



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

Part of the Sydney in  
**2032**  
Strategy



# The University of Sydney Law School

Strategic Plan 2024-25

## Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Sydney's campuses and facilities sit on the ancestral lands of many of Australia's First Peoples, who have for thousands of generations exchanged knowledge for the benefit of all. These include the Gadigal, Gamaraygal, Dharug, Wangal, Tharawal, Deerabbin, Darkinyung, Guringgai, Gamilaraay, Barkindji, Bundjalung, Wiradjuri, Wiljali, Ngunawal, Gureng Gureng and Gagudju peoples.

Respectfully acknowledging the ancient learning cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the University of Sydney declares its commitment to the continuation of this sharing through the agency of its work. There is no part of Australia where we work that has not been loved, nourished and cared for since the beginning of time.

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# Leadership foreword

## Inspiring legal minds in 2032: Reflecting on our progress, envisioning our future

At the end of 2023, the leadership of Sydney Law School examined our progress against our 2020–25 strategic plan, *Reimagining Sydney Law School*. Despite COVID-related challenges, we have achieved much over the past four years, successfully implementing transformational programs focused on enhancing student experience, research excellence and global engagements. Our strategic labours have successfully prioritised admission pathways, diversity and inclusion programs, and recruitment and support of First Nations students and staff. Creating new ‘first in field’ scholarships has also enabled us in 2024 to welcome the most diverse undergraduate and postgraduate law student cohort in our history.

The 2022 launch of the University’s new 10-year institutional strategy, *Sydney in 2032*, has given us an opportunity to refine and reinvigorate Sydney Law School’s priorities, and to align our work in coming years with that strategy. Assisted by the University’s Strategic Planning team and informed by our own staff and student focus groups, our Law Leadership Group held regular collaborative sessions throughout 2023 that sparked fresh insights and energy, essential for strategic planning, prioritisation and implementation.

At Sydney Law School we have many competitive advantages. Foremost among these is the high quality of our students and staff, bolstered by a network of engaged alumni who are leaders in their profession, in government and in industry, and who offer generous support to their alma mater through gifts and scholarships, sessional teaching and career mentorship.



There will be unforeseen challenges ahead. Just as the COVID-19 pandemic was an ‘unknown unknown’ in 2020, so in the next few years we will need to pivot to the rapid uptake of artificial intelligence (AI) in education and the law. Through periods of change, we remind ourselves that our mission is inspirational as much as vocational. As outlined in *Reimagining Sydney Law School*:

*Our shared ambition is to inspire legal minds within Sydney Law School, the profession, and beyond. Building on our history, we aim to create a positive impact, transform the legal landscape, and society at large. We’re committed to increasing and celebrating diversity within Sydney Law School, and to providing opportunities for those traditionally excluded from law study and practice. Our students remain central to our vibrant learning and scholarship community, as we apply our academic rigour to both foundational and emerging areas of law and justice.*

This ambition uniquely positions Sydney Law School to contribute to the overarching aspiration outlined in the University’s *Sydney in 2032* strategy: to be known for the extraordinary power of our world-class teaching and research to transform people’s lives. It also speaks to our aspiration to give our students – no matter their background – the skills, knowledge, mindset and worldview to serve and advance their own communities, the region and the world.



**Simon Bronitt**  
Head of School and Dean  
Sydney Law School



Sydney in  
**2032**  
*Strategy*

**OUR ASPIRATIONS**

Building on the First Nations knowledge of these lands,  
we are Australia's first university, Sydney's university  
and a great global university

Our student-focused  
education is  
transformational

- Law 2024–25 initiatives**
- Embedding Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into our curriculum
  - Enhancing student engagement in learning
  - Investing in the professional development of our educators



Our community  
thrives through  
diversity

- Law 2024–25 initiatives**
- Maintaining access and outreach initiatives
  - Supporting our students
  - Recruiting diverse staff



Our research is excellent,  
tackles the greatest  
challenges and contributes  
to the common good

- Law 2024–25 initiatives**
- Engaging in proactive recruitment
  - Raising our profile and taking a leading role in shaping public discourse
  - Enhancing research outcomes



A better place to work, and a place that works better

- Law 2024–25 initiatives**
- Dual naming
  - Truth telling and responsibility
  - Enabling and empowering a collaborative and inclusive community
  - Partnering with a range of external voices and expertise

# Our aspirations for 2032: *The role of Sydney Law School*

In 2032, our scholarship and education are essential to the development of an innovative and diverse legal profession. Our future focus builds on our history and tradition, deepening our links with legal practitioners, the judiciary, regulators, government and First Nations organisations to be thought leaders in reimagining foundational and emerging fields relevant to the profession and the wider world.

Our students value their legal education as a formative transformational experience that has lifelong impact. It empowers them with the knowledge and leadership skills they need for a diverse range of careers. They develop a strong sense of belonging to the University, forged through deep connections with their teachers and peers, and feel safe and supported to confidently participate in their learning. With agency and choice in their study program, they value the opportunity to learn from and work with globally leading educators, researchers and legal scholars who, in turn, are supported by Sydney Law School to flourish and achieve excellence.

Our graduates are the first choice for employers nationally and internationally, renowned for their social and environmental awareness, global outlook, and creative and independent thinking. They are proud to remain connected to Sydney Law School, wherever they live and work, and to actively support the next generation of students, willingly giving time to enrich the current student experience.

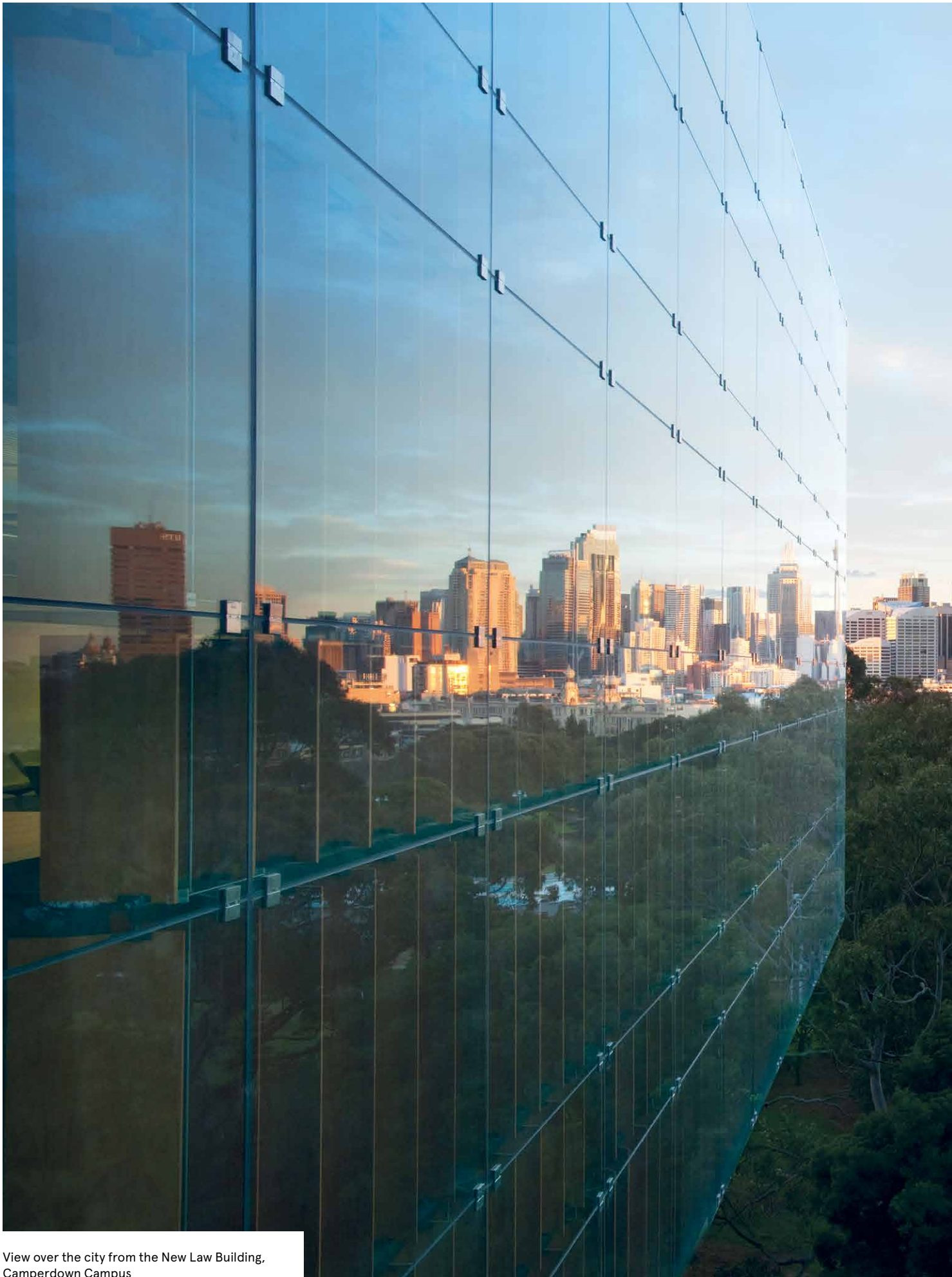
Our students come from increasingly diverse backgrounds. They join a global legal community of students, staff, affiliates and visitors that is underpinned by values of inclusion, diversity and collaboration. It is a community that shares knowledge through open and robust discussion, engaged in with self-reflection and civility. While respecting the distinct needs, lived experience and aspirations of each unique student, we foster a common passion for law and justice.

In 2032, Sydney Law School is an even more welcoming place, where people forge deep connections and a sense of belonging that honours the First Peoples of Australia. We acknowledge the place of Indigenous law and justice

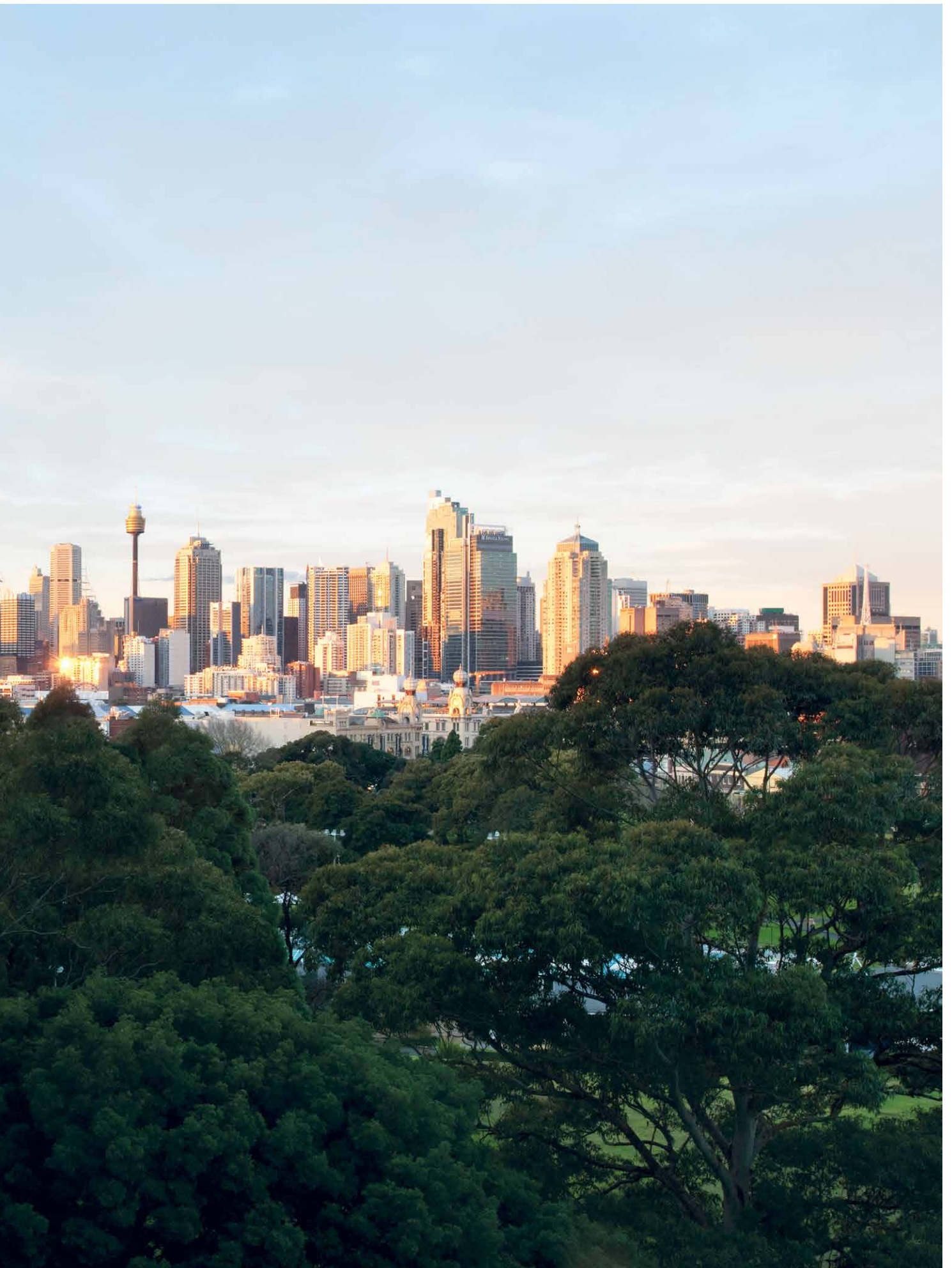
in legal education and throughout wider society through truth telling, ensuring our graduates possess the skills to interrogate legal and sociocultural issues with an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives.

Our research is renowned for tackling contemporary and emerging issues of law and justice with rigour, integrity and independence. In 2032, we are known for comprehensive disciplinary strengths which include leadership in areas of intensifying priority such as sustainability, health, innovation and technology, as well as for the scholarship of legal education, which informs the delivery of our teaching. Thanks to the work of our specialist centres, institutes and networks, our regional and global focus is distinctive in its comparative and interdisciplinary approach. We thoughtfully integrate our students into our projects and our academic community through internship and work-integrated learning opportunities, and engage in ambitious, imaginative, socially relevant research that pursues a wide variety of perspectives, a broad spectrum of funding and partners, and novel approaches to the communication of the impacts of our work.

Our expertise is highly regarded and sought after by media, government, the profession and industry. Across all our work, we are leaders in influencing public perspectives, providing a forum to discuss the issues that matter most to society. Our impact reflects our global mindset and comprehensive understanding of local conditions, embedded in multiple communities of practice. We are leaders in promoting regional and international dialogue and interaction in Australia's neighbourhood, and our partners value us for our reliability, flexibility and responsiveness.



View over the city from the New Law Building, Camperdown Campus



# Our student-focused education is *transformational*

In 2024–25 we will build on the foundations laid in our 2020–25 strategic plan, *Reimagining Sydney Law School*, by focusing on embedding Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into our curriculum, enhancing student engagement in learning, and investing in the professional development of our educators.

In support of the University’s ambition to be the best Australian university for teaching and learning by 2032, we also recommit to positioning academic excellence at the heart of an engaging student experience that equips our graduates for the future.

## Sydney Law School 2024–25 initiatives

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### Embedding Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into our curriculum

A key milestone from *Reimagining Sydney Law School* was the review of our Bachelor of Laws and Juris Doctor courses. In 2024 we will begin to implement a recommendation from the Curriculum Review Committee to embed the laws, knowledges, perspectives and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across both our Bachelor of Laws and Juris Doctor curricula, for commencement in 2025.

We have also been awarded funding through the *One Sydney, Many People* strategy 2021–2024 to more deeply embed First Nations perspectives into our first-year Bachelor of Laws and Juris Doctor curricula, and will work with Indigenous legal education experts to design learning materials, activities and assessments in culturally assured ways across these two projects.

### Enhancing student engagement in learning

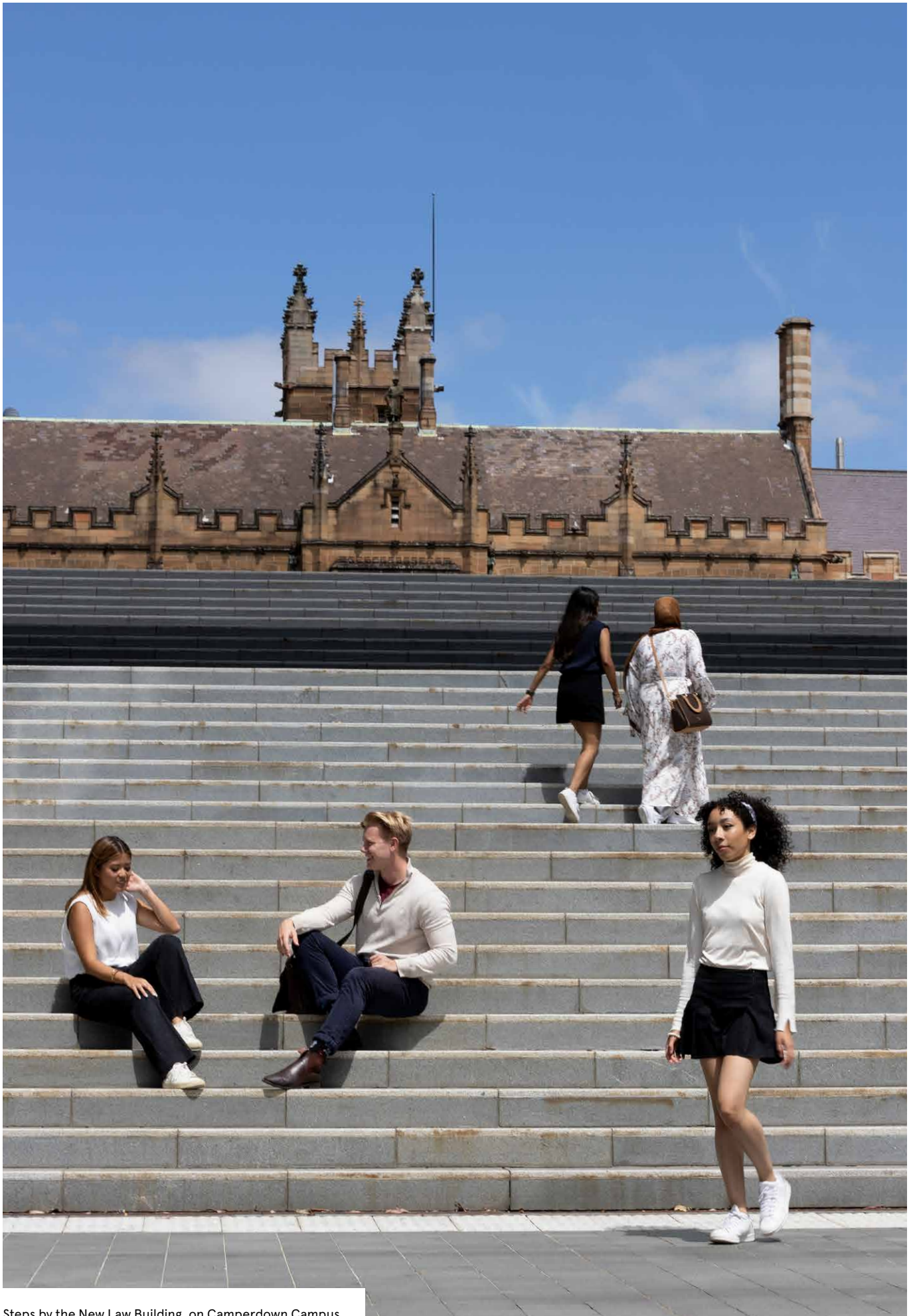
We continue to build on the progress we have made in this area over the past three years, transforming five large-cohort units of study by increasing teacher–student and student–student interactions in class.

By reflecting and learning from these projects, in 2024–25 we will scale these efforts across more units of study. This will involve co-designing with our students our approaches to teaching and learning, designing more interactive classroom activities, increasing interactions between domestic and international students, and enhancing connections between our teachers and students.

### Investing in the professional development of our educators

In 2024–25 we will focus on supporting our educators in their commitment to professional development, and on celebrating our expertise and innovation in legal education both within and beyond the University.

To do this, we will continue to enhance the professional development activities that we successfully implemented as part of *Reimagining Sydney Law School*, drawing on the expertise of our legal education designers. We will refine our workshops on assessment design and feedback, our Legal Education Seminar series, and our engagement with University and national legal education peer review programs. We will also encourage our staff to benefit from our professional development resources, which are provided to promote educational innovation and excellence.



Steps by the New Law Building, on Camperdown Campus

# Our community thrives *through diversity*

With one of the most diverse cohorts of enrolling students already, Sydney Law School will play a leading role in the University's aspiration to identify and support students and staff from a full range of diverse backgrounds to flourish at the University.

By 2032, Sydney Law School will be known for its culture which encourages a wider diversity of people in terms of both background and lived experiences, who share a common passion for law reform and justice, underpinned by values of inclusion, diversity and collaboration.

## Sydney Law School 2024–25 initiatives

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### Maintaining access and outreach initiatives

In 2023 we welcomed our first cohort of students from under-represented low-socioeconomic-status backgrounds supported by the University's MySydney Scholarship scheme. This scheme, introduced as part of the *Sydney in 2032* strategy, builds on the earlier successes of the Gadigal Program and the E12 Scheme. Through Sydney Law School initiatives we also encouraged first-year transfer and Juris Doctor students by extending the Gadigal and E12 programs to current non-Sydney Law School students.

In 2024–25 we will support these students to succeed in their studies, complementing University-wide schemes with our own programs and scholarships aimed at lifting the educational ambitions and achievements of students from diverse backgrounds. We will focus on two newly launched scholarships for Indigenous students, which include a First Nations Juris Doctor scholarship, as well as on our ongoing work to support students who are experiencing financial hardship.

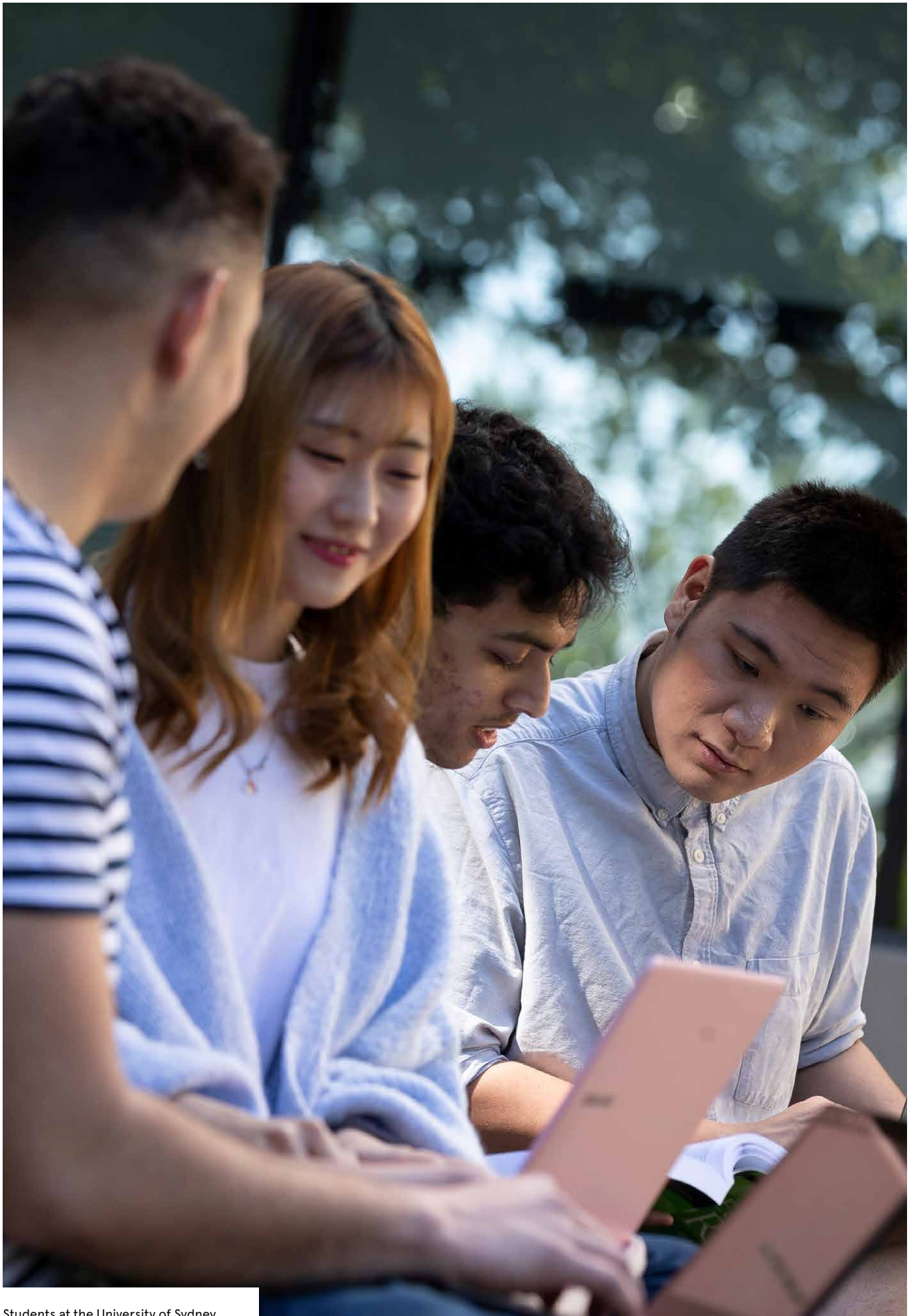
### Supporting our students

We will continue to develop bespoke support programs for our students in a number of areas. Firstly, we will expand our Legal Minds Mentoring program, which identifies and supports students who would benefit from assistance with academic skills. Secondly, we will prioritise the mental wellbeing of our students by strengthening our partnership with Batyr, a youth-led organisation that focuses on reducing mental health stigma and increasing help seeking. Thirdly, we will increase our efforts to build connection and belonging among our students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, through new mentoring and networking initiatives.

We will also continue to support our students to build their professional networks and connections with the legal profession, through both new and established mentoring programs that connect them to potential employment and leadership opportunities. And we will encourage our alumni to connect with and actively support our current students.

### Recruiting diverse staff

We will continue to diversify our Sydney Law School staff through strategic recruitment in 2024–25. We will grow and expand our staff and affiliate talent and our education, research and engagement activities by welcoming to Sydney Law School new colleagues currently working in diverse fields at a broad range of world-leading institutions across the globe. We will also continue to recruit new Indigenous academic and professional staff into key roles as part of our Indigenous Employment Strategy.



Students at the University of Sydney

# Our research is excellent, tackles the greatest challenges and *contributes to the common good*

Building on our 2020–25 strategic plan, *Reimagining Sydney Law School*, we will continue to foster a collaborative and innovative research culture that enables our academics, research fellows and postgraduate research students to excel, engage and have impact.

In 2024–25, Sydney Law School will contribute to the University’s research aspirations by building a proactive, whole-of-school approach to academic recruitment, by seeking opportunities to further raise our profile and shape public discourse, and by enhancing research support for our academic staff.

These actions will put us on a path to ensure that by 2032 we are known for our mentoring, training and support of research excellence across all career levels.

## Sydney Law School 2024–25 initiatives

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### Engaging in proactive recruitment

In 2024–25 we will build a pipeline of talent, enabling continuous, future-focused recruitment to meet our future needs in teaching and research. This pipeline will be critical to fostering a legal education and research ecosystem that empowers our staff to excel.

When attending conferences, on sabbatical or undertaking other activities, we will actively seek out talented academics and keep them informed of potential job openings at Sydney Law School, with a particular focus on attracting early- and mid-career researchers. We will also ensure that our future research support activities include meeting demand for supervision of higher degree by research (HDR) students. A school-level committee will guide this process to ensure its success.

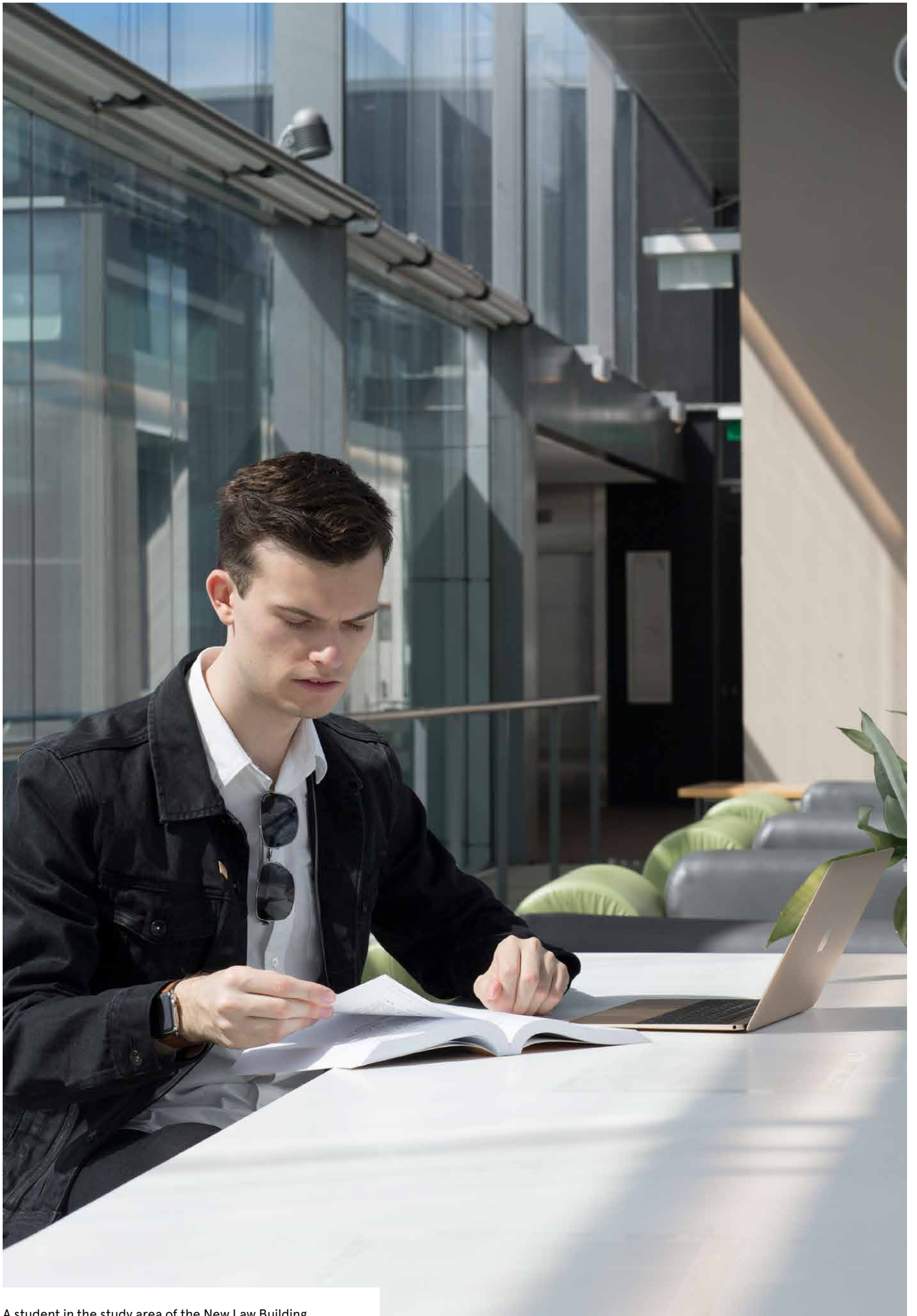
### Raising our profile and taking a leading role in shaping public discourse

We will pursue opportunities to further consolidate our position as eminent thought leaders, advisors and influencers on key issues relating to the law, justice and policy reform. We will maximise our impact in these areas, and hence our contribution to the common good. To do this, we will continue to raise the profile of our teaching and research innovation by articulating with renewed energy our collective contribution to society, both within and beyond the University.

### Enhancing research outcomes

In 2024 we will pilot a new peer-to-peer research support program, Peer support And Networking to Increase Capacity (PANIC), which will invite participants to share their ‘works in progress’ with a view to collaboratively developing articles and other publications.

The program will be open to all members of staff and to postgraduate research students, further developing our research community and creating scope for collaboration across our subdisciplines. It will also incorporate visiting scholars, encouraging them to engage with our research community and providing opportunities for our staff and postgraduate research students to further expand their networks.



A student in the study area of the New Law Building

# A better place to work, *and a place that works better*

At all times we are mindful that the University and Sydney Law School are located on lands that are home to the oldest continuous cultures in the world, and that these cherished lands are a strength that is core to how our students, staff, local communities and partners experience the University.

Our education and research will be augmented by our focused attention on building leadership and partnership capabilities within Sydney Law School, by prioritising collaboration with discipline leaders nationally and internationally, and by diversifying our institutional collaboration partners in teaching and research.

## Sydney Law School 2024–25 initiatives

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### Dual naming

The University's *One Sydney, Many People* strategy includes a commitment to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander narratives into the infrastructure, design and fabric of our campuses. In 2024–25, Sydney Law School will work with Indigenous collaborators and language holders to explore opportunities to use Indigenous languages within our programs and on signage of our buildings which sit on Gadigal lands. We will also facilitate opportunities for our staff and students to understand the significance of this activity, including by offering targeted language training.

### Truth telling and responsibility

Truth telling comes in many forms. Through its Anti-Racism Statement, the University has committed to truth telling at institutional level, and Sydney Law School has committed to supporting this at local level through engagement in this project.

Sydney Law School will itself enable truth telling by including and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices. We further commit to listening, hearing the truth telling, and considering whether, how and to what extent it can be incorporated into our practices.

Truth telling is also an opportunity for us to take responsibility for the legal system within which we work, and for what law and justice are about. As legal scholars, we can engage in a form of truth telling that entails speaking the truth of the legal system – what it has been, how it was established, what it is now, what impacts it has, and what avenues there are for change. We can assist our students, our colleagues, the legal profession and the broader community to better understand the truth of the Australian legal system. In 2024–25 we will explore how truth telling can be incorporated into our teaching, research and outreach activities.



A smoking ceremony

### Enabling and empowering a collaborative and inclusive community

We will harness the collective energy of Sydney Law School to create a more collaborative culture that builds on our longstanding tradition of excellence, innovation, collegiality and shared endeavour.

In 2024–25 our senior staff will engage with each other in mentoring and other fora to embed a shared conviction that collaboration and mentoring are not ‘optional extras’ but are deeply connected to their own research and career progression. We will encourage our colleagues to adopt a collective rather than an individualistic approach to their research and community engagement, by enabling our senior staff to engage proactively in recruiting HDR students and research fellows, to create more opportunities for early- and mid-career researchers, and to expand their roles as mentors.

We will enable all our staff to have constructive, open conversations and to gain multiple, broad perspectives on their professional development, beyond the formal structures of the Academic Performance and Development (AP&D) and Professional Performance and Development (PP&D) systems. This will ensure that our staff feel continuously supported and have clear visibility and control of their career trajectories.

### Partnering with a range of external voices and expertise

Sydney Law School will invite a range of external voices and expertise to help us foster a culture of collaboration.

We will establish a Sydney Law School Advisory Group to provide global and domestic insights from leaders within our alumni network, the legal profession, industry, government, NGOs and local communities. We will also attract global and local talent through competitive visiting fellowships and practitioner-in-residence programs to support our education, research and engagement priorities. And we will draw on the knowledge and expertise of our partners to assist with fundraising, independent reviews, student career panels, distinguished guest lectures and seminars, and mentoring programs.



A Law Leadership Group workshop

## How this strategic plan was developed

We developed this strategic plan through a highly collaborative and consultative process across 2023. As we progressed, our colleagues and stakeholders had multiple opportunities to provide feedback and contribute ideas.

### The Law Leadership Group

The Law Leadership Group came together for a series of workshops in 2023 to reflect on and review the progress made against the priorities, measures and actions in our 2020–25 strategic plan, *Reimagining Sydney Law School*, and to consider their alignment with the University's *Sydney in 2032* strategy.

The group then developed a preliminary aspirational vision for Sydney Law School in 2032, identified potential barriers to achieving that vision, and established initiatives for 2024–25 to provide the foundation for achieving the school's vision as part of broader work under the *Sydney in 2032* strategy.

### Staff engagement

Sydney Law School colleagues were invited to provide feedback on the draft vision developed by the Law Leadership Group, which informed our aspirations for 2032 as articulated on pages 4 and 5 of this document.

All our staff then came together for a strategy day in November 2023, which focused on how we would successfully implement the initiatives, ensuring broad involvement from our staff, students and other stakeholders.

### Student engagement

A student workshop in October 2023 identified potential actions that would help to build a greater sense of belonging and community among Sydney Law School students. It also uncovered insights into the law student experience, and identified the types of assessment and feedback from which our students learn the most. These key insights rounded out the collaborative development of this strategic plan, reinforcing our central commitment to locating the student experience at the heart of this strategy.

**Contact us**

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Photography by Stefanie Zingsheim, Louise Cooper, Abril Felman  
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Produced by Marketing and Communications and the Strategic  
Planning Office, the University of Sydney, April 2024.  
The University reserves the right to make alterations to any  
information contained within this publication without notice.

