

AUSTRALIAN  
ACADEMY OF  
THE HUMANITIES

# STRATEGIC PLAN

Championing a humanised  
future for Australia

2020  

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2025

# FOREWORD

OUR PURPOSE REMAINS CLEAR AND DETERMINED: TO ENSURE THE HUMANITIES IN AUSTRALIA THRIVE AND EXCEL, BECAUSE WE BELIEVE A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL HUMANITY DEPENDS ON ETHICAL, HISTORICAL, CREATIVE AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE.



The launch of the *Australian Academy of the Humanities Strategic Plan 2020–2025* comes at a remarkable time in our history. We are currently gripped by a global pandemic with a severity, impact and reach not seen for a century.

The Academy had ended 2019 on a high, following a year of celebration and engagement in honour of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, under the banner ‘Humanising the Past, Present and Future’.

In a world radically altered by the impacts of COVID-19, the need to strive for a humanised future seems more relevant and important than ever.

Disadvantage has been sharply brought into focus across and within our societies.

Technology has accelerated and taken on new meaning in a COVID-19 world.

Humanity’s impact on the environment has been exposed as the world is momentarily relieved of intense human activity.

We are forced to consider what it means to be human, and humane, in the face of an existential threat borne by disease.

The knowledge, expertise and ideas vested in humanities researchers, scholars and teachers will be fundamental to adapting to these changes and to the recovery of our communities, our societies and our humanity.

The Academy was formed in 1969, to ‘assist in the attainment of high standards in scholarship in the Humanities in Australia and help Australian humanists to take their full part in international activities in the field of the Humanities, thereby serving the best interests of the community’. Fifty years on, this remains central to our mission.

Our purpose remains clear and determined: to ensure the humanities in Australia thrive and excel, because we believe a better future for all humanity depends on ethical, historical, creative and cultural knowledge and expertise.

Although the Strategic Plan was developed well before the worldwide spread of COVID-19, it stands us in good stead to navigate these extraordinary times. It challenges us to recognise, encourage and celebrate the full range of humanities excellence today, both within and beyond the university sector. Organised around five key strategies, the Plan will help us to shape a more diverse Fellowship; expand our engagement and outreach; increase our visibility on issues of national importance; reconcile and recognise Indigenous culture, history, knowledge and practice; and invest in organisational capability.

We recognise that we cannot act alone if we are to realise the ambitions outlined in this Strategic Plan. Collaboration is one of our guiding principles, and we seek to work with organisations with shared priorities and principles to champion the humanities, arts and culture and their foundational

role in tackling our most complex challenges and striving for a better future for all.

The Strategic Plan provides a framework for our operations with flexibility to pursue new endeavours and adjust our operations in keeping with our purpose and objectives. Over the next five years we will regularly review the Plan, measuring our progress with regard to each of the proposed strategies.

We wish to thank the Council, Secretariat and Fellows of the Academy who contributed to the development of this Plan, for their rich and frank feedback, their insights into who we are as an organisation, and the principles that should guide our work now and into the future.

We look forward to implementing the *Strategic Plan 2020–2025* over the coming years and making a significant difference in how the humanities are supported, understood and relied upon in Australia.



**Professor Joy Damousi**  
FASSA FAHA  
PRESIDENT



**Dr Christina Parolin**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# WHY WE'RE HERE: OUR VISION, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

THE AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF THE HUMANITIES CHAMPIONS THE CONTRIBUTION HUMANITIES, ARTS AND CULTURE MAKE TO OUR NATIONAL LIFE. OUR VISION, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES ARE INTENTIONALLY ASPIRATIONAL — WE SET HIGH STANDARDS REFLECTIVE OF THE HIGH STANDARDS OF HUMANITIES PRACTICE BOTH IN AUSTRALIA AND WORLDWIDE.



## OUR VISION

For a tolerant, inclusive and clever Australia, enriched and enabled by a deep appreciation of the histories, ideas, and cultures of our people, and of people around the world.

## OUR PURPOSE

To ensure the humanities in Australia thrive and excel, because a better future for all humanity depends on ethical, historical, creative and cultural knowledge and expertise.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

01

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### **Preserve and advance humanities knowledge**

Promote the advancement of Australian society by investing in humanities research capacity and encouraging global engagement and collaboration for researchers.

02

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### **Inspire excellence**

Ensure that outstanding research across the humanities is recognised, encouraged and celebrated through our Fellowship election, grants and awards programs, and public engagement initiatives.

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### **Inform and influence**

Be trusted and influential advisors to government, the media, and the research, education and cultural sectors, through evidence-led policy advice and development. Drive knowledge-sharing between government, research, industry and cultural sectors.

04

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### **Lead and champion**

Promote the value and benefits of research and teaching in the humanities. Be the focal point for the Australian humanities community, including those studying, working or trained in the humanities.

05

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### **Promote ideas, skills and creativity**

Empower communities, the economy and society through the sharing of cultural and creative knowledge and practice, and the skills required for a diverse, adaptable and creative workforce.

# OUR FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

TO FULFIL THE ACADEMY'S VISION AND PURPOSE, AND TO MEET OUR OBJECTIVES, OUR STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUSES ON FIVE STRATEGIES:

S1 / SHAPE A MORE DIVERSE FELLOWSHIP

S2 / EXPAND ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

S3 / INCREASE VISIBILITY ON ISSUES OF  
NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

S4 / RECONCILE AND RECOGNISE

S5 / INVEST IN ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY



THESE STRATEGIES WILL DRIVE OUR ACTIVITIES DURING THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. EACH STRATEGY WILL BE SUPPORTED THROUGH SPECIFIC ACTIONS AT EVERY LEVEL WITHIN OUR ORGANISATION – THROUGH COUNCIL, FELLOWSHIP AND STAFF. PROGRESS ON THE STRATEGIES WILL BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY BY COUNCIL ACCORDING TO AGREED MEASURES OF SUCCESS.

# S1

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## Shape a more diverse Fellowship

To meet our objectives to ‘Preserve and advance humanities knowledge’, and ‘Inspire excellence’, we will shape a more diverse Fellowship that reflects the full range of humanities excellence today, both within and beyond the university sector.

*We will:*

- Refresh our Criteria for Election – including how we define excellence – to better reflect the full range of scholarship and practice across the humanities today.
- Build a more diverse membership, including targeting gender representation, cultural diversity, creative arts research and practice and the public humanities.
- Explore and develop opportunities to support scholars in the earlier stages of their careers – the next generation of humanities Fellows and leaders.

# S2

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## Expand engagement and outreach

To meet our objectives to ‘Lead and champion’ and ‘Promote ideas, skills and creativity’, we will develop and implement tools for improving public understanding and appreciation of humanities knowledge and skills.

*We will:*

- Develop an ambitious public engagement strategy with the goal of reaching and influencing a wider range of stakeholders and the Australian community.
- Collaborate with organisations sharing our broad vision and principles to collectively promote the contribution of the humanities, arts and culture to national life.
- Develop programs to support researchers looking to share their findings with public audiences.
- Conduct research into the skills required for a diverse, adaptable and creative workforce for Australia’s communities and industries and communicate these research findings to key audiences.
- Encourage and celebrate the work of the Fellowship, including contributions to the Academy’s policy, research and engagement initiatives.

# S3

## Increase visibility on issues of national importance

To meet our objectives to 'Inform and influence' and 'Lead and champion', we will expand our network and our engagement on issues of national importance. Through these actions, we will help ensure ethical, historical, cultural and creative perspectives inform discussions regarding Australia's future challenges and opportunities.

### *We will:*

- Develop a government engagement strategy driven by a human-centred approach to policy-making.
- Engage with a broad range of parliamentarians to build bipartisan support for our positions.
- Undertake, publish and promote research on issues of national importance that require humanities perspectives and expertise, including those directly impacting the humanities community.
- Facilitate events and briefings for discussion and debate about major policy issues and challenges.
- Support the Australian Council of Learned Academies in providing multidisciplinary advice to government.
- Build links with other leading national and international academies and related organisations across the Asia-Pacific region and encourage collaboration on issues that cross national boundaries.





# S4

## Reconcile and recognise

To meet our objectives to 'Preserve and advance humanities knowledge', 'Inform and influence' and 'Inspire excellence' we will contribute to national efforts to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledges and practices as foundational to our national story; and recognise the role and contribution of Indigenous researchers and knowledge custodians.

### *We will:*

- Establish an Indigenous Researcher Advisory Group to advise on the most effective and appropriate ways to recognise the role and contribution of Indigenous researchers and knowledge custodians in Academy structures and programs.
- Partner with leading Indigenous organisations and other bodies to assist in progressing the agenda for national recognition of our First Nations people.
- Support Indigenous scholars at the early and middle stages of their careers through our grants and awards programs.

# S5

## Invest in organisational capability

To deliver on all our objectives, S5 focuses on building a sustainable and innovative organisation with the right people, resources, operating environment and governance frameworks to deliver on strategy now and into the future.

### *We will:*

- Invest in our people, including providing professional development opportunities and creating supportive workplace conditions.
- Diversify our funding sources including philanthropic partnerships, developing a major bequests program, and looking to both government and non-government grants to undertake our work.
- Review our governance structure to ensure that it is relevant to current and future needs of the organisation and is reflective of our vision and guiding principles.
- Secure more appropriate premises with the facilities necessary to advance our work and deliver on our purpose and objectives.



An aerial, high-angle photograph of a large, open plaza. The ground is paved with a light-colored material, and a complex network of dark lines is drawn across it, forming a series of interconnected triangles and polygons. Numerous people are scattered throughout the plaza, some walking, some standing in small groups, and some sitting on the ground. The overall scene is captured in a cool, blue-toned color palette. On the left side of the image, there is a dark blue vertical rectangular area containing white text.

# OUR PRINCIPLES

EVERYTHING THE ACADEMY DOES — OUR BEHAVIOUR, OUR DECISIONS AND OUR ACTIONS — IS GOVERNED BY FOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES. WE WILL DELIVER OUR STRATEGIC PLAN WITH INTEGRITY AND IN LINE WITH THESE PRINCIPLES, ENSURING OUR PERFORMANCE IS ALIGNED WITH OUR VISION AND OUR PURPOSE.



## INDEPENDENCE

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We derive our authority and integrity through our independence from government, universities, commercial or other interests.

## COLLEGIALITY AND COLLABORATION

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We seek to work with organisations with shared priorities and principles to better advance the humanities and, in doing so, the lives of people in Australia and abroad.

## ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND INTEGRITY

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We defend free and critical inquiry and the right of researchers to debate without fear of censorship or retaliation. In turn, we expect researchers to approach their work ethically, with integrity and rigour.

## DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

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We respect and value diversity, and we champion the principles of inclusion within all aspects of our operations, and across all aspects of life.

**THE AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF THE HUMANITIES** IS THE NATIONAL BODY CHAMPIONING THE CONTRIBUTION THAT HUMANITIES MAKE TO NATIONAL LIFE. ESTABLISHED IN 1969, WE ARE AN INDEPENDENT, NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION WITH A FELLOWSHIP OF OVER 640 LEADERS AND EXPERTS IN HISTORY, THE ARTS, LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE, LINGUISTICS, PHILOSOPHY, CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION, ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE, AND RELIGION. WE PROVIDE INDEPENDENT AND AUTHORITATIVE ADVICE, INCLUDING TO GOVERNMENT, TO ENSURE ETHICAL, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES INFORM DISCUSSIONS REGARDING AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

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