



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

SCHOOL OF
ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN & PLANNING

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land where our School is located. We extend this respect to all Traditional Custodians we engage with across Australia and pay respect to the elders past, present and emerging. We are inspired by the Indigenous knowledge systems and placemaking that have shaped Country. We commit to bringing forth knowledge and awareness of these systems to ensure they are embedded into practice.

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MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL AND DEAN



Against the backdrop of COVID-19, 2020 may seem an odd time to be launching a new strategy. And yet, the uncertainties of 2020 have stimulated remarkable clarity that has allowed us to articulate the School's strengths, identity and aspirations.

These will serve us well as way finders over the next three years, as the world, the University of Sydney, and the School navigate through and beyond the current pandemic. In this context we reaffirm and extend our commitment to social justice; to educate architecture, design and planning professionals with the skills, critical orientation and collaborative mindset appropriate to 21st century careers; and to produce disciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledges valued equally by the society we serve and our intellectual peers.

Through this Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 we invite our staff, students, alumni and professions to join us in shaping better environments for future generations.

Professor Robyn Dowling
Head of School and Dean,
Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning



OUR HISTORY AND CONTEXT

The Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning has been fostering dialogue about cities, buildings and designed environments for over a century. Our undergraduate Bachelor of Architecture degree began in 1919, Town and Country Planning in 1948, and Design Computing in 1978. We established the world's first Chair of Architectural Science in 1953, and proudly graduated Australia's first PhD in architecture in 1963 and first Indigenous architect in 1990.

Throughout its first century the School established a rigorous and collaborative academic environment, in which a broad range of voices across humanities, science, creative practice and social science combined to address contemporary built environment and design issues. Our diverse community of students and academics come from nations from around the world, and we remain sector leaders with our high proportion of female academic staff and students.

Our staff and students take an active role in influencing change within and beyond the University. Many former students now hold senior professional and academic posts in Australia and around the world, including as President of the International Union of Architects, CEO of the Greater Sydney Commission, and founders of national and international technology firms such as Small Multiples. Creative technologist and interaction designer Steven Bai who founded Sencity also once walked the halls of the Wilkinson building.

The School's second century is ripe with opportunity. Led by our first female Dean, Professor Robyn Dowling, the School is ranked as one of the top 20 built environment schools in the world. The relevance of research and teaching in built and designed environments has never been greater, with expertise in architecture, design, architectural science and planning in high demand nationally and internationally. This is reflected in employment outcomes for our graduates, which are among the highest in the sector. In addition, sustained investment in research over the past five years has meant that research in the School is now rated as 'above world standard', with acknowledged strengths in research engagement. Generous benefactors have entrusted the School to expand our offerings to students from diverse backgrounds and to further our architectural design leadership.



The School's second century is also one of considerable challenge and change. The professions we lead and serve are placing increasing emphasis on collaboration across specialisms. Labour market transformations are seeing renewed focus on post-professional learning opportunities. Research funding remains critical to addressing the intellectual and societal challenges of our time, but ever more uncertain. And while the School

has successfully internationalised its culture and aspirations, the task of articulating them to our local communities and incorporating Indigenous knowledges remains unfinished. These challenges shape our strategy, informed also by the University's overarching strategic plan and recent strategies for engagement, sustainability and Indigenous education and research.

As one of the world's top-ranked schools in the field of architecture and the built environment we have been leading the way in teaching and research for over 100 years. This strategic plan addresses the challenges facing us as we enter our second century and lays the foundations for continuing this leadership.

Cross-disciplinary approaches

Through a series of original drawings, 3D models, virtual and augmented reality experiences, and the reproduction of archival material, the exhibition,



Designed in Italy, Made in Australia, showcased for the first time the comprehensive work produced during the 1960s and 1970s by the world-famous Italian engineer Pier Luigi Nervi and his office in Rome, Studio Nervi, for Harry Seidler. In telling the story of the Nervi-Seidler collaboration, the exhibition shed light on the history of Australian concrete industry and unexpected Roman, Milanese and Canadian precedents adopted in the design and construction of some of the most renowned masterpieces of the modern Australian architecture and celebrated the unique *designed-in-Italy* Nervi style.

Leading by design

Equipping students with 21st century skills to solve complex problems is core to our Bachelor of Design Computing.



Introspect was developed by three Design Computing students as a digital, audio-based self-care intervention that assists nurses in employing positive coping mechanisms to improve their ability to manage distress—allowing them to continuously deliver high-quality care to all of their patients. To address the multitude of complex, personal mental health challenges faced by nurses, *Introspect* employs technology, self-conversation and guided self-reflection to create a space for compassion and kindness. The innovative design was supported by the Council for Research Excellence and recognised with a Gold Award in the Next Gen Social Impact category at the 2020 Good Design Awards.

ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN & PLANNING



Our Focus

The School of Architecture, Design and Planning is committed to a sustainable future for Sydney and the world. Working together across our disciplines of architecture, design and planning, we explore how regions, cities, buildings, interiors, products and software systems can successfully meet the needs of people and society. We build external partner engagement into the fabric of our teaching and research to address profound challenges such as ensuring user-centric design across systems and scales, housing affordability, designing public spaces that are inclusive and healthy, sustainable building materials and practices. Through scholarly collaborations we will continue to offer innovation in theory, policy, technology and design.

We emphasise and celebrate creativity in our ideas, actions and interactions. With foundational expertise across the humanities, sciences and social sciences, our people are nurtured to be experimental, imaginative, critical and engaged. Our distinctly Australian identity is informed by global perspectives and a growing awareness of Indigenous knowledge systems, underpinned by a commitment to social justice and equity.

Architecture

Experimental. Critical. Engaged. We extend the boundaries and critical edges of the profession through the interplay of conceptual engagements and the cultures of architecture and urbanism.

Design

We provide a pathway for solving complex, nonlinear problems, which cannot be solved with technological or scientific methods alone. We offer a way of thinking to deal with uncertainty, complexity and failure.

Planning

We embrace an integrated and multidisciplinary approach to the theory, policy and design of how we make and shape cities.

Our Place, Our Commitment

The Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning sits proudly on Gadigal land, where Aboriginal people have taught, learnt and nurtured since time immemorial. Located in the Wilkinson Building on City Road, Darlington, the School sits adjacent to a popular Gadigal fishing spot in Blackwattle Creek, now known as Gadigal Green. For a School dedicated to the study of place, space and their relationships with people, it is fitting that the traditions of knowledge sharing and community feature intrinsically in the life of the School.

For many decades, reconnecting to the traditional custodianship of this land has evolved in the School through a commitment to socially engaged design education and embedding cultural learning into our units of study. This includes students participating in the Aboriginal Housing Company in the 1990s, to showcasing Indigenous knowledge and research on native Australian grasses and grains in Gamilaraay Country.

Our current home in the Wilkinson building hosts a vibrant and diverse community that is welcoming of all, through exhibitions in the Tin Sheds Gallery, public lectures, and industry events.

STRATEGY

Our Mission

We lead and inspire thought on built and designed environments, objects and experiences. Our staff and students work in partnership with the professions and each other to shape inclusive and sustainable futures. Together we apply creativity, rigour and a collaborative mindset to advance knowledge.



Mission

We lead and inspire thought on built and designed environments, objects and experiences. Our staff and students work in partnership with the professions and each other to shape inclusive and sustainable futures. Together we apply creativity, rigour and a collaborative mindset to advance knowledge.

Objectives

Our graduates are innovators and creative leaders. They are equipped to deliver public good through wide-ranging careers in design and the built environment

At the frontiers of disciplinary knowledge our education advances the professions of design, planning and architecture in Australia, Australasia and globally. It is informed by international and Indigenous perspectives and responsive to the needs of a diverse body of students

Our world-recognised disciplinary and multidisciplinary research advances knowledge and addresses timely intellectual and societal challenges to enable inclusive and sustainable futures

Our researchers connect across the disciplines and with external research partners to generate new research questions, knowledges and approaches and solutions to real world problems

We embed trust, integrity and partnership in School culture to enable inclusive and sustainable futures

We elevate culturally and gender diverse and Indigenous voices and perspectives

Strategies

Education

Enhance our capability to deliver high-quality teaching by mentoring, developing and supporting our academic staff

Deliver a coherent offering of student learning experiences that are engaged with professional practice, committed to social justice and informed by Indigenous, local and global perspectives

Diversify program offering by increasing distance learning and extended non-award post-professional programs

Enhance the collaborative capability of graduates who are specialists with deep disciplinary knowledge and trained to work across the disciplines

Deliver targeted initiatives to grow Indigenous student numbers, aligned with the One Sydney, Many People strategy

Research

Foster a collegial high-performance research culture by connecting researchers across disciplines and career stages and providing structured mentoring opportunities

Strengthen our reputation for path-breaking disciplinary scholarship with a sustained commitment to generating high quality academic and non-traditional research outputs

Fully embed higher degree research as an integral element of our research ecosystem

Improve our capacity for problem-focussed research, engagement and impact through skills development and targeted investment

Culture

Build Indigenous knowledges and cultural competency into activities across the School and advocate for increased participation of Indigenous students and staff in School life

Encourage staff to reach their potential by providing mentoring, leadership and career progression opportunities and wellbeing support for academic and professional staff at all stages

Create a collaborative and outward-looking culture in which academics lead creative and critical enquiry and transform practice

Involve our local, national and international alumni and partners in shaping the future of our School, to ensure our education and research address the emerging needs of our time

Operational enablers

Enable professional staff to deliver operational excellence by providing high quality support for their career development and wellbeing

Streamline our operations support through better software systems and aligned reporting to improve our processes, maximise our efficiency and deliver sustained excellence

Cultivate a high functioning team to model transparency, accountability, collegiality and trust

Embed a culture of external engagement across the School and develop effective and imaginative approaches to working with partners

EDUCATION

Our programs

Our programs educate students to be global citizens, contributing to inclusive and sustainable futures through imaginative, compassionate and unconventional approaches. Our graduates develop deep disciplinary knowledge in their chosen field and capacity to collaborate across interconnected specialisms. Through a focus on creativity and continuous professional learning, we embrace the future needs of our professions, and advance educational practice in the built environment.

The School's success has been underpinned by teaching staff who are passionate, collegiate and dedicated to inspiring future generations of architects, designers and planners. We teach in partnership with adjunct academics and engaged alumni who contribute generously and enthusiastically to program development and delivery. Over the next three years we will foster an ambitious, collaborative culture of teaching and learning in which all teaching staff are supported to develop their teaching careers through scholarship, mentorship, and training.

Our student body is diverse, coming from across the world and representing a range of interests and backgrounds. In this strategy we implement an explicit commitment to nurture this diversity. We will more actively work to meet the emerging needs of international students and distance learners and to enhance student-centred learning opportunities. We aim to be the School of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. We will enable this by recruiting and supporting Indigenous academics and continuing to increase the Indigenous content of our programs.

Objectives

1. Our graduates are innovators and creative leaders. They are equipped to deliver public good through wide-ranging careers in design and the built environment.
2. At the frontiers of disciplinary knowledge our education advances the professions of design, planning and architecture in Australia, Australasia and globally. It is informed by international and Indigenous perspectives and responsive to the needs of a diverse body of students.

Strategies		Measures of success
E1	Enhance our capability to deliver high-quality teaching by mentoring, developing and supporting our academic staff	Improved learning and teaching quality outcomes through internal and external benchmarks and peer review
E2	Deliver a coherent offering of student learning experiences that are engaged with professional practice, committed to social justice and informed by Indigenous, local & global perspectives	Principles reflected in curriculum review outcomes and increased units of study incorporating Indigenous ways of thinking
E3	Diversify program offering by increasing distance learning and extended non-award post-professional programs	Increase in online non-award post-professional courses in Architecture, Design and Urbanism
E4	Enhance the collaborative capability of graduates who are specialists with deep disciplinary knowledge and trained to work across the disciplines	At least 1 capstone project in each program that provides opportunities for students to work on multidisciplinary projects
E5	Deliver targeted initiatives to grow Indigenous student numbers, aligned with the <i>One Sydney, Many People</i> strategy	Increase in number of Indigenous students



RESEARCH

Our research

Our world-recognised research investigates the interactions of people, communities and societies with products, systems and environments. Our scholarship is characterised by rigorous inquiry that combines disciplinary depth and interdisciplinary breadth, with benefits delivered through prototypes, constructions, theoretical concepts, exhibitions and policy. Building on recent success in research quality evaluations, we will improve our already high standards of intellectual excellence. To do so we will prioritise a culture of aspirational research development for researchers at every career stage.

The School values its history of engaged research, such as staff and student experimentations with self-build and autonomous housing in the 1970s, inventing new ways of measuring indoor environmental quality or influencing urban planning responses to climate change. Our research will continue to interrogate significant urban, technological, environmental and societal issues, and the concomitant shaping of policy and practice. We will embed a culture of research engagement within our existing strong intellectual research culture. Combining scholarship, experimentation, design and practice, our research is conceptualised not just as a way of thinking and questioning, but as an act of projecting and creating, and a process of engaging and transforming.

Our Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates work alongside world-renowned academics to undertake challenging disciplinary and multidisciplinary projects beyond the traditional territories of knowledge. The potential of HDR projects to collaboratively and imaginatively contribute to the School's ambitious and focused research agenda will be more fully realised during the life of this strategy.

Objectives

1. Our world-recognised disciplinary and multidisciplinary research advances knowledge and addresses timely intellectual and societal challenges to enable inclusive and sustainable futures.
2. Our researchers connect across disciplines and with external research partners to generate new research questions, knowledges and approaches and solutions to real world problems.

Strategies	Measures of success
R1 Foster a collegial high-performance research culture by connecting researchers across disciplines and career stages and providing structured mentoring opportunities	Increased collaboration across disciplines, sectors and career stage (including HDR) Increased engagement in mentoring
R2 Strengthen our reputation for path-breaking disciplinary scholarship with a sustained commitment to generating high quality academic and non-traditional research outputs	Increased number of research outputs in discipline-leading publications and ERA assessment of 'well above world standard' for all relevant field of research codes Increased Category 1 grant income
R3 Fully embed higher degree research as an integral element of our research ecosystem	Improved higher degree research completion rate
R4 Improve our capacity for problem-focussed research, engagement and impact through skills development and targeted investment	Increased number and value of grant applications across categories 2 - 4

Research Impact

Getting the building temperature right significantly reduces energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions, and makes occupants more comfortable, productive and healthy. The School's Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) lab has developed IEQ standards and tools for evaluating the objective and subjective characteristics of indoor environments (IE). The lab's collaborations with building owners and policy makers has shaped how indoor environments are engineered, measured and managed. The lab advised on Australia's national building environment ratings and these IE standards have impacted leading green building rating systems internationally.



Architectural Design

CULTURE

Our culture

From our position in a public university we instigate and inspire public debate, elevating diverse voices to improve lives through technological, social and creative innovation to meet the needs of a changing world. We respect the trust placed in us to help design and build an environment that is healthier, smarter and more inclusive. We seek to model these values in all aspects of our work and pass them on to our graduates.

Our partnerships with alumni, industry, government and our peers are vital to improve educational outcomes for our students and the impact and engagement of our research. Our partnership strategies are characterised by mutually beneficial endeavours underpinned by honesty, trust and respect.

We value our academic and professional staff and care about their career advancement and wellbeing. By nurturing trust and integrity, we will build a workplace culture that reflects our values and facilitates success.

Culture of Engagement

Connecting our leading research on complex social issues with the public is core to our role as a university. In her 2018 talk at TEDxSydney, *Housing Crisis? How about Housing Solution*, Professor Nicole Gurran presented an alternative path to rising levels of housing inequality. By thinking about housing as investing in community, rather than a market commodity, the true value of a home becomes apparent: a community where everyone has a decent place to live.



Objectives

1. We embed trust, integrity and partnership in School culture to enable inclusive and sustainable futures
2. We elevate culturally and gender diverse and Indigenous voices and perspectives

Strategies	Measures of success
C1 Build Indigenous knowledges and cultural competency into activities across the School and advocate for increased participation of Indigenous students and staff in School life	Double the number of staff who have completed cultural competency training Engagement of School Indigenous Strategy and Services Committee across all School activities
C2 Encourage staff to reach their potential by providing mentoring, leadership and career progression opportunities and wellbeing support for academic and professional staff at all stages	Improved staff and culture survey outcomes Gender equity and increased diversity of staff at all levels
C3 Create a collaborative and outward-looking culture in which academics lead creative and critical enquiry and transform practice	Increased ADP participation in public policy and public debate
C4 Involve our local, national and international alumni and partners in shaping the future of our School, to ensure our education and research address the emerging needs of our time	Increased ADP participation in relevant external partnerships Establish engaged advisory boards with alumni and external partners

OPERATIONAL ENABLERS

Our operations

Our academic work is underpinned by high quality operational support and responsive, targeted investment. The School houses comprehensive facilities to support excellence in our research and education. Our expert staff offer students and academics five labs, such as the Design Modelling and Fabrication Lab, fostering integrated and collaborative design fabrication approaches.

To achieve our goals in a rapidly changing environment it is vital that our operations are agile and connected, and that we leverage our facilities for maximum efficiency. Good governance and collegiality are essential to ensuring integrity and respect in all our activities. We will achieve this through open and transparent discussion of key decisions affecting the School in regular Town Hall meetings.



Operational excellence

To allow students and researchers continued access to our leading Design Modelling and Fabrication Lab (DMaF) during the COVID-19 pandemic, our expert technicians rapidly established a digital fabrication bureau service. Students were able to submit 3D printing and laser cutting jobs online to the DMaF technical staff and receive their physical models in the post. A range of online tutorials and virtual consultations complemented this service. This allowed students to continue developing their design and fabrication skills, regardless of where they were learning.

Strategies

We will prioritise the following enabling strategies for 2020–2023:

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| <p>01 Enable professional staff to deliver operational excellence by providing high-quality support for their career development and wellbeing</p> | <p>03 Cultivate a high functioning team to model transparency, accountability, collegiality and trust</p> |
| <p>02 Streamline our operations support through better software systems and aligned reporting to improve our processes, maximise our efficiency and deliver sustained excellence</p> | <p>04 Embed a culture of external engagement across the School and develop effective and imaginative approaches to working with partners</p> |

Operational Enablers



Contact us

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