



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Part of the Sydney in
2032
Strategy



The University of Sydney Law School

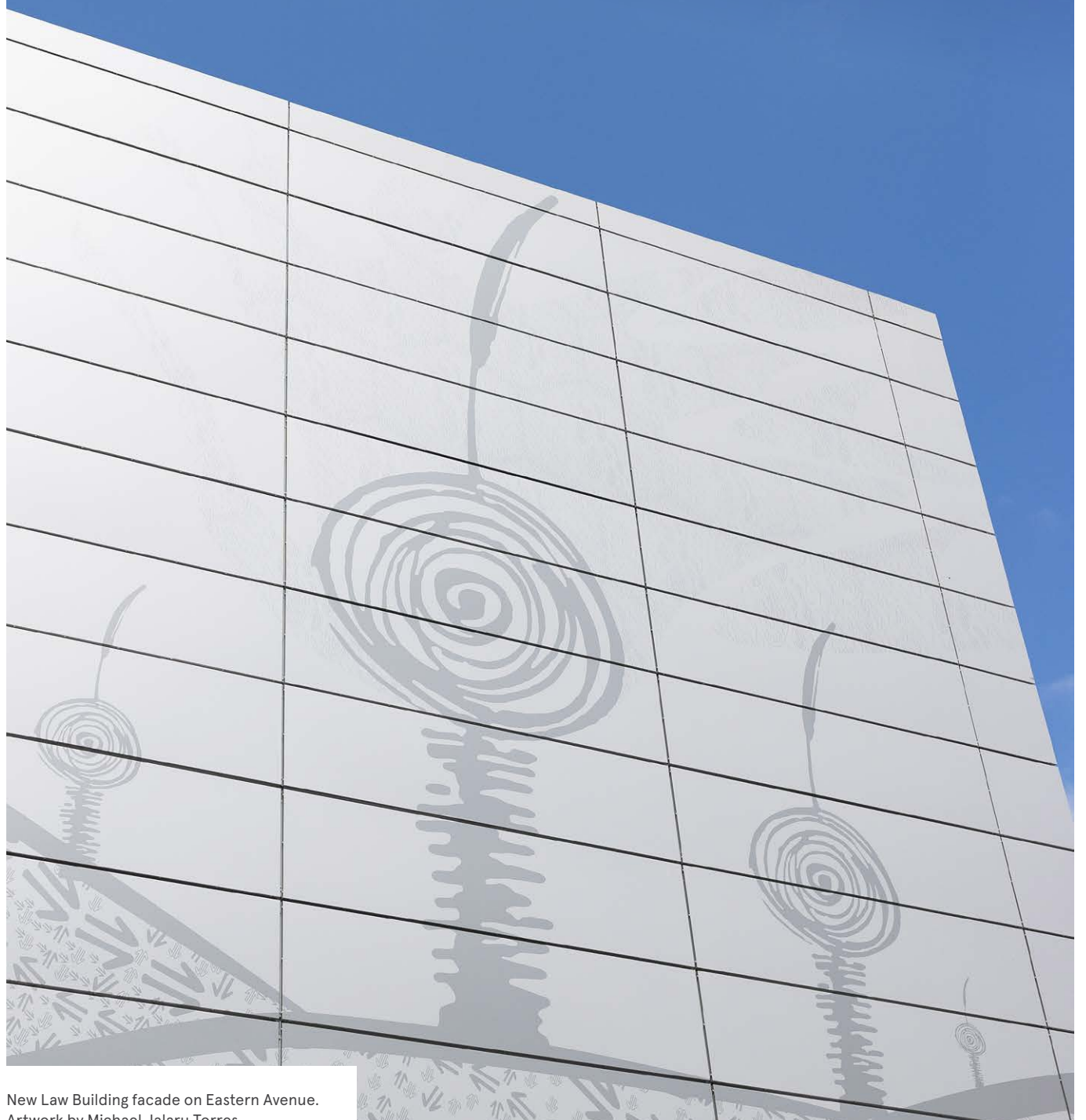
Strategic Plan 2026-28

Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Sydney's Camperdown/Darlington Campus sits on the lands of the Gadigal people, with other campuses, teaching and research facilities on the lands of the Gamaraygal, Dharug, Wangal, Darkinyung, Burramadagal, Dharawal, Gandangara, Gamilaraay, Barkindji, Bundjalung, Wiradjuri, Gureng Gureng and Gagadju peoples.

We recognise and pay respect to the Elders and communities of these lands, past and present, who for thousands of years have shared and exchanged knowledges across innumerable generations, for the benefit of all.

We respect and value the knowledges, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There is no place in Australia – water, land or sky – that has not been known, nurtured and loved for millennia by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



New Law Building facade on Eastern Avenue.
Artwork by Michael Jalaru Torres.

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Leadership foreword

Since rejoining the University of Sydney Law School in early 2025, I have been deep in conversation with Sydney Law School staff, students and alumni. I have been in dialogue, too, with colleagues from around the University, and with people from across the legal profession, the bench, and the many fields in which Sydney Law School is fortunate to have supporters and collaborators. As the expiry of our 2024–25 strategic plan neared, these discussions focused on how to prioritise our collective efforts over the next three years to deliver significant, tangible progress against the University of Sydney’s *Sydney in 2032* Strategy and ensure that Sydney Law School is positioned to go from strength to strength into the future.

The result of these discussions is this Sydney Law School Strategic Plan 2026–28, an expression of our entire School community’s shared purpose and common commitment. It articulates clear, actionable plans for the steps we will take over the next three years to ensure that our education remains leading edge and that we lift our research ambition, foster greater collaboration, and create lasting social value. I am excited to share it with you.

Core to this Strategic Plan 2026–28 is an ambition for Sydney Law School to marshal the strengths we have demonstrated since our establishment in 1855, on Country where law has been taught for tens of thousands of years, to lift our shared gaze to the shifting horizons of our discipline, our profession and our world, and to set a course that will ensure our continued leadership and vitality into the future.

Today, Sydney Law School is home to students, researchers and educators from a great variety of backgrounds, and welcomes those with potential for excellence from all quarters of society and the world. We are committed to seeing that our students and graduates flourish, that our researchers tackle the hardest questions collaboratively and impactfully, that we support the pursuit of justice by the First Peoples of this land, and that our community is a place of fairness, thriving, intellectual vibrancy and connectedness, where people feel respected, supported and inspired. Our aim, deeply rooted in the University’s core values of trust, accountability and excellence, is to ensure that Sydney Law School is recognisable within and beyond the University as a genuinely exciting, empowering place to study, research, work and collaborate. We seek to partner more widely than ever before to confront the many national and global challenges that have unanswered law and policy questions at their heart. The ongoing input of our newly established Strategic Advisory Council and of our extraordinary global network of alumni and collaborators will be invaluable in this work.





Professor Fleur Johns, Head of School and Dean,
Sydney Law School

Over the next three years, we will adapt our curricula and teaching practice to equip our students with the skills and capabilities to enable them to face the future with courage, competence, and a strong service orientation, including by affording students equitable access to field-relevant AI tools and integrating their use into our core curriculum in considered and responsible ways. We will strive to become more outward-looking and daring in our research ambitions, increasing our research collaboration across disciplinary and sectoral boundaries leveraging our research strengths in Australian, Asia-Pacific and international laws. We will continue our recent years' work of amplifying and valuing Indigenous knowledges and perspectives in law and fostering an environment in which First Nations students and staff thrive.

Recognising that our student community is more diverse than ever and growing in diversity year by year, we will adapt how we give feedback to our students and support them and their teachers both within and beyond the classroom, including by creating new opportunities for experiential learning. Our aim is to ensure that each of our students feels enabled to find their voice, pursue their passions and connect with others, regardless of their starting point.

At the same time, we will strive to promote the sharing of insights and to cultivate potential among our professional and academic staff. We want to ensure that our students and staff alike experience respect, care and agency at Sydney Law School while being fairly held to the highest standards, enabling them to realise capabilities in study and work that they might never have known they had.

This Strategic Plan 2026–28 has been shaped by collective efforts and candid conversations involving our entire Sydney Law School community, and I am grateful to all who have contributed. To those new to these discussions, please consider this Strategic Plan 2026–28 an open invitation. Whether you wish to study law, to advance your academic or professional career, to make a legacy-defining gift to create opportunities for others, or to explore prospects for research collaboration or professional or community engagement with Sydney Law School, we invite you to come and talk with us. Our ambitions for the next three years are bold, and our minds and doors are always open. We'd love to bring you along for the ride.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fleur Johns".

Professor Fleur Johns FASSA
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



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



Our community
 thrives through
 diversity



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

Sydney Law School’s shared purpose

Pursuing collective excellence in field-shaping research across a diversity of legal knowledge domains and contributing to interdisciplinary inquiry on questions that matter; educating for wisdom, adaptability, and ethical, service-oriented leadership in the legal profession and beyond; and contributing responsibly to public debate and the societal pursuit of justice for all

**Educating law students for
 future flourishing**

- Promoting critical AI literacy and discernment across our curricula
- Expanding clinical and experiential learning
- Improving the quality and timeliness of feedback
- Optimising our student engagement and career support programs
- Curricular curation and teaching support to maintain course quality and vibrancy

**Strengthening our
 collaborative capability
 in research**

- Grant Readiness and Support Program (GRASP)
- Funding for University-industry Engagement in Law (FUEL)
- Academic workforce planning and capability building

**Enhancing connectivity
 to support staff thriving at
 every career stage**

- Establishing communities of practice
- Enhancing promotion and career planning support
- Strengthening communication and collaboration

**Promoting research,
 teaching and practice
 relating to Indigenous legal
 knowledges and experiences**

- Delivering recruitment, retention and support programs for First Nations staff
- Enhancing recruitment and support programs for First Nations students
- Continuing to embed *Ngara* across our curricula through training and reflective practice



Our aspirations for 2028: The role of Sydney Law School

The University of Sydney's *Sydney in 2032* Strategy sets out a transformative vision for Australia's first university: to build on our legacy, face challenges, and adapt to change to ensure that by 2032 our work is more compelling, and more important to society, than at any other time in our history. Given our remarkable record of leadership and the breadth and depth of our current capabilities in Australian, Asia-Pacific and international laws, and as one of the founding disciplines of the University, Sydney Law School has a vital contribution to make to the realisation of this vision.

We aspire to a future in which Sydney Law School is a crucial enabler of, and key contributor to, research collaboration across the University; showcases possibilities for advancing critical AI literacy and service learning alongside rigorous grounding in the fundamentals of legal problem solving; and offers a model of student belonging, Indigenous legal learning and leadership.

Sydney Law School will advance this vision from 2026 to 2028 through a focus on our values, our shared purpose, and the four strategic priorities identified below.

Our values

Sydney Law School is committed to earning and deserving trust, demonstrating accountability, and pursuing excellence in all that we do.

Our shared purpose

Sydney Law School invites all who join and all who are already part of our community into a sense of shared purpose and common commitment.

Sydney Law School's shared purpose is pursuing collective excellence in field-shaping research across a diversity of legal knowledge domains and contributing to interdisciplinary inquiry on questions that matter; educating for wisdom, adaptability, and ethical, service-oriented leadership in the legal profession and beyond; and contributing responsibly to public debate and the societal pursuit of justice for all.



We believe that to shape the future of law and help build a more just world, we must nurture responsible, adaptable, trustworthy leaders. We are dedicated to fostering an educational environment in which our students continue to develop exceptional critical-thinking and problem-solving capabilities and sound legal knowledge and skills, as well as acquiring ethical AI literacy and cultivating a strong service orientation towards the profession and society. At the same time, Sydney Law School researchers will work together with researchers from across the University of Sydney and throughout Australia, our region and the world to tackle emergent legal questions, influence practice and policy, and address a wide range of salient societal issues and problems, leveraging our strength as a comprehensive law school with a distinctively global outlook and network. Our approach is outward-looking and collaborative, and we are dedicated to sustained and meaningful partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including our extraordinary alumni community, in service of our shared purpose.

“In an era of profound change in the legal sector, the Strategic Plan provides the changes required for Sydney Law School to achieve its priorities and an outline of how it will be executed, so that the next generation of graduates can engage in, and lead the legal profession, as well as contributing to the wider community.”

– Kevin McCann, Chair of Sydney Law School's Strategic Advisory Council



Our strategic priorities for 2026–28

- 1. Educating law students for future flourishing**

Providing a student-focused and transformative legal education that is exciting, rigorous, and grounded in ethical service, which equips graduates with highly adaptive skills and capabilities for responsible leadership and critical and creative legal thought, enabling them to face the future with courage and competence.
- 2. Strengthening our collaborative capability in research**

Producing outstanding, innovative legal and policy research in service of the public good through collaboration with researchers in other disciplines and jurisdictions. Extending our local, national and global relationships with the profession, industry, governments, communities and other universities and institutions to enhance our research impact, sustain our research leadership, and ensure continuing public confidence in our work.
- 3. Enhancing connectivity to support staff thriving at every career stage**

Maintaining a supportive and inclusive workplace and study environment where a sense of shared purpose, collegiality, transparent decision making and embrace of diversity drive improved performance, accountability and wellbeing.
- 4. Promoting research, teaching and practice relating to Indigenous legal knowledges and experiences**

Working to embed and amplify Indigenous knowledges and perspectives in law and public debate and to foster an environment in which First Nations students and staff thrive and non-Indigenous colleagues adopt ethical practices in line with the University's Indigenous strategy, titled One Sydney, Many People 2025–2032.



Student excellence being recognised at the 2025 Prize Giving Ceremony.

How we will advance our strategic priorities in 2026–28

To deliver clear improvement against each of these four strategic priorities, between 2026 and 2028 Sydney Law School will undertake concrete initiatives for change in relation to each, as outlined on these pages.

Strategic priority 1: Educating law students for future flourishing

Why it matters

Sydney Law School has a responsibility to produce graduates who can navigate and guide others through a complex, fast-changing world, and help shape it for the better. To this end, our graduates must be not only academically excellent legal problem-solvers but also adaptable, imaginative, collaborative, and deeply, ethically reflective. We must remain attuned to our students' diverse circumstances, needs and aspirations, and adapt the support and guidance that we offer accordingly, partnering with students along the way.

“For law students, legal education becomes meaningful when it equips us with knowledge and, crucially, with the confidence and responsibility to apply it within an evolving professional and social landscape. Learning to thrive in the face of change, rather than merely exist alongside it, is increasingly central to how students approach their development.”

– Mounica Akula, President, Sydney University Law Society

Initiatives for change

In pursuit of this strategic priority, we will undertake the following initiatives.

Promoting critical AI literacy and discernment across our curricula

By investing in AI-focused curricular development, affording students equitable access to field-appropriate AI tools, and upskilling both staff and students to understand the ethical-use cases for AI and other digital technologies in law and policy fields and to grapple with the underlying drivers, risks and ramifications of this use, we will work to prepare our graduates for the increasing digitalisation of legal practice and other forms of work.

Expanding clinical and experiential learning

We will expand our clinical teaching offerings and diversify our students' exposure to experiential learning opportunities to afford students meaningful cohort-building and rewarding service-learning experiences and to create more practice-ready and inspired graduates, consistent with the Legal Profession Admission Board's reform initiatives for Practical Legal Training in New South Wales. This will

include collaborating with colleagues in other faculties and schools to pilot an on-campus clinic affording Law and Social Sciences students access to an interdisciplinary clinical learning environment while helping to service unmet needs for legal advice and social support in the surrounding community under the supervision of qualified professionals. This will also lay the groundwork for our long-term vision of establishing a standing facility of this kind on the University's Camperdown/Darlington Campus, to be known as the NEST (Node for Education, Service and research Translation).

Improving the quality and timeliness of feedback

We will work to enhance student learning and sustain a culture of teaching excellence by improving the quality and timeliness of the feedback that we offer our students, employing multiple feedback modes and channels and advancing best practice across all our programs, including by ensuring that all our staff use common tailorable templates and tools to deliver feedback on assessment tasks. This will include reviewing and improving our training practices and support for casual teachers.

Optimising our student engagement and career support programs

By piloting and assessing the impacts of our new Student Engagement Unit and Law Careers Program, we will test a range of measures to strengthen inclusion, expand peer-to-peer support, maintain strong graduate employability, and ensure broad-ranging success and wellbeing across our already diverse and continually diversifying student cohort, working to embed and sustain those initiatives that yield measurable improvement in student outcomes and experience. We will enhance students' awareness of the wide range of career pathways open to them across the public and private sectors in Australia and around the world.

Curricular curation and teaching support to maintain course quality and vibrancy

We will strengthen the quality and vibrancy of our curricula through improved planning and more regular review of offerings against student demand, making space for ongoing pedagogic innovation. At the same time, we will enhance how we recruit, onboard and support the casual academics who are essential to our teaching, ensuring a stronger foundation for our continued excellence in legal education.



Strategic priority 2: Strengthening our collaborative capability in research

Why it matters

Legal research plays a crucial role in shaping law, influencing institutional and community practice, and enhancing societal understanding, equity and resilience. There is no major social, political, economic, technological or environmental issue with which we are grappling today either nationally or globally that can be tackled without rigorous legal analysis, prudent critique, and creative law and policy thought. Many such issues take legal and policy inquiry in unprecedented directions. As the challenges facing us are often complex, multidimensional and dynamic, a high-ambition research culture is vital to ensuring that Sydney Law School remains at the leading edge of law and policy research.

To do field-shaping, significant work, Sydney Law School must pursue bold research agendas, attract competitive research funding, support early- and mid-career researchers, and build multigenerational researcher cohorts that include higher degree by research (HDR) students. Our researchers must collaborate widely and effectively, including as contributors to interdisciplinary teams, and translate their research findings into insights and outcomes that are meaningful to industry, governments, affected communities and the wider public. Competition for research funding is more intense than ever, and funding bodies in Australia are focused on boosting research and development (R&D) investment across the board, making grant readiness and enhanced capability for interdisciplinary and external engagement essential.

“Sydney Law School has long been a home for leading Australian legal researchers. Many of our staff have worked with organisations such as the UN, governments, parliaments, courts, major law firms and community legal centres. We are well placed to research global and national legal problems. This strategic plan will enhance our collaborative research with colleagues in other faculties and schools, and with our community partners.”

– Professor Andrew Edgar, Associate Dean (Research)

Initiatives for change

In pursuit of this strategic priority, we will undertake the following initiatives.

Grant Readiness and Support Program (GRASP)

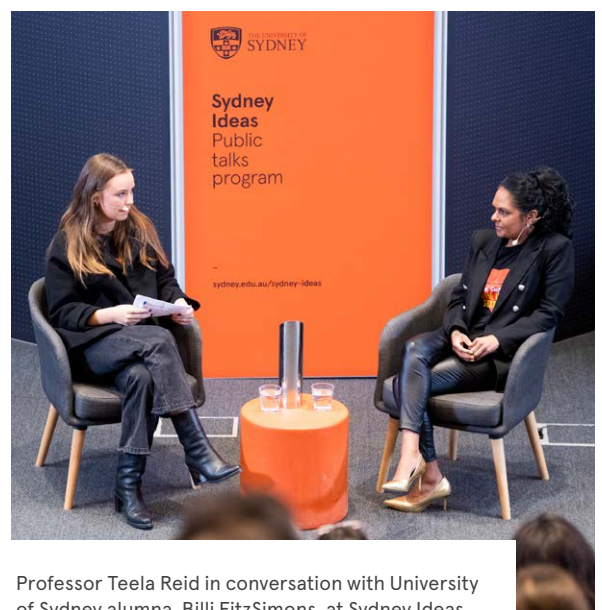
We will design and deliver a revised training and support program to provide our researchers – especially those early in their careers – with the practical support, constructive feedback, internal incentives and consistent mentoring needed to equip and encourage them to successfully navigate the competitive research funding landscape. This will improve our grant submission and success rates to increase our research income, enabling us to create new opportunities for the brightest research students and postdoctoral researchers.

Funding for University–industry Engagement in Law (FUEL)

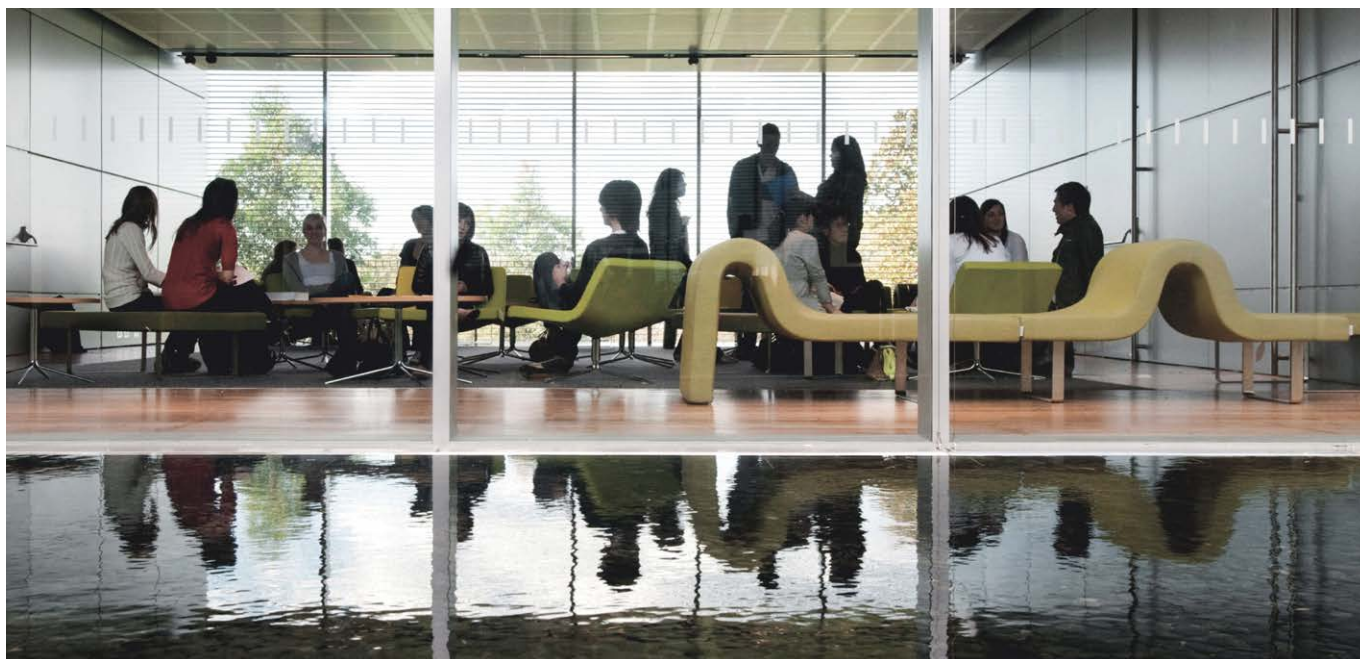
We will deploy internal seed funding and improve showcasing of our research capacities with the aim of fostering a culture of, and promoting our capability in, collaborative, team-based research that moves beyond the traditional model of solo scholarly inquiry, facilitating partnerships with researchers in other disciplines and with non-academic stakeholders, and promoting broader public recognition of our research contributions and strengths.

Academic workforce planning and capability building

We will map and plan succession in areas of research strength that are distinctive to Sydney Law School relative to our law school peers, and take steps to bolster our areas of emergent strength, enabling Sydney Law School to retain its standing as a research leader well into the future.



Professor Teela Reid in conversation with University of Sydney alumna, Billi FitzSimons, at Sydney Ideas.



Strategic priority 3: Enhancing connectivity to support staff thriving at every career stage

Why it matters

Our people's intrinsic motivations and experiences of joy, recognition and connection are vital to Sydney Law School's success. We have consistently attracted and retained great people: capable, independent thinkers, many revered in their fields, who have chosen to dedicate their careers to working within a leading public university. Yet the pressures on academic and professional staff seem to be growing. Amid the busy-ness of campus life, mentoring, recognition, and information-sharing may be uneven. The University of Sydney, while financially sound, operates within a resource-constrained higher education environment, meaning that the productivity and development of our existing staff are more important than ever. A thriving, resilient and connected staff body is critical not only to individual staff wellbeing and institutional health but also to a positive student experience, and to helping us inspire and equip students to flourish professionally in the diverse careers that they go on to pursue.

"Our strategic initiatives are designed to strengthen how we connect and work together across Sydney Law School. By focusing on active collaboration, meaningful career development, and effective communication and information-sharing, we will create the conditions for all staff to thrive."

– Louisa Johnson, General Manager, Sydney Law School

Initiatives for change

In pursuit of this strategic priority, we will undertake the following initiatives.

Establishing communities of practice

We will create and maintain specific communities of practice to provide targeted, peer-led development support, information sharing and mutual encouragement across our main programs and areas of work, meeting the diverse needs of our academic and professional staff at all stages of their careers and fostering an enhanced sense of belonging, accountability and trust.

Enhancing promotion and career planning support

We will develop and deliver an enhanced program of promotion mentoring and career planning support to enhance staff satisfaction, aid staff retention, and ensure optimal staff continuity and sustained performance throughout Sydney Law School.

Strengthening communication and collaboration

We will harness digital technologies to create a more connected and responsive Law School community. By enabling open and transparent information sharing, strengthening data management, and supporting inclusive consultation, we will transform how we work together and support informed decision making across the School. We will also strengthen our engagement with alumni, the legal profession and the wider community, building stronger partnerships, challenging outdated perceptions, and extending the reach and impact of the Law School.

Strategic priority 4: Promoting research, teaching and practice relating to Indigenous legal knowledges and experiences

Why it matters

In line with the University's Indigenous strategy – One Sydney, Many People 2025–2032 – and as a matter of fundamental responsibility in any nation forged through colonisation, Sydney Law School is committed to valuing and integrating First Nations legal knowledges and perspectives; improving cross-cultural competence at the interface between First Laws and Western Laws and in professional interactions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities; and promoting and facilitating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and self-determination. Under the leadership of our Associate Dean (Indigenous Strategy and Services) and our Indigenous Strategy and Services Committee, we will work to expand opportunities for Indigenous students and staff and to promote enhanced insight and ethical practice among non-Indigenous students and staff.

“Preparing our students for the real world requires not simply a reckoning with the truth of what law is, but a deep understanding of the co-existence of Western Laws and First Laws. We are committed to building our capabilities by forging new pathways for First Nations research, supporting Indigenous leadership and student experiences, as well as creating safe staff dialogue to enhance teaching and learning. An integral component of this work is to enhance our industry relationships through our First Nations Practitioners-in-Residence program for greater community impact.”

– Professor Teela Reid, Associate Dean (Indigenous Strategy and Services)

Initiatives for change

In pursuit of this strategic priority, we will undertake the following initiatives.

Delivering recruitment, retention and support programs for First Nations staff

We will seek opportunities to recruit more First Nations staff, provide meaningful, localised and responsive career development support to our First Nations academic and professional staff, and promote Indigenous representation and leadership within Sydney Law School and beyond.

Enhancing recruitment and support programs for First Nations students

We will review and enhance our pathways, practices and programs and financial assistance offerings aimed at attracting First Nations law students and ensuring their long-term success. We commit to growing – in caring, student-centred ways – the numbers of First Nations law students enrolled across all our programs between 2026 and 2028, and we will dedicate resources to supporting these students' academic achievement and wellbeing and nurturing their capabilities for leadership and connection to industry partners. We will seek donor support to enable us to offer additional scholarships to First Nations law students, including higher degree by research (HDR) students.

Continuing to embed *Ngara* across our curricula through training and reflective practice

Ngara is a word from the Gadi language of the Sydney basin that means 'listen, hear, think'. In 2025 Sydney Law School implemented a renewed core curriculum, including a new course learning outcome called *Ngara* which stipulates that all our graduates are expected to have an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledges and perspectives, including the ongoing effects of colonisation, and an ability to reflect on the cultural specificity of law. Preparing our staff and students to engage respectfully and ethically with *Ngara* is key to our success. This means that the integration of Indigenous knowledges into our Bachelor of Laws and Juris Doctor programs must centre First Nations' self-determination. Between 2026 and 2028, we will review and enhance the embedding of *Ngara* across our curricula to ensure our graduates understand the historical and contemporary challenges of pursuing justice in the place where Sydney Law School is located, and strengthen their legal knowledge and professional skills in the community.



Engagement, transparency and accountability

As we work to deliver on each of our strategic priorities for 2026–28, we will seek out and welcome regular dialogue with our diverse stakeholders, including enhancing communications with our alumni and our colleagues within the legal profession. Our doors will always be open to those who want to know more about our work and our plans, or to partner with us in pursuing the most complex and pivotal questions in legal research or in cultivating and empowering the next generation of legally trained leaders and changemakers.

Strategic Advisory Council

In 2025, Sydney Law School assembled a new Strategic Advisory Council whose role, beginning in 2026, is to offer us candid feedback on our delivery against our strategic priorities and on our meeting of community expectations more generally, as well as to provide independent counsel on local, national and global trends that bear upon the current and future success of our students, graduates, alumni and staff and on that of Sydney Law School as a whole.

The council is made up of thought leaders at different career stages and from diverse fields, all being Sydney Law School alumni and/or active partners in our programs, who have demonstrated a strong commitment to serving the common good. They will play a pivotal role in ensuring that we deliver on the strategic priorities articulated in this strategic plan, over the 2026–28 period and beyond.



Kevin McCann AO (Chair)
Former Partner and Chair,
Allen Allen & Hemsley



Amit Singh
Managing Partner, Mandala



Jeremy Chan
Founder, Veraty.ai



Olivia (Liv) Ronan
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Olivia Sioud
Investment Partner, Skip Capital;
Board member, Visibuild;
Board member, Applied



Professor Fleur Johns
Head of School and Dean,
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Michelle Gordon
Partner, Corrs Chambers
Westgarth



Damian Beaufils
Barrister, Black Chambers;
Chair of the First Nations Committee,
New South Wales Bar Association



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Sydney Law School



Craig Reucassel
Host, ABC 702 Sydney Breakfast



Lucinda Aboud
Lawyer and Mediator, Mediation
Family Law; Member, University of
Sydney Alumni Council



Delivering this strategic plan

The delivery of this strategic plan across 2026–28 will be supported by clear implementation plans for each initiative, enabling focused investment of time, resources and expertise in our strategic priorities. Ongoing review of progress will inform adjustments where required, ensuring measurable improvement by the end of the period. This will involve making responsible and equitable choices to streamline, de-prioritise or conclude activities that have not demonstrated impact.

At the same time, we remain accountable for maintaining and continuously improving our core operations consistent with the high standards that the community rightly expects of the University of Sydney.

How this strategic plan was developed

Sydney Law School Strategic Plan 2026–28

February–March 2025	New Dean assumes leadership Law Leadership Group reviews progress against 2024–25 strategic plan
April 2025	School Board reviews 2024–25 strategic plan outcomes to date and plans for 2025
June 2025	Law Leadership Group develops initial plans for 2026–28
August–September 2025	Key Sydney Law School decision-making bodies (Law Leadership Group; Education Committee; Research Committee; Indigenous Strategy and Services Committee) discuss proposed strategic priorities and initiatives for 2026–28
September 2025	School Board provides feedback on proposed strategic priorities and initiatives for 2026–28
October 2025	All staff and student representatives invited to comment on proposed strategic priorities and initiatives for 2026–28
November 2025	All-staff Strategic Planning Day held to discuss and refine proposed strategic priorities and initiatives for 2026–28 School Board provides feedback on revised initiatives for 2026–28 and on proposed governance and reporting arrangements
December 2025 – February 2026	Implementation plans and governance arrangements developed
February 2026	Strategic Advisory Council reviews proposed Sydney Law School Strategic Plan 2026–28
April 2026	Public launch of endorsed Sydney Law School Strategic Plan 2026–28

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