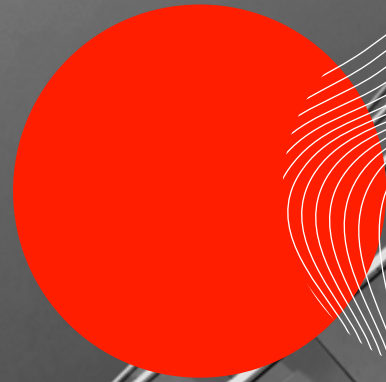




Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion

# Social Justice Report 2020

UTS is an agent for social  
change, transforming  
communities through  
research, education  
and practice.











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## Acknowledgement of Country

UTS acknowledges the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, the Boorooberongal People of the Dharug Nation, the Bidiagal People and the Gamaygal People upon whose ancestral lands our university stands. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these lands.

## Vice Chancellor’s Social Justice and Inclusion Committee

The Hon. Verity Firth  
Tracie Conroy  
Prof Carl Rhodes  
Dr Brett Smout  
Prof Michael McDaniel  
Jacqui Wise  
Prof Ian Burnett  
Assoc Prof Willa Huston

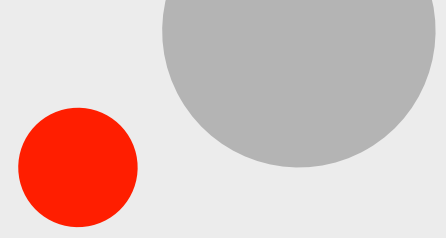
Jennifer Lagoon  
Prof Alan Davison  
Prof Louise McWhinnie  
Prof Fiona Brooks  
Dr Karen O’Connell  
Prof Andrew Parfitt  
Prof Debra Anderson  
Dr Lien Pham

# Welcome



“At no time has there ever been such a need for universities to play a positive role, to engage with community, government and business.”

**Above:** Verity Firth, Executive Director of Social Justice, UTS.



August 2020 marked the second anniversary of the Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion at UTS. It was also a pivotal time for UTS to reaffirm its commitment to bring about positive social change. The COVID-19 pandemic turned the world on its head. At no time has there ever been such a need for universities to play a positive role, to engage with community, government and business.

UTS recognises that universities exist for public good. The centre is a gateway for the university to create partnerships that deliver social reform. It's role is to help UTS maximise its social impact across all its operations, guided by the Social Impact Framework, the university's roadmap for change.

In 2020, the centre's focus shifted dramatically to those in our community most negatively affected by COVID-19. Relief packages for international students were incorporated into the work we were already doing with community groups in our precinct. The pivot to home learning for high school students in our U@Uni widening participation program in South West Sydney also exposed a massive digital divide for many students. With the assistance of Lenovo, UTS was able to provide laptops to those kids struggling to learn without the face-to-face support of schools.

This year UTS also looked inward, conducting a university-wide communications campaign to overcome racism within our academic and student cohort in light of the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement.

In 2020, the centre also led important conversations on key social topics – running over 30 online events attended by more than 10,000 people. These included discussions about the future of education and how universities can better support the mental health of our student cohort, as well as workshops supporting women in the media landscape.

All Australian organisations are now required by law to submit a Modern Slavery Statement by June 2021. But UTS has gone further. In 2020, the centre joined with Anti-Slavery Australia, UTS staff and community partners to develop UTS's Modern Slavery Declaration of Commitment. While reporting is an annual requirement, the declaration sets out UTS's overarching stance on ensuring modern slavery is eradicated from all aspects of our operations.

2020 was the pilot year of the UTS U@Uni Academy – a widening participation program focussed on developing high school students' 21st century skills. UTS is looking beyond the ATAR to determine a student's potential and make way for students who may not have succeeded in entering university through traditional pathways.

The transformative nature of universities is reflected in the values and, more importantly, the actions of our staff and students. This report captures just some of the achievements of the UTS community and is an amazing reflection of the social justice vision of our team. I am humbled by the contributions of so many at UTS, and by our community and industry partners.

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone at the Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion, and to every member of the UTS community. Your support and work demonstrate the open, diverse and intellectually rigorous culture at UTS of which we can all be proud.

**The Hon. Verity Firth**  
**Executive Director of Social Justice, UTS**



# Social justice in an extraordinary year

2020 was one for the history books. Catastrophic climate disasters, a worldwide pandemic and political and social division tested our world like no other time in recent history.

However, it was also a year where we, as a society, demonstrated what can be achieved when time, energy and resources are dedicated to truly important issues.



**Top:** Laptops being delivered to students in need in South West Sydney. Photo supplied.

## COVID-19

From pivoting to remote learning and working, to supporting those who were struggling mentally and financially, and contributing research and resources to finding a vaccine, the UTS community showed its courage and resilience in a trying time.

During the pandemic, UTS developed:

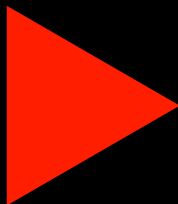
- student financial support packages: including interest-free loans, grants, and funds to buy the equipment necessary for studying from home
- the crisis volunteering initiative: UTS employed 75 students to assist not-for-profits in need of extra hands during the crisis, including Foodbank, Oz Harvest and the Glebe Youth Service.

## Digital divide

When the world shifted online in response to COVID-19 lockdown, the digital divide became obvious. Remote learning and working placed pressure on families and individuals who once may have shared devices and internet, or who relied on public spaces like libraries. This divide was, and still is, placing a great many families and communities at a disadvantage.

To even the playing field UTS:

- delivered 110 laptops to students in need in South West Sydney, in partnership with Lenovo
- launched the Glebe Digital Mentoring program, employing international students to teach residents in Glebe over the age of 55 digital skills so they can better access the services they need, many of which moved online during the pandemic
- dedicated the third season of the **All Things Equal** podcast to unpacking the complications and consequences of rapidly developing technology and the digital divide.



“There is a digital divide driving inequality in our education system. It affects capacity, critical thinking skills and access to online learning, and the pandemic has exacerbated it.”

Verity Firth



# Social justice in an extraordinary year



**Top:** Sydney Black Lives Matter march.  
Photographer: Amanda Moors-Mailei



**Top:** Dr Michelle Zeibots at her farm in Hartley Vale, home to the Hartley Vale Good Garlic Co.  
Photo supplied.

## Tackling racism

One reaction to COVID-19 has been an increase in racist attitudes and behaviours. This, paired with the worldwide Black Lives Matter movement, shone a light on racial inequality in 2020.

In response to this UTS:

- reiterated its zero tolerance for racism stance through a refreshed anti-racism communications campaign
- ran thought leadership webinars focussing on issues of racial inequality, including the Black Lives Matter movement and rights for First Nations peoples
- published thought pieces from our equity practitioners on racism and how to be actively anti-racist.

## Climate crisis

In 2020, UTS staff and students continued to encourage action to stem climate change and provide sustainability solutions by:

- partnering with universities, government, industry and consumers on the Reliable Affordable Clean Energy for 2030 Cooperative Research Centre – awarded \$68.5 million in Australian Government funding over the next decade to deliver a suite of world-leading energy solutions ranging from smart inverters to renewable micro-grids
- developing an innovative university-wide project where scraps collected from kitchen bins and cafes across campus are processed on site and turned into nutrient-rich soil conditioner that is used to grow crops at an organic farm in Hartley Vale (near Lithgow)
- launching the Bachelor of Sustainability and Environment – a four-year combined degree to prepare graduates for careers in the rapidly expanding green economy and at all levels of government and non-government organisations.





**Above:** Invasion Day rally in Melbourne.  
Photographer: Unsplash.


# 1 Enabling equitable access to education

## **UTS Social Impact Framework, Domain 1:**

**Increased number of equity target groups successfully complete a higher education degree at UTS**

Education has the power to transform the lives of individuals and the communities to which they belong. We believe that universities have a responsibility to support students from the widest range of backgrounds to access quality education. While education opens doors and expands opportunities for individuals to make positive contributions to society, the diversity of our student community is also one of UTS's strengths.





The UTS Widening Participation Strategy aims to increase the access and success of students from underrepresented backgrounds at university.

UTS is proud of its strengths-based approach to Indigenous excellence in research, employment and education. This is showcased by the work of Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, which plays a pivotal role in facilitating access and building aspiration among young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We know education has the power to transform lives, communities and the future. We believe that a more diverse and equitable student cohort will forge a more inclusive and prosperous society.

**604**

**high school students,  
36 teachers and  
195 UTS students engaged  
in the U@Uni Academy**

**286**

**parents of high school  
students participated in our  
Parent Ambassador Program**

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**“The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the vital need for widening participation. Brilliant students face hurdles brought on by circumstances beyond their control. It isn’t right. It’s time we levelled the playing field.”**

**Sonal Singh  
Manager, Student Equity**

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Full data set can be found in the appendices to this report, available online at [socialjusticereport.uts.edu.au](https://socialjusticereport.uts.edu.au)



# U@Uni Academy: pivoting the pilot online



**Top:** Students taking part in the U@Uni Academy Summer School program. Photographer: Kwa Nguyen.

2020 was the pilot year of the UTS U@Uni Academy – a widening participation program focused on developing high school students' 21st century skills. On successful completion of the two-year U@Uni Academy program, students will be offered a place at UTS.

The program began with a two-week on-campus Summer School, where students participated in a range of hands-on workshops and activities in their field of choice: Science, Media, Design, Engineering and IT, Business and Health. Family, friends, teachers and community organisations gathered to view students' projects and celebrate the official launch of the U@Uni Academy with a keynote from Mark Scott AO, Secretary of the NSW Department of Education. The U@Uni Academy also received mainstream media coverage, featuring on Channel 9 news.

In March, as restrictions increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face workshops and tutoring were shifted online.

The pandemic brought into sharp relief the ever-widening digital divide that exists in our society. Working with teachers and partner schools, the U@Uni team ensured students could complete their study requirements remotely, delivering 110 laptops to students in South West Sydney – including to those participating in the Academy – with the help of Lenovo.

Students successfully completed their Hackathon workshop online where they had the opportunity to pitch to real world clients, including Google and Telstra.

As the year progressed and local COVID-19 cases fell to zero, the Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion was thrilled to be able to invite the pilot cohort back onto the UTS campus to complete their final workshops for the year – all while social distancing and wearing their very own U@Uni Academy reusable masks.

### U@Uni Parent Ambassadors

All parents aspire to quality education and career prospects for their children, regardless of socio-economic status.

However, some parents are unable to access the information and resources needed to effectively support and broaden their children's education and career pathways. The outcome can be a narrowed spectrum of opportunities.

In response to this, the UTS Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion piloted a Parent Ambassador Program to assist parents from low SES backgrounds to support their children's aspirations.

Between July and August 2020, three 'Careers Breakfast' sessions were held for 83 parents and carers from three schools in South West Sydney. The sessions were delivered by parents of current UTS student ambassadors – engaged in running the centre's U@Uni programs – online via Zoom.

The sessions shared information about:

- supporting your child through high school
- benefits and reality of university
- course selection and careers
- pathways into university
- scholarships and the costs of university.

Parent feedback was positive, with 77 per cent of survey participants strongly agreeing that the session had broadened their awareness of career options for their child.

The Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion plans to continue with this program in 2021.



# Scholarships and outreach

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## 89

**Indigenous students participated in an online Galuwa experience**

## 204

**student engagements, involving 31 schools, either face-to-face or via zoom**

## 15

**online engagements with community organisations**

### Indigenous outreach

Jumbunna's Pathway Program offers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students an opportunity to demonstrate university potential through life experience, other education and previous work, then supports commencing students with tutoring and bridging courses. In 2020, Jumbunna saw 111 students participate in the Pathways Program and commenced 147 students.

In 2020, we were unable to run on-campus Galuwa programs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As an alternative, we designed and launched the Galuwa Experience Portal.

The portal is designed to be the single point of contact at UTS for Indigenous students wanting to find out more about study at UTS. It provides online and on-demand resources and activities for students to participate in. The portal has the added benefit of reaching a wider audience, and, is not limited by capacity restrictions.

Jumbunna hosted a series of online workshops that were designed to be interactive and engage participants in what they may experience in an on-campus workshop.

### Launch of Pasifika Mentoring Program

The UTS Pasifika Mentoring Program works with senior students from four high schools in Western Sydney, matching them to UTS student mentors also from a Pacific Islander background. The mentors support the student's success in school and encourage active decision-making for their future.

Young Pasifika people in Australia – 40 per cent of whom are under 19 – are less likely to engage in tertiary study.

"Pasifika young people live in culturally complex and socially diverse environments and often face complex challenges when navigating unfamiliar school and post-school environments," said Amanda Moors-Mailei, Program Manager, Educational Access Schemes & Pathways, UTS Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion.

"Our hope is that young Pasifika high school students will become actively engaged in decisions that will have a significant impact on their future and continue to strive toward positive educational outcomes, well-being and post-school success."

The pilot will run for the 2021 school year.

## UTS Humanitarian Access

The UTS Humanitarian Access program supports access, participation and success for students with lived experiences of forced migration who are seeking asylum in Australia. The UTS Humanitarian Scholarship, academic mentoring, and transition support form part of this program.

### Launch of Humanitarian Academic Mentoring program

The Humanitarian Academic Mentoring Program matches students from a refugee or asylum seeker background – Humanitarian Scholars – with academic staff in a one-on-one mentoring relationship aimed to empower and guide students in their studies. The program was piloted between July and December 2020.

**“It’s the fact that I can talk to somebody about my study. When I have too much pressure, I can talk to her about it, and she gives me advice. It just makes me feel better. It’s really helpful.”**

**Student mentee**

### Careers and Industry Mentoring event

In November 2020, 40 professionals, including scientists, architects, surgeons and a chief information officer, joined Humanitarian Scholars for an evening of career development in which they offered industry-specific guidance and support for students’ career aspirations.

### Access and Pathways webinar

In 2020, UTS led online workshops on educational access schemes, pathways and scholarships for university for the migrant, refugee, refugee-like and asylum seeker community.

UTS worked in partnership with TAFE NSW, Charles Sturt University, Macquarie University, Western Sydney University and the NSW Department of Education to deliver the workshops to more than 120 registrants.

# \$10,000

**was raised for the  
UTS Humanitarian  
Scholarship through the  
UTS Fundraising Hub**



**Top:** 2021 Humanitarian Scholars Morning Tea.  
Photographer: Kwa Nguyen



# 2 Students as agents for change

## **UTS Social Impact Framework, Domain 2:**

### **Students have the agency to enact personal and social responsibility**

While students arrive at UTS with existing civic capacity, we also recognise our institutional role to further enable active citizenship, encouraging them to contribute to society in meaningful ways throughout their education. We are proud of the impact our students make in the world, both during their time as students at UTS, and in their professional and personal lives beyond, as alumni.



# Celebrating our international SOULies

**As COVID-19 hit Sydney and not-for-profits struggled to find volunteers, international SOUL students stepped up.**

UTS SOUL Award is an extra curricular program that supports students to volunteer in the community sector.

This year, despite many losing their jobs as a result of the pandemic and being ineligible for government support, international students continued to give back.

The Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion thanks them and acknowledges their remarkable efforts.



**“I started volunteering because I wanted to give back to community. I feel good when helping others. Sometimes it’s the small things that make the biggest difference.”**

**Yanlin Zhu**



**“I strongly believe in helping everyone in all possible ways. Volunteering creates a platform to add value to the community. International students have the ability to positively contribute to the community because they bring diversity in their work.”**

**Lakshika Raghav**

# Supporting students and communities through COVID-19

## Crisis volunteering initiative

International students and students from a refugee or asylum seeker background were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

“Things went downhill very quickly. My workplace let go of their casuals, all 15 of us. And suddenly I wasn’t earning any income. I wasn’t eligible for JobKeeper – as a refugee, my visa means I’m not eligible for any government support at all,” said UTS Humanitarian Scholarship student and volunteer Rock Idugboe.

While students were facing financial distress, community organisations were experiencing an increased need for volunteers.

UTS’s crisis volunteering initiative was created to connect both groups through an innovative corporate volunteering program.

75 eligible students were recruited to work part-time for three months with community organisations such as Foodbank, Oz Harvest and the Glebe Youth Service.

“The students are employed and paid by the Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion to help us deliver on our public purpose and social justice agenda, by helping communities. It supports UTS as a good corporate citizen, using its resources to contribute to public good,” says Dianne Moy, Social Impact Lab Lead at the centre.

“It’s such a good program, and a great environment. It’s really been a lifeline for me and my family,” said Shali Thevarasan, UTS Humanitarian Scholar.

**“My workplace let go of their casuals. And suddenly I wasn’t earning any income. I wasn’t eligible for JobKeeper – as a refugee, my visa means I’m not eligible for any government support at all.”**

**Rock Idugboe**



**Right:** Rock Idugboe, UTS Humanitarian Scholar.  
Credit: Kwa Nguyen



## Digital mentoring in Glebe

COVID-19 forced many services to rapidly move online. Most people were able to adapt, but for many it made access to basic necessities impossible due to a widening digital divide.

On UTS's doorstep in Glebe, a group of residents over the age of 55 found themselves with little to no experience accessing online services, and a lack of digital literacy skills.

At the same time, the pandemic was disproportionately impacting international students – many lost their employment, were ineligible for government support schemes, and were left socially isolated.

The Glebe Digital Mentoring Program responded to the needs of both groups, and matched international students with Glebe residents to provide digital mentorship and support resident's technological needs.

The pilot program employed students for up to 10 hours a week over three months to partner with mentees – resulting in increased digital confidence and skills in the older residents, income and experience for student mentors, and cross-cultural exchanges and connections.

**“It's about so much more than just acquiring digital skills. It's so much about the relationships – both for the international students and for the mentees.”**

**Bilquis Ghani**  
Social Impact Practitioner at the  
Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion

# Housing and jobs: A home is where the start is

UTS Business School students' knowledge has helped the Women's Housing Company (WHC) in its mission to help tenants secure work.

The WHC manages over 1,000 properties across Sydney, the Hunter Region and Coffs Harbour, providing affordable and transitional accommodation for women on limited incomes. But it knows women need more than a roof over their head for their lives to be truly transformed.

"The housing sector often refers to the housing continuum: give people somewhere safe and affordable to call home, depending on their circumstances, and hopefully the majority of them will be able to move onto training, education and employment, then from affordable housing back into the private housing sector," says Chief Operating Officer, Kathleen Cain. "What we want to do is to try to coordinate better pathways for people to move through that housing continuum."

The organisation engaged postgraduate students from UTS Business School's Applied Management Consulting course to research and evaluate the employment engagement program developed by the WHC. The work was completed through the UTS Shopfront Program, which links university expertise and the community sector via pro bono projects.

For three months, the students surveyed WHC tenants. This was followed by in-depth focus groups. The students also spoke to community partners in the employment sector and to agencies that provide support to tenants in other areas, such as mental health.

MBA student Deirdre O'Neill, who was part of the five-member group that worked on the project, says the further the team delved into what sort of work and training opportunities people needed, the more they realised how complex their task was.



**Left:** Sydney skyline.  
Credit: Unsplash





**Right:** Women's Housing Company tenants have diverse life experiences. Photo supplied.

"The women have so many diverse needs. We realised that coming up with one solution wasn't going to work. They needed individualised support and tailored services. Ultimately, what we found was that this was actually about tenants having access to the right information – knowing what help was out there already."

The students' report supported a holistic and staged employment engagement program with linking and support at the core. "The aim is to overcome barriers by helping women connect to and mobilise resources better, by linking them to existing services, strengthening ties to training and jobs programs, setting up a support group," says Deirdre.

Something that came across strongly in the focus groups was that the women felt alone in their struggle to find work, she says. "They thought no one else was looking for a job," yet hundreds of tenants put their hands up to take part in the study.

Kathleen Cain says the students' research reinforced to the WHC that it was on the right track. "It showed that the tenants trust us – that came through really clearly – and it reinforced to us that we have to drive this, we have to coordinate this, for our tenants to be truly successful."

Working on real-life projects through the Shopfront Program exposes students to a challenging policy area and to the complexity – and rewards – of working in the not-for-profit sector.

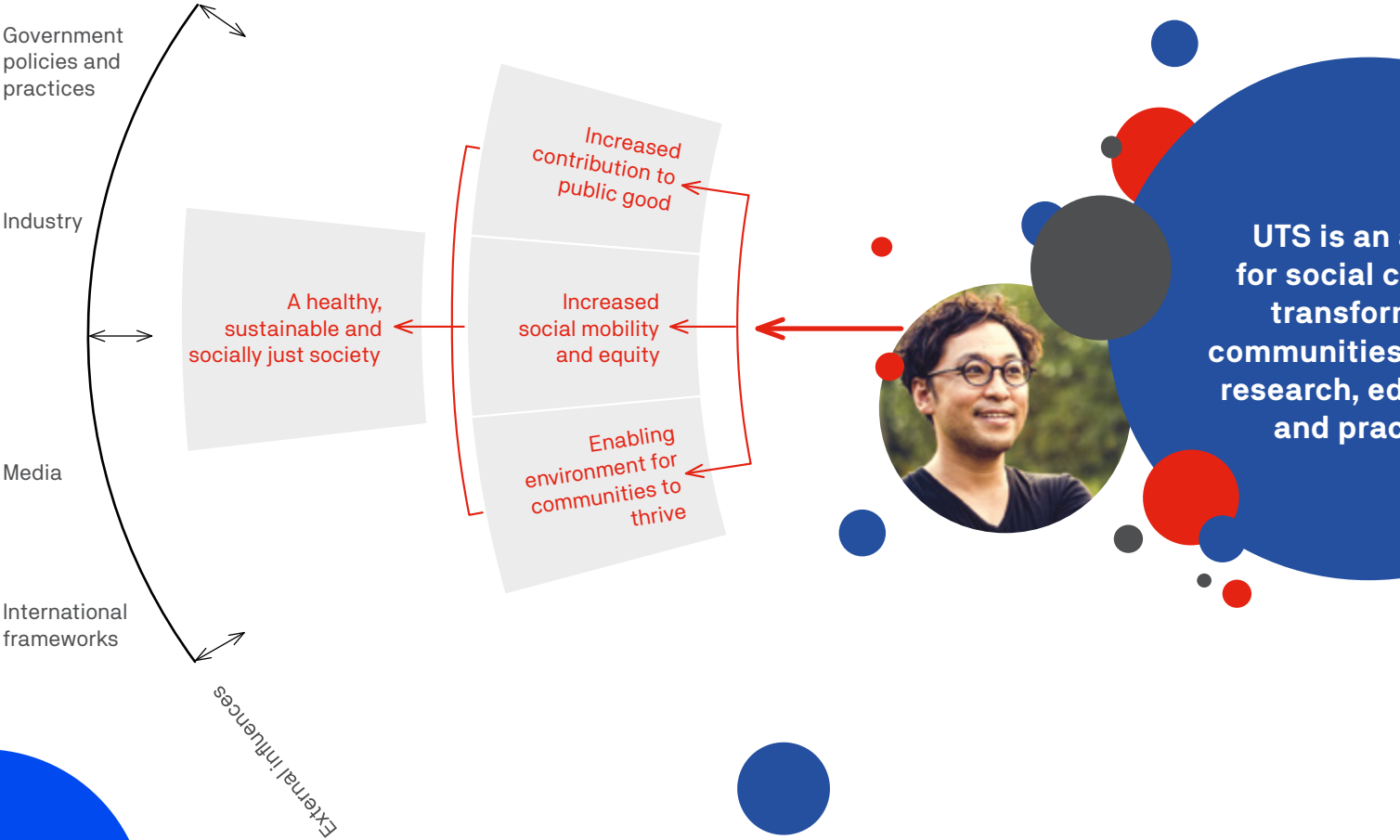
Dr Marco Berti, the project's academic advisor, is an advocate of experiential learning as it captures the technical, relational and ethical complexity of management practice.

"For postgraduate students, who often already have significant experience, learning about management consulting is about developing a sophisticated capacity to cope with complexity," Dr Berti says.

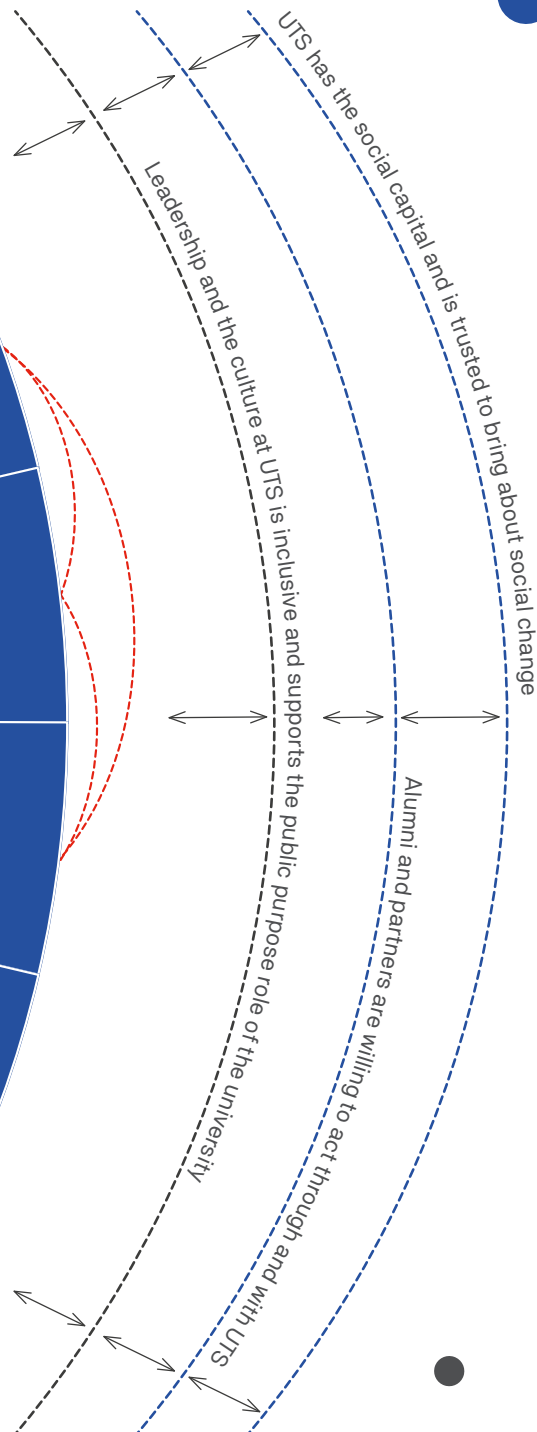
Best of all, shortly after completion of the project, the WHC reported that one participating tenant was able to use the information provided to secure a job soon after, and two others went on to connect with training and employment programs.



# The UTS Social Impact Framework



agent  
change,  
ming  
through  
education  
practice



# 3 Maximising staff impact

## **UTS Social Impact Framework, Domain 3:**

**Staff have the confidence and are supported to maximise their social impact**

Supporting the civic capacity of our staff community is a fundamental tenet of our social justice agenda. UTS strategies, systems and processes are instituted with a view to enabling staff to maximise and amplify their social impact. The following pages showcase just some of the ways that UTS is supporting staff to contribute to social justice causes.





## Launch of UTS Community Fundraising Hub

The UTS Community Fundraising Hub is the university's newest platform, allowing the UTS community to quickly and effectively raise funds for projects, programs, and initiatives.

Donations of any size can be put towards causes, which currently includes Ruff Sleepers, the UTS Humanitarian Scholarship, Jumbunna research, and more.

In 2020:

- \$22,824 was raised
- three teams and seven individuals fundraised for various causes
- 200 donors contributed

## Challenging conventions about inclusive practice

The Inclusivity Experiment aims to make ethical and inclusive design easier for everyone.

In 2020, UTS educators shared their resources and strategies for incorporating inclusive practices into teaching – especially important as learning rapidly moved online.

They made videos to share their learnings and explored these further in a webinar with 45 participants.

“We thought this would help people incorporate some more inclusive practices without having to necessarily restructure their entire course right away,” said Mehal Krayem, Operations Officer at the UTS Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion.

The experiment will continue bringing together UTS's existing expertise and look for gaps that can be worked on in collaboration with community.

# Social Impact Grants

Social Impact Grants support UTS researchers and practitioners to undertake projects that have social impact.

Ten grants of up to \$5000 were awarded by the UTS Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion in 2020, with another awarded at the start of 2021 as a result of COVID-19 delays.

Congratulations to the recipients:

**Ramona Vijayarasa, Chancellor's Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Faculty of Law**

Measuring Gillard's Legislative Footprint: making a case for more women at the top to deliver gender-responsive outcomes for fellow women

**Edwina Deakin, Senior Manager, Advisory, Institute for Public Policy and Governance**

Community Engagement: Addressing the Digital Divide. A practical community engagement guide for decision makers and planners

**Paul Byron, Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences**

The Mental Health Support of LGBTIQ+ Young People during COVID-19

**Dr Darrall Thompson, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building**

La Perouse Nationally Significant Public School and Community: developing equity and connecting community through digital storytelling and socially responsive design

**Nick Hopwood, Associate Professor, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences**  
Positive Social Change for Families of Children with Feeding Difficulties: raising public awareness around tube-feeding

**Sophie Ritchie, Social Impact Manager, Rapido, Faculty of Engineering and IT**  
UTS COVID-19 Response: Rapido engineers delivering remote design of PPE for low-income countries

**Paula Gleeson, Senior Social Researcher, Centre for Carers Research**  
Making Meaning: performance art as social impact

**Laura Shackel, UTS Student, Anti-Slavery Australia, Faculty of Law**  
Co-designing a Modern Slavery Action Toolkit for Young People

**Dr Dean Jarrett, Lecturer, Indigenous Business, UTS Business School**  
Indigenous Evaluation Hub: building the capacity of not-for-profit organisations to integrate and celebrate Indigenous paradigms in evaluation practices

**Dr Sara Dehm, Lecturer, Faculty of Law**  
Evaluating Academic Peer-Mentoring Program for Academics from a Refugee Background: addressing best practice, promoting networks

**Danielle Manton, Associate Lecturer, Indigenous Health, Faculty of Health**  
Physios Knock it Out for Indigenous Health

## Elevating social impact evaluations at UTS

Creating social impact that's practical, useful and meaningful requires skilled monitoring and evaluation.

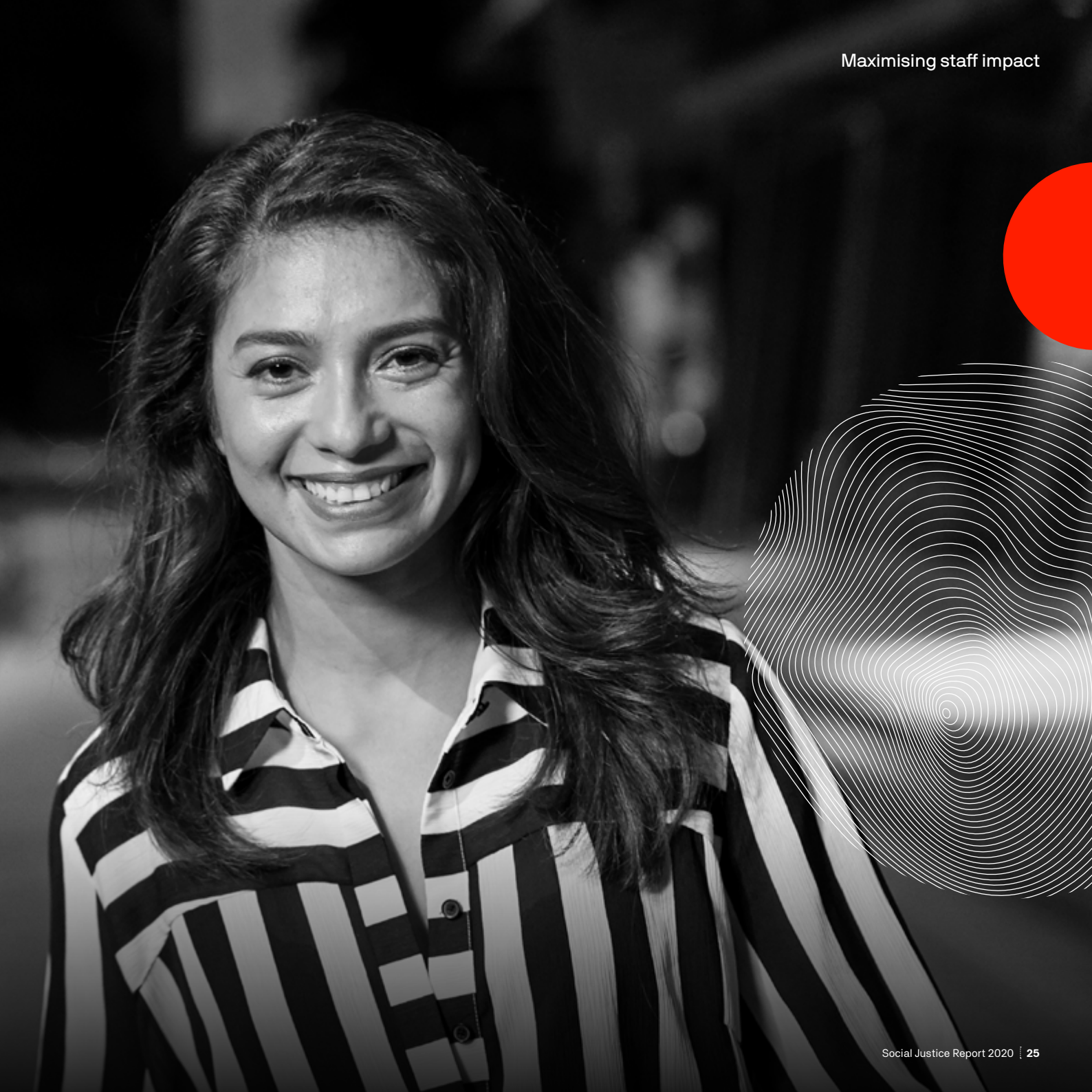
Instituted in 2019, 'Knowledge Bites' is a series of presentations to build UTS's capacity for social impact evaluation.

Knowledge Bites presents new perspectives on evaluating social change, generates discussion on best practice and fosters innovation through collaboration, with an overall aim to improve the university's evaluation practice.

In 2020, the Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion held Knowledge Bites sessions covering:

- evaluating with Indigenous perspectives
- using program logic in evaluations
- evaluating climate change research
- reimagining outcomes frameworks
- using the Meaningful Evaluation© method.





# 4 Research, teaching, program outcomes

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## **UTS Social Impact Framework, Domain 4:**

**Targeted research, teaching  
and program outcomes have  
social impact and collectively  
contribute to community.**

As a public purpose institution, UTS is committed to delivering significant economic, environmental, cultural and social impact through our research and practice. These outcomes are further enhanced through strategic partnerships with community, industry and government bodies. Our culture of external collaboration informs and brings added value to all that we do and drives outcomes that benefit people and communities.



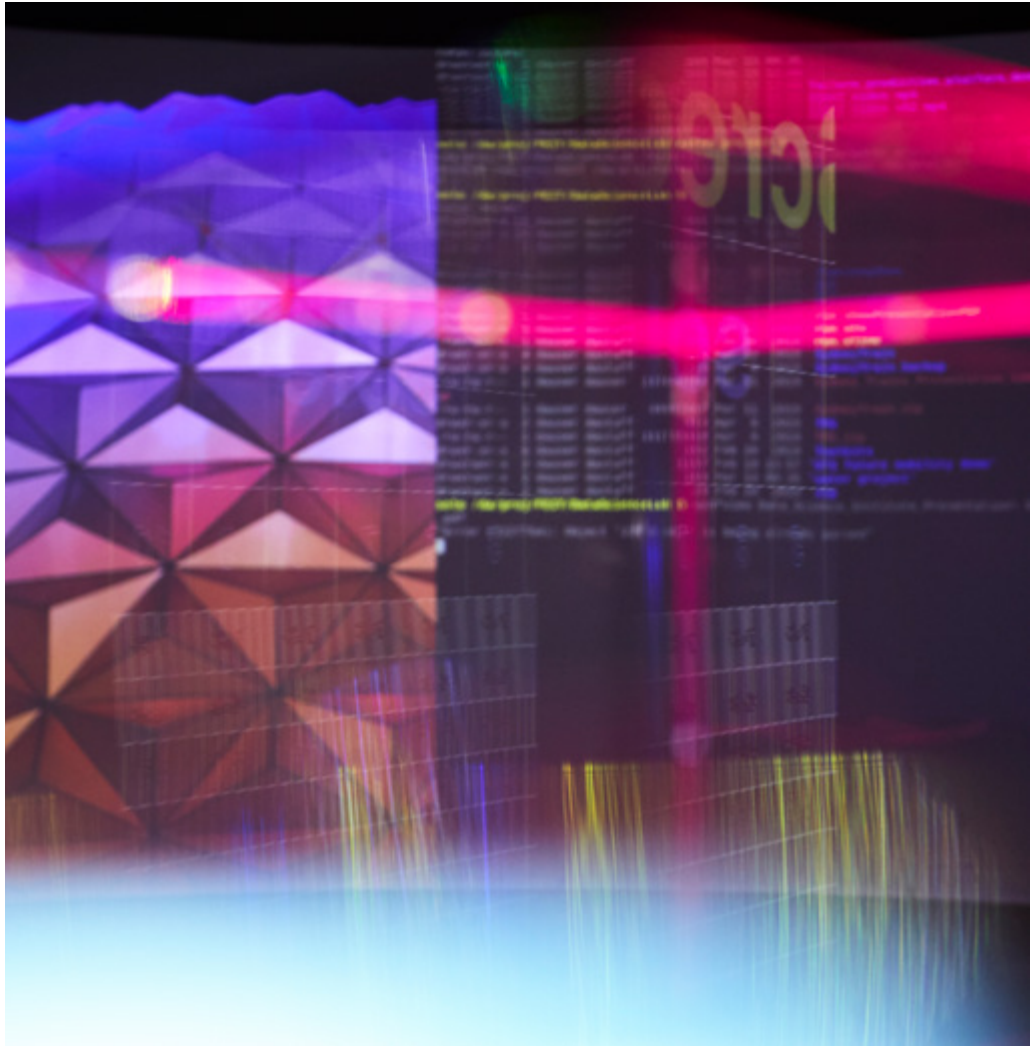
# Supporting government to use AI ethically

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) granted \$200,000 to UTS to support its project, 'Ethical Artificial Intelligence: supporting responsible development by learning through international collaboration'.

The program is designed to develop governments' capacity and expertise in using AI technology ethically for public service delivery. UTS will build crucial learnings to upskill government leaders – complementing DFAT's diplomatic mission to deliver sustainable economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion worked collaboratively with UTS Business School, the Faculty of Transdisciplinary Innovation and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences on the proposal. It involves building three modules – Ethical AI, Data Governance: Consumer Data Rights, and Ethical AI Leadership.

The grant is a direct result of UTS's ongoing partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission on AI and Human Rights.





# Social impact in action

## UTS researchers are turning waste into affordable prosthetic limbs

380 million metric tonnes of plastic waste are created annually around the world, with 91% going to landfill.

Rapido Social identified the opportunity to upcycle high-density polyethylene (HDPE) – used for everything from shampoo bottles to milk crates – into 3D printing material. As a non-toxic material approved for medical use, HDPE offers a future in affordable and accessible open-source 3D-printed artificial limbs.

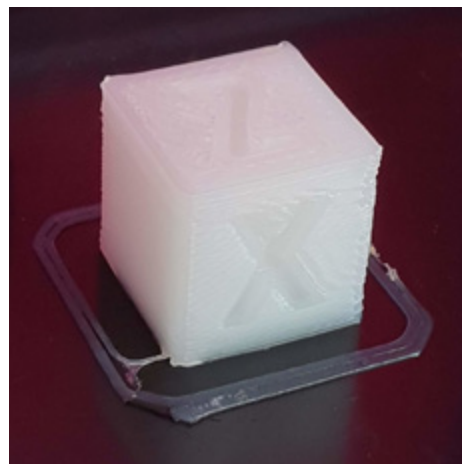
“We worked with Bernie Craven, CEO of Waste Free Systems and an ex-hairdresser, who noticed an abundance of waste in salons – the majority of shampoo and conditioner bottles are made from HDPE,” explains Rapido Social’s Social Impact Manager, Sophie Ritchie. “But we also built a relationship with the not-for-profit e-NABLE who release open-source designs online so that 3D-printed prostheses are more accessible.”

Recycled HDPE often shrinks and warps in 3D printing. In overcoming this issue, the team have paved the way for further research to increase recycled plastic use in 3D printing.

The team also redesigned a 3D-printed hand, enabling users to move and orient their fingers in ways not previously possible. For example pivoting from the vertical position needed to hold a pen to the horizontal one required to hold onto a bike’s handlebars.

Their work has had an immediate impact – two Queensland kids will be receiving artificial hands developed out of the project.

“This project was an exciting opportunity, because it enabled us to explore solutions for two difficult social issues at once – the excess of waste plastic globally, and the cost-barriers to purchasing prosthetic limbs,” says Sophie.



**Top:** 3D print samples. Photo supplied.

**Bottom:** Rapido Social staff. Photo supplied.



**Top:** Indigenous students. Photo supplied.  
**Bottom:** Nareen Young. Photo supplied.

### **Gari Yala — First national survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers**

There is little information available about the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workforce.

As a result, policy conversations about Indigenous employment are dominated by statistics and a narrow focus on getting people into work.

Gari Yala, ‘Speaking Truth’ in the Wiradjuri language, is the first national survey undertaken of its kind.

Run by Jumbunna’s Indigenous People and Work Research and Practice Hub, and the Diversity Council Australia, the survey collected firsthand Indigenous experiences in the workplace.

“We wanted to get an Indigenous perspective into the [policy] conversation,” explains Nareen Young, Industry Professor at Jumbunna. “Until now, discussion has tended to focus on getting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into employment, but working lives are far more complex than that.”

The report results were released in November 2020, offering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and evidence-based research to workplaces that want to tackle Indigenous employment and change things for the better.

Responses from 1,033 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait workers highlighted that:

- 78% said it was important for them to identify as Indigenous within their workplace
- 63% experience high identity strain when they themselves, or others, view their identity as not meeting the norms or expectations of the dominant culture in the workplace
- 39% carry the burden of high cultural load, which comes in the form of extra work demands and the expectation to educate others
- 38% reported being treated unfairly because of their Indigenous background sometimes, often or all the time
- 44% reported hearing racial slurs sometimes, often or all the time
- only 1 in 3 of respondent’s workplaces provided satisfactory support when respondents experienced racism
- only 1 in 5 respondents worked in organisations with both a racism complaint procedure and anti-discrimination compliance training that included reference to discrimination and harassment against Indigenous people.

“We want to provoke discussion in the community about what workplaces need to do to properly equip themselves to enable Indigenous people to explore flourishing careers,” Nareen says.



# Social impact in action

## Human rights and technology policy response

As part of UTS's partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission, UTS academics responded to a 2020 Discussion Paper on the human rights impacts of technology.

Our response to the white paper was transdisciplinary, formed during a day-long workshop facilitated by the UTS Design Innovation Research Centre and Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion, and attended by Human Rights Commissioner, Edward Santow.

UTS academics and practitioners from across disciplines offered their expertise.

The response highlighted four principles needed in tackling human rights issues and technology: the need for a transdisciplinary approach; a desire to produce socially just outcomes; the key role of education and technological literacy; and the value of design-led thinking.

## UTS and Apolitical upskill public servants

The UTS Institute for Public Policy and Governance, Institute for Sustainable Futures, and the Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion joined with Apolitical to create an interactive boot camp for public servants on how to translate evidence into policy.

Learning outcomes from the free five-week boot camp included:

- the different types of evidence that can be used in policymaking
- what good (and bad) evidence looks like and how to tell the difference
- translating data into evidence to tell a compelling story
- how to design and apply experimental approaches in policymaking.

Verity Firth, Executive Director of Social Justice, and Carol Mills, Director, Institute for Public Policy and Governance, additionally hosted a one-day crash course on How to Use Evidence in Policymaking, available to Apolitical members and the public.

## What is Apolitical?

Apolitical is a peer-to-peer social and learning network for public servants. It aims to bolster and hone critical skills, and is based on the belief that government is critical to solving global challenges.

Apolitical partners with governments, foundations, universities and NGOs around the world to identify and share policy best practice, bringing together leading experts from inside and outside public service.

## Podcasts that pack a punch

Congratulations to **All Things Equal** podcast on receiving the Excellence in Creative Audio award at the Community Radio Awards 2020 for 'Digital Divides' – an exploration into the ethical implications surrounding human rights, technology and AI.

Congratulations also to **The New Social Contract** which won Gold in the Best Lockdown Podcast category at the Australian Podcast Awards. The 10-part series examines how the relationship between universities, the state and the public might be reshaped as we live through COVID-19.

Thank you to the UTS academics, educators and practitioners who lent their voices, research, opinions and expertise to these podcasts.

## Disability Research Innovation Network

The UTS Disability Research Innovation Network launched in 2020 to support multi-disciplinary research and enhance partnerships between UTS scholars, people with disability, community and government.

The initiative awarded three grants to projects with potential for increasing inclusion for people with disability:

- The Human Impact of Climate Change and Related Emergencies for People with Disability, their Families, Disability Organisations, and Communities
- Exploring the Perspectives of People with Intellectual Disability on the Role of Former Disability Institutions – in partnership with the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability and People with Disability Australia
- Developing a New Generation of Exoskeletal Assistive Devices to Offer Users Better Mobility, Freedom and Personalisation – a collaboration between the Faculty of Engineering & IT Biomedical Engineers and the Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building.



**Top:** Producer Dan Butler with The Hon. Verity Firth receiving the award for 'Excellence in Creative Audio' at the Community Radio Awards 2020. Photo supplied.

# 5 Advocacy

## **UTS Social Impact Framework, Domain 5:**

**UTS is an advocate, critical voice and thought leader on issues that concern and impact communities**

While supporting academic integrity and independence, the university hosts events and contributes to public dialogue from our institutional platform. In collaboration with external partners, UTS convenes thinkers, analysts and experts to explore drivers of, and develop solutions to, complex global problems.



# Weighing in on public policy

Universities can make valuable contributions to policy debate. Drawing upon our academic and practitioner expertise, UTS made a range of submissions to key government policy proposals in 2020 including the following:

## Job-Ready Graduates Package

While broadly supporting a focus on jobs in the face of economic downturn, the Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion pinpointed outcomes resulting from the package that could further entrench inequality.

The centre identified risks including flawed methods for managing underperforming students; a misdiagnosis of equity issues across rural, remote and metropolitan areas; and a fee structure that perpetuates wealth inequalities.

## Religious Freedom Bill

While anti-discrimination laws should provide protections on the grounds of religious belief, these must be balanced against the right to non-discrimination.

The Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion responded to the draft Religious Freedom Bill with recommendations to limit religious exemptions to anti-discrimination laws where there is a specific religious element; and amend anti-discrimination legislation to prohibit religious organisations which receive public funding, or provide services on behalf of the government, from discriminating in ways that would otherwise be unlawful.





# What's on(line)

In 2020, UTS went online to advocate for social justice in the university sector and beyond.

Our events featured leaders in equality, education, and engagement – deepening our connections with alumni, partners and community stakeholders.

## University in community

**The Future of Education – towards 2027** series explored how COVID-19 has changed the education landscape – and what we can do in the near future to make access to education equitable in the face of financial instability, changing social conditions and unrest.

Vice-Chancellor, Attila Brungs, Executive Director of Social Justice, Verity Firth, and David Abello, President, People with Disability Australia, launched the **UTS Access and Inclusion Plan, 2020-2024**, with an online discussion considering the new flexibility of remote working, and what universities need to do to ensure a supportive and inclusive environment all the time.

## Empowering women

In partnership with the Australian Council of Social Service, UTS continued to build the **media skills of women working in the community sector** by exploring strategies to deal with the backlash received by women activists and honing in on how to get stories published by the media.

Dr Kakenya Ntaiya, Kenyan feminist and social activist for education and female empowerment, delivered the **International Women's Day 2020** keynote, on a day when we celebrated the graduates from the Kakenya Centre for Excellence now studying at UTS, Western Sydney University, and the University of Sydney, and raised money for the LBW Trust.

The majority of Australians want a more diverse parliament to more fairly and equally represent the country's population. Partnering with Women's Business and Women for Election Australia, we brought together The Hon. Linda Burney, Senator Mehreen Faruqi, Ms Jenny Leong MP, and Ms Kaushaliya Vaghela MP to speak about **what it's like being a woman, an MP and Indigenous or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse**.

**“It's important to recognise there are systems and structures in place that are preventing women – and particularly women of colour – participating in our democratic systems, and that's across the board.”**

**Jenny Leong, Member for Newtown**



## Tackling injustice

Highlighting the historical, colonial mistruths about First Nations people, Bruce Pascoe, award-winning author of *Dark Emu* and Adjunct Professor at UTS Jumbunna Institute, spoke to an audience of 750 as part of UTS's **Reconciliation Week** activities.

Many Australians joined the millions denouncing violence and systemic racism as part of global Black Lives Matter protests. But more than 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have died in police custody since 1980, so why did it take so long for Australians to sit up and take notice of the injustice closer to home? UTS academics joined The Hon. Linda Burney to dissect **Black Lives Matter in the Australian public discourse**.

For the release of her debut book, *The Altar Boys*, Suzanne Smith joined Verity Firth and journalist David Marr to discuss the **clerical abuse and cover ups by the Australian Catholic Church** – detailing their deliberate strategy of using psychological warfare against witnesses in key trials involving paedophile priests.

To launch her new book, *Disability, Criminal Justice and Law*, Dr Linda Steele and a panel of disability advocates discussed how **measures implemented to make criminal justice systems more 'humane' actually undermines social justice**.

"I'm sometimes in despair of the superficiality of the Australian mind. Because if [*Dark Emu*] had had a true impact, if change had actually happened, a 45,000-year-old cave of art and social and cultural and human development importance, wouldn't have been blown up a week ago."

Bruce Pascoe

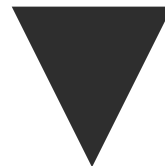
"There is a big focus in this space on truth and knowledge deficits as a way to move forward. That's a really important first step, but if we go through this process of acknowledging ... and then do nothing about it, then that is not only a wasted opportunity. It's its own kind of violence and betrayal."

Alison Whittaker, Research Fellow at UTS Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research

"I think that it is time, to be honest, in Australia for other movements to work with us and don't talk about us as 'the vulnerables'"

El Gibbs, Director of Media and Communications, People with Disability Australia

# What's on(line)



## After COVID-19

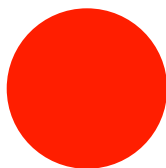
Australia is the only liberal democracy without a Charter of Rights or a Human Rights Act. The recent pandemic raised the question of whether we have enough protection for basic human rights in Australia. We partnered with the **Human Rights Law Centre** to discuss what it would mean if every member of our community had essentials like quality health care, dignified aged care, and a secure roof over their heads – in good times and in bad.

Prior to COVID-19, no-one would have believed that school children could shift overnight to online learning; that it was possible for banks to offer mortgage holidays and government's to double unemployment benefits; that rough sleepers could be housed and evictions put on hold; that wages could be subsidised and Australians could near universally agree to stay home from the beach and the pub. But we did it. For the release of *Upturn*, Tanya Plibersek, Tim Soutphommasane, Adrian Pisarski, and Verity Firth came together to imagine a better Australia, with a stronger economy, a fairer society, and a more environmentally sustainable future.

**“We all benefit when we treat each other respectfully and debate the ideas, rather than feed like vampires off conflict.”**

**Tanya Plibersek**

As part of the OECD's global conversations on **Government After Shock**, the Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion and the Institute for Public Policy and Governance also joined local government representatives to explore their response to the pandemic, and how they could continue to contribute to the wellness and resilience of communities in future.





## Vice-Chancellor's Democracy Forum

The inaugural event, held in October, saw Professor Jason Stanley (Yale University, author of *How Fascism Works*) and Dr Anna Funder (UTS alumni and award-winning author of *All That I Am*) dissect:

- the impacts global politics, economics and culture have on Australia
- the current political climate in the United States in the context of the rise of authoritarian, ultranationalist political regimes around the world.



# 6 Operations

## **UTS Social Impact Framework, Domain 6:**

**UTS business operations  
and strategies reflect a  
long-term independent  
commitment to social impact**

Driving social change begins on campus and in our community. We strive to embed inclusivity, sustainability and accessibility as part of our business and employment practices. Our organisational initiatives enable UTS, and our people, to bring about social change.



# Shaping workplace culture

## Embracing flexible work

There aren't many upsides to be found in a global pandemic, but perhaps one is the worldwide embrace of flexible working.

Like so many, UTS rapidly shifted to online and remote working in response COVID-19.

While it wasn't all smooth sailing, it demonstrated that flexible work works.

New technologies and online platforms, such as Microsoft 365 and Zoom, allowed people to complete work from home and collaborate in new ways.

The move forced us to be innovative, creative and tenacious. It made us think outside the box when it comes to new work practices and tactics. It also opened our eyes to the importance of maintaining social connection and a safe and healthy working environment – especially mental health and wellbeing.

Flexible working has been discussed for years, but in forcing our hand, COVID-19 showed us that a hybrid workforce is achievable – something we will be better for moving forward.

**New ways of working** is a key pillar in our UTS 2027 long-term strategic plan.



## Disability action plan

UTS is committed to being a leading education provider and employer for people with disability.

Equal access and opportunities for development is imperative to achieving this goal. COVID-19 underlined its importance as shifting to online and remote working revealed the barriers many face in their day-to-day lives.

UTS's new four-year disability action plan aims to ensure that our campus and community is open, inclusive and supportive.

The Access and Inclusion Plan (2020–2024) reaffirms our commitment to moving beyond compliance – and toward a more genuinely inclusive university. This plan was the most consultative to date, with input from across UTS, including from those with lived experience of disability.

Key areas of focus in the plan include:

- learning and education
- employment
- accessible environments
- culture
- research and innovation.



# Contributing to public policy and discourse

## Modern Slavery Declaration of Commitment

Australians unwittingly buy products made under conditions of modern slavery every day.

It's an issue under increased scrutiny since the Modern Slavery Act passed in 2018. Large organisations must now assess, mitigate and report on the risks of modern slavery in their supply chains. 'Modern slavery' describes all forms of slavery and human trafficking. It includes servitude, forced labour and debt bondage.

The reporting requirement provides an opportunity for organisations to address any risks in their business, and to push for the abolishment of modern slavery in Australia and in the global supply chains of our economy.

The Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion partnered with Anti-Slavery Australia to develop UTS's Declaration of Commitment. While the reporting is an annual requirement, the declaration sets out UTS's overarching stance on ensuring modern slavery is eradicated from all aspects of our operations.

## Carnegie Community Engagement Classification

The Australian pilot of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification is completed, with eight institutions submitting their applications to the Carnegie Foundation.

The classification demonstrates universities' commitment to transformative partnerships with communities. It involves both self-study by a university, and partner feedback.

The Australian pilot was led by UTS and Charles Sturt University, with participating institutions forming the National Advisory Committee for the classification in 2021.

"We need to do this so that we can continue to build better solutions, to tackle problems which the community and government regard as the most urgent, and to work on what is most important to the people who make up our society. Having the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification will help us ensure that our efforts are demonstrable, measurable and scalable," said Verity Firth, Executive Director of Social Justice at UTS.

In 2020, UTS hosted two summits for pilot members and observer universities to share learnings.



## Maintaining gender equity in times of crisis

COVID-19 triggered a ‘pink-collar recession’ – the first recession to hit women’s jobs harder than men’s.

In June, UTS joined seven other universities in signing a statement to commit to action on gender equity and pledging not to allow COVID-19 to unravel decades of progress.

The commitments include:

1. Actively seeking equal representation of women in COVID-19 response planning and decision-making.
2. Reporting on gender equity impacts (including compounding intersectional factors) within our own institutions and working with sector partners to address emerging issues.
3. Continuing the Athena SWAN initiative.
4. Maintaining gender equity and diversity programs and Key Performance Indicators.
5. Preserving the gender equity progress that UTS has already made.

**“This commitment mirrors our approach to social justice as ‘business as usual’. Even in such difficult times, UTS remains authentic in its commitment to workplace diversity and inclusion.”**

**Tracie Conroy, Director, Equity and Diversity, UTS Centre for Social Justice & Inclusion.**





# Staff in-residence

**UTS has dedicated in-residence staff members who not only provide support to our university community, but also contribute their expertise to research efforts and teaching and learning.**



### Carer-in-Residence: Leila Frijat

As UTS Carer-in-Residence, Leila Frijat's personal life and research interests collide, perfectly suiting her caring responsibilities and career ambitions.

"I hope I can help inform research specifically about culturally and linguistically diverse young carers, and help support the carers in my own life – especially the hidden ones – with the knowledge I learn," Leila said.

Leila is a carer for her younger brother.

Her day-to-day includes helping him around the house with food preparation, getting him ready for outings, and helping manage his administrative needs, like coordinating his NDIS, to build his independence and capacity.

"I think there is a common misconception that caring is frantic and chaotic. For me, caring has been the complete opposite. It is grounding and gives me time to reflect on what is important," she said.



Credit: National Centre of Indigenous Excellence.

### Elder-in-Residence: Auntie Glendra Stubbs

Auntie Glendra Stubbs joined UTS in 2020 as Elder-in-Residence.

Auntie Glendra plays a significant cultural, knowledge sharing, mentoring and social role for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, enhancing Indigenous student retention and success. She represents UTS through community engagement initiatives and contributes to the wellbeing of Indigenous staff and students.

Auntie Glendra helps students feel a sense of connection to their own community while studying away from home, contributing to a sense of belonging and a supportive environment at university.

She continued to support students during COVID-19, offering her contact number for students to reach out to her while studying remotely.

"I just want the students to succeed and know they belong at university. If I can help a student to complete their studies, or support them through any doubts or troubles, then I'm doing my job," said Auntie Glendra.



### Journalist-in-Residence: Jess Hill

Investigative journalist Jess Hill became UTS's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences' first Journalist-in-Residence.

Her ground-breaking first book *See What You Made Me Do* combined storytelling with forensic research to turn the tables on how we view domestic and family violence.

The program provides Jess the time and dedicated space to work on her next projects alongside leading UTS journalism academics. She is also available as a mentor to journalism students and as a guest lecturer.

"I am so thrilled to be joining UTS as the inaugural Journalist-in-Residence. The opportunity to be working amongst the excellent minds at UTS, not just in the journalism department, but across so many disciplines, is one I am so grateful to have. Some of our best journalists have emerged from UTS, so I'm also excited to be amongst all the up-and-comers, and to exchange ideas and techniques with them," Jess said.



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