Engaging with
our southern community
Flinders University is an integral part of the higher education sector in South Australia, attracting over 16,000 students to its campus in southern Adelaide.

The main campus of Flinders University is located within Adelaide’s southern metropolitan region, which is currently undergoing a period of major structural reform of its economic base and industrial infrastructure.

As one of the major employers in the southern suburbs of Adelaide, Flinders University makes an important economic and social contribution to the area and sees its engagement with the community as a key strategic aim.

Flinders is actively involved in several strategic initiatives and this overview provides a summary of the University’s activities in the southern Adelaide region.
Contribution to Skills and Community Education

Southern Knowledge Transfer Partnership (SKTP) Project

In late 2008 Flinders was successful in winning a $3.5 million grant (from the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations’ Diversity & Structural Adjustment Fund), enhancing the University’s ambition to expand tertiary education, contribute to skills acquisition and engage with the community. The SKTP Office was established in May 2009. The SKTP Project will see Flinders staff and students increase their contact with community organisations, businesses and government agencies in a partnership approach designed to deliver improved skills, knowledge and innovation.

Flinders is seeking to raise awareness among regional stakeholders of the University’s commitment to collaboration with them in building the knowledge capacity of the region.

To achieve this, Flinders University will respond to the future workforce needs of southern Adelaide, identify opportunities to collaborate with local government and non-government organisations to build knowledge capacity in strategic areas of social and environmental significance, and will work with schools and TAFE in the region to continue to build a range of pathways to university.

Two-way partnerships will be established to develop and implement:

- curriculum reforms that will reflect the knowledge needs of the region
- an integrated regional strategy for increasing participation by young people in university
- strategic and specific workforce development approaches to building the clean technology, medical devices and health workforces in the region
- strategic work-integrated learning opportunities for students and organisations through mentoring, placements and fellowship programs
- a forum program to identify opportunities for collaboration and to inform the region about the University’s activities and capabilities.

As a result of the initiative, teaching and research efforts at Flinders will closely reflect the needs of the southern region. There will be an increase in work-integrated learning opportunities within the region, and sustainable, long-term relationships will be formed between the University and regional stakeholders.
The role of the Flinders Centre for Science Education in the 21st Century (Science 21) has special relevance to the southern region and its changing industrial profile.

One of the Centre’s key aims is to help produce a future-proof Australian workforce that is scientifically literate and capable of meeting the needs of industry for both today and tomorrow.

Science21 works to build capacity within science education to ensure that the experiences young people have at school enable them to make meaningful connections with the wider world and open up the landscape of education and career pathways available to them.

As an academic centre outside normal departmental structure, Science21 has been structured to ensure that it is responsive to the needs of policy makers. As well as providing links to pertinent reports and publications from around the world the Science21 team produces briefings and opinion pieces to help provide access to the evidence-base for all decision-makers in science education.

The Centre, launched by the Premier in January 2008, is funded in partnership with the South Australian State Government and the University.

Two major public schools in the southern region, Blackwood High School and Hamilton Secondary College, are part of a Science21 project commissioned by the State’s Future SACE Office that is working with selected schools across the State on the School to Work Mathematics and Science Program.

Schools taking part in these programs will pioneer innovative ways to keep students engaged in education and training, with successful examples shared across the State to increase the number of students achieving their potential.

Research evidence will be used to inform decisions about the type of support that schools will need in the future.

For more information visit: www.flinders.edu.au/science21/
Health in the south

The School of Medicine, within the Faculty of Health Sciences, is an integral part of the Flinders Medical Centre (FMC), which is part of the Southern Adelaide Health Service (SAHS). Integration between teaching, research and clinical service has allowed the School and the FMC to achieve international prominence in medical research and has brought with it advances in clinical practice that benefit the community at large.

The Faculty of Health Sciences has a significant presence at the Repatriation General Hospital (RGH) at Daw Park and at Noarlunga Health Services, both of which provide clinical learning facilities for students in medicine, nursing and allied health. The Flinders Palliative and Supportive Services Unit and Rehabilitation and Aged Care Unit based at the RGH provide clinical services in addition to advancing knowledge through teaching and research. The University is building additional facilities at both the RGH and Noarlunga to provide for the extension of its activities at those sites.

Through the Parallel Rural Community Curriculum (PRCC) Program, medical students spend up to a year of their studies while assigned to a rural general practice and many make a significant contribution to the local community. The PRCC operates from a number of nodes, one of which (the Hills Mallee Fleurieu PRCC) is based in Victor Harbor. A recently completed extension to the Victor Harbor Hospital provides an administrative base and “state of the art” teaching facilities in support of this activity. The facility, like similar University facilities at a number of regional centres, is freely available for extension teaching of nurses and other allied health professionals.

A number of general practices in the southern suburbs, including Noarlunga Health Services, are also engaged in teaching of medical students through provision of short-term placements.

Students from Speech Pathology and Audiology provide individual and group programs for children with special needs and communication difficulties at Christies Downs Primary School and St Patrick’s Special School. The Department also has a partnership with Catholic Education to provide diagnostic assessments and inclusive education for school children with speech and language problems, and has an arrangement with Townsend House to provide CanDo4Kids Auditory Processing Disorder Clinics at the FMC.

In support of teaching and research laboratories, several psychology clinics are run on campus by staff and students of the School of Psychology, offering programs of therapy to children, adolescents and adults, and addressing areas including sleeping problems, depression, posttraumatic stress and eating disorders. The Autism Research Unit also carries out assessments.
Southern Program for Improved Participation in Education (SPIPE)

In 2003 the University established the SPIPE Program with partners in the southern suburbs of Adelaide. The Program extends and enhances the relationship between Flinders University and Adelaide’s southern region by:

- encouraging and supporting participation in education;
- assisting students from the southern region to gain access to courses at Flinders and to complete their studies successfully;
- providing advice and assistance to help these students make the transition to employment when they graduate; and
- increasing the two-way interaction between the University and local industry, including through research collaboration and consultancy.

Supporting this Program are a number of key equity initiatives, these include:

**Inspire Peer Mentoring Project**

The Inspire Peer mentoring Program was established to increase retention and participation in education for at risk students in the southern suburbs of Adelaide.

This goal is met through Flinders University students being immersed in the classroom as peer mentors. The mentors bring their own study skills, knowledge, passion and interest in their subject area to classroom or community based education program, exposing young people to a range of topics in an effort to help motivate them to consider going onto further education.

There are a range of projects including specific indigenous mentoring programs at Christies Beach High School in cooperation with Yunggorendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education and Research, with over 30 schools and agencies engaged in placements of 160 mentors with approximately 2,000 mentees.

In 2008 Inspire was awarded the Australian Learning and Teaching Council award for programs that Enhance Learning.
Access, Participation and Social Inclusion

Increasing access and participation

**Flinders Noarlunga Study Hub**

The Flinders Noarlunga Study Hub is an IT and learning-support access centre located in the Adult and Community Education Centre, Christies Beach High School, and is a result of collaboration between the School and Flinders University. The Study Hub facilitates access to web-based material for enrolled and prospective Flinders students in Adelaide’s south as well as secondary and adult entry students at Christies Beach High School.

This tangible presence provides enhanced access opportunities for those in the southern suburbs, who find accessing the University’s main campus (because of work/family commitments, or lack of affordable transport options) difficult.

**Widening Participation**

In 2009 the University is developing resources for use in Years 8 -10 in southern suburbs high schools on University pathways and career outcomes. A Flinders Career Development Consultant is undertaking focus groups in selected Southern schools to identify resources the University can develop for use by school teachers and VET teachers /career counsellors in a school environment.

**Breakthrough**

Breakthrough is a program in partnership with the Hackham West Community Centre and The Smith Family, to provide mentoring support to enhance learning success for at risk children from year 7 in primary school through to the end of high school. This long-term support will address students’ social, emotional, recreational, learning and financial needs to maximise their education outcomes and foster aspirations to learning beyond school including University.

Participants are drawn from low-income family primary school students intending to go to Christies Beach High School the next year from Hackham, Hackham West and Noarlunga Downs schools. The program reflects the importance of early intervention to target long term disadvantage and build aspirations for post secondary school education.
SACE First Generation Program

The University, in cooperation with the future SACE Office, is participating in a project which involves the identification of school students (in Year 10) with families who have no history of participation in tertiary education. Once these students have been identified the University takes an active role in encouraging and supporting them to continue with their secondary education and progress to tertiary education. This is achieved through running a series of on-campus events as well as arranging for existing University students to act as mentors.

Foundation Studies Course

Flinders University offers a part-time one-year Foundation Course which allows people from non-traditional backgrounds to experience university study in a flexible and supportive learning environment. The Course is offered by 3 different study options (on campus in the evening, online, and off-campus day classes which are taught at Christies Beach High School).

There are no prerequisites for entry to the Foundation Course and on successful completion, students are able to apply for admission to Flinders degree courses the following year. Since the course began in 1983 approximately 3000 students have used this course to move into a bachelor degree at Flinders.

Entry Pathways to Engineering

Flinders, under a recently signed agreement with the University of South Australia, offers engineering pathway degrees which allow students to study the first two years of their engineering degree at one University and then transfer to the other institution at a point where the curriculum becomes more specialised, thereby allowing southern-based students easy access to courses taught at University of SA’s Mawson Lakes campus in the north.

Entry Pathways to Law

In addition to conventional entry routes, the Flinders Law School has developed a range of entry pathways designed to broaden access to law study and maximise the diversity of the student body. Among these are pathways for students at schools in the southern suburbs of Adelaide and in country areas south of Adelaide who meet criteria based on disadvantage.

“The Southern Knowledge Transfer Program is about making the connections between the University, all levels of government, the community and industry to ensure that teaching and learning at Flinders is responsive to the needs of the southern Adelaide community. It’s also about facilitating Flinders community engagement, whether it’s through shared research activities or broader knowledge transfer,”

Penny Crocker, Head, Southern Knowledge Transfer Program.
Collaboration with Schools

School-based activities
Flinders University values its collaborative links with all of the schools in the southern Adelaide region. Every secondary school in the region has access to a specific liaison officer in the Flinders Admissions Office who is responsible for managing all aspects of school-University relationship.

All southern schools can participate in a range of opportunities for engagement:
• Campus tours with focus areas including: Nanotechnology, Forensic & Analytical Chemistry, Engineering (Robotics, Biomedical) Biological Sciences (Marine Biology/Aquaculture, Biodiversity and Conservation, Biotechnology) Computer Science, Nursing, Midwifery, Psychology, Paramedics, Health Sciences, Business, Commerce, International Studies, the Anatomy Museum, and discussion on tertiary courses and careers pathways.
• Theory of Knowledge sessions held for 12 International Baccalaureate students
• Presentations tailored for specific year groups (Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12)
• Presentations for Career Nights and Parent Nights
• Flinders Experience Days – focussed on particular areas of study
• Flinders Enrichment Day (Year 11 and Year 12 students)
• Flinders Language Day (Year 10 students)
• Flinders Course and Careers Open Days (all students)

Adult entry based activities
• Adult Experience Day focussing on promoting University pathways for Adult entry students.

Science Communication Officers
The Faculty of Science and Engineering has engaged three Science Communication Officers who provide a range of activities which can be tailored to an institution’s requirements. These activities are informative, friendly and interactive and users can create their own program by choosing a combination of activities which can include:
• Practical sessions that link to the curriculum (and may include scientific equipment not available in Schools)
• Interactive tours of our facilities
• Current students talking about their experiences at Flinders
• Information sessions on career path options in Science and Engineering
• Presentations on Science and Engineering’s current research and degree programs

TAFESA Links

Southern engagement
Flinders has an especially close relationship with the TAFE Adelaide South Institute and its campuses at Noarlunga, O’Halloran Hill and Panorama, including representation on its Governing Council.

TAFE/VET Entry and Credit Transfer
The University is extending educational opportunities by enhancing the entry pathways for students who decide to come to university after completing a TAFE or Vocational Educational Training (VET) qualification. Flinders sets aside places in most of its undergraduate degree courses for TAFE/VET graduates. The University has strengthened its credit transfer framework for students enrolling in undergraduate courses who have completed both related and unrelated TAFE/VET courses, and the University is actively promoting awareness of the pathways to the University in TAFE SA campuses, in private VET institutions and to careers counsellors and teachers in schools.
Business Partnerships

The University is involved in a range of partnerships focussed on Southern Adelaide including:

**Medical Device Partnering Program**
The Medical Device Partnering Program (MDPP) is a collaboration between South Australian researchers, end-users and industry to develop cutting-edge medical devices that solve real end-user problems and bring devices to the market.

The MDPP supports the development of products with an identified clinical need, sound technical solution and a viable market opportunity. The program is led by Flinders University and supported by partners: Office for the Ageing, Adelaide University, University of South Australia, Novita Children’s Services, Department of Trade & Economic Development, Office of the Venture Capital Board, Australian Institute for Commercialisation, Flinders Partners, Playford Capital, Entech Group, Manufacturing Focus, Southern Adelaide Economic Development Board, Office for the Southern Suburbs, City of Marion. Five of the 15 projects reported in the MDPP Annual Report 2008/2009 involve partnerships with a location South of Adelaide’s CDB.

**Flinders Small/Medium Enterprise Project in McLaren Vale**
Flinders University in conjunction with the McLaren Vale Grape, Wine and Tourism Association is undertaking a project to engage with small-medium enterprise owners and operators in the McLaren Vale region. The aim is to work in partnership with operators to achieve positive outcomes for individual businesses and the region as a whole.

After an initial skills audit, Flinders will assist operators and their staff with an ambitious project aimed at updating the skills and professionalism of businesses, by offering relevant training at times and locations suitable to them; and utilising existing skills from the community. A wider more long term goal of promoting the region is also on the agenda.

**South Australia’s Centre for Innovation Incorporated (SACFII)**
A partnership with universities, industry and the South Australian Government, SACFII fosters collaboration opportunities for small to medium sized businesses by offering a resource and referral service for companies that are market driven and looking to become internationally competitive.

“South Australia has huge potential to establish a strong base to produce medical devices technology.”

John Hill, Minister for Health, launching the Medical Device Partnering Program.
The University is also involved in the following projects:

- Liaison with Regional Industry Career Adviser for Southern Adelaide (Australian Industry Group)
- Monitoring the social services, industry structure, housing and health impacts of economic restructuring in the southern region, including work into the health, housing and labour market impacts of closure in the automotive sector in southern Adelaide. (The Vice-Chancellor is a member of Southern Suburbs Coordination Group.)
- Primary and community health activities in collaboration with Flinders Medical Centre, Noarlunga Health Services, Southern Adelaide Health Service and the Noarlunga Healthy Cities Project
- Marion Learning Festival, conducted over five days at the Marion Cultural Centre and Westfield Marion Shopping Centre, this event brings together local schools and community organisations
- Onkaparinga Council’s management of the Onkaparinga Catchment (Waterproofing the South)
- Onkaparinga Council’s Sustainable Living program
- Onkaparinga Library Link with Flinders (inter-library loans, computer access)
- Flinders University, as both an education provider and in its membership on many key southern suburbs committees and boards, is providing advice to the State Government on the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide, Darlington Transport Project and the Noarlunga Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study
- Flinders University is co-operating with the South Adelaide Football Club, The Panthers, where synergies exist for increased participation eg young people aspiring to attend university (pathway programs), mentoring programs and organisational development
- Flinders staff and students are involved in ‘Feet on the Street’, raising money for homeless people in the south, and have an ongoing engagement with Southern Junction Community Services.
Community Networks and Work Enterprise

The University is represented on a variety of boards and committees with a focus on southern suburbs initiatives, and liaises regularly with:

- Southern Suburbs Coordination Group (chaired by the Hon John Hill, Minister for the Southern Suburbs)
- Southern Adelaide Economic Development Board (SAEDB)
- Innovative Community Action Networks (ICAN) steering committee.
- Southern Exporters Club
- City of Onkaparinga’s Economic Development Forum
- Southern Region Employment & Skills Formation Network (DFEEST)
- Southern Success Business Enterprise Centre Board and liaises with Inner Southern BEC
- Southern Adelaide Health Service’s Future Clinical Directions Committee
- Regional Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS)

Work Integrated Learning opportunities for Flinders students in the Southern region includes:

- Twelve week work-placements of Bachelor of Innovation and Enterprise (Science and Technology) students with a broad spectrum of southern industry and government bodies.
- ‘WorkReady’ Flinders students placed as interns with southern suburbs enterprises and organisations.
- Workplace Mentoring matches Flinders students with experienced mentors from those careers to which they aspire.
- Flinders students trained in environmental assessment are matched with businesses in the Mitcham and Marion Council areas under the First Steps program, with support from the City of Mitcham and City of Marion Councils.