inclusion in the final strategy.
- redrafting of the final strategy as a more succinct strategic statement that defines our future strategic directions and priorities and an associated implementation plan, for approval by Council.
- release in mid to late 2017.

We look forward to hearing your views on the future of our university.