FLINDERS UNIVERSITY
ANNUAL REPORT
2020
MISSION
To be internationally recognised as a world leader in research, an innovator in contemporary education, and the source of Australia’s most enterprising graduates.

VISION
Changing lives and changing the world.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
Flinders University
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Disclaimer
Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this publication is accurate at the time of publication. You can find updated information on our website at flinders.edu.au

Cover
Students at Bedford Park campus

CRICOS No. 00114A
CHANCELLOR’S REVIEW

What does a university of significance represent to the wider community? The 2020 year has indicated how significant that role is. Flinders University faced twin tests through 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic gripped the world, yet its nimble reaction to address the crisis and the debt abilities of staff and students has seen Flinders play an impressive leadership role through a troubling and uncertain time.

It has been especially gratifying to see, from my vantage point as Chancellor, the entire Flinders community heed the call to best serve the community and each other, as researchers, teachers, practitioners and carers set themselves to solve problems and resolve key issues triggered by the COVID-19 crisis.

Flinders University not only underlined its broad research expertise across multiple academic disciplines, but also its teaching staff responded magnificently during the year in ensuring that the interest of our students were effectively and appropriately looked after.

Flinders University provided crucial financial and pastoral support for students in need – especially our beleaguered community of international students, many who found themselves stranded far from home.

It has been an unprecedented time of generosity from our alumni and friends, as they recognised the importance of supporting our institution that laid the foundation for their personal and professional journeys. More than 500 donors including University Council members and staff made significant contributions to the University during the year, and their generosity has been acknowledged in more detail within the Annual Report.

The trials of 2020 will be reflected on as a transformative moment in our history – from which we have emerged smarter, stronger and more resilient.

The trials of 2020 will be reflected on as a transformative moment in our history – from which we have emerged smarter, stronger and more resilient. The result of our endeavour, prudence and careful planning in the years up to and including 2020 means that Flinders University is in good financial shape and therefore able to progress our future plans.

Now we look ahead, excited by the promise of the Flinders Village Development that lies immediately before us. The commencement of train services from the city to Flinders and the opening of the Flinders railway platform offers a powerful sign that our Bedford Park precinct will be connected to the heart of Adelaide like never before.

The next phase of work in this exciting precinct will begin later this year, as construction starts on the new Flinders Health and Medical Research Building. This will ensure Flinders University’s continuing role as an innovative leader in health and medicine, supporting the vital work of more than 380 world-class researchers in areas including cancer, heart disease, neuroscience and digital health technologies.

An important development during the year occurred at our Tonsley precinct with the development of automated manufacturing through our Line Zero project in association with BAE Systems. It represents a significant new development for the University after years in the planning.

Our success in these areas underlines that the quality of our people is paramount, clearly reflected in our staff – but also the achievements of Flinders people within the wider community, catalogued in the vast array of service medals awarded to more than 30 alumni, donors and current University staff in the 2020 Australia Day and Queen’s Birthday honours lists.

We are also inspired by our leading alumni who have been awarded the Convocation Medal – the highest honour bestowed by Flinders University – for making incredible differences to improve the lives of many in our community. In 2020, we pay tribute to medallists Ms Sarah Brown AM, Chief Executive Officer of Purple House that facilitates improved health services for Indigenous Australians living in remote communities, and Professor Jamie Cooper AO, whose medical and administrative expertise as Director of the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Research Centre has transformed Intensive Care efficiency and outcomes in hospitals throughout the nation.

Such people form the beating heart of the Flinders University community and set a high standard we are all compelled to follow.

Our determination to boldly evolve and improve is a key point of difference for Flinders University. It is an attribute made possible through the continued hard work of the University Council with Vice-Chancellor Professor Colin Stirling and his senior executive team. It takes hold and forms the spine of this University’s culture, thanks to the dedication and enthusiasm of our leadership and staff. It is a place that truly makes a difference.

All of this leads to realising the goals mapped out in our strategic plan, Making a Difference: The 2025 Agenda, underlining that our strategic developments have not been upset by obstacles laid across our path. Together, we have forged ahead, understanding the connection between teaching and forever striving to learn more, to innovate and create for the benefit of all, to grow as people and understand our place and role within a robust, caring community.

Reflecting on such achievements through a tumultuous year, I thank our entire community at Flinders University for their commitment to help realise our strategic goals, to enrich our students, and to make the world a better place.

I also acknowledge the support and commitment which I and the University community have received from the members of Council and its various Committees during the year.

Stephen Gerlach AM
CHANCELLOR
There can be little doubt that 2020 will be remembered as one of the most challenging and unexpected times in most of our lives. However, while the COVID-19 pandemic impacted all members of our University community we rose collectively to the challenge and continued to deliver outstanding outcomes in both education and research.

Amid this great upheaval, the quality of our researchers shone brilliantly leading to the University attracting its highest ever levels of grant funding. In 2020 Flinders University increased its HERDC research income by over 29% to nearly $68 million, and a continuation of three consecutive years of exceptional growth. The figure includes our highest ever total for Australian Government funding and also our highest ever funding from industry, demonstrating the relevance of our research to real world problems. External research funding represents the best leading indicator of research success and our progress demonstrates the value of our 2019 decision to invest in the research uplift programme.

Our researchers were also quick to apply their expertise to issues arising from the pandemic, with 35 projects funded across all six Colleges addressing questions as diverse as 3D printed facial guards and the effects of the pandemic on individual wellbeing.

We also saw the impact of our research reflected in the plaudits for our leading scientists, including Associate Professor Justin Chalker winning the Prize for New Innovators in the 2020 Prime Minister’s Prizes for Science and Professor of Clean Technology Colin Raston sharing the honour of being named the 2020 South Australian Scientist of the Year.

Our students were hugely impacted by the onset of the pandemic. Not only were study patterns disrupted but many students faced added financial and emotional burdens made worse by the uncertainties associated with the growing pandemic.

The response from our staff was nothing short of outstanding. We quickly shifted to online modes of delivery so that students could continue their studies. We also shifted many support services online to help keep students engaged.

Such efforts to provide the best outcome for students saw Flinders’ online learning platform receive positive endorsement from 87.6% of undergraduates in the 2020 Student Experience Survey – a significantly higher engagement rating than the national universities average. Indeed, Flinders University improved against the sector average in every single category of the Survey.

Our teaching excellence and innovation continues to earn national plaudits, with the new Diploma of Digital Technologies winning the prestigious Training and Mentorship Program of the Year in Defence Connect’s 2020 Australian Defence Industry Awards.

The initial course intake in March upskilled 51 shipbuilders from BAE Systems Maritime Australia, equipping them with digital skills for modern shipbuilding.

Our student-centred ethos also required that we respond quickly and decisively to help support students facing severe financial hardship as a result of the pandemic. We created a $12.5 million student support package that included generous donations from many staff, alumni, Council members and friends of the University. Through emergency relief payments and a new Matthew Flinders Scholarship programme we were able to support nearly 2,000 students who might otherwise have been unable to continue their studies.

We continue to champion diversity and equality of opportunity for all. Indeed this is at the heart of our first INNOVATE Reconciliation Action Plan launched in 2020 to foster an environment that recognises and embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, knowledges and cultures. Recognised by Reconciliation Australia, our INNOVATE plan is grounded in the concepts of togetherness, reciprocity and respect.

We have also taken great strides towards our sustainability goals with 100% of our electrical power now supplied from renewable sources. Our own solar energy farm provides 20% of our energy needs and the remainder comes from the Willogoleche Wind Farm in South Australia’s mid-north, furthering our rapid progress to become one of Australia’s first carbon-positive universities.

The result of our endeavour, prudence and careful planning means that Flinders University is in good financial shape to progress our future plans.

We can all reflect on an extraordinary 12 months of great accomplishment, for which I would especially like to thank our staff for their commitment and hard work in staying focused on the needs of our students during such an eventful year.
Our teaching and support services went online in 2020, and our Council meetings followed suit on Zoom.

From top left to right:
Professor Brenda Wilson AM
Mr Stephen Gerlach AM (Chancellor)
Mr Stephen Hains (Deputy Chancellor)
Professor John Roddick
Ms Natalie Hills
Ms Sharon Wilson
Ms Kathryn Gramp
Ms Elizabeth Perry AM (Deputy Chancellor)
Professor Colin Stirling (Vice-Chancellor)
Mr Douglas Gautier AM
Mr Aidan Cornelius-Bell
Mr George Freney
Dr Amanda Muller
Ms Natasha Kidd
Mr John Hood
President and Vice-Chancellor Professor Colin Stirling
Professor Colin Stirling has extensive experience in research, teaching and management. As Vice-Chancellor, he is responsible for ensuring the success and efficacy of Flinders University while providing strategic direction to its employees. Educated in Scotland, he has been renewed every five years. Throughout his academic career, Professor Stirling has achieved a record of excellence in research, innovation and successful change management through roles including Vice-President at the University of Manchester, and Provost and Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Curtin University.

Senior Executive Team

SENIOR EXECUTIVE TEAM

Chief Financial Officer Richard Porter
With previous roles as CFO and CEO across a range of South Australian sectors, Mr Porter has a wealth of experience in business strategy, finance and accounting. A University of South Australia graduate, he holds a Bachelor of Economics and an MBA and is a Certified Practising Accountant. Mr Porter is charged with managing Flinders University’s finance function including reporting, operations, procurement, tax and insurance.

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Vice-President and Executive Dean, College of Business, Government and Law Professor Phyllis Tharenou
Professor Phyllis Tharenou has held several executive roles at Flinders University, following earlier senior positions including Executive Director of Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences at the ARC and Dean Research at the University of South Australia. Recognised for research in international careers, global mobility, gender differences in managerial career advancement, and human resources especially of training, Professor Tharenou is a Fellow of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology in the United States, and the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management.

Vice-President and Executive Dean, College of Education, Psychology and Social Work Professor Mike Kyrios
Professor Mike Kyrios is a clinical psychologist who has held a range of academic, professional and administrative roles. His research covers the biopsychosocial spectrum and focuses on anxiety, depression, addictive and obsessive-compulsive disorders. An internationally sought-after speaker, he has been President of the Australian Psychological Society (APS), National Chair of the APS College of Clinical Psychologists and Scientific Chair for the International Congress of Applied Psychology and the World Congress of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies. Professor Kyrios holds adjunct positions at the University of Melbourne, Swinburne University and the Australian National University. He completed his postgraduate studies at LaTrobe University.

Vice-President and Executive Dean, College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Professor Vanessa Lemm
Professor Vanessa Lemm has held executive and academic appointments in Latin America, Europe and Australia including senior leadership positions at the University of New South Wales and the Diego Portales University in Chile. An internationally recognised expert in European Continental and Political Philosophy, she has published widely on Friedrich Nietzsche, biopolitics, and contemporary political thought, is the editor in chief of Nietzsche-Studien: International Yearbook in Nietzsche Studies, and co-founded an international research network on biopolitics. She completed her PhD at the New School for Social Research in New York.

Vice-President and Executive Dean, College of Medicine and Public Health Professor Jonathan Craig
Professor Jonathan Craig has contributed substantially to kidney disease research, including leading the formation of state, national and international networks for trials and best practice guidelines. A past member of a WHO expert review panel for public health, Professor Craig’s many current advisory roles include member of the National Health and Medical Research Council’s Health Translation Advisory Committee, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, Medical Services Advisory Committee and Commonwealth Department of Health Life Savings Drug Program.

Vice-President and Executive Dean, College of Nursing and Health Sciences Professor Alison Kitson
Professor Alison Kitson joined Flinders University following her leadership of the University of Adelaide’s nursing school. She has held executive roles at the Royal College of Nursing in the United Kingdom and published extensively on nursing and health care, with a focus on research translation. Professor Kitson is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Research, the American Academy of Nursing and the Royal College of Nursing of the United Kingdom. She was also awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Malmo University Sweden for her work on nursing quality and standards of care.

Vice-President and Executive Dean, College of Science and Engineering Professor Alistair Rendell
Professor Alistair Rendell joined Flinders University in 2019 following a 23-year career with the Australian National University, including more than five years as Director of the Research School of Computer Science where he oversaw a near tripling of its size. He has significant experience in both academic leadership and high-performance computing research. With an undergraduate degree in chemistry and a PhD in theoretical chemistry he has made contributions to several widely used computational chemistry software packages and is currently part of a US based team developing software for the world’s leading fastest computer.

General Counsel and University Secretary David Lim
A highly experienced General Counsel and Company Secretary, Mr Lim’s experience spans ASX listed and public sector organisations and private legal practices. A Bachelor of Economics and Bachelor of Laws graduate from the University of Adelaide, he has extensive experience in corporate governance, infrastructure projects, capital markets and funding transactions, commercial property, corporate governance, Board and Board Committees, ASX requirements, executive contracts and remuneration, and risk management.
**KEY STATISTICS**

### STUDENT AND STAFF NUMBERS — FIVE-YEAR FIGURES

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<td><strong>UNIVERSITY — CONSOLIDATED RESULTS</strong></td>
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<th><strong>HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH ENROLMENTS</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Source: Flinders University Planning and Analytical Services
Digital Up-Skilling
The Diploma of Digital Shipbuilding begins, with 53 shipbuilding workers involved in a digital up-skilling program at Tonsley, funded by the Commonwealth and South Australian Governments.

COVID-19 Support
Matthew Flinders Scholarships are initiated as Flinders University launches a $12.5 million package to support students in need due to COVID-19 disruptions.

Genomics & Bioinformatics
Flinders University is announced as one of six foundation partners of the $7 million South Australian Genomics Centre, an initiative to support genomics and bioinformatics research in South Australia across all disciplines, from environmental, plant and agricultural research to human health.

COVID-19 Vaccine Trials
Human trials of a potential COVID-19 vaccine developed at Flinders commence in South Australia, with a Phase 1 trial conducted at the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

3D Aerial Maps
3D aerial maps of bushfire affected Adelaide Hills and Kangaroo Island regions, produced by Flinders Emeritus Professor Jorg Hacker, help to assist swift fire ground recovery.

Artistic Collaboration Hub
Assemblage Centre for Creative Arts commences as a multi-disciplinary artistic collaboration hub, offering new dynamic possibilities for research into innovative artistic enquiry and art creation.

Reconciliation Action Plan
INNOVATE: Reconciliation Action Plan is launched at Flinders University to foster an environment that recognises and embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, knowledge and cultures.

Underwater Discovery
Flinders University maritime archaeologists lead the discovery of underwater Aboriginal artefacts off the north-west coast of Western Australia that rewrite knowledge on Australia’s ancient landscapes.

Campus Elders
Indigenous elders on Campus are introduced at Flinders University, with Kaurna Elder Uncle Lewis KatiBurka O’Brien at Bedford Park, Larakia and Wurramungu Elder Richard Balang/Japaljarri Fejo at Darwin campus and Arrernte Elder Dr Pat Miller AO in Alice Springs.

Training & Mentorship Award
The Diploma of Digital Technologies, created in partnership with ASC Shipbuilding, wins the prestigious Training and Mentorship Program of the Year at Defence Connect’s Australian Defence Industry Awards.

Worldclass Manufacturing
Line Zero Factory of the Future is announced, pointing to a worldclass manufacturing accelerator developed in collaboration with BAE Systems Maritime Australia and embedded within the Tonsley Innovation District.

International Students
Summer Break Series, featuring events, advice and support from Flinders University staff and alumni, is launched to support 2500 international students remaining in Adelaide after completing their study year, due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

Flinders Railway
The new Flinders Line that extends from the city to the Flinders Medical Centre and Flinders University precincts, commence passenger services – and the new Tonsley and Flinders railway stations are opened.

Digital Up-Skilling
Pictured: Teaching Advanced Technologies. 

Artistic Collaboration Hub
Pictured: Yunggorendi building entrance. 

Genomics & Bioinformatics
Pictured: Flinders University maritime archaeologists. 

COVID-19 Vaccine Trials

Climate Change
Pictured: New Flinders train line. 

3D Aerial Maps
Pictured: Australia’s Hunter Class frigates. 

Underwater Discovery
Pictured: Flinders University maritime archaeologists. 

Reconciliation Action Plan
Pictured: Genome research. 

Campus Elders
Pictured: Diploma of Digital Technologies students. 

Training & Mentorship Award
Pictured: Diploma of Digital Technologies students. 

Worldclass Manufacturing
Pictured: Pictured: Australia’s Hunter Class frigates. 

International Students
Pictured: Pictured: New Flinders train line.
Flinders University set its INNOVATE Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in motion during 2020, an expansive policy and ongoing series of initiatives to ensure Indigenous strategies and cultural perspectives are embedded throughout the University.

Developed over many months of consultation with students, staff, alumni and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across South Australia and the Northern Territory, its launch in June set the University on its own unique journey to reconciliation.

Crucial support, guidance and wisdom to set out along this path came from respected elder and leader Professor Tom Calma AO – a former diplomat, government advisor, Social Justice Commissioner, Race Discrimination Commissioner, co-chair of Reconciliation Australia, and co-chair of the ‘Indigenous Voice to Government’ initiative. His input ensured the RAP’s strength to withstand critical scrutiny of its fundamental elements, including embedding cultural learning across all Flinders University campuses, acknowledging the long-held philosophies, knowledges, research strengths and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and a determination to detect and address unconscious bias or structural discrimination.

Illustrating a determination to build a new inclusiveness for Indigenous people at Flinders University grounded in the concepts of togetherness, reciprocity and respect, the INNOVATE RAP will embed Indigenous perspectives across activities and deepen a commitment to our First Nations peoples and their knowledge and cultures in a spirit of equity, integrity and unity.

Flinders University’s RAP recommends 16 core actions informed by many more deliverables, under the themes of relationships, respect, opportunities, and governance. This includes developing an Indigenous Research Strategy, a procurement strategy to buy more goods and services from First Nations suppliers and increasing the proportion of staff and students who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Riding at the forefront of this change, Associate Professor Simone Ulalka Tur was appointed Flinders University’s inaugural Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) in February. Hailing from Yankunytjatjara community in north-west South Australia, Associate Professor Tur is responsible for engagement with Indigenous students, staff and the broader community to enhance respect for Indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives, and progress Indigenous advancement in education, research, employment and wellbeing.

Such cultural developments dovetail into the importance of key research, including Dr Annabelle Wilson’s work to establish a peer-mentoring scheme for dieticians working with Aboriginal people, to refocus on improved nutrition of a post-Colonial diet for Aboriginal people.

Ngarrindjeri and Kaurna man Dr Christopher Wilson – the first Indigenous person in Australia to complete a PhD in Archaeology (2017) – brings crucial perspective to this academic discipline by studying Aboriginal sites through the lens of Aboriginal experience. Having been a part of Flinders University life for the past 17 years, Dr Wilson is now Senior Lecturer in Archaeology and Indigenous Studies and is his work includes repatriating Ngarrindjeri ancestral remains from domestic and UK museums, and assisting in community reburials.

Narrunga woman Dr Natalie Harkin’s work as a DECRA Research Fellow at Flinders University is cataloguing important fresh historical perspectives, using archival-poetic methods to research and unlock colonial-era surveillance records to document Aboriginal women’s domestic service and labour histories in SA.

Laying further groundwork for change, Dr Maree Meredith, a Bidjara woman and Deputy Director of Poche SA + NT, a centre for improving Indigenous health outcomes, has been carefully examining the need to build a so-called ‘pipeline’ of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people throughout the higher education sector, to increase the representation of Indigenous Australians in research.

Ngarrindjeri Elder in South Australia, Desley Haynie, a former diplomat, government advisor, Social Justice Commissioner, Race Discrimination Commissioner, co-chair of Reconciliation Australia, and co-chair of the ‘Indigenous Voice to Government’ initiative. His input ensured the RAP’s strength to withstand critical scrutiny of its fundamental elements, including embedding cultural learning across all Flinders University campuses, acknowledging the long-held philosophies, knowledges, research strengths and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and a determination to detect and address unconscious bias or structural discrimination.

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The introduction of respected Senior Elders-On-Campus brought new levels of emotional support and Indigenous wisdom to Flinders University sites, through making access available to Uncle Lewis Yarluburka O’Brien, Kaurna Elder based at Bedford Park; Uncle Richard Fejo, Larrakia Elder based in Darwin, and Aunty Pat Miller, Arements Elder based in Alice Springs. The University is cataloguing important fresh historical perspectives, using archival-poetic methods to research and unlock colonial-era surveillance records to document Aboriginal women’s domestic service and labour histories in SA.

To show support for Flinders University’s RAP, a series of 20 lapel pins was created as miniature replicas of the hand-painted ceramic tiles at the Yunggorendi building’s external entrance.
Rapid response to key issues during the COVID-19 crisis highlighted Flinders’ broad expertise across multiple academic disciplines, swiftly addressing the community’s urgent safety concerns, especially for medical staff and others working at the front line of medical testing and care.

Not content to rely on external grants only, Flinders in 2020 committed internal funds which were granted to 35 COVID-19 related projects across our six Colleges, including some in collaboration with external partners. They touched myriad aspects of society, recognising that COVID-19 greatly affected the general community, not just those afflicted by the disease.

Flinders was instrumental in establishing Australia’s first dedicated testing facility for protective gowns, to ensure more locally made personal protective equipment (PPE) was available to keep healthcare workers safe from COVID-19 and other infections.

The Medical Device Research Institute (MDRI) at Tonsley, led by Professor Karen Reynolds, tested fabric samples from gown manufacturers for resistance to bacteria, virus and fluids. Flinders also helped develop the South Australian Mask Testing Facility at Tonsley, to test respirator and surgical masks produced by local manufacturer Detmold – a stringent process previously taking some three weeks in the United States. Fast-tracking the process locally ensured that SA industry could ramp up production of safe protective equipment used by health professionals.

Another innovative trial at Flinders Medical Centre tested 3D-printed face mask seals moulded to the faces of individual healthcare workers, to reduce the potential for any leakage of infection caused by ill-fitting masks when treating COVID-19 and during other high-risk procedures.

Beyond serving the medical community, Flinders University’s tests of commonly available fabric masks proved they significantly reduce the number of aerosolised viruses to which a wearer could be exposed.

A published study found that even the poorest performing mask filtered at least 63% of virus numbers in aerosols of a size produced by coughing and small enough to be inhaled into the lower respiratory system – reinforcing community confidence in these important infection control measures.

Providing effective and easily accessed mental health initiatives to an apprehensive community has been of critical importance. The Orama Institute of Mental Health and Wellbeing at Flinders University found that 80% of its research participants showed high levels of psychological distress or low levels of wellbeing since the start of COVID-19 restrictions, and Orama offered practical solutions by implementing new evidence-based strategies, delivered online by trained facilitators. This included Professor Mike Kyrios’s STREAM techniques to help people stressed and worried by self-quarantine or working from home.

The fight to protect people against the disease saw Professor Nikolai Petrovsky harness Oracle Cloud technology to speed the development of a vaccine candidate for the SARS-CoV2 coronavirus responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic, which commenced public trials in July.

Other COVID-19 related research projects at Flinders range from finding a bacterial link to respiratory failure, to tracing the virus in South Australia’s sewage systems; figuring how to enhance wellbeing among front-line health workers; evaluating the effectiveness during isolation of home telemonitoring for patients with chronic conditions, and examining remote Aboriginal community understanding and responses to the pandemic.

Researchers probed deep into surprising outcomes triggered by COVID-19 restrictions, from the impact on illicit drug trafficking and supply in Australia, to studying how parents managed family life and the effective use of physical activity during lockdowns.

Professor David Lynn will look to the future, investigating the long-term effects of COVID-19 on the immune system. COVID-19 also greatly affected the way Flinders was able to teach its students, but staff were clever and nimble in their efforts to find swift solutions. In a mere matter of weeks our dedicated lecturers, supported by our professional teams, transitioned from face-to-face teaching to full online delivery, earning high praise from the Vice-Chancellor.

In March, Flinders became the first university in SA to move all its lectures online, closely followed by online delivery of other classes, workshops, tutorials and seminars, enabling students to continue to learn via digital delivery methods. Flinders’ online learning system experienced up to 85 times the traffic compared with the previous year and coped easily with the increased volume.

The creativity, commitment and continued effort of staff to provide the best outcome for students saw Flinders’ online learning platform receive positive endorsement from 87.5% of undergraduates in the 2020 Student Experience Survey – a significantly higher engagement rating than the national universities average.

Other innovations that cleverly bridged the University’s research and teaching functions include the free “Braving COVID-19” online lecture series – an extension of Flinders’ ongoing BRAVE public lectures that highlight the work of leading researchers. In addressing subjects from epidemiology updates to COVID-related influence on climate activism, this forum provided a crucial information portal that kept the whole population informed of current, evidence-based best scientific practice, and highlighted Flinders voice as strong and responsible community leader.
Flinders University Annual Report 2020

Commission into Violence, Neglect, Abuse and Exploitation delivering stronger models for the care of all older people.

A telling example is the starting discovery by Flinders University maritime archaeology researchers that has redefined the boundaries of Australian history. Their precious find of Aboriginal stone tools and grinding stones located on the seabed off Western Australia’s Pilbara coast represents the first evidence of an ancient time when climatic change and rising seas inundated the earliest Australian Indigenous coastal settlements thousands of years ago.

Flinders maritime archaeologist Associate Professor Jonathan Benjamin led an international team which confirmed what Aboriginal communities had long believed – that ancient communities historically occupied a far greater Australia than exists today. It represents an important first step towards unlocking the secrets of ancient coastal habitation, which is a vast domain for future exploration, as 21% of Australia’s original land mass is now under water – an area larger than the state of Queensland.

This research was but one highlight in a year characterised by Flinders University Colleges flexing their academic expertise to address significant social needs.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

A record year for research success

2020 saw Flinders University lift its research income 26%, continuing an upward trend over the past five years to post its highest ever income. It has led to research breakthroughs that shift the way we think and react with the world around us.

A telling example is the starting discovery by Flinders University maritime archaeology researchers that has redefined the boundaries of Australian history. Their precious find of Aboriginal stone tools and grinding stones located on the seabed off Western Australia’s Pilbara coast represents the first evidence of an ancient time when climatic change and rising seas inundated the earliest Australian Indigenous coastal settlements thousands of years ago.

Flinders maritime archaeologist Associate Professor Jonathan Benjamin led an international team which confirmed what Aboriginal communities had long believed – that ancient communities historically occupied a far greater Australia than exists today. It represents an important first step towards unlocking the secrets of ancient coastal habitation, which is a vast domain for future exploration, as 21% of Australia’s original land mass is now under water – an area larger than the state of Queensland.

This research was but one highlight in a year characterised by Flinders University Colleges flexing their academic expertise to address significant social needs.

The Caring Futures Institute demonstrated the strength of a multi-disciplinary approach to provide solutions for complex public health issues. Mining Flinders’ rich lode of health science, medical, nursing and social welfare experts, Professors Alison Kitson, Julie Ratcliffe, Sue Gordon and Jennifer Tieman led teams that engaged with Australia’s healthcare industry to improve the lives of the elderly by making strong recommendations to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Such holistic engagement with a broad industry sector showed Flinders research having great influence and driving necessary reform – informing government policy, advising industry best practise and workforce improvements, and delivering stronger models for the care of all older people.

Professor Sally Robinson’s submissions to the Royal Commission into Violence, Neglect, Abuse and Exploitation of People With Disability also pursued this rigorous line.

Strength through collaboration

Consolidation of Flinders Health and Medical Research Institute (FHMRI) reinforced collaborative strength through bringing together many of the University’s world-leading innovative and inspiring research experts striving to improve health, prevent disease and combat health inequalities.

This includes teams led by experts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (led by Associate Professor Tamara Mackean), Eye and Vision (Professor Jamie Craig), Health Data Science (Professor Derek Chew), Heart and Vascular Health (Associate Professor Anand Ganesan), Mental Health (Professor Malcolm Batterby), Neuroscience (Professor Karin Nordstrom), Primary Care (Professor Richard Reed), Sleep Health (Professor Danny Eckert), Social Determinants (Dr Annabelle Wilson and Dr Toby Freeman), Infection and Immunity (Professor Geraint Rogers), Rural and Remote Health (Dr Vivian Isaac), Healthy Ageing (Associate Professor Kate Laver and Professor Maria Crotty) and Cancer (Associate Professor Michael Michael).

Fuelled by the appointment of Professor Peter Eastwood as new FHMRI director and the deep connections with the South Australian Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) and the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network (SALHN), FHMRI is enhancing Flinders’ research in basic and applied molecular biosciences, building healthy communities and clinical translation.

Paving the way towards reform

The sum of Flinders expertise was also evident in research that influenced important public campaigns. Academics from five Colleges and spanning many disciplines were heavily involved in five years of campaigning by the SA Abortion Action Coalition that led to the Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2020. Drawing on their research and teaching expertise, Associate Professor Barbara Baird (Women’s and Gender Studies), Associate Professor Catherine Kevin (History), Dr Prudence Flowers (History), Dr Monica Cations (Psychology), Mr Mark Rankin (Law), Adjunct Professor Judith Dwyer (Public Health), Ms Brigid Coombe (Nursing) and Dr Jessie Shipman (Health Sciences) worked with a broad-based group of lawyers, health care providers, unionists, students and individual activists to pave the way towards historic law reform.

Making sure the mind matters

Orama Institute for Mental Health and Wellbeing research into ensuring stronger mental health through preventable measures with the introduction of the Be Well Plan, created in partnership with the SAHMRI. This evidence-based, facilitated program coaches participants as they craft their own personalised wellness strategy, and is now supported by a tracker application that provides ongoing assessment of each participant’s wellbeing.

Research into post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by Professors Reg Nixon, Sharon Lawn and Associate Professor Bed Wadham led to introduction of the Military Academic Pathway Program, which has enabled 48 veterans to obtain the necessary support to start university studies. Recognised as a national finalist for Veteran Support Program of the Year in 2020, the new pathway has strengthened Flinders’ relationship with the Australian Defence Force, military industries and veterans’ associations.

Evaluating change in climate

The Climate and Sustainability Policy Research group contributed to the development of an evidence base for climate and coastal adaptation in South Australia, working in partnership with the Department of Environment and Water and local councils throughout South Australia. Led by Associate Professor Cassandra Star, this group evaluated the efficacy of current climate adaptation planning and benchmarked it against international best practice to improve policy formulation and intervention outcomes.

Looking back in time to better understand the effects of changing climate and species development, Professor John Long led a year of great accomplishment among the Palaeontology team. His research into an ancient Elipistostege fish fossil, published in the journal Nature, revealed new insights into how the human hand evolved from fish fins.

Furthering Green chemistry

Within the College of Science and Engineering, myriad new applications are being discovered for the Vortex Fluidic Device – a Flinders University invention that writes a fresh chapter in the possibilities for Green chemistry in everything from manufacturing to adapting super-hard nano-materials and even food processing. Professor of Clean Technology Colin Raston says 2020 breakthroughs, from developing more efficient lithium-ion batteries to producing more sustainable Omega-3 oils, have built on the body of about 100 papers that his research group has published about the Vortex Fluidic Device, “and we have only scratched the surface about what is possible for this device,” he explains.

Similarly, the Chalker Lab expanded its ground-breaking work to create versatile new polymers from industrial waste products, discovering that a new type of self-repairing rubber can be made from sulfur, canola cooking oil and dicyclopentadiene from petroleum refining.

Outstanding recognition for Flinders researchers

Two Flinders University researchers received exceptional awards recognising their contribution to research and innovation. Professor Colin Raston was named 2020 South Australian Scientist of the Year while Associate Professor Justin Chalker was awarded the 2020 Prime Minister’s Prize for New Innovators.
Robust engagement with industry is reinforcing Flinders University’s research strengths and propelling its most powerful collaborative projects.

Flinders and Naval Group Pacific is developing an innovative digital shipyard vision through utilising mobile machining robots and exoskeleton technologies. Flinders was also selected by Lockheed Martin Australia as one of its research partners to develop advanced technologies for Australia’s Future Submarine Program.

Flinders researchers across all six Colleges have secured new defence related research projects. This includes a $5 million National Electronic Warfare initiative at Flinders to develop research and training programs that build electronic warfare defence capabilities in Australia, and a $445,000 Australian Research Council Discovery Project to develop novel electrically conducting carbon-based paints that are stable in marine environments and provide a green solution for controlling the biofouling of surfaces.

Flinders is also playing a key role in a $15 million research and development project led by Thales Australia supported by the Trusted Autonomous Systems Defence Cooperative Research Centre, which will see Flinders researchers working with project partners to design, develop, test and evaluate various teams of autonomous vessels, to develop new systems for underwater mine detection and clearance.

Shaping the future of public health

The Caring Futures Institute at Flinders University draws on the combined research expertise of health science, medical, nursing and social welfare experts, and is engaging with Australia’s healthcare industry to establish a clear way forward in the wake of recommendations laid down by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Within this space, Professor Julie Ratcliffe leads a team that continues ARC-funded work on Quality of Life measures, formulating solutions through close collaboration with aged care providers and consumers – with a tool to inform routine sector-wide quality assessment and economic evaluation currently in development.

Collaboration ensures better Bight knowledge

Flinders University marine biology experts were part of the Great Australian Bight Research Program involving more than 100 scientists and technical staff from a range of organisations. The project uncovered more than 300 species of wildlife and other aspects of conservation significance during a four-year, $20 million project. Collaborative approaches to planning, research and training programs that build electronic warfare defence capabilities in Australia, and a $445,000 Australian Research Council Discovery Project to develop novel electrically conducting carbon-based paints that are stable in marine environments and provide a green solution for controlling the biofouling of surfaces.

Flinders secured lead commercialisation partner Clean Earth Technology to drive commercialisation and scale-up of a new polysulphide polymer developed by Associate Professor Justin Chalker that is designed to improve NFI success rates.

Assemblage presents new artistic opportunities

The establishment of the Assemblage Centre for Creative Arts at Flinders University has expanded possibilities for innovative artistic research collaboration. This new research centre, headed by former Australian Dance Theatre artistic director Professor Garry Stewart, has been designed to draw together myriad artistic and academic disciplines at Flinders University, while also encouraging external artists, researchers, industries and communities to join as partners in new artistic ventures. It aims to forge bright new ideas for research that can stimulate, measure and qualify the social and commercial impact of Arts endeavours, resulting in a new type of knowledge creation. This includes major collaborative projects being undertaken in The Void, one of the largest virtual reality and motion capture labs in South Australia, that is bringing together filmmakers, choreographers, actors, dancers, gamers, archaeologists, medical researchers and technicians in collective digital vision projects.

Commercialising our intellectual property

In late 2020, Flinders was closely involved with the launch of start-up company NuLife BV, in conjunction with majority investor and venture partner IQ Medical Ventures. The seed investment of $350,000 will be used to progress clinical milestones for a novel IVF pharmaceutical intervention developed at Flinders by Professor Karen Turner that is designed to improve IVF success rates.

Flinders secured lead commercialisation partner Clean Earth Technology to drive commercialisation and scale-up of a new polysulphide polymer developed by Associate Professor Justin Chalker and his team while also funding on-going research at Flinders. The polymer from waste sulfur and vegetable oil binds mercury, gold, and other heavy metals and therefore has a wide range of potential uses. Scale-up of production of the polymer from approximately 1kg per week to 5kg per hour has already been achieved, with Clean Earth Technology developing a high-tech automated production facility in Adelaide that will achieve over 1 tonne per day for export. Partly as a result of this commercial impact Associate Professor Chalker was awarded the 2020 Prime Minister’s Prize for New Innovators.

New Venture Institute

The renowned UBI World Benchmark Study included Flinders University’s New Venture Institute as the only Australian incubator and one of three that top the Asia Pacific region for 2019/20 among its top global business incubators from among 1580 programs. It reinforced Flinders’ reputation as Australia’s leading University Business accelerator, that has - since its inception in 2013 – hosted more than 12,000 event participants, trained 2000 innovators, and founded, supported and grown 421 startups that have raised more than $3.5 million for projects and ventures. It has served as a vital springboard for such companies as GoMicro, whose versatile artificial intelligence microscope is being used in a kit to diagnose leishmaniasis in war-torn nations, on farms to identify pests, and to grade tuna for consumption in Sri Lanka.

NVI was a partner in such important industry summits as FOMETN, a four-week wine and tourism technology accelerator event held in Adelaide during October, that presented an array of innovative business ideas involving technology solutions with potential to shape the future of the wine and tourism industries.
Flinders University, in partnership with ASC Shipbuilding, launched the Diploma of Digital Technologies in March 2020, with its initial intake upskilling 51 shipbuilders from ASC Shipbuilding, BAE Systems Australia, equipping them with digital skills for modern shipbuilding. In this program, which is supported by the Federal and State Governments and delivered in partnership with TAFE SA, students developed future-focused skills in innovation and industry 4.0, cybersecurity, digital design, design for manufacture, cyber-physical systems, robotics and automation.

The immediate success of this new diploma saw it win the prestigious Training and Mentoring Program of the Year in Defence Connect’s 2020 Australian Defence Industry Awards. Flinders University Professor in Innovation and Program Director Giselle Rampersad says this recognition highlights the successful partnership between university, industry and government, and also the importance of Australian organisations being able to use digital technologies to boost sovereign manufacturing capacity in a cost-effective fashion. Plans are underway to expand this program to include SMEs and organisations from a broad range of sectors, from defence to manufacturing, health, energy and construction.

Citations for Australian teaching awards

The 2020 Australian Awards for University Teachers applauded the work of several Flinders educators who received citations for making outstanding contributions to student learning. Dr Masha Smallhorn, from the College of Science and Engineering, received a citation for engaging large first-year cohorts in biological sciences through gamification to enhance student engagement.

Vice-Chancellor applauds teaching innovations

Marking an extraordinary year of challenge for the University’s teaching staff, the Vice-Chancellor’s 2020 Excellence in Teaching and 2020 Innovation in Teaching awards rewarded outstanding performers in unusually demanding and disrupted circumstances.

A Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching was presented to Dr Louise Matwiejczyk and her team from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences for innovation and leadership. A recipe for enhancing the student experience and teaching and learning through short-term study abroad experiences in nutrition and dietetics.

Excellence in Teaching Awards were also presented to Dr Maria Giannacopulos (College of Business, Government and Law) for developing cutting edge, research-led curricula in Criminology which addresses contemporary global questions of Indigenous and racial justice, and to Ms Ying Yu and her team from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences for improving consistency in teaching and learning clinical skills and optimising student capacity to develop competency through the development of the Clinical Skills Storybook.

An increased number of seven Vice-Chancellor’s Innovation in Teaching Awards recognised clever solutions to overcome the unusual challenges of 2020 and ensure better learning engagement. They were presented to Dr Christine Barry (College of Medicine and Public Health) for 3D pelvic anatomy learning online; Mr Joss Rankin (College of Education, Psychology and Social Work) for engaging partners in Outdoor Education; Dr Nina Sverstsen and team (College of Nursing and Health Sciences) for the Malpa program; Dr Masha Smallhorn and Mrs Narelle Hunter (College of Science and Engineering) for Online Virtual Practical Simulations in Biological Sciences; Dr Philip Palmer (College of Business, Government and Law) for using Quitch in company accounting; Dr Sam Elliott (College of Education, Psychology and Social Work) for targeted Work Integrated Learning in the Bachelor of Sport, Health and Physical Activity; and Dr Vpul Pare and Dr Rajesh Johnsam (College of Business, Government and Law) for gamification to enhance student engagement.

New media teaching wins global plaudits

The quality of teaching in new media has been amplified by the continuing success of Flinders University’s partnership with CDW Studios. Together, they have triumphed in the global Rookies rankings for digital design and illustration, rocketing to number four in the world during 2020 for concept art and illustration; number six for 2D animation; making the revered best overall creative media and entertainment school list for the first time; and placed in the world’s top 50 schools for game design and visual effects.

Expanded work placements

Flinders University’s Work Integrated Learning program resulted in almost 14,000 placements completed in 2020. While 2330 placements were affected by COVID-19 disruptions, some were rescheduled and others delivered via alternative learning options. This included introducing the Flinders Engineering Consulting model to ensure Masters of Engineering students could complete their placements, and third-year Exercise Science students running EXStradorinary Brain Breaks as placement alternatives.

Online Learning and Teaching

In response to the online delivery of teaching and learning, usage of Flinders University’s learning technology platforms experienced significant growth in 2020 – especially Kaltura (video platform, up to 20 times more traffic), Collaborate (web conferencing, with attendees up to 60 times higher), and with up to 3000 students accessing both Collaborate and Kaltura software. To improve online study interaction, FLO interface was updated to provide some significant benefits, including a more contemporary appearance, better ability for students to control how topics are viewed, improved navigation, a timeline feed showing upcoming due dates and easier access to recently visited topics and activities – all in a more mobile-friendly application.

Outstanding student research

The outstanding quality of work published by Flinders University students was recognised with the 2020 Best Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Student Publication Prizes. The winners were Piyamas Kanokwongnuwut (College of Science and Engineering), Dr Lito Papanicolas (Medicine and Public Health), Victoria Bridgland (Education, Psychology and Social Work), Dr Brittany Johnson (Nursing and Health Sciences), Mohammad Khorsand (Science and Engineering), Stephen Muller (Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences) and Dr Sian Troath (Business, Government and Law), while the Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in HDR Supervision went to Dr Helen McLaren.

HDDR Student Research Impact prizes were awarded to Dr Lauren Meyer (Science and Engineering) and Dr Sarah Fraser (Nursing and Health Sciences), while Vice-Chancellor’s Awards for Doctoral Thesis Excellence went to Dr Daryl Selwood and Dr Jennifer Slaep (Nursing and Health Sciences), Dr Lisa Alcock, Dr Alex Newcombe, Dr Elton Shute and Dr Menyert Boknazarova (Science and Engineering), Dr Matthew Tieu, Dr David Tumbull and Dr Sean Gilbert (Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences), Dr Simone Deegan (Business, Government and Law) and Dr Sasha Guayum and Dr Cara Rossi (Education, Psychology and Social Work). Dr Guayum also received the Australian Psychology Society Award for Excellent PhD thesis in Psychology for her thesis titled ‘An Investigation into the Mechanisms Underlying the Memory Amplification Effect’.
Flinders NT is a hub of health research, education and workforce development – and it works in partnership with Flinders University Rural Health SA + NT to facilitate high quality, multidisciplinary health education and research, and provide local placement opportunities for rural students.

The Flinders NT Medical Program is especially valuable, providing workforce support, inspiring healthy living and careers in health, and supporting NT communities through innovative initiatives such as the Poche SA + NT Centre for Indigenous Health.

Dr Maree Meredith, acting deputy director of Poche SA + NT, presents a compelling case that a different language is needed to improve Indigenous health. Her research says Indigenous people want to be engaged – in a language they want to listen to. “For most of these people, English is their third language. If we shape the health conversation in their terms, it shifts power to the people who need to benefit from our medical research. If not, we won’t make progress.”

Dr Meredith and her colleagues are striving to introduce change. Their research shows that Aboriginal communities experience and discuss health very differently to conventional health personnel. She insists the existing system and current means of communicating with Indigenous people about health is not working. “We’re advocating for a social model of health. For Indigenous Australians, you cannot have an effective conversation about health unless it is also about language, culture, country and family. These four aspects cannot be separated from what it means to be healthy. It must be holistic conversation.”

Dr Meredith says the biomedical model and relationships with doctors will not improve unless broad relationships are improved with Aboriginal communities, which requires a big shift from how the medical sector currently operates, with greater empathy needed. “The biomedical model is only one way of dealing with health. There are traditional healers who have been practising for millennia, and Indigenous knowledge also needs to be at that interface,” she says. “Medical people come with their expertise, but Aboriginal people bring their lived experience, along with their experience as traditional healers. It all has to come together.”

Dr Meredith says change will come through a health system that respects Indigenous community approaches, which is being employed by Poche SA + NT. “We don’t go into a community unless we are invited. We don’t impose our ideas. Instead, we accept their invitation to help, either from individuals or from communities. That’s a respectful approach. And due to this, invitations for the Poche Centre to work with communities are coming thick and fast. The great opportunity right now is how we train the current generation of students to be the next practitioners.

It’s why we have increased the numbers of Indigenous members of staff, and have Indigenous Elders on campus – so that when a non-Indigenous person comes into our program, the first thing they see is an Aboriginal face.”

Career pathway advice goes online

Due to COVID-19 concerns, Top End Health Services and the Flinders NT Regional Training Hub postponed an annual face-to-face Medical Careers Expo for 2020, but replaced it with a Medical Career Pathway Webinar Series that allowed NT medical students and pre-vocational doctors to connect with specialist colleges and progress their training and career planning. The programs featured Fellows and trainees speaking of their experiences within the NT and beyond, how to optimise training prospects, and how to connect with relevant health departments and support systems.

Ten specialty Colleges and organisations recorded and uploaded video segments onto the Flinders NT RTH webpage with other career pathways announced.

Expanding Paramedic studies

In commemorating 20 years of teaching Paramedic Science in 2020, Flinders expanded its teaching offering to include a new Paramedic Science course in NT from 2021. Tailored specifically for the NT, the course is delivered in collaboration with St John NT, the South Australian Ambulance Service and Ambulance Victoria, ensuring industry relevance. Theory components can be completed online from anywhere in the Northern Territory, while face-to-face components will be delivered via practical workshop intensives in state-of-the-art facilities in Darwin each semester, with 300 hours of emergency ambulance placements over the duration of the degree with St John NT. It will provide a pathway for graduates to apply for the Flinders NT medical program under the Postgraduate entry pathway into the Doctor of Medicine degree.

Practical education sessions for remote clinics

While COVID-19 travel restrictions limited learning opportunities for some remote practitioners, Flinders NT educators at Nhulunbuy assisted local health services by providing practical education sessions.

Nursing Lecturer Chloe Lyons and Senior Lecturer in Remote Medicine Dr Katie Williamson visited clinical staff at Gunyangara Clinic, part of the Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation that provides essential Aboriginal Health services across the East Arnhem region, to help with Basic and Advanced Life Support refresher training, developing realistic simulations for the teams to troubleshoot. Flinders University medical and nursing students were also involved in the training session, gaining insight into challenges facing small remote clinics.

Extraordinary circumstances saw COVID-19 impact Flinders University’s international engagement across all priority areas in 2020, with the nature of international student recruitment fundamentally changed due to international border closures. This resulted in a raft of adaptations, including transitioning to fully digital online recruitment activities; enhanced engagement and relationship management with the University’s agent network; support of offshore recruitment partners; enhanced conversion campaign initiatives; webinars and masterclasses which were developed and supported by Academic staff, and a new Go Beyond Scholarship Scheme.

However, despite COVID-19 interferences, total international enrolments for 2020 reached 97% of the 2019 enrolment total, and Flinders exceeded its International student recruitment target in Semester 1.

International Student Support

Flinders International led the critical incident response and retention strategy of students who were unable to travel to Australia in Semester 1, 2020. Emergency Remote Learning expanded as the University’s International Student Support Services (ISS) transitioned online, including the provision of all support services: advisory, orientation and student engagement activities. Semester 2, 2020 saw recruitment of a new offshore student cohort, which commenced online studies with the intention of travelling to Australia when possible.

Staff across the University worked with Flinders International to create a Consolidated Student Services Point that ensured students could receive personalised face-to-face support during Australia’s COVID-19 lockdowns. This was an important and successful initiative that connected students both from students and staff.

Flinders International also led the University’s contribution to the Student Return to South Australia Pilot Program, working in collaboration with the SA Government, UniSA, University of Adelaide and Study Adelaide.

Despite such difficulties affecting their study year, Flinders’ international students won three tertiary student categories in the StudyAdelaide 2020 International Student Awards, with awards granted to Bushfire Support (Kathu huntsman), Nhat Thach Ng (United States) and Sisley Li (China), while Najma Khagul Khan from Pakistan, and Mey Wong (Wong Ying Mey) from Malaysia were highly commended.

Learn Without Borders

The University’s Learn Without Borders team led the critical incident response and repatriation of students, with Virtual Study opportunities explored in lieu of border closures.

Transnational Education

Flinders University was able to deliver seven courses to 1382 students in collaboration with international partners in China, Malaysia and Singapore. Flinders Transnational Education (TNE) programs include Masters and Bachelor courses in Psychology, Education, International Relations and Health Administration. In total, the University delivered 2020, more than 650 Flinders students graduate from the three joint programs.

20-year Masters Partnership

The twentieth anniversary of Flinders University’s partnership with Chitkara University in India marks the delivery Transnational Education programs was marked in 2020 through the ongoing delivery of three successful Masters programs. With Nankai University having celebrated its 100th anniversary celebrations in 2019, the relationship between the two prestigious universities has flourished since the initial collaboration established by the late Professor Noel Tracy from Flinders’ former School of International Studies. Currently, Professor Binglian Liu from the College of Economic and Social Development at Nankai University, now, the successful delivery of the Master of Arts in International Relations, Economy and Trade (MAIRET), Master of Hospital Administration (MHA) and the Master of Educational Leadership and Management (MELM) has seen more than 5600 students graduate from the three joint programs.

India Strategy

In February 2020, Flinders University’s largest and most senior delegation travelled to India to build on valuable Indian partnerships as well as forge new connections with a strategic focus on research, student recruitment, education and mobility. Flinders University Vice-President and Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) Sebastian Ranesold met with Chitkara University Chancellor Dr Madhu Chitkara to sign a new Memorandum of Understanding, resulting in a Flinders-Chitkara dedicated scholarship and the opening of a Flinders Corner at Chitkara to give students Flinders course information.

Generous support pledged for students

Many of Flinders University’s international students needed increased support due to COVID-19 disruptions, which resulted in a phenomenal generosity of staff, alumni and supporters to raise money for the Matthew Flinders Scholarship Fund, forming part of Flinders’ $12.5m support package for students in need. An estimated 3500 international students struggled as a result of the pandemic - many losing part time work, some lacking IT access required to transition to online study and others feeling the stress of isolation – which is why the scholarships provided relief payments to students with urgent and immediate needs, especially those unable to return to their home countries due to border closures.

Other initiatives supported by Flinders International to help mitigate international student financial hardship included the FUSA Emergency Hardship fund and the SA Government International Student Support Package.

“FLINDERS UNIVERSITY HAS SHOWN GREAT SUPPORT TO ME AND MY FELLOW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS DURING THIS COVID-19 PERIOD. THEY HAVE GIVEN US FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND PROVIDED ALL THE DEGREE SUPPORT ONE NEEDS TO EXCEL IN THEIR ACADEMIC STUDIES.”

Olayinka Abiyoye, Master of Civil Engineering student, from Nigeria
Innovator earns Prime Minister’s Prize
Associate Professor Justin Chalker won the Prize for New Innovators in the 2020 Prime Minister’s Prizes for Science, recognising his discovery and development of a new class of polymers that provide sustainable solutions to some of humanity’s greatest challenges – clean air, fresh water and sustainable food production. Associate Professor Chalker’s invention allows polymers to be synthesised directly from elemental sulfur (a by-product of the petrochemical industry) and renewable, low-cost plant oils such as limonene and canola – a welcome substitute for the unsustainable methods used in traditional plastic and rubber manufacture – and these inventions have led to a global commercialisation and distribution agreement with Clean Earth Technologies.

SA spotlight on Raston and Reynolds
Flinders University took the spotlight at the 2020 SA Science Excellence and Innovation Awards, with South Australia’s Scientist of the Year honour shared by Professor of Clean Technology Colin Raston (with Professor Sharad Kumar), while the nation-leading South Australian Medical Device Partnering Program, led by Professor Karen Reynolds, won the Excellence in Science and Industry Collaboration Award.

Trio stand proud as Tall Puppies
Three of Flinders University’s emerging stars of research – hydrogeologist and water management expert Dr Margaret Shanafied; archaeologist Dr Ian Moffat and palaeontologist Dr Alice Clement – were named in 2020 SA Tall Poppy Science Awards. The recognition is announced to coincide with National Science Week, along with the annual Unsung Heroes of SA Science Awards, which included Mrs Pat Vilimas as a finalist. The Technical Officer in Microscopy and Pathology from Professor Damien Keating’s laboratory in the College of Medicine and Public Health was commended for her ongoing commitment to supporting medical research.

Alumni making an impact on society
At the 2020 Flinders University Alumni Awards, the achievements of recent graduates were celebrated for the first time, among 16 award recipients for their impact on society. The expanded array of awards, which reflected a vast influx of nominations, included two Convocation Medals (the highest honour for Flinders University graduates), 7 Distinguished Alumni Awards and 7 recipients of inaugural Early Career Alumni Awards.

The Convocation Medalists were Sarah Brown AM, Chief Executive Officer of Purple House that facilitates improved health services for Indigenous Australians living in remote communities, and Professor Jamie Cooper AO, Director of the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Research Centre, Head of Critical Care Research at Monash University and Senior Specialist in Intensive Care at The Alfred Hospital.

Distinguished Alumni Awards went to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researcher David Tarnda Cogley; Gienunga International High School principal Wendy Johnson; Professor Ross McKinnon; arborist, botanist and ecologist Dr Dean Nicolle OAM; bioscience activist Professor Wendy Rogers; and maritime archaeology Adjunct Associate Professor Mark Staniforth. Dr Ian Davis OAM received a posthumous award for his service to people living with motor neurone disease, notably through establishing advocacy organisation FightMND.

The seven inaugural Early Career Alumni recipients were Saadia Daniel Ajak, for his contribution to the African-Australian community; screen editor and film post-production mentor Verónica Buhagiar; Dr Melanie Farrier, for promoting equity within the STEM community; Dr Lauren Meyer for innovative research in shark trophic ecology; Dr Gemma Sharp for mental health research and clinical practice within the field of body image and eating disorders; and Dr Christopher Wilson for bringing crucial perspective to archaeology by studying Aboriginal sites through the lens of Aboriginal experience.

National honours for service
A large contingent of 18 people from the Flinders University community were acknowledged with 2020 Australia Day Honours, including 13 alumni along with current and former staff, and donors to the University.

Flinders graduate and Convocation Medalist Professor Anthony Thomas, physicist and an Australian Laureate Fellow, was one of five Australians to take the top honour of Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) – and other award recipients included maverick fossil hunter and conservationist Professor Rod Wells and physics teacher Associate Professor Maria Parapally.

The 2020 Queens Birthday awards recognised 16 Flinders people, led by current Flinders University council member and Deputy Chancellor Elizabeth Perry AM. Awards also went to neurophysiologist expert Professor Marcello Costa AC; defence technology researcher Professor Jackie Craig AM; remote and Indigenous health advocate Sarah Brown AM; Medical educator Dr Sara Louise Jones AM; hearing expert Dr John Craig Byrne AM; medical administrator Professor Paul Nathaniel Smith AM and forensic scientist Professor Adrian Linacre OAM.

Outstanding public health leadership
Professor Nicola Spurrier was awarded the 2020 Basil Hetzel Leadership in Public Health Award. The Chief Public Health Officer for the South Australian Department for Health and Wellbeing and Flinders University professor (academic status) was recognised for outstanding leadership and contributions as the state dealt with devastating bushfires followed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Water expert takes on ARC role
Internationally renowned earth scientist, hydrogeologist and groundwater expert Professor Craig Simmons joined the Australian Research Council as Executive Director, Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Earth Sciences. A Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, Professor Simmons is a multi-award winning researcher whose accolades include SA Scientist of the Year (2015) Australian Water Professional of the Year (2017), Flinders University Convocation Medalist (2017) and Director of the National Centre for Groundwater Research and Training at Flinders University.

Museum honour adds to Long list
Globally recognised palaeontology expert Strategic Professor John Long was made an Honorary Associate of the Australian Museum in November 2020, applauded for his position as one of the most distinguished evolutionary biologists in Australia. Only nine of these lifetime honorary appointments have been awarded in the museum’s 190-year history, prompting Professor Long to announce “this is quite an unexpected accolade”.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Flinders University’s efforts to engage with the wider community were challenged and transformed due to COVID-19 disruptions during 2020 – but smart initiatives brought forward innovative thinking and fresh possibilities.

FUMA

Although periodic lockdowns prevented much face-to-face engagement, FUMA (Flinders University Museum of Art) – one of the largest university art collections in Australia, with more than 8000 works - still presented art and inspiration to audiences through new digital offerings. In the hold: Decolonising Cook in contemporary Australian art – one of the largest university art collections in Australia, with more than 8000 works - still presented art and inspiration to audiences through new digital offerings. In the hold: Decolonising Cook in contemporary Australian art, FUMA exhibition.

Engagement

learning bookings during 2020. and Medicine students – resulting in more than 100 object-based-Drama and Social Work, as well as a powerful program for Psychiatry FUMA collections also support topics in Media Studies, Visual Art, Geography, History, Health Sciences, Literature and Social Sciences. raft of Indigenous studies programs, across Art History, Education, and a Multi-Disciplinary service called Healthy for Life. This builds on its already successful optometry, physiotherapy, hearing and speech pathology services that are both affordable and high quality, while providing more than 350 placement training experiences for students and research opportunities using the newest technology.

Sporting partnerships

Visible engagement in the southern suburbs has continued with Flinders University’s 12-year sponsorship support of South Adelaide Football Club taken to an even greater level with the re-naming of the Panthers’ home ground at Norwood as Flinders University Stadium. This agreement builds on the relationship between South Adelaide and Flinders University that also sees the Flinders logo emblazoned across the playing jumpers for both men’s and women’s football teams, and interaction between Flinders sports programs with South Adelaide footballers. In other sporting codes, Flinders University remained Adelaide United’s naming rights sponsor on the players’ jerseys for home games for the men’s and women’s teams played at Coopers Stadium in Hindmarsh.

Talking Art and Ideas was another new initiative that brought artists and art enthusiasts together for livestreamed long-format conversations over a four-part series. Despite disruptions to classes, FUMA also continued to fulfill its important role in collections-based teaching and learning, ensuring digital access to artworks, facilitating lecture recordings in the museum, and developing resources for online delivery. FUMA’s nationally significant holdings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art comprises a vital component for a raft of Indigenous studies programs, across Art History, Education, Geography, History, Health Sciences, Literature and Social Sciences. FUMA collections also support topics in Media Studies, Visual Art, Drama and Social Work, as well as a powerful program for Psychiatry and Medicine students – resulting in more than 100 object-based-learning bookings during 2020.

Menors connect with Arts students

Launching the Student to Alumni Mentoring Program (StAMP) for Creative Arts enabled final year Arts students to connect with Flinders alumni who have relevant Arts industry experience, to share their advice, knowledge and expertise. A diverse collection of 23 mentors participated in StAMP, including Flinders University Alumni Award winners Basia Borkowski (executive producer at Screentime Australia), theatre director Geordie Brookman, cinematic editor Veronica Buhagiar, writer and illustrator Alan Tucker, and Julianne Pierce (Executive Officer of Arts Industry Council SA).

Nurses acknowledged with respect

To celebrate International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, Flinders University nursing and midwifery academics held a Candlelight Vigil to meet the dawn with one minute’s silence in the Bedford Park Hub on International Nurses Day (12 May). It was designed to show support for colleagues around the world working at the coalface of COVID-19 treatment and patient care, while more than 770 nursing graduates from the class of 2020 were mailed a special Nursing-Midwifery pin to celebrate their achievement during the Year of the Nurse and Midwife.

Science viewed through the lens of young females

The Flinders University Cochlear Aurora Photo Contest – part of Flinders University’s engagement with schools to promote STEM studies among local female high school students – attracted a record number of entries that creatively captured the topic “science is everywhere”. As an initiative of Flinders University’s STEM: Women Branching Out group, the five-year-old competition aims to inspire more girls to delve into the wonder of science and ultimately consider their futures working among its many disciplines. The 2020 contest included Year Seven students for the first time, as public, private and Independent schools were represented across wide economic demographics.

Health2Go continues to grow

The Flinders Health2Go allied health centre at the University’s Sturt campus expanded its community health services by commencing four new services in 2020 - Exercise Physiology, Nutrition, Diabetes and a Multi-Disciplinary service called Healthy for Life. This builds on its already successful optometry, physiotherapy, hearing and speech pathology services that are both affordable and high quality, while providing more than 350 placement training experiences for students and research opportunities using the newest technology.

With almost 4100 consultations provided during 2020 – a number comparable to 2019 consultations, thanks to the expanded range of services that are both affordable and high quality, while providing more than 350 placement training experiences for students and research opportunities using the newest technology. With almost 4100 consultations provided during 2020 – a number comparable to 2019 consultations, thanks to the expanded range of services, and despite significant limits imposed on physical Optometry and audiology testing due to COVID-19 restrictions. Importantly, the modification of many services to a telehealth format during COVID provided more than 150 patients with care that might otherwise have been missed.
Thank you to our donors and friends who partnered with us in 2020 and 2021* to make a difference. Thank you also to our many donors who wish to remain anonymous.

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Natalie Hill
Parthenia Hibbs
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Mark Horton
Joseph Horrobin
Sally Hocking
Pete Houlden
Mak Hough
Dian Hueson
Christian Huddlestone
Felicity Huggett
Kathleen Hughes
Marilyn Gullen
Goddard Gullifer
Ann Gardner
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Stephen & Ruth Gullifer AM
Scott Germann
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The primary responsibilities of Council are:

- Appointing and monitoring the performance of the Vice-Chancellor as Chief Executive Officer;
- Approving the mission and strategic direction of the University, including its annual Budget and Business Plan;
- Overseeing and reviewing the management of the University and its performance;
- Establishing policy and procedural principles consistent with legal and community expectations;
- Approving and monitoring systems of control and accountability, including controlled entities;
- Overseeing and monitoring the assessment and management of risk, including commercial undertakings;
- Overseeing and monitoring the academic activities of the University; and
- Approving significant commercial activities of the University.

Council Members

The Council consists of the following members:

- the Chancellor ex officio;
- the Vice-Chancellor ex officio;
- the president of the Academic Senate ex officio or if the presiding officer is the Vice-Chancellor, an academic staff member of the Academic Senate who is not a student of the University, elected by the Academic Senate;
- eight persons appointed by the Council on the recommendation of a selection committee (the term of office is 2 or 4 years determined on the recommendation of the selection committee).

Committees of the University Council

To assist with its responsibilities, Council has established Standing committees which contribute to the effective governance of the University.

Each of the standing committees provide expert advice to Council in their key area of responsibility and is chaired by a member of Council, ensuring effective communication with, and accountability to, Council.

Executive Committee

Composition

Chancellor ex officio (Chairperson); and Six (6) Chancellor-appointed members, as follows:

- Vice-Chancellor ex officio
- 2 x Deputy Chancellors ex officio
- Chair, Academic Senate ex officio
- 2 x external members of Council.

Key Responsibilities

The Executive Committee is responsible for advising and assisting the Council in the performance of its responsibilities, including governance requirements; composition, structure and monitoring of Council and its committees; the appointment of the Chancellor, Deputy Chancellors and Vice-Chancellor; succession planning; and advising the Council on the University’s strategic plan, emerging risks and opportunities.

Academic Senate

Composition

Appointed members (13):

- Chairperson (a member of the academic staff appointed by the Vice-Chancellor)
- Twelve (12) senior academic staff, namely, two (2) from each College, with skills and experience appropriate to the Academic Senate’s terms of reference, appointed by each Vice-President and Executive Dean giving due consideration to gender balance.

Ex officio members (14):

- Vice-Chancellor
- Dean of Graduate Research
- Dean of Academic Senate
- Education Officer, Student Council
- Deputy Chancellors ex officio
- Six (6) x Senior Deans of College
- Pro Vice-Chancellor (International)
- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)
- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student)
- Vice-President
- University Higher Degrees by Research Committee
- University Higher Degrees by Research Committee

Key Responsibilities

Academic Senate oversees and monitors the academic activities of the University and ensures the academic quality and integrity of the University’s academic operations.

Senate has four sub-committees to which it has delegated some of these responsibilities:

- Education Quality Committee
- Research Quality Committee
- Student Appeals Committee
- University Higher Degrees by Research Committee

Audit & Risk Committee

Composition

The Committee is appointed by the Council and comprises at least three members:

- The Chair will normally be selected from amongst the external membership of Council.
- All members will be persons external to the University.
- All members must have an understanding of the content of financial statements and the key financial issues facing the University.
- At least one member must be qualified and experienced in accounting or finance.
- The Chancellor will not be a member of the Committee.

Key Responsibilities

The Audit & Risk Committee assists Council to discharge its oversight and monitoring responsibilities by providing advice on financial reporting, compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, internal control structure, risk management procedures, and the internal and external audit functions.

Finance & Investment Committee

Composition

The Committee comprises the following members appointed by the Council:

- The Chair will be an external member of Council, other than the Chancellor, with financial and/or commercial expertise.
- Up to five persons external to the University with relevant expertise, subject to the resulting composition having an equal or greater number of Council members compared to other persons.
- Vice-Chancellor (ex officio).

Key Responsibilities

The Finance & Investment Committee advises Council on matters concerning the overall financial performance and management of the University, including matters having a significant financial impact, annual budget setting and performance, and monitoring of investments and resources.
**Remuneration Committee**

**Composition**

The membership will comprise the members of the Executive Committee except that the Vice-Chancellor will not be a member of the Committee.

The Remuneration Committee assists Council to discharge its oversight and monitoring responsibilities in relation to the setting and annual review of remuneration and performance goals for the Vice-Chancellor and senior executive remuneration and succession planning.

**Council Member Attendance – 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>FA</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>ARC</th>
<th>EC</th>
<th>FIC</th>
<th>RC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Mr Stephen Gerlach AM, Chancellor (ex officio)</em></td>
<td>1/03/10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Professor Colin Stirling, Vice-Chancellor (ex officio)</em></td>
<td>1/01/15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Professor John Riddick, Presiding member of Academic Senate (ex officio)</em></td>
<td>1/07/17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mr George Freney, Appointed member of Council</em></td>
<td>1/01/19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mr Douglas Gaultier AM, Appointed member of Council</em></td>
<td>19/04/12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ms Kathryn Gramp, Appointed member of Council</em></td>
<td>1/01/15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mr Stephen Haines, Appointed member of Council</em></td>
<td>1/01/11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ms Elizabeth Perry AM, Appointed member of Council</em></td>
<td>8/08/13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mr John Hood, Appointed member of Council</em></td>
<td>9/03/17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Professor Brenda Wilson AM, Appointed member of Council</em></td>
<td>1/10/15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^<em>Ms Sharon Wilson, Appointed member of Council</em></td>
<td>23/08/19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^<em>Dr Amanda Mullen, Academic Staff member elected by Academic Staff</em></td>
<td>13/07/18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Natalie Hills, Professional Staff member elected by Professional Staff</td>
<td>1/01/17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mr Aidan Cornelius-Bell, Elected PG student member</em></td>
<td>1/01/20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ms Natasha Kidd, Elected UG student member</em></td>
<td>1/01/20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data for Council Members only

*Membership continuing *Reflects attendance at meetings while the person was eligible to attend as a member.

**Code of Best Practice**

The University adheres to the Voluntary Code of Best Practice for the Governance of Australian Universities.

This Code seeks to provide support and guidance to university governing bodies and to university leadership more broadly. It outlines the key roles and responsibilities of governing bodies and provides a suite of recommendations and guidelines to support their effective functioning.

**Risk Management**

The University has a risk management framework which is supported by risk management and legislative compliance policies and regular reporting to Council and its standing Committees on enterprise and operational risk, including work health and safety. The approach to risk management is consistent with the Australian and New Zealand Standard (AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018).

The University maintains a rolling three-year Internal Audit Plan that is undertaken by the University’s internal auditors and is developed with regard to the University’s risk register.

The 2020 audit areas included Cybersecurity, Security and Quality requirements for Managing Defence Contracts and Course Accreditation. The University also maintains a corporate insurance program that is regularly reviewed with regard to the University’s risk profile.

During 2020, senior executives and leaders were also provided with training on fraud, cyber-security, conflict of interest and other related issues.

**Response to COVID-19 Pandemic**

During an unprecedented year, the University’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic was multifaceted with staff acting rapidly to implement health and wellbeing measures, move to online teaching and changing the way we deliver student support services, as well as creating innovative events such as the Virtual Open Days for prospective students and other members of the community to experience the world-class attributes of our University.

A COVID-19 Taskforce was established and led by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor to ensure that the University responded effectively to COVID across all operational areas to keep students and staff up to date with the evolving situation. COVID-safe plans were implemented to ensure appropriate physical distancing and related measures designed to ensure staff and students remained safe once they were able to return to the campuses.

The University also established a $12.5 million Student Support Package to support students facing financial hardship as a result of the pandemic.

**GOVERNANCE & RISK**

**Sustainability**

The Sustainability Plan to 2025 sets out the University’s aspirations including achieving zero net emissions from electricity by 2021 and generating 30% of its energy needs from renewable sources.

In line with this Plan, Flinders entered into an agreement at the end of 2020 with global energy provider ENGIE for the supply of the University’s electricity needs from 100% renewable sources. The supply complements our existing investments in solar carpark and rooftop systems that were already generating 20% of electricity needs at our main campus. Our investment in a range of renewable supply and storage projects has Flinders making rapid progress to become one of Australia’s first carbon-positive universities.

In addition, Flinders’ vision to decarbonise its transport fleet is well underway having installed 13 electric vehicle charging stations at its main campus and having 3 electric vehicles in its fleet with plans for more in the future.

**Virtual Open Days**

The University has a fleet of electric vehicles and plans to increase this number in the future.

In addition, Flinders’ vision to decarbonise its transport fleet is well underway having installed 13 electric vehicle charging stations at its main campus and having 3 electric vehicles in its fleet with plans for more in the future.
Students at Bedford Park campus

FINANCIALS

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Cash Flows Statement 45
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To be read in consultation with the full financial statement.
2020 was a year of challenge for the University, not least in having to respond to the impact of COVID-19. With strong cash reserves and minimal debt the University had the financial capacity to react quickly and decisively to the uncertainty and disruption to operations. This included transitioning modes of teaching online, the introduction of programmes to support student welfare and those financially disadvantaged, and expansion of the University’s capacity to support both students and staff learning and working from home or offsite, along with strategies to curtail operational and capital expenditure. This has resulted in the University recording an operating surplus of $37.8m compared to a surplus of $25.1m in 2019.

Total revenue increased slightly to $535.1m compared to $530.3m in 2019 with an increase in Australian Government Funding for teaching and research offsetting the lower fees and charges from students and lower investment gains. Total salary expenditure increased slightly from 2019 noting the University did not incur any staff separation costs linked to COVID-19 during the 2020 financial year. Significant savings in discretionary non salary expenditure have flowed directly through to the University’s bottom line, being a major contributor to the final operating result. The University remains cautious about the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on future earnings, particularly in the context of international travel restrictions and the effect this will have on future international student revenue.

The successful financial result for the year further strengthens the University’s balance sheet with total Net Assets of $821.0m (2019: $776.2m) underpinning the capacity of the University to meet this challenge while at the same time continuing to progress planned strategic investments.

Full audited financial statements are available online at flinders.edu.au
# COMPREHENSIVE INCOME STATEMENT – FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

## CONSOLIDATED UNIVERSITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net result for the period</td>
<td>38,377</td>
<td>24,813</td>
<td>37,795</td>
<td>25,080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ITEMS THAT WILL BE RECLASSIFIED TO PROFIT OR LOSS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain/(loss) on financial assets designated at fair value through other comprehensive income</td>
<td>7,790</td>
<td>7,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,790</td>
<td>7,790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ITEMS THAT WILL NOT BE RECLASSIFIED TO PROFIT OR LOSS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain / (loss) on revaluation of land, buildings, library and artworks</td>
<td>(801)</td>
<td>(801)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>(801)</td>
<td>(801)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total other comprehensive income</td>
<td>6,989</td>
<td>6,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total comprehensive income</td>
<td>45,366</td>
<td>44,784</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Total comprehensive income attributable to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>45,440</td>
<td>45,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-controlling interest</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>44,784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45,540</td>
<td>45,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Full audited financial statements are available online at flinders.edu.au

# FINANCIAL POSITION STATEMENT – AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

## CONSOLIDATED UNIVERSITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASSETS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>124,913</td>
<td>65,366</td>
<td>123,271</td>
<td>64,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receivables</td>
<td>13,934</td>
<td>21,412</td>
<td>15,275</td>
<td>19,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Assets</td>
<td>2,487</td>
<td>1,857</td>
<td>2,487</td>
<td>1,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventories</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other financial assets</td>
<td>3,402</td>
<td>2,280</td>
<td>3,402</td>
<td>2,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-financial assets</td>
<td>3,402</td>
<td>2,280</td>
<td>3,402</td>
<td>2,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88,916</td>
<td>88,860</td>
<td>88,860</td>
<td>88,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total assets</td>
<td>1,046,867</td>
<td>982,638</td>
<td>1,042,523</td>
<td>979,294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## LIABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CURRENT LIABILITIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and other payables</td>
<td>49,401</td>
<td>41,884</td>
<td>46,179</td>
<td>38,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowings</td>
<td>3,402</td>
<td>2,280</td>
<td>3,402</td>
<td>2,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisions</td>
<td>26,374</td>
<td>24,002</td>
<td>26,006</td>
<td>23,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other liabilities</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract liabilities</td>
<td>43,185</td>
<td>44,028</td>
<td>43,867</td>
<td>41,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total current liabilities</td>
<td>122,553</td>
<td>112,792</td>
<td>115,212</td>
<td>109,725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade and other payables</td>
<td>7,783</td>
<td>3,012</td>
<td>7,783</td>
<td>3,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowings</td>
<td>13,019</td>
<td>8,770</td>
<td>13,019</td>
<td>8,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisions</td>
<td>71,880</td>
<td>74,068</td>
<td>71,880</td>
<td>74,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract liabilities</td>
<td>9,652</td>
<td>7,516</td>
<td>9,652</td>
<td>7,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non-current liabilities</td>
<td>102,334</td>
<td>93,366</td>
<td>102,334</td>
<td>93,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liabilities</td>
<td>224,887</td>
<td>206,098</td>
<td>221,546</td>
<td>203,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets</td>
<td>821,980</td>
<td>776,540</td>
<td>820,977</td>
<td>776,193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## EQUITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
<th>2020 $’000</th>
<th>2019 $’000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves</td>
<td>205,423</td>
<td>198,434</td>
<td>209,176</td>
<td>202,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained earnings</td>
<td>616,109</td>
<td>577,732</td>
<td>611,801</td>
<td>574,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University interest</td>
<td>821,980</td>
<td>776,540</td>
<td>820,977</td>
<td>776,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-controlling interest</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>821,980</td>
<td>776,540</td>
<td>820,977</td>
<td>776,193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CHANGES IN EQUITY

**CHANGES IN EQUITY STATEMENT – FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESERVES</th>
<th>RETAINED EARNINGS</th>
<th>UNIVERSITY INTEREST</th>
<th>NON-CONTROLLING INTEREST</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$’000</td>
<td>$’000</td>
<td>$’000</td>
<td>$’000</td>
<td>$’000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSOLIDATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at 1 January 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain on revaluation of land, buildings, infrastructure, library and artwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain/(loss) on equity instruments designated at fair value through other comprehensive income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment due to AASB15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total comprehensive income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of non-controlling interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at 31 December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at 1 January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain on revaluation of land, buildings, infrastructure, library and artwork</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total comprehensive income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of non-controlling interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at 31 December 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CASH FLOWS

**CASH FLOWS STATEMENT – FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSOLIDATED</th>
<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$’000</td>
<td>$’000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OS-HELP (net)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superannuation Supplementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Government Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Grants received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HECS-HELP - Student payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts from student fees and other customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dividends received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other investment income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GST recovered/paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payments to suppliers and employees (inclusive of GST)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest and other costs of finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proceeds from sale of investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other investing outflows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of property, plant and equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payments for financial assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans to related parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repayments of loans by related parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repayment of lease liabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSOLIDATED</th>
<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$’000</td>
<td>$’000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123,271</td>
<td>124,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64,248</td>
<td>59,023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financing arrangements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-cash financing and investing activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full audited financial statements are available online at flinders.edu.au
Hon John Gardner
Minister for Education
Level 9, 31 Flinders Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Minister

I have the honour to present to you the Annual Report and audited financial statements
for the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020 in compliance with the Flinders
University Act 1966, Section 27, and in accordance with a resolution of the members
of Council at its meeting on 20 May 2021.

Stephen Gerlach AM
Chancellor
Students at Bedford Park campus