

Mission and strategic priorities  
2019-2021

# Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion





Social Justice is core business for UTS. A public-purpose institution, UTS is boldly committed to a new strategic direction with social justice at the heart of the university's priorities.

We are the first university in Australia to create a whole-system response to our public purpose through the Social Impact Framework. The framework brings connection to diverse efforts from across the university in a clearly articulated roadmap of outcomes, and sets operational priorities that will bring our vision to life.

The Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion is the coordinating vehicle for the implementation of the Social Impact Framework across the university, and for driving the university's social justice agenda more broadly. We maximise the capacity of UTS to deliver public benefit through:

- Catalysing and rewarding activities with social impact
- Connecting partners around social justice initiatives
- Fostering a diverse and inclusive culture
- Delivering strategic and collaborative programs
- Leading and evaluating whole-of-institution strategies and systems

## **Our Vision**

UTS contributes to the transformation of communities through research, teaching and practice – leading to a healthy, sustainable and socially just society.

## **Our Purpose**

To see that UTS is increasingly just, equitable and socially impactful.



## A DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION

UTS's unique strengths lie in our engagement with communities, our strong ties to industry and our practice-oriented approach.

We are committed to driving social change beyond our campus. What makes our approach unique is the scope of our ambition.

As Australia's number one young university, our vibrant intellectual community is paired with agility and an open-mindedness to tackling the wicked problems of society in the 21st century.

We connect with the right people to create change through shared understanding.

Our links to a global community of thinkers and to community and business sectors positions us as a hub of transformative knowledge generation, with an innovative mindset to achieving positive social change.

## APPROACHING WICKED PROBLEMS

At the Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion we have set ourselves the challenge to be the driving force that scales up UTS's social impact commensurate to the need we see in the world around us. That need is profound; the world we exist in is deeply imperfect.

The dislocating impacts of globalisation on local economies, the ever growing threat of climate change and the emergence of political and religious extremism are just some examples of urgent global problems with no easy solutions.

Universities can provide the necessary research and intellectual rigour to understand the problems facing us, inform public debate and drive policy-, business- and community-led solutions. But we cannot do this alone.

The centre will foster connectedness through UTS to engage in collaborative knowledge generation and impact with the communities to which we are connected – at the local, national and global levels.

At the same time, the centre is pivotal to creating a culture at UTS that values social justice, impact and inclusion. We also see ourselves as deeply embedded in our local precinct. By engaging with our own neighbourhood we are responding to the imperative that the engaged university must be a pillar of the community and a knowledge exchange.

## OUTCOMES

Four overarching outcomes must be realised in order for the centre to achieve its purpose:

The UTS community is diverse and inclusive

UTS has expertise in the areas of social impact, social justice and inclusion

UTS actively contributes to resolving the social challenges that affect communities

UTS has increased capacity to be a socially impactful and engaged university

## CHALLENGES

Coordinating cross-university delivery of key impact initiatives requires enhanced capacity across UTS in areas such as demonstration of social impact and program delivery. We must also ensure that staff and students share UTS's vision and awareness of the outcomes we are working towards.

In order to be a socially impactful university, UTS must influence power holders and decision makers beyond its own walls. To achieve this, the university must use its standing as a trusted contributor to social justice dialogue and policy, and maximise collaboration with stakeholders and communities.

This will be a strategic focus for the centre, as will creating and developing the UTS Social Impact Lab.





## THE SOCIAL IMPACT LAB

A gateway to university-level expertise and knowledge, the Social Impact Lab will bring together community partners, academics, policymakers and practitioners to generate meaningful social change.

This is a new mechanism, to be overseen by the Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion, by which the university's institutional strengths can be harnessed towards social challenges that matter to, and impact, the communities with which we are connected.

Addressing complex problems requires connecting people across sectors and disciplines. The Lab will provide a space where community, industry and government stakeholders can bring problems to the university to be considered, tested and innovated – offering a neutral, safe convening place necessary for cross-sector, cross-disciplinary collaboration.

By convening diverse stakeholders, the Lab will ensure relevant expertise, research and experience is brought to the table to co-create and problem solve in purpose-led projects.

While providing direct benefits to communities and the organisations who utilise the Lab, the Social Impact Lab will allow academic and professional staff to gain additional insights and incorporate their findings into disciplinary knowledge.

As a public-purpose education institution, one of our major offerings is our ability to build capacity in others. We see this as a significant way in which the centre can support communities, as experts in their own fields, to amplify their impact.

We will translate practice developed through the Lab into learning opportunities, and supplement this with our institutional expertise and the expertise of our partners, to be shared more broadly.

Our long term goal is to support communities to develop transformative and generative partnerships through which further change can be achieved.

## ACTIVITIES

The centre will maximise capacity of the university, our staff and our students to deliver public benefit. We support key outcomes and preconditions in our theory of change, through a range of programs and initiatives operating in the following ways:

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### **CATALYSING AND REWARDING ACTIVITIES WITH SOCIAL IMPACT**

Targeting staff and students to help identify, innovate and support research, teaching and practice that furthers UTS's social impact goals.

Our goal is to help the outside world gain access to expertise within UTS, and to ensure that staff and students benefit from the transformational relationships that real world collaboration and connection bring.

A key strategic priority will be the development of a Social Impact Research Support Strategy, built on existing centre initiatives and explicitly focusing on enhancing impact and supporting faculty based research expertise.

The centre's evaluation expertise provides the skills and capacity building to support staff to demonstrate and enhance the social impact of their own research and practice.

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### **CONNECTING PARTNERS AROUND SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES**

Actively responding and contributing to resolving social challenges that affect communities, through external engagement and internal collaboration.

The centre acts as a gateway for UTS to respond to community need, building connections for community groups, not-for-profits and government agencies to access the university's resources and collaborate on social justice initiatives, including the Social Impact Lab.

We manage the UTS Shopfront Community Program, which has operated for over 20 years supporting community engaged research and student coursework, alongside the SOUL student volunteering program.

The centre co-manages of *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*, a peer-reviewed, open access, online journal concerned with university-community engagement.

## **FOSTERING A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE**

Through training programs, events and other strategic activity targeting staff and students.

We support a range of staff- and student-focused inclusion strategies and activities in areas including cultural diversity, disability, gender and sexual orientation, and run events to support and celebrate diversity and inclusion.

We are responsible for the university's Equal Opportunity and Diversity policy, and operate a grievance handling service for staff and students reporting cases of discrimination and harassment.

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## **DELIVERING STRATEGIC AND COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS**

Running initiatives to help deliver outcomes identified across key domains of the Social Impact Framework.

The centre is responsible for the UTS Widening Participation Strategy, involving extensive pre-access and aspiration building programs for low SES students, along with educational access schemes and pathways programs.

Our diversity and inclusion training packages lead the sector in innovation and impact, aiming to build capability in staff and students across a range of areas, including mental health, LGBTIQA+ inclusion, sex and ethics, and newly introduced sexual consent training through the Respect. Now. Always program.

We have been pivotal in the delivery of the Athena SWAN Bronze Accreditation application and action plan.

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## **LEADING & EVALUATING WHOLE-OF-INSTITUTION STRATEGIES & SYSTEMS**

Monitoring and driving the Social Impact Framework implementation, and other whole-of-university equity and inclusion strategies.

We support the university executive to embed social impact, inclusion and social justice at the heart of the university strategy.

We contribute to system wide responses, alongside the Social Impact Framework, that support the broader university community's contribution to social impact, social inclusion and social justice.

We ensure faculties and units are supported to share responsibility and deliver the outcomes developed through the Social Impact Framework and other whole-of-university diversity and inclusion strategies.

## CONTACT US

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