Australia has one of the best higher education systems in the world.
This handy data snapshot gives a sense of the profound economic, social and cultural contributions of Australia’s world class universities.

Catriona Jackson
Universities Australia
Chief Executive
University education added an estimated $140 billion to the Australian economy in 2014. Our universities educated almost 1.4 million Australian and international students in 2017 and directly employed 130,000 full-time equivalent staff.
ALL ENROLLED STUDENTS 2017 = 1,513,383

Domestic students 1,081,945
International students 431,438

Bachelor 971,664
Other Undergraduate 65,709
Postgraduate coursework 361,540
Postgraduate research 66,145
Enabling 28,901
Non-Award 19,424

Commencing students 619,084
Continuing students 894,299

COMMONWEALTH FUNDED STUDENT PLACES IN 2017 623,217

Source: DET, Selected Higher Education Statistics - 2017 Student Data
39 outstanding universities are members of Universities Australia.
Australia has 41 local universities (including a small specialist university) and two overseas institutions that operate here. All 37 of Australia’s public universities are UA members, as are two of the four private universities.

UNIVERSITY SIZE BY NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS

AVERAGE COMMONWEALTH GRANT SCHEME FUNDING PER STUDENT PLACE (EFTSL) $11,240
Australia has a diverse mix of 1.5 million students in our world class higher education system - 1.4 million of them at UA member universities.
DOMESTIC STUDENT PROPORTIONS BY CATEGORY 2017

- Commonwealth supported students (EFTSL) 83.5%
- Studying bachelor degree 71.1%
- Studying on-campus 64.6%
- Studying full-time 65.1%
- Younger than 25 years old 60.9%
- Female 58.3%

Source: DET, Selected Higher Education Statistics - 2017 student data and uCube
Local and international students pursue a wide range of academic disciplines.
COMMONWEALTH SUPPORTED AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PLACES, BY FIELD OF EDUCATION, 2017

- Commonwealth supported student places: 623,217
- Overseas students places: 325,583

Source: DET, uCube
Australian universities make it possible to study part-time around work and family responsibilities.
OVER THE LAST DECADE, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS FROM LOW SES BACKGROUNDS HAS INCREASED BY MORE THAN 60%
GROWTH IN DOMESTIC UNDERGRADUATE ENROLMENTS BY EQUITY GROUP

123% increase in students with a disability

105% increase in Indigenous students

66% increase in students from low SES*

50% increase in regional and remote students**

* Definition changes from 2006 SEIFA to 2016 SEIFA
** Definition changes from 2006 MCEETYA to 2016 ASGS

Source: DET, Selected Higher Education Statistics - 2017 Student Data
More than 340,000 higher education students graduated in 2017.
NUMBER OF AWARD COURSE COMPLETIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS, BY COURSE LEVEL

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate
AUSTRALIA’S UNIVERSITY COMPLETION RATES REMAIN HIGH.
NUMBER OF AWARD COURSE COMPLETIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS, BY CITIZENSHIP CATEGORY

[Bar chart showing the number of award course completions for all students, by citizenship category from 2003 to 2017. The chart indicates an increase in completions over the years, with a greater number of domestic students compared to international students.]
39.7% of 25-34 year olds in Australia now have a bachelor degree or higher.
PROPORTION OF PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA AGED 25-34 WITH A BACHELOR DEGREE OR HIGHER

Source: ABS 6227.0, Education and Work, May 2018
People from major cities are twice as likely to hold a degree than those from regional and remote areas.
PROPORTION OF PEOPLE AGED 25-34 WITH A BACHELOR DEGREE OR HIGHER, BY REMOTENESS AREA

Major Cities: 44.6% (2018), 39.6% (2010)
Inner Regional: 23.1% (2018), 18.8% (2010)
Outer Regional: 22.4% (2018), 16% (2010)
Remote and Very Remote: 19.7% (2018), 14.5% (2010)

39.7% Australian average 2018

Source: ABS 6227.0, Education and Work, May 2018
WITH A REPUTATION FOR EXCELLENCE, AUSTRALIA IS ONE OF THE TOP DESTINATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
Our universities welcome students from all around the world.
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BY COUNTRY OF PERMANENT HOME RESIDENCE

Source: DET, Selected Higher Education Statistics - 2008 and 2017 Student Data
THE EDUCATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IS AUSTRALIA’S 3RD LARGEST EXPORT BEHIND IRON ORE AND COAL.
AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SECTOR IS VALUED AT $33 BILLION A YEAR
GDP CONTRIBUTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SECTOR, BY STATES (2017 - 18)

Source: ABS International trade: Supplementary Information, Financial Year, 2017-18 [Cat. No 5368.0.55.003]
AUSTRALIA’S WORLD CLASS UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INCREASINGLY ATTRACTS GLOBAL AND INDUSTRY FUNDING.

Source: DET 2018, Research Income Data 2004 to 2017 and Research Block Grants Allocations 2001 to 2019
Australian universities have diversified their sources of income in recent years.
2016 TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE ($30.1 BILLION)

- Australian Government grants 38.6%
- HELP payments 17.5%
- International student fees 20.7%
- Upfront student contributions 1.7%
- Other fees and charges 5.7%
- Consultancy and contract research 4.0%
- Investment income 3.2%
- State and local governments 2.2%
- Other income 6.3%
- Investment income 3.2%

UNIVERSITIES ALSO INVEST HEAVILY IN THEIR PEOPLE
2016 TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE ($28.6 BILLION)

- Academic staff expenses 28.6%
- Non-academic staff expenses 25.8%
- Other expenses 32.3%
- Payroll tax 2.7%
- Depreciation and amortisation 7.2%
- Repairs and maintenance 2.7%
- Finance cost 0.7%

AS STUDENT ENROLMENTS HAVE GROWN OVER THE PAST DECADE, SO HAVE STAFF NUMBERS.
TOTAL ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF, INCLUDING CASUAL STAFF (FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT)

Source: DET, Selected Higher Education Statistics - Staff Data (various years)
SOME STAFF SPECIALISE IN TEACHING OR RESEARCH BUT MANY COMBINE BOTH
NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT ACADEMIC STAFF, BY FUNCTION

Teaching only function:
- 1996: 6,833
- 2006: 8,566
- 2017: 17,383

Research only function:
- 1996: 8,246
- 2006: 12,262
- 2017: 15,937

Teaching and Research:
- 1996: 25,045
- 2006: 25,271
- 2017: 27,680

Source: DET, Selected Higher Education Statistics - 2018 Staff Data
These figures are a reminder of the many ways in which our universities drive Australia’s economic growth, extend the frontiers of human knowledge, make life-saving breakthroughs and help the nation to transition in an era of digital disruption.
The student data reported in this publication includes all higher education providers reporting their student data to Department of Education and Training (DET) through the Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS). In 2017, 92 per cent of these higher education students studied at 39 UA member universities.