

Avondale University



# Strategic Plan

2024 - 2027





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# *acknowledgement* **of country**

Avondale University acknowledges our Sovereign God as Creator and Provider of all things. We respectfully acknowledge the Awabakal and Darramuragal people as the traditional custodians of the lands on which we live, work, study and worship across our Lake Macquarie and Sydney campuses. We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all First Nations people.



## About Avondale University

Avondale University is Australia's newest university, with a long and proud history. Avondale University traces its beginnings to 1892 when its predecessor institution was established in Melbourne, Victoria, to educate young people for employment in the developing work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. In 1897 the College was relocated to its present site in Cooranbong, New South Wales, offering courses in teaching, business, and biblical and mission studies.

Avondale has been preparing students for degrees since the 1950s, initially through external programs (BSc, University of London) and affiliation agreements (BA, Pacific Union College, California; MA, Andrews University, Michigan), and subsequently with Australian accreditation. In December 2014, Avondale achieved self-accrediting status through the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. Australian University College status was awarded in 2019. In July 2021, TEQSA approved Avondale's application to become an Australian University in recognition of its long history of quality course offerings, strong student outcomes, commitment to civic leadership and engagement with local and regional communities underpinned by mission-based research and extensive industry collaborations.



As a dual sector university, Avondale offers a bespoke range of vocational (VET) pathways and certificate programs, undergraduate, postgraduate and Higher Degree by Research offerings. Higher education offerings span the fields of Arts, Business, Teaching, Nursing, Counselling, Ministry and Theology. VET options include Outdoor Recreation and Leadership, and Individual Support certificate courses. High impact, interdisciplinary research is a hallmark of Avondale University, with three Research Centres leading the way in Lifestyle and Health; Christian Education; and Scripture, Spirituality and Society. An academic press and scholarly journal exemplify Avondale's commitment to mission-aligned research and scholarship with practical benefits for our local and global partners.

Avondale University's values of Excellence, Spirituality, Wellbeing, Integrity and Service are at the heart of our student and staff community. These core values are infused in our course offerings and research, as well as extra-curricular activities, mission and volunteer initiatives and in our service to the wider community. The University caters for students from diverse backgrounds who desire a values-based Christian higher education with a focus on student wellbeing, a holistic educational experience and academic excellence. Our main campus is in the picturesque City of Lake Macquarie, NSW, Australia and our nursing-specific campus is on the grounds of one of NSW's largest private hospitals in Wahroonga, Sydney. Avondale is proud to be part of a worldwide educational network within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, welcoming all who want to learn in a values-based, inclusive environment. This learning community includes schools, universities and colleges that prepare students for lifelong learning and a worldview of service.

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# Avondale University Values

Excellence

Spirituality

Wellbeing

Integrity

Service









## Avondale's Mission and Strategy

### **Our Purpose**

To transform lives through Christ-centred higher education

### **Our Way**

We engage students in authentic, faith-based learning, service and discovery

### **Our Impact**

Empowering our University graduates and community with a greater vision of world needs



During 2023 we renewed our commitment to mission, consolidated our University Strategy and refreshed our focus on five strategic priorities aligned with the University Renewal Plan.

## Avondale University Strategic Plan 2024-2027: A Strategy for Growth

The refreshed Avondale University Strategic Plan 2024-2027 builds on Avondale's proud history and the profound legacy of those who went before us. The plan charts a course for securing our future as an Australian University, part of the international network of Seventh-day Adventist universities and colleges and welcoming students from all backgrounds who aspire to learn in a high quality, values-based higher education environment. Our roots go deep in the communities we serve as we prepare graduates with a greater vision of world needs.

Starting with our values of excellence, spirituality, wellbeing, integrity and service, the refreshed strategic plan reflects the focal point of spirituality and faith engagement which infuses all that we do. Our five strategic priorities, outlined below, are designed to achieve growth and sustainability to more effectively deliver on our mission.







## Five Strategic Priorities

### 1. Delivering an exceptional student experience

Building on Avondale's rich history, we will continue to innovate, challenge, and renew what we offer to our students, staff and society. We will ensure as many people as possible, from wide and varied backgrounds, have the opportunity to benefit from Avondale's top rating higher education courses, along with vocational pathways and short courses to prepare them for the world of work. We will combine a focus on spirituality and faith engagement to prepare graduates with an orientation to mission and service, and the capacity to respond ethically and morally in their workplaces and communities locally and globally.

#### What will success look like, 2024-2027?

- Top 10 in Australia for high quality student experience
- Enhanced spiritual engagement assessed using qualitative and quantitative indicators
- Improved student satisfaction with wellbeing and support services
- Improved student satisfaction, retention and success in undergraduate and postgraduate courses





## 2. Securing our future

As Australia's smallest university, Avondale will prioritise strategies to secure our future to deliver our unique mission. This priority will be addressed through a combination of business plan renewal, diversifying revenue sources, innovating in coursework offerings and modes of delivery that meet market demand and expanding VET pathway options. Investing to grow is a priority of the renewal plan, particularly in digital renewal and investment in contemporary learning and worship spaces and improved student accommodation to enhance Avondale's ability to attract students to on campus and online learning environments.

### What will success look like, 2024-2027?

- Increased higher education student enrolments in current and newly created courses and modes of delivery across all Fields of Education to meet market demand
- Increased VET and short course student enrolments in current and expanded course offerings in priority labour market areas
- Financial sustainability will be measured through increased operating income, diversified revenue streams and reduced operating deficits



### 3. Engaging in world-class research with impact

Our learning and teaching is enriched by scholarship and world-class, mission-aligned research. Avondale specializes in applied research that: aligns with our core mission; has a demonstrable impact on communities; addresses real world issues and challenges; and serves our world for good. Avondale already demonstrates 'world-standard' research based on overall quality and quantity of research publications, number of citations, research grant income, collaboration with peers internationally and industry engagement (including with Adventist Schools Australia, Sanitarium Health & Wellbeing Group, ADRA and Advent Health). It will be important to sustain and increase the consistency of this performance across all Fields of Research and Education over the coming period.



#### What will success look like, 2024-2027?

- Annual growth in research quality and productivity through increased submission to high quality (Q1/Q2) journals and improved field-weighted citation impact scores
- Annual growth in research grant, commercialisation and contract income across Fields of Education
- Strategic partnerships growth, prioritising evidence of impact and expanded partnerships with Adventist institutions in the South Pacific region





## 4. Fostering staff talent and culture

Our people are the bedrock of our strategic success. Our workforce plan focuses on fostering staff talent, capability building and wellbeing. We are intentional about shaping and refreshing our academic and professional staff workforce profile to align with strategic priorities, educational and research focus areas. Opportunities for spiritual engagement and practical wellbeing support are integral to fostering our organisational culture.

### What will success look like, 2024-2027?

- Annual improvements in staff wellbeing and spiritual engagement using survey and qualitative indicators
- Continued top quartile performance on benchmarked staff engagement, learning and culture surveys
- Increased senior academic leader ratio by Field of Education

## 5. Achieving operational efficiency and excellence

A systemic program is underway to enhance data management and automation, improve monitoring of student progress and identification of students at risk, and to counter threats to academic integrity and cyber security. These efforts include investment in systems, research, and education. Avondale benchmarks nationally to maximise cyber risk mitigation, counter foreign interference risks and optimise data security. Operational efficiency measures are monitored closely to maximise financial sustainability and risk mitigation.

### What will success look like, 2024-2027?

- Improved resource use, particularly space utilization across the calendar year
- Growth in external event income
- Operational efficiencies through automation and streamlined digitally enabled workflows

Our priorities

**1** Exceptional student experience

**2** Securing our future

**3** World-class research engagement with impact

**4** Staff Talent and Culture

**5** Operational efficiency and excellence

Spirituality and Faith Engagement

# Measuring our success, 2024-2027

Achievement of strategic priorities will be reflected in progress towards targets set for each of the following Key Performance Indicators. Targets will be reviewed annually, annual progress targets will be approved by Council in December each year.

## Key Performance Indicators for each Strategic Priority

### Priority 1: Exceptional student experience

#### ***Quality, mission-aligned student experience***

- 1.1. Student spiritual engagement indicators) - spiritual engagement survey
- 1.2. Student support services - % overall satisfaction with quality & usefulness

#### ***Student retention and success***

- 1.3. Commencing bachelors student retention
- 1.4. Overall student satisfaction (QILT)

### Priority 2: Securing our financial future

#### ***Student load/revenue growth targets***

- 2.1. Total higher education student load (EFTSL)
- 2.2. VET student income - reduced deficit

#### ***Income sustainability***

- 2.3. Total operating income
- 2.4. Operating deficit reduced

### Priority 3: World-class research and engagement with impact

#### ***Research quality and productivity***

- 3.1. Submissions to Q1/Q2 journals
- 3.2. Field-weighted citation impact score

#### ***Research income, partnerships, impact***

- 3.3. Research grant and contract income - annual growth%
- 3.4. Partnerships growth - SPD SDA institutions

### Priority 4: Staff talent and culture

#### ***Staff wellbeing and engagement***

- 4.1. Spiritual wellbeing/spiritual engagement indicators) - survey
- 4.2. Staff engagement, learning and culture survey - satisfaction item

#### ***Workforce profile***

- 4.3. Senior academic leader increase - ratio by Field of Education
- 4.4. Staffing profile - % academic staff on casual contracts

### Priority 5: Operational efficiency and excellence

#### ***Operational savings/efficiencies***

- 5.1. Increased resource utilisation - Classroom utilisation; External event income
- 5.2. Operational efficiencies and savings: Documented savings implemented

#### ***Digital investment for efficiency and excellence***

- 5.3. Pulse software implemented to automate processes
- 5.4. CMS | SMS projects to streamline/automate processes (complete in 2025)







