The twenty-first century world in which RMIT finds itself is profoundly different from the nineteenth century city in which it began. The broad environment for post-secondary education in the next five years is evident; increasing reliance on universities for the education and research that fuels a knowledge economy and growing demand in our region for that education and research.

Added to this, the knowledge economy ensures that students come to post-secondary education with the ability to tap a wealth of educational resource beyond the classroom and the expectation that they will have many opportunities to take new directions and add to any initial educational qualification. This environment is an opportunity for universities to be more significant and vibrant places, to be an integral part of the development of the societies in which they are located.

With these opportunities have come major challenges for universities. The knowledge economy and its demands have made education more global and increased the competition as educational institutions, established and new, seek to provide for those demands. The immediate region remains one with an increasing demand for post-secondary education, but also a place with a greater interest in and capacity to provide for that demand.

In Australia, as with many similar economies, a large proportion of the population now has post-secondary educational qualifications. When combined with the declining numbers of school-leavers, the landscape of domestic post-secondary education is changing and the type and scale of education demanded with it.

To provide the quality of education and research that will meet the demands of a global economy and students with a desire to be part of such a world requires significant institutional investment. As public funds to support universities decline, Australian universities rely more on other sources of income, principally fees from students. This challenges the ability of the university to educate the best students no matter where they may be and therefore to build the professionals, educators and researchers of the future.

Australian universities cannot proceed as if an adequate response to international demands is to add an international layer to the education provided for domestic purposes. Further, there is no reason to suppose that the pattern of international and domestic demand will be aligned in the next five years and that our responses can proceed as if they are. Yet, in order to be a vibrant and significant part of the world around us and meet the expectations of our future students and society, we must improve our funding in order to support investment in higher quality education and research.

While this environment in which RMIT will find itself is important in framing strategic direction for the next five years, it is not everything. RMIT must be clear also about what it is seeking to achieve with the education and research it offers.

The dream that education would not be confined to elites brought RMIT into being. This had two aspects; the range of education provided, which remains in the continued offering of higher and vocational education at RMIT, and the focus on practical, work-relevant, professional and vocational education.

The core of RMIT’s success in education has been to provide students and industry with focused outcomes relevant to industry and professions. The approach has been one of cultivating minds while also building skills, to paraphrase the University’s motto.

This approach remains vital. The major objective for many of the students, domestic and international, who seek post-secondary education, is to gain a professional or vocational education that will allow them to move swiftly to apply themselves to the fields in which they are interested.

1 The motto of RMIT is “Perita manus, mens exculta” which is translated as “the skilled hand, the civilised mind”.

Vice-Chancellor’s Introduction
In the next five years, people will need to change and renew their educational direction, be prepared to move from one field to another, and respond to the fluidity and demands of the knowledge economy. RMIT began by offering education that responded to the demands of students and industry. In the next five years, we will need to increase the flexibility of our programs, and to draw on the strengths of higher and vocational education.

In research the impact that comes from ideas and solutions that are tied to the concerns of the world around us is critical to our mission. Research that is focused and concentrated in fields in which we have built strength is the first step. Ensuring that the links between researchers, industry and community are stronger is the second. The quality of our research must meet international standards but our goal is to engage in quality research that has an impact on the world.

Our approach to education and research draws on our history, recognising that at its core has always been a commitment to engage with the future through responding to the demands of students and industry.

As we look forward to 2010 the education that RMIT provides will be global in its reach. As greater numbers of Australians have sought post-secondary education as their means to a better life, so in the young economies surrounding us increasing numbers of people seek education. There are many ways of providing a global education, but RMIT will do so by building an education offered in a range of city locations, and offering to its students the opportunity to study in more than one of those locations.

To engage with a world in which industry is dominated by the multinational or global corporation requires education and research that is not tied to a particular national location or perspective, that understands profoundly the intersection between global and local cultures.

RMIT has a commitment to education and research that builds understanding by practical investigation, by designing for the problems it encounters in the world around it. To do so for the future means building a ‘global passport’ for students and ensuring that research agendas are global in their conception.

The Vietnam campus is one means of providing education and research that is not an ‘export’, but developed by reflecting and responding to the global environment.

RMIT’s work with offshore partners in Asia is also about being part of the cities of the region, their industries and their communities.

Students of the future will need education that is flexible, that responds to specialised professional and vocational demands, that prepares a student with the creativity and independence derived from work-integrated learning and that is global in its conception.

Research that is designed for impact, and responds to demands across the world informs our education and integrates us with the societies in which we are located.

RMIT was designed to build a brighter future for the people of Melbourne. RMIT will design for the future to be global through providing an engagement and experience that stretches across the region and by being practical in approaching ideas and solutions through industry and community links and flexibility in education. In all this RMIT, through creativity and passion, will design for a better future.

Professor Margaret Gardner
Vice-Chancellor
Mission:

RMIT is a global university of technology with its heart in the city of Melbourne.

We create and disseminate knowledge to meet the needs of industry and community and foster in students the skills and passion to contribute to and engage with the world.
Vision to 2010

In 2010 RMIT will be:

- Global in outlook and action, offering our students and staff a global passport to learning and work.

- Urban in orientation and creativity, reflecting and shaping the city of the 21st Century.

- The first choice provider of work-relevant learning in Australia, preparing students for professions and vocations of the future.

- One of Australia’s top research universities, internationally known for our applied focus and for excellence in research and research education in our chosen fields.
Values:

Useful

Creative

Passionate

Fair

Connected
Our graduates are creative, skilled and highly employable.

Knowledge and skills developed in our students are relevant and applicable to the needs of communities, industry and individuals.

Our staff are outcome-oriented and agile in their approach to meeting the needs of communities, industry and individuals.

Opportunities for students and staff to fulfil their potential are created.

Innovative curriculum and research solutions are sought, applied and rewarded.

A creative and inventive culture is fostered.

Students’ aspirations, experience and needs are central to evaluating our performance and shaping improvement.

Industry and community are active partners in our teaching and research.

Global networks formed around enterprise, industry and communities underpin our operations.

Team work is supported and encouraged.

Learning opportunities cater for a diverse range of students, including those who may be disadvantaged in relation to education and/or labour markets.

Respect for Indigenous cultures is reflected in our work.

Intellectual freedom and tolerance is nurtured and debate encouraged.

A physically, culturally and socially safe work and study environment is provided for all staff and students.

Ethical, honest and open dealings characterise relationships with students, staff and partners.

Meeting the needs and aspirations of our students and partners is a top priority.

Excellence in teaching, scholarship and research is rewarded and supported.

Cultural and social diversity is supported and celebrated.
To achieve our vision, we will pursue the following priorities:

**Priority 1**
- Build a global university grounded in Melbourne and connected to communities, enterprises and industry across the world, providing our students with a global passport to learning and work.

**Priority 2**
- Position RMIT as the first choice provider of work- and industry-relevant learning.

**Priority 3**
- Develop focused areas of excellence in research and scholarship that reflect our global engagement with industries and communities. We will assure RMIT's inclusion in the top 15 research performers among Australian universities.

**Priority 4**
- Ensure flexible, useful pathways and learning opportunities for students.
Create an experience for students which is stimulating and satisfying and which celebrates diversity.

Attract, develop, reward and retain staff who will embrace the future with energy and creativity and who are focused on the needs of our students and our partners.

Develop facilities and systems to support and sustain excellence in education and research.

Develop a sustainable platform for achieving our goals.
Priority 1

Build a global university grounded in Melbourne and connected to communities, enterprises and industry across the world, providing our students with a global passport to learning and work.

RMIT is one of the most successful providers of international education in Australia, with over 18,000 international students from more than a hundred countries. RMIT is a member of the Global U8 Consortium and, with a campus in Vietnam and significant teaching partnerships in Hong Kong, China, Malaysia and Singapore, has a strong educational presence in the Asia-Pacific region. Our students are supported by more than thirty international teaching and learning partnerships and have access to study-abroad opportunities across the globe. However, creating a global university requires more than the delivery of education services. It requires internationalisation of our curriculum and pedagogy. It requires opportunities for RMIT students to have an international experience as part of their study program, and for RMIT staff to engage with international peers and networks. It requires strategic partnerships across national borders to support RMIT’s provision of world class and globally relevant education. In recognising the urban condition as one of the main economic and intellectual challenges of this century, we place Melbourne and the other cities with which we engage at the heart of our global network. We will take on the challenges of understanding an increasingly urbanised world and through teaching and research assist students, enterprises and communities to do likewise.

Action 1
Define our global network with desired points of presence and engagement and establish criteria to guide future partnerships with educational institutions, enterprises, industries and governments.

Action 2
Establish RMIT’s Melbourne and Vietnam campuses as twin hubs for the RMIT global network, linked and supported by high quality information and communication technology and strong staff and student interactions.

Action 3
Establish education abroad and student exchange opportunities across all major sites and programs, and increase opportunities for all students to benefit from an international experience during the course of their study with RMIT.

Action 4
Develop programs that are international in character and which support industry engagement, taking account of cross-border articulation opportunities and transnational professional accreditation requirements.

Action 5
Improve opportunities for staff engagement in international networks, and enhance cross-cultural skills and understanding.

Action 6
Improve RMIT’s ranking amongst Australian universities in the UK Times Higher Education Supplement World University Rankings, and remain in the top 100 universities as ranked by the Times.
Priority 2

Position RMIT as the first choice provider of work- and industry-relevant learning.

From its beginnings in 1887, RMIT has been committed to providing education that is practical and connected to the needs of communities, industry and employers. We offer high quality, work-integrated learning across a range of programs and our graduates enjoy above average employment rates. Our goal for 2010 is to strengthen and extend our reputation as a provider of excellent work-relevant and work-integrated learning, in Australia and overseas, thereby aligning our history with our future as a global university of technology. Our dual sector character offers us significant opportunities to develop creative and flexible offerings which meet the evolving needs of students and industry. With these opportunities come challenges: most importantly, to improve the quality, standing and distinctiveness of our vocational education and training and higher education programs, and to improve pathways between education sectors and between learning and work. We must also provide innovative and creative opportunities for those seeking to engage or re-engage with learning and the workforce. Industry relevance and strong labour market outcomes will determine our academic specialisations, and the institutional processes which support them. Our educational programs will be focused on professional and vocational outcomes, but they will also ensure that we are true to our mission and build well-rounded, creative and skilled graduates.

Action 1
Develop our academic plan for vocational education and training and higher education. The plan will incorporate a distinct strategy for vocational education and training; will capture the benefits of RMIT’s identity as a dynamic dual sector institution; support industry engagement and opportunities for new pathways between vocational education and training, higher education and research sectors and between learning and work; and partnered delivery with other providers to support breadth as well as depth.

Action 2
Align teaching and learning activity with the needs of key industries and enterprises in Australia and internationally, ensuring ongoing engagement with their representatives.

Action 3
Increase RMIT’s apprenticeship and traineeship profile and align it with clearly articulated pathways developed in partnership with industry.

Action 4
Expand and enhance opportunities for work integrated learning.

Action 5
Provide opportunities for lifelong learning, particularly for those seeking to enter or improve their position in the workforce, drawing on an active alumni engagement program.

Action 6
Sustain high levels of graduate employability and ensure achievement of strong outcomes across our educational programs.
Priority 3

Develop focused areas of excellence in research and scholarship that reflect our global engagement with industries and communities. We will assure RMIT’s inclusion in the top 15 research performers among Australian universities.

RMIT is known for research that is engaged with practical solutions to real world problems, and which is often conducted in collaboration with others. This research orientation is critical to the development of a knowledge economy. Over the past five years RMIT has significantly improved its performance against a range of research indicators that measure the quality and impact of our research. To achieve our goal for 2010, we will need to focus our resources to ensure our performance is world-class in our chosen areas and reflects the global requirements of our industry and community partners. Talented research staff and postgraduate students are attracted to RMIT because of our strengths in key areas, our industry linkages, our reputation for creativity and innovation and the talent and vision of our academic leaders. We will focus on developing our key research resource - our staff - and on opportunities to nurture emerging talent and cross-disciplinary linkages. The fact that much of our research will be directed towards solving problems will support such opportunities. To build and sustain excellence we must concentrate also on building national and international networks in our chosen areas of focus and connect those emerging and excellent researchers with their peers.

Action 1
Define and strengthen areas for research focus which reflect our chosen directions and, in particular, the needs of our industry and community partners.

Action 2
Ensure research activity is informed by active engagement with identified industry and community partners.

Action 3
Build international research collaborations and establish clear international benchmarks for our performance in our chosen areas of focus.

Action 4
Assist emerging researchers and research groups and postgraduate students to build their research strengths, by, for example, fostering research networks and partnerships and helping them to identify sources of funding.
Priority 4

Ensure flexible, useful pathways and learning opportunities for students.

Learning pathways assist students into education and facilitate student progression through different stages of education. Recognition of prior learning, assured credit transfer and/or articulation between educational programs and institutions, cross-sectoral offerings, multiple entry and exit points for programs, and entry points designed to encourage participation by specific student cohorts all provide opportunities for students to move into and between educational settings and work. Such flexibility in education meets the needs and aspirations of students who will face increasing change in their working lives.

RMIT will focus its development of learning pathways in Australia and internationally in order to:

- Provide learning opportunities for those who might otherwise be disadvantaged in accessing education.
- Help students to build on work or educational experience gained in Australia or overseas.
- Fulfil our potential as a dual sector provider offering a seamless pathway learning environment, while maintaining a strong and distinctive vocational education and training profile.
- Meet industry needs to build workforce capabilities.

Whether they are vertical, horizontal or multi-directional, our pathways will be flexible, transparent and equitable. They will be embedded within teaching and learning strategies. Transition support for students moving across sectoral or work-study boundaries is critical to their success, and this will be an immediate focus for action.

Action 1
Increase the number and effectiveness of guaranteed pathways between education sectors and across borders; especially those which support the RMIT global network, meet the needs of industries in developing the skills of their workforce, and address the specific needs of learners who are disadvantaged in terms of their access to work-relevant earning and/or their position within the labour market.

Action 2
Improve the communication of pathway opportunities to students.

Action 3
Improve opportunities for credit transfer and recognition of prior learning.

Action 4
Improve our systems for tracking student progress as an aid to understanding student choice, providing transition support and monitoring outcomes.

Action 5
Provide strong transition support for students utilising pathways between sectors, across campuses and borders, and between learning and work.

Action 6
Develop dual sector and nested programs in line with the knowledge and skills requirements of the current and future labour market and the learning needs of students.
Priority 5

Create an experience for students which is stimulating and satisfying and which celebrates diversity.

Engagement with students is at the heart of RMIT’s success. In ensuring a great experience for our students, we will focus on creating a stimulating and satisfying environment in which intellectual inquiry, respect for Indigenous cultures and enjoyment of diversity is fostered and celebrated. We will improve the systems and services upon which students rely and which ease their path through study.

The student experience must also build upon our presence and identity in urban environments. Our learning environment must reflect and capture the best aspects of our physical environment - an environment of engagement. We are a ‘city within a city’, and over the next five years we will make the most of it.

Listening to students is essential if we are to create a better environment. So too, is the development of a strong service culture which responds to feedback. Beyond feedback, we must seek to innovate and provide an intellectual, cultural and socially stimulating environment. These are prerequisites for achieving our goals for 2010.

**Action 1**
Define and focus on the core RMIT experience of learning and research through engagement with scholarship, enterprises, industry, governments, and with the urban environment which is supported by campus, knowledge and communications facilities.

**Action 2**
Capitalise on our location in the heart of Australia’s creative capital by developing RMIT’s visibility and presence in the city of Melbourne.

**Action 3**
Create opportunities for staff and students to engage with the diversity of urban life, its people, enterprises and industries.

**Action 4**
Improve communication with students and provide opportunities for students to engage with each other and provide feedback. We will ensure that feedback is used to improve the student experience and its effectiveness conveyed to students.

**Action 5**
Strengthen services to students, ensuring that they are flexible, accessible on demand, fit for purpose and responsive.
Priority 6

Attract, develop, reward and retain staff who will embrace the future with energy and creativity and who are focused on the needs of our students and our partners.

The active and creative engagement of RMIT staff is the key to our future success. In order to capture the benefits of this engagement, RMIT will invest in staff: through recognition and reward structures which are aligned with our goals, through strong and focused professional development, through improving the teaching and research environment and through opportunities for staff to actively participate in the development of RMIT.

Knowledge workers are in high demand, and we will develop strong recruitment and retention strategies. We will be more targeted in our approach, recruiting staff with knowledge and attributes which support our academic and service priorities. We will ensure that induction supports staff transition into RMIT, and their ongoing development. We will increase opportunities for staff to share and benefit from their colleagues’ good ideas and good practice.

As a university which supports and celebrates diversity, we will value cultural and racial diversity in our staff profile.

The development of positive leadership attributes and behaviours across RMIT will support our achievement of these goals.

Action 1
Develop and promote a leadership culture which values responsiveness, engagement, vision and knowledge, and which strengthens accountability across RMIT.

Action 2
Improve the management and workforce planning capabilities of RMIT leaders.

Action 3
Recruit and retain high performing staff and align recruitment practices with our teaching, learning, research and service priorities.

Action 4
Ensure reward and recognition for high quality performance, innovation and the achievement of organisational goals.

Action 5
Prioritise professional development activity to support our chosen directions and goals.
Priority 7

Develop facilities and systems to support and sustain excellence in education and research.

Our goal is to provide an environment which is safe, environmentally sustainable and conducive to intellectual and social engagement. Our facilities and systems exist to support our academic activities. With this in mind, our first priority is to improve our research, teaching and student facilities.

Administrative systems should be cost-effective and simple. We face increasing demands relating to administrative, reporting and compliance requirements, and therefore complex or unwieldy systems are not sustainable. Consistent processes, systems and procedures will streamline administrative functions and reduce costs.

Improving management information and a continued commitment to simplifying processes and focusing them on academic outcomes will support this priority.

Action 1
Improve and consolidate our built infrastructure, in particular our student, research and teaching and learning facilities, to provide a stimulating, sustainable and safe learning and working environment.

Action 2
Implement integrated and simple administrative systems to support our dual sector character and our industry and international aspirations.

Action 3
Consolidate and integrate our information and communication technologies across the RMIT network.

Action 4
Refine management, governance, reporting, policy and processes to ensure simplicity, transparency and results.

Action 5
Improve the availability and use of management information to support strong decisions and external reporting.
Priority 8

Develop a sustainable platform for achieving our goals.

RMIT began as a not-for-profit educational institution dedicated to providing education to expand the opportunities for all people. We remain committed to this goal.

However, in order to serve our mission and achieve our vision we must improve our ability to generate substantial surpluses to invest in education and research. Government funding is shrinking as a proportion of overall revenue and no longer sustains our commitment to quality education and research. Non-Government funding is growing, but is intensely competitive.

Our goal, therefore, is to generate strong surpluses through revenue growth and diversification; and through ongoing attention to our cost structures and ways of working.

In terms of student load, our goal is moderate growth overall, accompanied by a significant change in our student mix. This will support our aspirations to be international and work-relevant, and to improve our capacity to invest in education and research. This change is currently underway and will accelerate after 2008. It will be enacted through the development and implementation of our Academic Plan.

Action 1
Re-align RMIT’s profile around opportunities for revenue growth in areas of strength, with moderate growth in selected cohorts and areas of activity and reduced activity in others.

Action 2
Allocate resources to support this re-alignment, including support for industry engagement, infrastructure, staffing, student support and marketing activity directed towards targeted student cohorts across the global network.

Action 3
Increase surplus funds available for investment through opportunities for revenue growth and diversification, including fundraising, alumni engagement and investment funds.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Goal 2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Outcomes</td>
<td>- Domestic graduates in employment, their own enterprise or further studies within five (5) months of graduation within each sector to exceed national or state average by 5%.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction Index (OSI) from Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)/</td>
<td>- 5% above National/State Average OSI.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Outcomes Survey (SOS)/ Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Performance (using DEST indicators)</td>
<td>- RMIT ranked in top 15 universities nationally against five key indicators (total income, total HDR completions, weighted publications, total competitive grants, total citations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets/Current Liabilities</td>
<td>- 1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Operating Result/Net Assets</td>
<td>- To achieve or exceed the sectoral average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Operating Result/Total Income</td>
<td>- To achieve or exceed the sectoral average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Standing of RMIT</td>
<td>- Improve RMIT’s ranking amongst Australian universities in the UK Times Higher Education Supplement World University Rankings, and remain in the top 100 universities as ranked by the Times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Quality</td>
<td>- 75% of buildings classified as satisfactory by the Tertiary Educational Facilities Management Association by 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unscheduled Absenteeism</td>
<td>- To achieve or improve on the Australian University Average calculated as average number of days per calendar year for each staff member that has been lost due to unscheduled leave including sick or personal leave.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>