

# *Planning for our future*

PROPOSED ACU MELBOURNE  
CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT





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## *Substantial plans for an education of substance*

Australian Catholic University (ACU) has grown rapidly over the past few years, and has worked hard to match this growth with the expansion and upgrade of its campuses.

Grounded in the Catholic intellectual tradition, ACU's commitment is to empower students with the knowledge, skills, and professional experience needed to interpret the world with confidence, to bring to the workforce people with a reflective habit of mind, aware of their values orientation and to make a difference in their community.

Founded from Catholic educational institutions that had been training teachers and nurses since the mid-19th Century, ACU today is a dynamic,

publicly-funded university, that welcomes students and staff of all beliefs and backgrounds.

Our proposed development for the Melbourne Campus is a major step forward in our provision of innovative, high quality higher education and academic research.

The focus of this proposal is in bricks and mortar, but its purpose is much more than that. It is about providing for teaching, space for learning, and space for future generations of Australians to think, learn and develop.

This is a carefully considered proposal, developed with input from many experts in many fields, from authorities, government, and from our local community. It was important to us from

the start that we balance the protection and preservation of our neighbourhood with the needs of our growing student and staff populations, and we are proud of the solutions that we propose.

ACU is an integral part of the vibrant Fitzroy and Melbourne communities and our commitment to provide educational opportunities and to work locally and internationally with those experiencing disadvantage will continue and expand.

Subject to planning approvals, I look forward to continuing to work with all of our stakeholders and the ACU community to bring this proposal to life.

*John Ballard*  
*Associate Vice Chancellor*



## *Growing and changing learning and teaching needs*

ACU's student and staff bodies are growing – so our infrastructure needs to expand to accommodate them, changed modalities of learning and research activities.

By 2020, our student population will increase from the current 10,000 to around 12,900, and our staff will grow from 800 to 1,200.

Subject to planning approval, we will improve our Melbourne Campus so that we may continue to provide the very best education to a changing and growing community.

Many universities are planning for population growth; it is important that Australia's tertiary sector be able to educate the next generation of Australian leaders. The development plan we have put before Council is designed with student needs as the first – but not the only – priority.

Students, staff, community users and our surrounding neighbours will all benefit from the changes we have planned.

For students, we will improve learning environments, create a dynamic campus hub, and establish green areas and recreation spaces.

For staff, we will improve amenity and expand teaching and academic space.

For community users and our surrounding neighbours, we will improve traffic flow and safety, provide a publicly accessible open space in Young Street, and improve the visual character that ACU brings to the neighbourhood.



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The development plan includes:

- A 12-storey teaching and academic space on Victoria Parade
- Staged renovation and construction of three existing ACU buildings over the next 10 years
- Consolidation of off-site teaching spaces to accommodate student, staff and research growth
- Upgraded student amenities including green spaces and recreation facilities
- A pedestrian-focused campus hub and more open spaces
- Underground parking for 270 vehicles, and an increase in on-site bicycle parking
- Removal of the Young Street car park, which will be replaced with open space and a new three-storey building



## *Planning for traffic and parking needs*

ACU's student and teacher populations are growing, so we recognise that planning for traffic, parking, and other transport options is vital.

ACU encourages the use of public transport and bicycle travel among our students and staff, and we value the convenience of Napier Street for cyclists. Part of our development plan is to preserve a strong active urban corner at Napier Street and Victoria Parade, which engenders a more harmonious relationship between cars, cyclists and pedestrians in the area.

We will also add at least 80 more bicycle parking spaces on campus in total.

Our planned works include a 270-space underground carpark at the corner of Napier Street and Victoria Parade. The current Young Street carpark will be removed, which allows us to relocate parking to the fringes of campus and free up the central hub for better pedestrian access and amenity.

Additionally, we are planning for the inclusion of charging points for electric vehicles on campus.

Our traffic engineering reports show that the works will not substantially increase traffic in the area. A significant proportion of ACU students and staff use public transportation or walk or ride to campus, and we continue to encourage them to do so.

While there may be increased traffic in the area during construction, we will work with our construction partners, our staff and students, and the local community to minimise disruption and establish optimal safety precautions.



## *Protecting our heritage and history*

As a faith-based institution, ACU is keenly aware of the importance of fostering awareness of and respect for our history and heritage.

There is a particular character to the East Melbourne and Fitzroy neighbourhoods and our past developments and current proposal have sought to preserve that character while providing for the needs of students, teachers and researchers.

Our commitment to preserving streetscapes and urban character in Fitzroy is shown in our approach to our properties in Brunswick Street, where we

have retained and upgraded the existing street frontages, and Cathedral Hall, which we have protected and preserved.

It is shown in our treatment of the site adjacent to Cathedral Hall, which was an old and derelict Brunswick Street service station. ACU remediated issues of contamination of the site and built in its place the St Mary of the Cross Square, freely accessible to the public.

In this new project, our commitment is evident in our plan to honour and showcase the Mary Glowrey building. We plan on doing this in two ways.

Firstly, we will remove the existing glass façade and ramp arrangement on Victoria Parade to re-establish the heritage façade.

Secondly, the new building will essentially wrap over and behind the Mary Glowrey building, to preserve its heritage and contribute to overall visual and spatial attractiveness.

Our history and heritage are an important part of our cultural fabric, and ACU remains committed to protecting and preserving it.



## *Preserving our trees and increasing our open spaces*

We recognise the balance that needs to be struck between open space, green space, and built form, particularly in our inner city.

We have demonstrated our commitment to open space on campus through the establishment of St Mary of the Cross Square, which provides an open public space on a prime site on Brunswick Street, rather than building within that space.

Our current proposal continues that approach by freeing up part of the existing carpark on Young Street to establish two areas of open space, including a triangular 'pocket park' at the centre of the campus,

providing a welcome green break from the surrounding buildings.

We also know the value of trees within the inner city, and we have worked hard with Council and with our planning team to minimise our impact on existing trees. As a result, only two trees will be removed from the street-side as part of the project; and we will be planting elsewhere on campus to compensate for their loss.





## *Our ongoing commitment to our community*

The Fitzroy neighbourhood is unique and special, and we are proud to bring students and academics to this part of Melbourne.

We have a long history in this community, and we plan to take care of our neighbourhood. We are one of the largest employers in the City of Yarra, and many of our students and staff live locally.

Our contribution to our community runs deep. We are significant supporters of local arts and community groups.

We are also proud of the work our education students do in providing Homework Support Programs to residents of nearby Atherton Gardens housing estate.





## *Adapting to community feedback*

Our plans have evolved in consideration of extensive research, expert advice, stakeholder and community input.

Since we first raised our plans with the City of Yarra Council, ACU has had several formal and many more informal interactions with our near neighbours. The feedback gained from these discussions has shaped and refined our planning, and we have willingly compromised to strike a balance between the needs of the University and the needs of our community.

The changes we have made in direct response to community feedback include:

- A decrease in height from 14 storeys plus plant to 12 storeys plus plant
- Increased setbacks from Victoria Parade and Napier Street to decrease the visual impact of the main building
- Removal of a proposed closure of the Southern end of Young Street from the proposal
- Removal of proposed 'air-bridges' over Young Street, linking campus buildings
- Saving more of the Dutch Elm trees along Napier Street, so that now only two trees will be affected
- Retention of all on street car parking on the east side of Napier Street
- Removal of some lighting options that may have affected neighbouring properties
- At least 80 additional bicycle parking spaces
- Removal of the existing glass façade on Victoria Parade to better showcase the Mary Glowrey building
- A change to the footprint of the Young Street redevelopment to create more open green space for public use
- Inclusion of charge-points for electric vehicles



## ***About ACU***

Australian Catholic University (ACU) has grown rapidly over the past few years. It is a vibrant university with excellent new facilities, award-winning buildings and renowned academics. It is known for its supportive and nurturing learning environment.

ACU empowers students to think critically, ethically and to bring about change in their communities and professions. Community engagement is a core part of every student's experience, and is embedded within most courses.

ACU is globally connected, and has relationships with more than 190 universities and educational institutions around the world, and is part of a global network of Catholic universities. The University has seven campuses around the country, and is one of few Australian universities with a presence in Europe, having recently opened the Rome Centre in Italy.

## ***More information***

For more detailed information and for updates as the planning process continues, please visit [www.acu.edu.au](http://www.acu.edu.au)