

Connect Discover Grow

Charles Darwin University Strategic Plan 2015-2025



“At Charles Darwin University we have a passion and a vision to use our skills and knowledge to help shape a brighter future. Through Connect Discover Grow we intend to become outstanding achievers across all areas of our core business – teaching and learning, research, engagement, Indigenous leadership and internationalisation.

We can only do this through collective effort, understanding that the advancement of every individual in our University community translates into a greater common good.”

Professor Simon Maddocks
Vice-Chancellor and President

Message from the Vice-Chancellor

Connect Discover Grow encapsulates Charles Darwin University's strategy for the future, a future that will undoubtedly be filled with opportunities and challenges we can barely imagine right now, but one in which we are confident that the strategic framework outlined by Connect Discover Grow will ensure this University's path to sustainability and success.

Charles Darwin University is somewhat unique. No other single Australian university serves such a large area of the continent, in such a remote location and with such a small population to sustain it. We are dual sector and the only university based in the Northern Territory. We are the most northerly Australian university, literally on Asia's doorstep, and closer in many respects to the vast populations of Asia than to the southern Australian states. While the Northern Territory covers around 16% of Australia, in 2015 it was home to just over 1% of the population, 30% of whom were Indigenous compared with around 3% of the general Australian population.

The Territory is also the focus of one of the nation's most ambitious plans for future development, to unlock the North's vast potential and to establish it as the trade gateway to Asia for all of Australia.

These are truly unique features that CDU embraces as both challenges and opportunities for the years ahead, building on the strong foundations and remarkable

achievements of our 25-year history. In this relatively short space of time we have developed a reputation as one of the most innovative teaching and learning and most research intensive universities in Australia and have risen to the ranks of the top 2% of world universities in 2015. CDU has provided, and will continue to provide, the human capital that underpins the future prosperity of Northern Australia and our near Asian region, while also providing innovative and flexible online learning choices for a broader national student market.

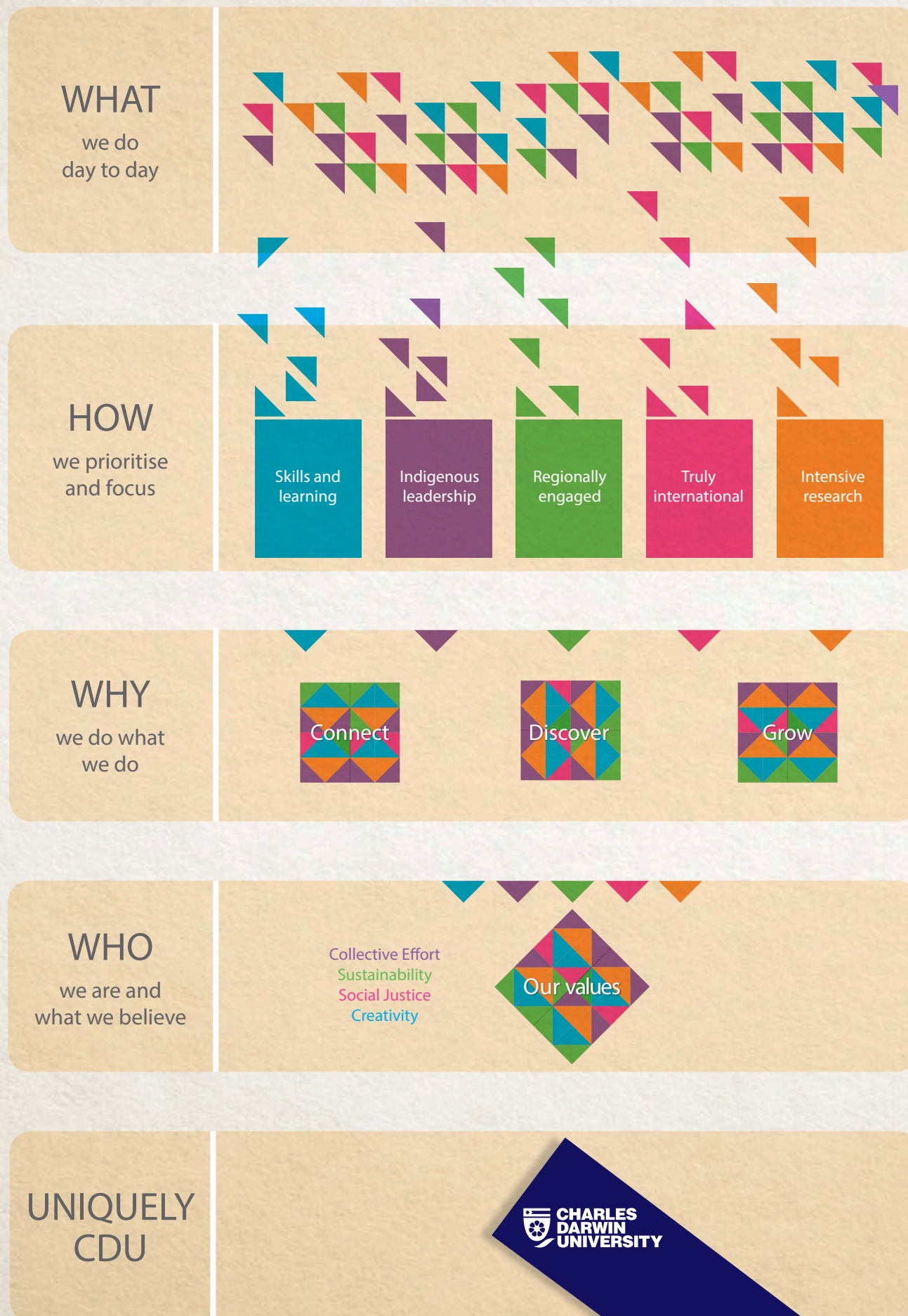
Ours is also a university deeply engaged with, and informed by, Australia's Indigenous people, recognising that we operate on the lands of many strong Indigenous nations, respecting the knowledges and culture of Aboriginal people and committed to Indigenous advancement.

Connect Discover Grow is a plan that establishes CDU as a new world university – outward looking, regionally engaged, developing strong Indigenous leadership, and delivering transformative skills and learning, and high-impact research when and where they are needed. It is a plan that, like our namesake Charles Darwin, encourages us to think outside the square, to find innovative solutions to the unique challenges we face in a place where new frontiers still abound. It is a strategy for growth that will be essential to our long-term sustainability and our ability to continue to provide the best possible service to our local and regional communities.

At CDU we believe a new world university is one built on social justice, sustainability, creativity and collective effort. We want this University to be a place where our staff and students can freely follow their passions to help shape a brighter future for us all. I look forward to the future of CDU with great optimism and am confident that together we will achieve great things.

Professor Simon Maddocks
Vice-Chancellor and President





A Plan for Quality and Growth

Charles Darwin University aspires to become a truly international dual sector university. From our base in the Northern Territory and as the Australian university closest to Asia, we will continue to expand and enhance our significant contribution to the important issues of our region through education and knowledge. CDU is ideally placed to prepare graduates for success in an increasingly complex, diverse and connected world and aims to be a provider of transformative skills and learning with a major focus on quality, access and growth.

CDU will also further develop its world class and emerging research strengths in areas critical to the sustainable and prosperous development of Northern Australia and the region, particularly Indigenous and tropical health, environmental science, public policy, engineering, information technology and Indigenous knowledges, through engagement with governments, industry, institutions and stakeholders.

With a strong and distinctive commitment to Indigenous knowledges, achievement and wellbeing, we will develop our skills and capacity in Indigenous leadership to become globally recognised for our success in Indigenous advancement.

Through Connect Discover Grow, CDU will be:

- 1 A provider of transformative **skills and learning**
- 2 Globally recognised for **Indigenous leadership**
- 3 A critically engaged university of the **region**
- 4 A **truly international university**
- 5 A successful **research intensive university**.

Our strategic activity will be underpinned by major improvements to University operations, structure and culture that will be implemented in the early stages of the life of this plan and continuously monitored and upgraded as necessary as the plan unfolds.

Key targets for 2025 are:

- A 100% increase in the number of students educated at CDU compared with 2015.
- A rise in the HE student retention rate to 75% (non-Indigenous) and 60% (Indigenous), with a long-term aspiration to reach parity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student retention.
- A rise in the Indigenous VET unit completion rate to 75%, with a long-term aspiration to reach parity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous unit completions.
- Consistent student satisfaction ratings over 80%.
- An increase in Indigenous students commencing HE programs to 15% of total CDU students.
- A rise in CDU's place in the Times Higher Education world university rankings to within the top 250 world universities, as well as in the top 20 world universities under 50 years old.
- An increase of 100 research active staff.
- A 100% increase in revenue from all sources compared with 2015.
- Implementation of an appropriate framework for managing, monitoring and growing key stakeholder engagement over the life of this plan.
- A 100% increase in international student numbers compared with 2015.
- A 50% increase in CDU students accessing international mobility programs compared with 2015.

1: A provider of transformative skills and learning

At Charles Darwin University we recognise the transformative value of skills and learning to change people’s lives, giving them the choice to seek rewarding and productive employment and lead prosperous and fulfilling lives. Our aim is to provide this through an accessible and high-quality learning experience for all our students and to create an organisational culture that places the quality of the student learning experience at the forefront of everything we do.

PRIORITY 1 – Expand student access to CDU education programs

CDU is committed to facilitating and enhancing access to its education programs, whether delivered at our major campuses and learning centres, at our more than 150 remote delivery locations in the Northern Territory, or online. As a dual sector university and an established provider of innovative online learning, CDU offers a large array of options for study from Certificate training through to Bachelor and postgraduate coursework and research degrees.

This provides enormous opportunity for student access to study at CDU that will be further expanded and enhanced through initiatives such as the development of clear pathways to enable student progression through CDU courses, including from VET through to Higher Education, and foundation programs to better prepare students for overall success.

PRIORITY 2 – Enhance teaching quality, the student learning experience and student success

CDU recognises that the quality of its teaching and the overall student experience, whether on campus, online or in the workplace, are critical to our ability to impart transformative learning and to student success.

We want our students to emerge as professional and ethical members of society who are adaptable

and creative, technically and culturally capable, and committed to the sustainability of our world. These attributes will be enhanced through new Distinctive Graduate Outcomes, curriculum reform, a refresh of our suite of Common Units and expanded work integrated learning programs.

We will enhance teaching quality by recruiting high-quality people, supporting and professionally developing our staff, and through innovative and creative curriculum and educational design.

We will implement a strong focus on student engagement through the use of world-leading interactive technologies that magnify the student presence and facilitate dynamic learning communities. Through this and expanded mentoring and support for students at risk, we will improve student retention and progression through to successful completion.

PRIORITY 3 – Deliver the skills and learning our region needs

CDU is committed to providing the knowledge and human capital that will underpin the public good and future prosperity of our region. We will do this by aligning and continually reviewing our course profile to ensure it meets the needs of the workforce our graduates will be part of locally, nationally or internationally.

Key indicators we are heading in the right direction will be:

- A 100% increase in the number of students educated at CDU in 2025 compared with 2015.
- A rise in the HE student retention rate to 75% (non-Indigenous) and 60% (Indigenous) by 2025.
- A rise in the Indigenous VET unit completion rate to 75% by 2025.
- Consistent student satisfaction ratings over 80% by 2025.
- A rise in CDU’s place in the Times Higher Education world university rankings to within the top 250 world universities, as well as in the top 20 world universities under 50 years old by 2025.

2: Globally recognised for Indigenous leadership

CDU places the highest priority on, and is committed to providing, effective and transformative leadership in Indigenous tertiary education in Australia. We acknowledge the imperative of Indigenous recognition, inclusion and achievement in the Northern Territory’s and the nation’s future prosperity and the role that education plays in empowering Indigenous people to achieve their aspirations and in addressing Indigenous disadvantage. Through the Australian Centre of Indigenous Knowledges and Education and throughout all our programs, we will deliver transformative and innovative teaching and learning, research and community engagement for and with Indigenous Australians, emphasising measures of equivalence and parity of esteem in developing intercultural communication, decision making, governance and ways of doing business that will benefit Indigenous communities both in the NT and nationally.

PRIORITY 1 – Realise our aspirations for Indigenous leadership

CDU recognises that in order to realise our aspirations for Indigenous leadership we must first support our staff to develop the cultural competency skills necessary to ensure that the knowledge and leadership they impart is raising the profile of Indigenous knowledges and their equivalence and appropriate to our cultural context. We will enhance our capacity for Indigenous leadership through the appointment of appropriately qualified Indigenous staff and will ensure that tracking progress towards Indigenous objectives becomes an embedded part of University reporting and monitoring systems.

PRIORITY 2 – Deliver improved outcomes in teaching, research and engagement

CDU is determined to improve overall outcomes in learning, research and engagement of Indigenous people, as well as the understanding of Indigenous culture by non-Indigenous people, through implementation of an Indigenous Learning and Teaching Plan and through Common Units designed to enhance cultural competency.

CDU understands that taking that first step towards university education is a large barrier for many Indigenous students. We will address this through programs to engage communities and build aspirations for Indigenous students to commence tertiary education and will support

students to make this transition with tailored programs and mentoring.

We will also develop strategic initiatives to enhance engagement and participation of and with Indigenous academics and students in the University’s research activities and profile, such as a coordinated whole of University approach to Indigenous engagement and an Indigenous Research Strategy.

PRIORITY 3 – Play a key role in the success of Indigenous Australians

CDU aspires to play a key role in Indigenous success and in producing the next generation of Indigenous leaders who will be the foundations of improved outcomes for Australian Indigenous peoples. We will develop specific accredited and professional programs to provide aspiring Indigenous leaders with the skills and attributes they will need to become transformative agents for change in Indigenous affairs across all facets of society.

Recognising that Indigenous success cannot be achieved in isolation, an important component of the new programs will also be the provision of courses to non-Indigenous students to enhance capacity for working across cultures and in raising the level of debate around Indigenous policy issues and the development of new models of leadership and management.

Key indicators we are heading in the right direction will be:

- An increase in the number of Indigenous students commencing HE programs to 15% of CDU students by 2025.
- A rise in the HE Indigenous student retention rate to 60% by 2025, with a long term aspiration to reach parity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student retention.
- A rise in the Indigenous VET unit completion rate to 75% by 2025, with a long term aspiration to reach parity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous unit completions.

3: A critically engaged university of the region

CDU's place in the Northern Territory, in Australia and in the Asian region, is strategically important and comes with unique responsibilities, opportunities and challenges compared with other Australian universities. We are and will remain strongly committed to and focused on meeting the tertiary education and research needs and expectations of the Northern Territory community so that our region can develop and prosper, while continuing to develop our outreach to students and communities across Australia and internationally.

We believe we have something unique and important to offer those we engage with in all our spheres of operation, an understanding and capability born out of our sense of place in the Northern Territory that fosters new ideas and innovative approaches.

We will engage with governments, other education and research organisations, industry and the community to form mutually beneficial partnerships and relationships so that we can continue to provide the best possible educational services and research outcomes for the people and regions we serve. As the only university based in the Northern Territory, CDU has a unique partnership, and a strong alignment in focus, with the Northern Territory Government to provide the skills and knowledge the Territory needs to prosper.

PRIORITY 1 – Meet the needs and expectations of key stakeholders including alumni

CDU places a high priority on developing strategic, productive and mutually beneficial relationships with partners and stakeholders to ensure that the services we deliver and the graduates we produce meet the needs and expectations of our local and broader regional communities. We will commit adequate time and resources to ensuring that these relationships are developed and maintained so that they remain an effective part of our external engagement.

PRIORITY 2 – Empower and equip staff for successful engagement outcomes

CDU recognises that effective and successful engagement will depend on how well our staff can develop and maintain relationships with external stakeholders and partners, as well as how we as an organisation manage our external engagement. We will develop support systems to enable our staff to achieve successful engagement outcomes and to make engagement with CDU a rewarding experience for our external partners and stakeholders.

PRIORITY 3 – Serve regional needs with flagship engagement activities

Within the context of serving the needs of our region, CDU will develop flagship areas of engagement that will deliver results in targeted areas, in particular those related to the sustainable development of Northern Australia and addressing the need for enhanced Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education.

PRIORITY 4 – Further diversify income sources

As an organisation, CDU must operate sustainably and maintain an adequate revenue stream to support its teaching and research activities and to deliver the services required by our community and the nation. Revenue from teaching and research are expected to increase as student numbers and research activity expand. CDU will also look to diversify its revenue streams and build philanthropic income as part of a secure future.

Key indicators we are heading in the right direction will be:

A 100% increase in revenue from all sources by 2025, compared with 2015.

Implementation of an appropriate framework for managing, monitoring and growing key stakeholder engagement over the life of this plan.

4: A truly international university

CDU is committed to internationalisation and to building and enhancing our profile and engagement within Asia in particular. We are uniquely placed both geographically, and in terms of our expertise, to deliver a range of education, training and research services to this region and to build lasting, beneficial partnerships that will enable our neighbouring international communities to prosper. We will implement our comprehensive international strategy to strengthen our international reputation and impact through excellence and innovation in our international policies and programs, with the aim of achieving sustained growth in international student numbers and sustainable mutually beneficial international partnerships and engagement in the coming decade.

PRIORITY 1 – Grow our international student base and enhance the international student experience

At CDU we believe we have much to offer international students and are committed to expanding our international student numbers in both VET and Higher Education. We will enhance student access through initiatives such as the development of pathways to study and will invest in projects to deliver a high-quality international student experience that will attract others to choose to study at CDU.

PRIORITY 2 – Become more internationally oriented

CDU recognises the need to broaden its horizons, to build on the international connections it has already established to orient its focus towards its international aspirations. Part of this refocus will be further internationalisation of our curriculum to ensure it is relevant and attractive to the international student market, and development and implementation of efficient and effective internal processes, study options and governance to facilitate growth in student numbers.

PRIORITY 3 – Grow our transnational commitment and capacity building

CDU is aware that internationalisation is as much about international engagement and capacity building as about attracting international students to study at CDU. We will grow our regional international

commitment and engagement through a range of programs and a transnational strategy to foster two way mobility, such as study abroad programs and visiting scholar fellowships, as well as building and maintaining strategic international institutional partnerships.



Key indicators we are heading in the right direction will be:

A 100% increase in international student numbers by 2025, compared with 2015.

A 50% increase in CDU students accessing international mobility programs by 2025, compared with 2015.

5: A successful research intensive university

CDU has established a breadth and depth of research expertise and advanced scholarship intimately linked to the needs of the Northern Territory and the Territory's Asian neighbours. Although one of the smallest universities in Australia, we are one of the most research intensive, with outstanding performance and recognised excellence in a small but highly relevant suite of research fields related to where we operate, in particular Indigenous and tropical health, environmental science and public policy.

CDU is positioned to develop additional world-class fields of research and scholarship to meet the emerging requirements of Northern and Central Australia and our immediate region. We will continue to build on already successful national and international research partnerships, including with research end users, to ensure our research continues to be relevant and has a strong positive impact on the communities we serve.

PRIORITY 1 – Strengthen our major research foci

CDU has achieved impressive world class rankings due in large part to its research intensity, knowledge transfer and international outlook, and recognises that further enhancing our major areas of research strength is a high priority if we are to build on this existing base to continue to improve our research performance.

To do this we will strengthen our three major research institutes through targeted resourcing and succession planning, as well as developing selected emerging areas of research excellence, such as in engineering and technology, in order to broaden our scope and capacity for diversification.

PRIORITY 2 – Strengthen industry engagement and research impacts

Engagement with industry, whether public or private sector, is key to ensuring our research outputs have impact and meet the needs of our region. We will

strengthen our engagement with industry across all areas of research activity, with an added focus on enhancing engagement related to entrepreneurship and potential commercialisation of research outcomes.

PRIORITY 3 – Improve the research support environment

CDU recognises that in order for our researchers to excel, we need to create a research environment that supports and facilitates high-quality research. Within the context of the Institute of Advanced Studies, we will ensure that our researchers – staff and students alike – have the opportunity to excel by providing resources, equipment and facilities, and professional support and development, in an environment where cross disciplinary research can flourish. To this end we will also develop a research administration environment that is efficient and effective and supports our staff to perform to the best of their abilities.

Key indicators we are heading in the right direction will be:

A 100% increase in annual research revenue by 2025, compared with 2015.

A rise in CDU's place in the Times Higher Education world university rankings to within the top 250 world universities, as well as in the top 20 world universities under 50 years old by 2025.

An increase of 100 research active staff by 2025.





How we use knowledge for the future

Social Justice

We believe that everyone can contribute to making a positive impact, regardless of background – whether through groundbreaking research, becoming a teacher in an Indigenous community or supporting the rights of others.

Collective Effort

We care about addressing the real issues in our local communities and across our region, through bringing together like-minded people with a desire to make their world a little better.

Creativity

We value originality, artistic endeavour and freedom of expression. We believe in learning from Indigenous and international cultures to create a new vision for the future.

Sustainability

As leaders in research, we're committed to preserving and protecting our environment, to ethical business practices and to using technology to build a more sustainable future.



Our collective beliefs

At Charles Darwin University, we believe a new world university is one built on social justice, sustainability, creativity and collective effort. A place where everyone can follow their passion to make things better – however big or small. We strive for excellence, integrity, accountability and equality of opportunity for all. We value and respect the place, history and culture of Indigenous Australians. We're all about bringing people together to use knowledge to help shape a brighter future.

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