RESEARCH & INNOVATION
DIRECTIONS TO 2020

RMIT UNIVERSITY
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RMIT’s Strategic Plan, ‘Ready for Life and Work’, outlines a clear and powerful vision for a global university of technology, design and enterprise. ‘Research & Innovation Directions to 2020’ describes how we will empower our researchers (staff and students) to achieve this, so that they can apply their distinctive research and innovation capabilities to create value and shape the world.

Each of us plays a role in generating or supporting research at RMIT – from researchers and their teams to research support staff, and everyone in between. This plan simultaneously sets out the priorities and actions by which we do this and highlights the many different ways we can contribute. Each of them important, each of them appreciated.

At every stage, research is a team activity. RMIT is keenly aware of this and has worked hard to build structures which facilitate research collaboration. Significantly, we have committed sufficient resources (financial, human, infrastructure) to ensure their success.

As always, our end goal is to bridge the gap between research and impact. RMIT was not established to pursue ‘knowledge for knowledge’s sake’ but to apply research and innovation “to the benefit of the well-being of Victorian, Australian, and international communities”. We must take advantage of our distinctive capabilities to deliver positive change. This is what ‘passion with purpose’ means.

Ultimately, it is the potential products, services, policies and business models that result from our research which lead to economic, social and environmental impacts.

To give our researchers the greatest chance of realising these pathways to impact, we have invested in research translation and have flung open our doors to industry and other partners.

We do all of this, wherever it is needed, in the areas of greatest need. Our global presence means that students and researchers can participate in our research enterprise wherever in the world they are located. Closer to home, our commitment to Australia’s indigenous communities means that we strive to undertake research that generates positive impacts in those communities.

‘Research & Innovations Directions to 2020’ provides the foundations for an uplift in RMIT’s research and innovation performance. This makes it essential to achieving RMIT’s Strategic Plan, and beyond this, living up to our motto – ‘a skilled hand, a cultivated mind’.

I urge you to think of this plan as a roadmap to creating value for our non-academic partners to deliver impact. Work out where you can make a contribution; consider how we can support you; so that together we can create value and shape the world.
Direction 1: Life-changing experiences

Goal 1
A transformative student experience
Priority 1: Graduating ready for life and work
Priority 2: Inspiring teaching
Priority 3: Learning through work and enterprise
Priority 4: Valuing and growing our diversity
Priority 5: A digitally enabled experience

Goal 2
Connected pathways
Priority 1: A distinctive form of connected education
Priority 2: Supporting access, progression and pathways
Priority 3: A trailblazing approach to assessment and credentials
Priority 4: A dynamic community of alumni
Priority 5: Enterprise-ready

Goal 3
Supporting and empowering our people with clearer, smarter, simpler systems
Priority 1: Our people focused on outcomes and positive impact
Priority 2: A team approach to work
Priority 3: Simpler, more supportive processes and systems
Priority 4: A positive culture of service and support
Priority 5: Intelligent, timely use of information and analytics

Goal 4
Managing resources for long-term value
Priority 1: Financial performance to support our goals
Priority 2: Places and spaces for creativity and collaboration
Priority 3: Digital infrastructure supporting everything we do
Priority 4: Improve environmental sustainability

Direction 2: Passion with purpose

Goal 5
Research and innovation: creating impact through collaboration
Priority 1: Using our strengths to drive impact in research and innovation
Priority 2: Solving public policy problems
Priority 3: Research embedded in teaching and engagement
Priority 4: Effective research training

Goal 6
Industry and enterprise embedded in everything we do
Priority 1: Meeting global demand with strategic partnership
Priority 2: Connected with industry and community throughout the student journey

Goal 7
Global reach and outlook
Priority 1: Preparing students for the globalised world of work
Priority 2: A global contribution to research and innovation
Priority 3: Global operations that contribute to RMIT’s reputation and financial performance

Direction 3: Shaping the world

Goal 5
Research and innovation: creating impact through collaboration
Priority 1: Using our strengths to drive impact in research and innovation
Priority 2: Solving public policy problems
Priority 3: Research embedded in teaching and engagement
Priority 4: Effective research training
Responsibility for implementing ‘Research & Innovation Directions to 2020’ rests with many, if not most, areas of the University, as does its overall success.

The Research and Innovation Portfolio will oversee the implementation process and monitor our progress. Implementation is articulated at a more granular level in RMIT’s Annual Operating Plan and the Research and Innovation Portfolio Plan.

**STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

RMIT’s strategic plan, ‘Ready for Life and Work’

Research & Innovation Directions to 2020

RMIT Annual Operating Plan
GOAL 1
A transformative student experience

OUR AIM:
Opportunities to engage with research and innovation add significant value to the student experience and enhance our graduates’ skills.

PRIORITY 1
Graduating ready for life and work

Our actions
- Cultivate research, innovation and entrepreneurship skills across all student cohorts.
- Improve graduate research outcomes by driving quality improvement based on sector-leading best practice.
- Encourage our research students to create value by generating positive impacts and broadly disseminating their research outcomes.

PRIORITY 2
Inspiring teaching

Our actions
- Inspire our students to be innovative and entrepreneurial through teaching and supervision which promotes research translation and value creation.

PRIORITY 3
Learning through work and enterprise

Our actions
- Incorporate industry internships and placements within the research training framework.
- Embed industry-connected practice in our research curriculum by developing practice-based research programs and studios.
- Provide opportunities to translate research and engage in entrepreneurship.

PRIORITY 4
Valuing and growing our diversity

Our actions
- Articulate pathways to graduate research for under represented students across all RMIT campuses, in keeping with RMIT’s Diversity and Inclusion Framework.
- Build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to undertake research and innovation.
- Demonstrate our commitment to achieving gender equality through our recruitment and retention practices and through the promotion of research in gender equality initiatives.

PRIORITY 5
A digitally enabled experience

Our actions
- This priority is addressed in Goal 4, Priority 3: ‘Digital Infrastructure supporting everything we do’.
GOAL 2
Connected pathways

OUR AIM:
Students have opportunities to progress to higher degree research programs that support their career and life goals.

PRIORITY 1
A distinctive form of connected education

Our actions
- Articulate the connection between learning, teaching and research to ensure our learning and teaching activities are informed by and engage with research.
- Ensure our campuses in Melbourne, Vietnam and Europe are connected in ways that contribute to our research, innovation and entrepreneurship priorities.

PRIORITY 2
Supporting access, progression and pathways

Our actions
- Articulate pathways from undergraduate courses to higher degree research programs across all RMIT campuses.
- Provide opportunities for all our students to be exposed to and develop skills in research and innovation.
- Develop training and provide support for academic staff to supervise research projects.

PRIORITY 3
A trailblazing approach to assessment and credentials

Our actions
- Explore innovative ways of recognising the skill development and achievements of our research students in the form of additional credentials for research students.

PRIORITY 4
A dynamic community of alumni

Our actions
- Work with our alumni to provide opportunities for research collaboration, funding and internship opportunities for our research students and staff.

PRIORITY 5
Enterprise-ready

Our actions
- Develop innovative postgraduate curriculums which focus on research impact, translation and commercialisation.
- Provide our students with the skills and opportunities to describe the potential impact of their research and innovation outcomes.
- Award prizes and other incentives to recognise value created by students’ research and innovation activities.
GOAL 3
Supporting and empowering our people

OUR AIM:
Supporting and empowering our people to achieve success with clearer, smarter, simpler support systems.

PRIORITY 1
Our people focused on outcomes and positive impact
Our actions
• Ensure our recruitment and retention practices identify and value individuals who are passionate about delivering a transformative student experience and impact through research and innovation.
• Recognise and reward outstanding performance in research and innovation and research support.
• Provide researchers, research supervisors and research support staff with access to professional development activities which emphasise outcomes and value creation.

PRIORITY 2
A team approach to work
Our actions
• Encourage a whole-of-university approach to research collaboration.
• Foster interdisciplinary research through our Enabling Capability Platforms.

PRIORITY 3
Simpler, more supportive processes and systems
Our actions
• Further develop the infrastructure, tools and resources to support cross-institutional collaboration.
• Implement a model for research support that provides a coherent, accessible and efficient set of services.
• Ensure all members of our research community have access to resources and services to support collaboration.
• Support communities of practice for staff members whose work is integral to our research and innovation activities.

PRIORITY 4
A positive culture of service and support
Our actions
• Develop service level agreements and performance indicators for all research support staff and communicate these to our stakeholders.
• Embed high-quality service and communications standards in our internal and external stakeholder engagement practices.
• Encourage a culture of continuous improvement in our grant development processes.

PRIORITY 5
Intelligent and timely use of information and analytics
Our actions
• Increase our use of data analytics as a source of transparent, reliable and timely information and analysis.
• Ensure the annual ‘Research Performance Health and Wellbeing’ Report delivers accurate and reliable data analytics for use in evidence-based decision-making and planning.
GOAL 4
Managing resources for long-term value

OUR AIM:
The University’s investment in research and innovation is aligned with the Strategic Plan and supports value creation.

PRIORITY 1 • Financial performance to support our goals

Our actions
– Use evidence-based criteria for capital and workforce planning to boost research productivity and performance.
– Develop and implement a methodology for the allocation of research support and research training funds which is transparent, strategically-aligned and creates value.

PRIORITY 2 • Places and spaces for creativity and collaboration

Our actions
– Design innovative spaces at all our campuses which foster creativity, collaboration and entrepreneurship in research and research training.
– Create digital and virtual spaces that facilitate collaboration among our staff, students, and external partners.
– Create a hub for research collaboration, service and support which is accessible to members of our research community.
– Ensure our exhibition, gallery, and archive spaces are accessible to internal and external research communities.

PRIORITY 3 • Digital infrastructure supporting everything we do

Our actions
– Enhance digital infrastructure to facilitate collaboration in research and innovation.

PRIORITY 4 • Improve environmental sustainability

Our actions
– Provide leading edge research administration, management and data analysis and reporting, applying a best practice framework for research information systems.
– Develop digital systems which support research students at all stages from enrolment to graduation.

– Promote awareness of RMIT’s ‘Sustainability Action Plan’ among researchers and research support staff.
– Support researchers to conduct research in ways that respect and minimise adverse effects on the environment.
OUR AIM:

To undertake research and innovation “to the benefit of the well-being of Victorian, Australian and international communities” (RMIT Act 2010; Section 5, ‘Objects of the University’).

PRIORITY 1
Using our strengths to drive impact in research and innovation

Our actions
- Design and implement policies and processes which support the reporting and evaluating of research engagement and value creation.
- Develop pathways to research translation to facilitate the commercialisation and impact of our research.
- Provide high-quality support for the administration, management and protection of our intellectual property assets.
- Develop entrepreneurship awareness and capability development programs and make them available to all members of our research community.
- Support research centres as engines of research intensity and depth.

PRIORITY 2
Solving public policy problems

Our actions
- Deploy our Enabling Capability Platforms to deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits.
- Initiate and contribute to conversations about public policy issues with government, industry and the community.
- Contribute to industry and public policy development to help build sustainable livelihoods and communities.

PRIORITY 3
Research embedded in teaching and engagement

Our actions
- Provide support and tools to embed research at all stages of education delivery.

PRIORITY 4
Effective research training

Our actions
- Undertake leading edge research which informs world-leading practice in learning and teaching.
- Work collaboratively to ensure our research strengths and expertise are promoted through the university’s broader external engagement activities.

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(L-R) Dr Amit Jadhav and Professor Rajiv Padhye at RMIT Brunswick campus
GOAL 6
Industry and enterprise in everything we do

OUR AIM:
By embedding industry and enterprise in everything we do, we ensure our research is relevant, valued and delivers impact.

PRIORITY 1
Meeting global demand with strategic partnerships

Our actions
- Develop a coordinated approach to industry engagement and business development, and establish a community of practice with industry and other partners.
- Develop global partnerships which support international research collaboration.
- Work with industry and government to identify and pursue opportunities for industry-led interdisciplinary research.
- Expand research ties with industry and research organisations with reputations for excellence, including through our presence in Vietnam and Europe.

PRIORITY 2
Connected with industry and community throughout the student journey

Our actions
- Secure a pipeline of industry supported or community initiated research projects for our research students.
- Promote international internship programs to increase the participation by research students.

GOAL 7
Global reach and outlook

OUR AIM:
RMIT is a global university which leverages the strengths and opportunities of its diverse campuses to deliver value for our students and our research and innovation partners.

PRIORITY 1
Preparing students for the globalised world of work

Our actions
- Increase mobility opportunities for our research students and communicate about their availability.
- Provide more collaborative research training opportunities for our research students with leading global industry and research organisations.

PRIORITY 2
A global contribution to research and innovation &

PRIORITY 3
Global operations that contribute to RMIT’s reputation and financial performance

Our actions
- Recruit the best global talent to build our research capability (including research students, early career researchers and experienced researchers) and provide research students with access to their expertise.
- Collaborate with RMIT’s global entities and globally-oriented research centres and initiatives to develop and profile RMIT’s research and innovation capabilities.
- Increase our share of international research funding by working collaboratively with our international campuses and through our strategic partnerships.
- Apply global perspectives to the definition and resolution of local, regional and global research challenges.
- Expand global opportunities for researchers, with a focus on early career researchers.

By embedding industry and enterprise in everything we do, we ensure our research is relevant, valued and delivers impact.