



RMIT's Decadal Aspirations:

Enabling research
and innovation
for impact

This is an abridged version of the RMIT Decadal Aspirations document.

This document offers a summary of RMIT's Decadal Aspirations that have been developed to inform how we can best enable research and innovation impact at RMIT.



Acknowledgements

The Decadal Aspirations were developed through a consultative process with support and input from academic and professional staff representing RMIT Colleges and Enterprise Portfolios.

The governance structure comprised the Steering Group (Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation Executive Committee), Project Integration Team and eight Strategic Enabler Task Groups.

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the commitment, insights, guidance and significant contributions to all involved.

Acknowledgement of Country

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University.

RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.



Foreword

I am delighted to share that after an extensive development and consultation process over the past 18 months, the RMIT Decadal Aspirations: Enabling research and innovation for impact document has been finalised and endorsed by the University.

The Decadal Aspirations encourages us to think, plan and act, collectively and strategically about the issues that are likely to become increasingly important for the success of RMIT University, its people and partners over the next 10 years.

This important document supports the delivery of RMIT's Knowledge with Action Strategy, specifically the actions outlined under Direction 2: Research and Innovation for Impact and considers emerging trends in the higher education sector and more broadly across industry, society, and environment.

As a comprehensive research-intensive University, RMIT aspires to create beneficial change for the economy, environment, and society from the application of knowledge and solutions arising from the conduct of excellent research. Recognising that our rich and diverse range of research activities can produce different impact in different ways, we are committed to enabling a multitude of diverse, conventional, and unconventional, impact pathways.

Each of the nine aspirations detailed in this document come with a range of recommendations for action that the University can consider in its strategic planning processes. In many instances, the aspirations and recommendations are both a call-to-action and an encouragement for RMIT teams to either start or to continue important conversations on the issues that matter to RMIT's mission.

The Decadal Aspirations reinforce RMIT's commitment to supporting and enabling our people and our partners to maximise the value that can be created and captured from the exchange of knowledge and translation of research.

Professor Calum J Drummond AO

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation

Vice-President, RMIT University



An aerial photograph of a residential street. The houses have red-tiled roofs and are arranged in a row. A white van is driving on the road, and a dark car is parked on the side. There are trees and greenery between the houses. The image is used as a background for the text on the right.

Background

Over the next decade, there will be a multitude of risks, challenges and opportunities across areas such as climate, security, inequality, health and wellbeing and emerging technologies.

How research and innovation can help society reach a range of desired futures has been informed by our understanding of the implications of various global megatrends and future drivers that are likely to be important in influencing the University's performance and mission.

Through an inclusive and consultative process involving key stakeholders across the University, nine key strategic enablers and accompanying Decadal Aspirations have been identified, informing how we can best enable research and innovation for impact at RMIT. These Decadal Aspirations do not prescribe priority areas of research which are better decided closer to areas of need and with our research partners and stakeholders.

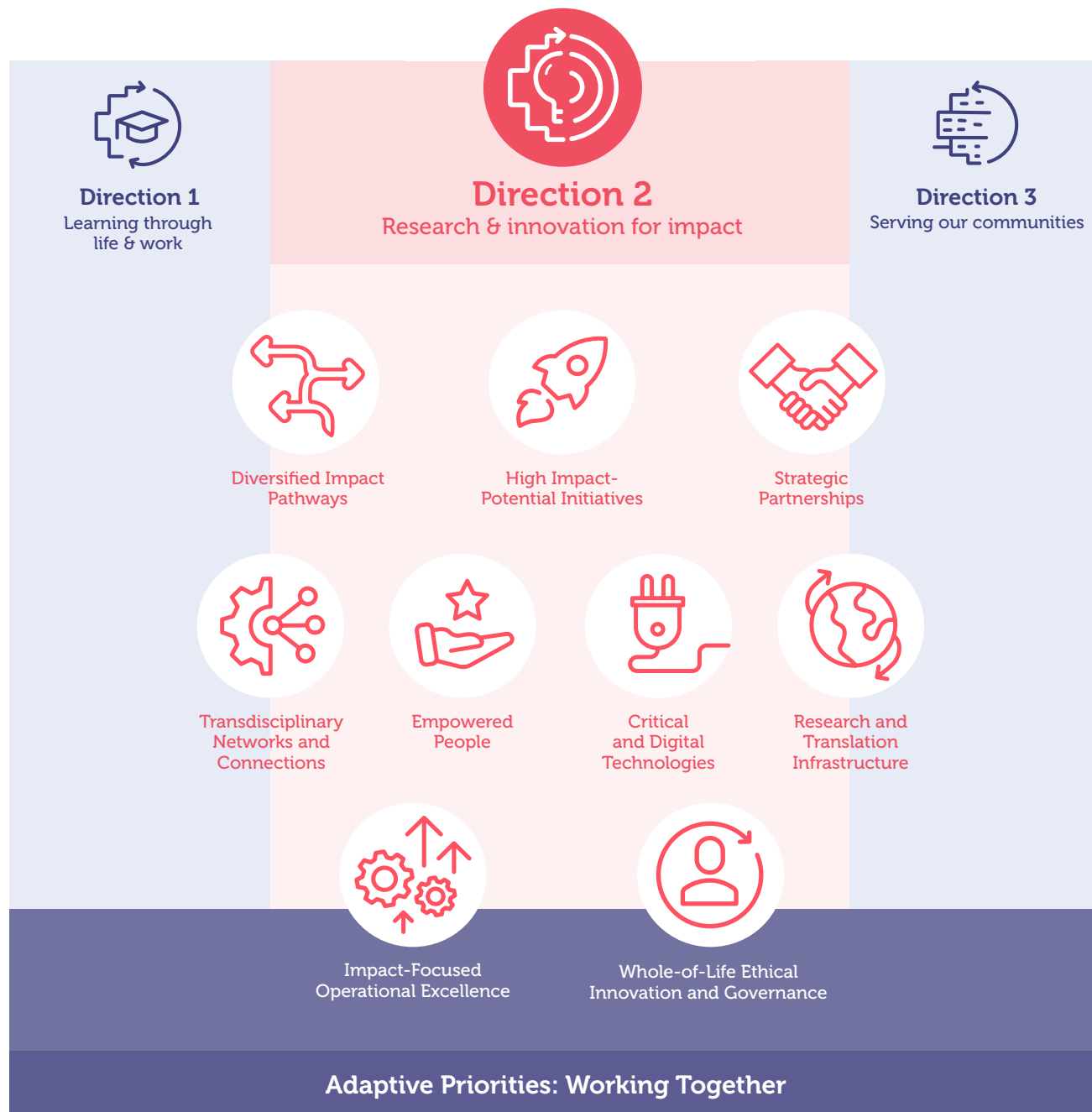
Connecting across RMIT's research and innovation ecosystem

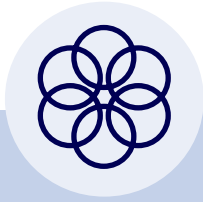
The Decadal Aspirations build on the collective efforts across Schools, Colleges, and Enterprise Portfolios, to deepen our research impact culture and our focus on streamlining and integrating our research services, tools, processes, and systems.

Decadal Aspirations directly support **Direction 2**: RMIT's Knowledge with Action Strategy, with a clear relationship between education, research, and partnerships.

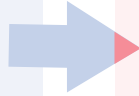
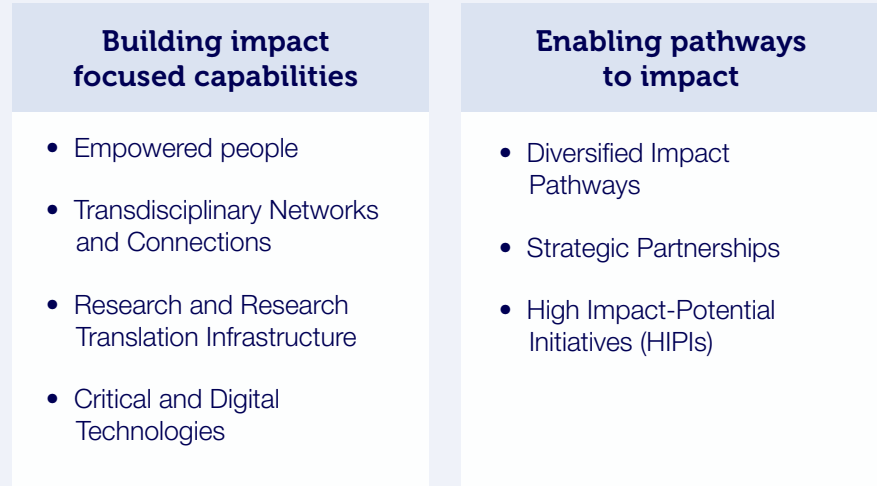
The nine strategic enablers have strong intersection points with **Direction 1**: Learning through life & work and the Education Plan, particularly the activities focusing on the research and teaching nexus opportunities and the future educator strategy.

The Decadal Aspirations also intersect with **Direction 3**: Serving our communities, particularly in partnerships for impact and the University's Adaptive Priorities and the Indigenous Research Strategy.





Deepening and Integrating RMIT's Impact Enablement Ecosystem



Futures

- Fairer
- Healthier
- Productive & Creative
- Secure & Resilient
- Sustainable
- Connected



Over the next decade, RMIT intends to evolve an increasingly integrated impact enablement ecosystem. This ecosystem is critical for supporting the development and application of world-class research and innovation capabilities to conduct and translate excellent research, through diverse pathways.

The key **Strategic Enablers** for supporting the University's aspirations for research excellence and impact over the next decade were identified through an inclusive process involving expert input from over 50 academic and professional leaders (organised across 8 task groups) from across the University.

The nine enablers focus on three strategic imperatives:

- Building impact-focused capabilities
- Enabling pathways to impact
- Evolving an integrated ecosystem that enables impact

The Strategic Enablers work collectively to extend RMIT's dynamic research and innovation ecosystem, which is the goal of Direction 2 in RMIT's Knowledge with Action Strategy.

A vibrant, sunlit city street scene. In the foreground, several pedestrians are walking away from the camera. A person in a blue patterned jacket is riding a bicycle towards the camera. The street is paved with cobblestones and lined with historic brick buildings featuring large windows and arched doorways. The sky is clear and bright, with long shadows cast on the ground. A red banner with white text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Strategic Enablers in focus

Building impact-focused capabilities

World-class fit-for-purpose capabilities underpin our ability to conduct excellent research and to create impact from translation of research. Capabilities encompass four key dimensions: people, expertise, infrastructure and connections.

Empowered people that are well connected across and external to the University, supported by fit-for-purpose research infrastructure, tools and technologies, are key to our aspirations to create impact from our research.

The combination of these key elements, together with organisational culture and connectedness across RMIT's diverse research capabilities, underpins what RMIT has to offer and how it delivers high-quality research with the potential to create impact.

The strategic enablers outlined below focus on building our impact-focused capabilities through the following aspirations and recommendations:

Enablers	Over the next decade, RMIT aspires to ...	Recommendations
Empowered People	be recognised as a sector leading University with a strong focus on developing and rewarding its people while working to achieve impact from research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a whole-of-University adaptable performance framework that includes enabling workload models. • Develop and implement a whole-of-University Professional Development Framework for academic staff and teams. • Develop and launch a whole-of-University Research/ Academic Career Development Program (RACDP).
Transdisciplinary Networks and Connections	be known for its ability to harness world-class research and innovation capability across disciplines to be deployed responsively and proactively to deliver impactful outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to activate existing, and where necessary, establish new transdisciplinary networks and initiatives across disciplines. • Build RMIT's capability in transdisciplinary science and research design, including development of next generation transdisciplinary leadership.
Research and Research Translation Infrastructure (R&RTI)	have access to world-class physical and digital infrastructure that enables our people to embark on diverse pathways to research impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a roadmap to guide the implementation of a strategic approach to investment and utilisation of existing and new R&RTI, within and outside RMIT. • Develop sustainable research infrastructure management practices and workforce planning protocols.
Critical and Digital Technologies (CDT)	have CDT capabilities that enable RMIT's proactive participation in and leadership at the frontiers of essential long-term national and international research priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) uplift. • Develop Innovation Risk Framework for CDT. • Enable seamless Digital Pathways and Strategic Digital Partnerships. • Create an empowered Critical and Digital Technologies Workforce.

Enabling pathways to impact

RMIT recognises that impact can take many forms and be realised in different ways. Given the diverse breadth of research capability at RMIT, it is important that diverse pathways to impact are enabled. Key to achieving impact is our ability to increasingly develop strategic partnerships and transdisciplinary initiatives at scale, with our strategic partners critical to delivering and enabling impact.

Creating pathways to impact is central to RMIT's Knowledge with Action Strategy particularly the key actions of i) Fostering partnerships for sustained impact at scale ii) Scale-up applied, transdisciplinary research; and iii) Accelerating research translation and commercialisation.

The following strategic enablers focus on enabling diverse pathways to impact through these aspirations and recommendations:

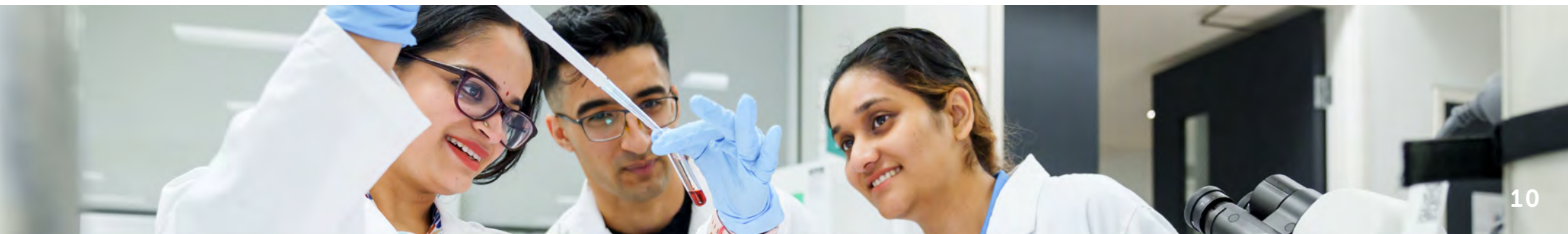
Enablers	Over the next decade, RMIT aspires to ...	Recommendations
Diversified Impact Pathways	be recognised for employing diverse pathways to deliver benefit to our partners and the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement an integrated approach to lift impact culture and capabilities through an integrated Impact Enablement Framework. • Enable diverse impact pathways through impact-focused research planning, evidencing, and translation. • Develop and implement a whole-of-University approach to research entrepreneurship and venture (RE&V) formation.
Strategic Partnerships	be known for delivering measurable benefits to society through strategic partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a whole-of-University approach to the planning of and involvement in Strategic Partnerships. • Design and implement innovative partnership models to deliver optimal impact for RMIT and its partners, recognition for researchers, and widespread benefits to end users.
High Impact-Potential Initiatives (HIPIs)	be recognised by its partners for pro-active leadership in creating and delivering High Impact-Potential Initiatives that enable diverse pathways to impact at scale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and launch an inclusive whole-of-University process for identifying and developing high impact-potential transdisciplinary initiatives. • Establish a pipeline of high impact-potential transdisciplinary initiatives in alignment with strategic partnerships and University's strategy to increasingly develop large-scale impactful initiatives. • Develop workforce capable of creating, leading, and delivering on HIPIs.

Evolving an integrated ecosystem that enables impact

World-class researchers need to be supported by fit-for-purpose research systems and services, guided by appropriate policy and processes to achieve excellent research outcomes. Alongside this, a whole-of-life approach to Ethical Innovation and Governance has become increasingly important to ensure impact is achieved from research and innovation.

The strategic enablers focus on evolving an integrated ecosystem that enables impact through the aspirations and recommendations:

Enablers	Over the next decade, RMIT aspires to ...	Recommendations
Impact-Focused Operational Excellence	be recognised as a sector leader in supporting researchers to achieve excellent research outcomes that help shape the world, providing high-quality expertise, advice, and systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of fit-for-purpose research management systems and tools. • Embed research engagement and impact effectively and innovatively into RMIT's processes. • Develop and implement a Professional Development Framework for research professional staff.
Whole-of-life Ethical Innovation and Governance	be recognised as a values-led University advancing ethical practices and good governance across the entire lifecycle of research and innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive, principles-focused “all-of-lifecycle” approach to ethical innovation and governance across RMIT. • Implement a whole-of-University framework for ethical research, innovation and governance aligned with RMIT's values. • Embed the comprehensive principles-focused ethical and governance framework as part of RMIT's research and innovation culture.





Realising the Decadal Aspirations

As a research-intensive University, RMIT aspires to create beneficial change for the economy, environment, and society from the application of knowledge and solutions arising from the conduct of excellent research and deepening transdisciplinary capability to tackle complex challenges.

As a University that emphasises impact from its research and innovation activities, RMIT is committed to supporting and enabling our people and our partners to maximise the value that can be created and captured from the exchange of knowledge and translation of research. This value can only be realised by our research partners and beneficiaries of the research we undertake. Recognising that our rich and diverse range of research activities can produce different impact in different ways, we are committed to enabling a multitude of diverse, conventional, and unconventional, impact pathways.

We have identified a range of Strategic Enablers and associated Aspirations which we believe are critical to support our ambition to achieve research and innovation for impact. With “Empowered People” at the core of our Decadal Aspirations, these Strategic Enablers underpin our commitment to deepen and better integrate our

evolving research and innovation ecosystem. An increased level of integration, supported by whole-of-University approaches to initiating, planning, designing, and delivering initiatives, schemes, programs, and services aim to improve quality while providing consistency and equity of access.

Realising the Decadal Aspirations is an adaptive process of continually assessing the University’s direction and research focus that is necessary in a rapidly changing world. This will require a degree of agility in our ability to respond while proactively anticipating future needs. From this perspective, the Decadal Aspirations provides guidance for strategic thought leadership as RMIT’s academic and professional communities, together with the student body, partners, and stakeholders, continue working towards an impactful future.

