

URBIS

# SHAPING UNIVERSITIES OF THE FUTURE

## TEN INSIGHTS

Leveraging evidence-based  
design and industry collaboration  
to meet the future



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**UNIVERSITIES ARE NO  
LONGER BASTIONS OF  
KNOWLEDGE SET APART  
FROM OUR CITIES AND  
TOWNS — THEY'RE PART OF  
OUR URBAN TAPESTRY.**



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This publication was developed in conjunction with Emily Weekes.

# KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

## EQUIPPING UNIVERSITIES FOR THE FUTURE

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**Universities are a defining piece of the puzzle when it comes to shaping cities and communities. At Urbis, we recognise the unique challenges facing the sector and the emerging opportunities. We partner with universities to unlock this potential.**

What makes students, employees and academics flock to a university? Why do some campuses thrive while others dwindle? As universities grow, how can campuses make the most of their assets, land and location? What do students need to feel safe and able to succeed on campus?

The primary role of universities was once the delivery of education. Today, a more complex set of drivers propels the sector. Whether it's technology, academic opportunity, student culture, campus life or the dynamic of facilities on offer — universities are striving to reach and retain an ever-evolving audience.

Students at all learning stages must be compelled to apply, enrol and study long enough to complete a qualification. Staff — whether academic or general — are now considering their career path and lifestyle, when choosing which campus to work on.

At the same time, universities need to position themselves as trusted leaders who are connected to alumni, industry, funders and government decision makers.

Urbis represents more than 30 professional disciplines and brings a breadth of knowledge and expertise to each project — working collaboratively to unlock the characteristics unique to each school and university.

Whether it's working across different sites, locations or jurisdictions, Urbis can breakdown the complexities driving the higher education market.

Today, learning occurs in different environments. We help universities to create flexible options to teach and learn in. Additionally, we can assist universities to maximise physical assets, increase capital growth and determine how to encourage people to linger on campus.

Our work supports the strategic vision of universities, by guiding complex institutions through a process of discovery to arrive at a campus design, strategy or master plan equipped to meet the challenges of the future.

At Urbis, we are also at the forefront of student accommodation development in Australia and New Zealand. We understand what drives students to our shores.

As advocates for the sector, we negotiate artfully with regulators, government bodies and industry partners.

Our goal is to deliver one outcome: a future-focused university.



# TEN INSIGHTS

LEVERAGING EVIDENCE-BASED DESIGN AND INDUSTRY COLLABORATION  
TO MEET THE FUTURE.



# 01

# BE A CATALYST FOR GROWTH

**Education plays an essential role in our society. It's how we expand our minds, change our lives and support our families. It's also one way to grow our cities and towns when semester begins and campuses come to life.**

Our goal is to harness the collective power of the university sector — to position the benefits universities bring to themselves, the community, businesses and Australia.

As we move towards a knowledge economy in Australia, there's increasing pressure on universities to combine innovation, learning and business on campus — with good reason.

In Victoria, seven clusters have been identified in the government's strategy, Plan Melbourne 2017–2050, as sites for future jobs growth and strategic infrastructure investment to support the economy. Each has a university at its heart.

These locations — made up of local and regional destinations — are also seen as nationally significant for their ability to attract workers, students and visitors from within Australia and overseas. Each cluster combines future-focused industries with a university campus.

The idea being that these sites, largely located in the suburbs, will offer study and work opportunities to people closer to home. It's an idea that's worked internationally and with Victoria at the lead, other Australian states and territories might one day follow.

In other more established overseas markets, universities are already seen as major economic hubs. And, with record population growth on the horizon,

there's never been a better time to invest in exploring how university campuses may develop differently over time.

Since 2011, the number of people in Australia with a bachelor degree has increased by 23%, whereas those with a post-graduate degree has risen by 45.9%. Notably, in 2006–2016 the number of students studying health almost doubled — opening up opportunities for new partnerships on campus.

As more universities tune into the benefits of partnering with businesses and industry, more pathways become available for staff and students. In remote locations, strategies like these can attract the broader community to campus and build a town centre atmosphere.

Overseas, we've seen towns take shape around a university. A remote campus location becomes less isolated with a raft of essential services onsite, as new jobs and areas of study emerge.

Australian universities are catching on. We are seeing the same trend in New Zealand. It is clear that bringing commercial occupants on campus can increase growth, but it must be executed well and driven by data.

As we look to the future, this reshaping of university campuses will likely lead to more jobs, better connections with industry, and a more holistic campus environment — regardless of the location.





Image: Urbis

**PROJECT**

## UQ GATTON CAMPUS 10-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND (QLD)

**Urbis worked with The University of Queensland to plan for the growth and development of their regional Gatton campus.**

Leveraging existing campus strengths and emerging trends in tertiary education, the plan sets out strategic directions for the campus, alongside a 10-year investment timeline that includes opportunities for collaboration with internal and external partners.

**SERVICES**

Design | Planning | Research

**PROJECT**

## THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE CITY CAMPUS

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE (NSW)

**The University of Newcastle's City Campus has been recognised as a catalyst for growth in Newcastle CBD.**

With new cafés and bars opening up around Newcastle, the new city campus coincides with government plans to revitalise the CBD through investment in light rail. Urbis has been working with the university to advise on a number of student and community focussed strategies to optimise this investment and plan for the future of the campus.

**SERVICES**

Economics | Research



Image: © The University of Newcastle, courtesy of The University of Newcastle



# 02 GONE ARE THE GATES

**Formerly fortress universities are looking beyond the gates — to connect with a broader community and build relationships that bring people onto campus.**

Gone are the days where learning took place solely at university, with job and business opportunities located somewhere beyond the campus gates. Once distinct sectors, we're now seeing a blend of the two, as businesses and universities recognise the potential rewards in working together.

Universities are no longer bastions of knowledge set apart from our cities and towns — they're part of our urban tapestry. City campuses, by default, operate in mixed-use precincts, surrounded by existing retail outlets and appearing more accessible and integrated as a result.

However, most campuses aren't city-based and require a strategic approach when it comes to building a 'liveable' campus, for what is largely a captive audience.

Students often have busy schedules, juggling work and study commitments at odd hours — so why not design for that? Urbis helps universities to decide on the right mix of retail and food and beverage outlets, so students and staff don't have to venture off campus.

Reaching out to communities that operate on a different schedule can help universities make the most of assets in the down times. Urbis works with universities to open up campuses to the community in a way that's genuine and doesn't detract from student experience during the semester.

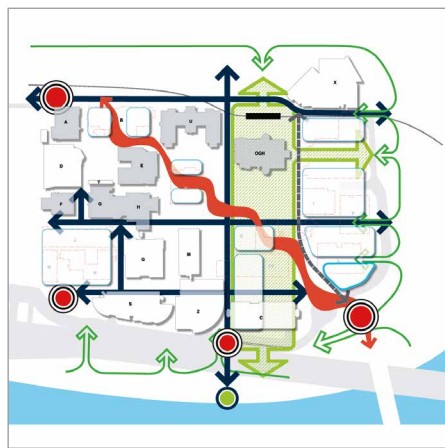
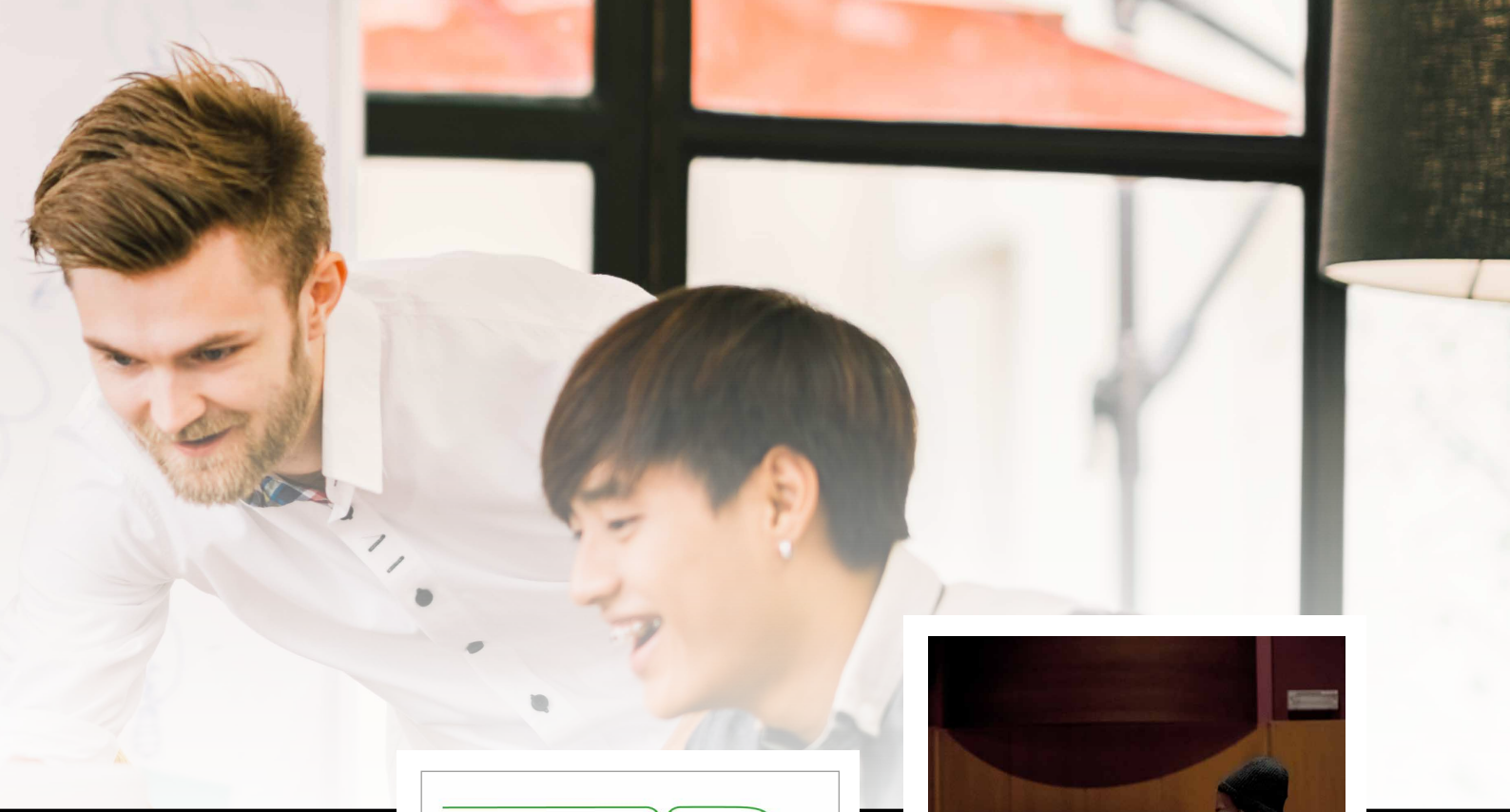
As more universities establish satellite campuses around Australia, the idea of having one main campus starts to fade. If students can study in an integrated urban campus closer to home, will the university experience be as formative and lasting? We think so.

This is where the cluster approach — housing health, business and technology alongside education institutions with student accommodation and retail onsite — holds promise. For example, employers will be able to engage recent graduates who might already be familiar with their work from being on campus.

As universities broaden their scope across Australia, Urbis is on-hand with consumer data, analysis and relationship-building skills that ensure new partnerships are diverse and sustainable, and government and regulatory bodies are on board.

In a sharing economy built around knowledge, it makes sense to think outside the gates. Universities can benefit greatly by boosting our towns, cities and the broader community — whether investing within or beyond the campus boundary.





**PROJECT**

## QUT MASTER PLAN 2033

QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (QLD)

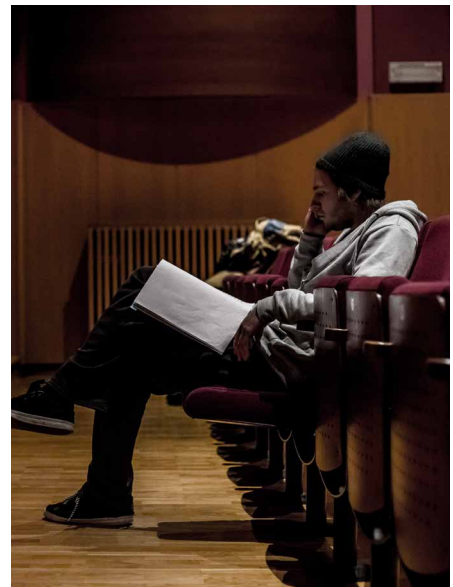
**Noticeable changes have occurred since Urbis delivered Master Plan 2033 for Queensland University of Technology.**

In particular, Gardens Point campus, situated in Brisbane's city centre has begun to connect more wholeheartedly with surrounding infrastructure. This is further enhanced by the Goodwill Bridge, which provides easy access on foot or bicycle to the cultural hub of South Bank.

**SERVICES**

Design | Economics | Research | Planning

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*Image: Urbis*



**CASE STUDY**

## UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON – MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON (LONDON, ENGLAND)

**University of the Arts London (UAL) is Europe's largest specialist university for art and design and forms a central part of a 27-hectare, mixed-use development site next to London's Kings Cross Station.**

The site integrates offices, retail, residential, leisure and community spaces, as well as 10 hectares of public space. Within this development sits UAL, in a seamlessly integrated development that offers much to the city.

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*Image: Getty Images*

# 03

## START FROM THE GROUND UP

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**It's now business as usual for universities to create dynamic campuses that cater to a range of different needs.**

A thriving campus life is great for staff and students, and it can boost a university's ability to attract star talent from around the world.

At Urbis, we look at all the factors contributing to student experience — here and overseas. We study the mechanics of what works on campus and develop strategies to encourage new behaviour.

Our landscape architects, designers, place-makers and analysts are dedicated to getting the most out of any campus. We start from the ground up and tailor outcomes to suit students, staff and the executive council making the decisions.

Looking at a campus holistically allows us to measure how students use different spaces and how the arrangement of buildings and campus layout might lead to — or detract from — potential growth opportunities in the future.

Urban campuses benefit from being in a lively part of town, while less urban universities have to create a sense of vibrancy to encourage students to linger.

Today, some universities have supermarkets on campus, while others have engaged chain store eateries to cater for heavy semester foot traffic, as well as attracting local neighbourhoods to explore the campus when surrounded by less equipped precincts.

With in-depth thought and planning, it's possible to deliver an enlivened campus that's designed to bring students together — outside the classroom and in collaborative spaces where it then becomes natural to mingle and connect.

Whether they study online or in face-to-face tutorials, students and staff should be encouraged to build meaningful networks, to get the most out of the teaching and learning experience.

Integrating precincts, retail outlets, cafés, restaurants and break out areas is essential to our work because it helps to foster connection. We review what is sustainable for the long-term on campus, from a retail perspective, like we would in any other location.

Today, our clients offer flexible teaching and learning spaces, collaborative and interactive by design. Lecturers move around teaching areas and connect with students as they learn, which in turn is encouraging more students to be on campus.

At Urbis, we help universities to rethink how they deliver education. We guide CEOs and executive councils in developing corporate strategies and master plans — flexible blueprints designed to meet the challenges ahead, based on rich data.

With each project, we determine the unique composition of the university. We might reimagine an existing part of campus, design a new precinct or learning spaces, acquire new property in nearby areas or assess the feasibility in holding onto far-lying campuses.

We work with universities to deduce a master plan most likely to attract students and employees to campus, studying every aspect of a university in action from the ground up, to design a campus that grows in value over time.



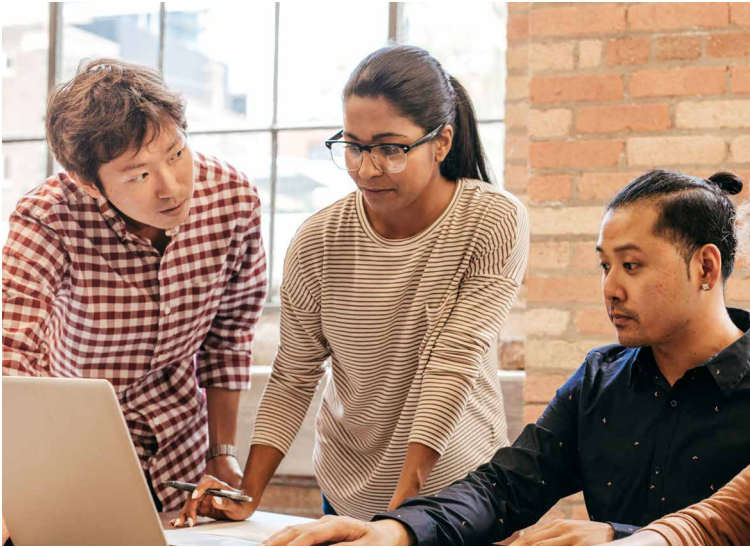


Image: Getty Images

**PROJECT**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY MASTER PLAN**

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY (NSW)

**Urbis partnered with The University of Sydney to develop a master plan for its \$1 billion Campus Improvement Program.**

More than 300,000sqm of floor space will be added across six precincts throughout Camperdown and Darlington campuses. This user-friendly master plan includes collaborative learning spaces, civic areas and an improved pedestrian and vehicle network.

**SERVICES**

Planning | Economics | Research

**PROJECT**

**MONASH UNIVERSITY FOOD AND BEVERAGE STRATEGY**

MONASH UNIVERSITY (VIC)

**Urbis is working with Monash University to determine its food, beverage and retail offering across all campuses.**

We examine how the current retail offer interacts with the campus environment, how and who uses it. We run future growth scenarios in student and staff numbers, as well as studying each location to determine the types of retail tenants that could be supported in the short and long term.

**SERVICES**

Economics | Research



Image: Courtesy of Monash University

# 04 PARTNER WITH INDUSTRY

**With government focus on universities as career destinations for working Australians, there's pressure to find the right partners and land uses.**

Partnering with a like-minded organisation can be a clever solution when faced with limited land options. Staff and students benefit from workplace experience, while employers have easy access to newly trained graduates.

It may not be possible to expand or acquire property on the open market, but with strategic guidance from experts across several disciplines, universities will find ways to partner with private organisations more easily.

A flexible master plan can allow for partners to be located away from the main hub, without losing the connection and relevance to the host university, its staff and support services. It can also inform any bold new developments that demand a creative approach to planning.

How will a new partnership contribute to the wider community over time?

We liaise with government decision makers and executive councils to ensure universities articulate proposed changes, innovations and benefits with confidence. Urbis works with universities to direct conversations at all levels of government.

A decade ago, Australia lost post-graduates to more entrepreneurial overseas universities. With the advent of employment

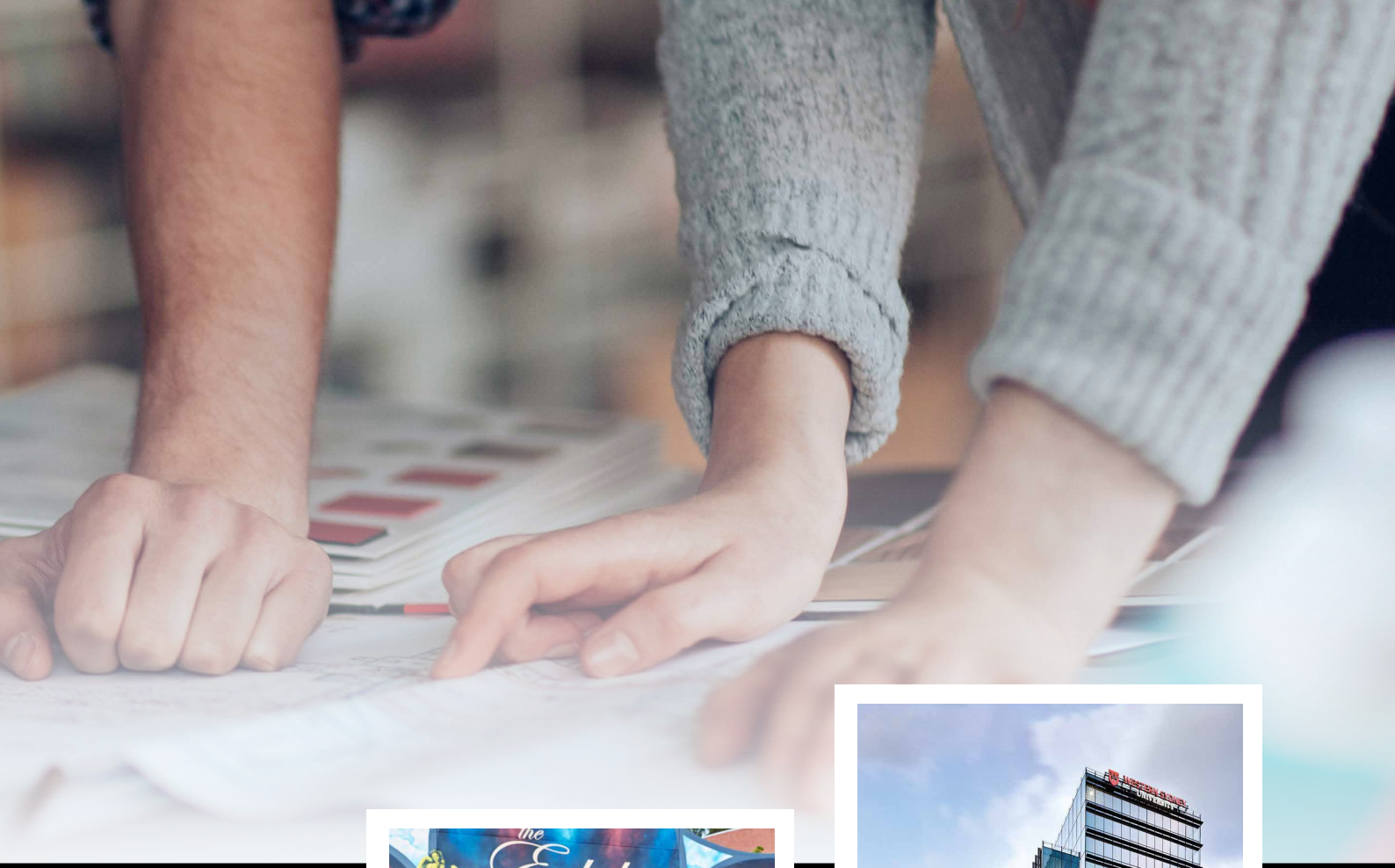
clusters, more universities here might assess how they can attract and retain their post-graduate students, while also developing business ideas.

In the health sector, the clinical work environment is an essential part of the learning that takes place at university, readying students for the real world. Most hospitals in Australia have links with universities — often more than one.

When universities partner with an internationally recognised institute, their ability to attract high calibre research candidates and staff opens up. It's likely that one day hospitals may be located on campuses — and within them, businesses developed by university students.

We expect to see increased collaboration in the future as the standard definitions of a workplace, office or lab are examined in a new light. As partnerships between industry and academia increase, these lines will continue to blur.

At Urbis, we're researching and analysing the ways employment is changing and the impact future partnerships may have on each university's ability to reach and retain quality students and staff.



**PROJECT**

**SPEIGELTENT FOR ECU  
MOUNT LAWLEY CAMPUS**  
EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY (WA)

**Urbis helped Edith Cowan University to become the first university in the world to acquire a Spiegeltent.**

This unique handmade venue will be housed at Mount Lawley campus and used by the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA). It holds 300 people and will be a real-world training venue for WAAPA's acting, producing and stage management students.

**SERVICES**

Planning

Image: Courtesy of Edith Cowan University



**CASE STUDY**

**WSU PARRAMATTA CAMPUS**  
WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY (NSW)

**This new, 14-storey CBD campus is a \$250 million world-class education and research facility, a vertical campus that showcases how workplaces and education can unite to deliver a smart and energy efficient building.**

Its 10,000 business students will be able to foster relationships with local businesses while they study. The site will also be home to 200 staff from PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Image: Courtesy of Western Sydney University, image by Bryan Siebel

# 05

# PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION

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**With an increased number of students staying on campus or in nearby urban centres, there's more vibrancy around universities than ever before.**

Student accommodation once consisted solely of campus colleges and halls of residence. Today's students are drawn to self-catering options and living with their peers in shared apartments.

In the 1990s, we saw the impact of student accommodation in Melbourne and realised its potential to awaken parts of our towns and cities that lie dormant after 5pm. More recently, in cities like Brisbane, we're seeing students breathe new life into the city after hours.

Understanding the demand for student accommodation, both in Australia and overseas, as well as determining what's driving student behaviour, are essential aspects of our work with universities.

We have benchmark student data on almost every university — whether students are commencing or continuing, undergraduate or post-graduate, local or international — and a decades' rich database on every student accommodation facility in Australia.

There's a strong correlation between the accommodation universities provide and the rate of growth they can achieve. Whereas for some universities, selling off accommodation to third party companies on long-term leases is a chance to unlock capital and focus on investing in other areas of growth.

Naturally, if accommodation is provided to students, it's easier to attract them when they have to move outside their local area. But some universities have begun to offer first-year students a guaranteed place of residence in an attempt to outbid the competition — such is its power.

Student accommodation supports on-campus retail outlets beyond the 9–5 and helps to balance out the heavy foot traffic of semester with the less populated semester breaks.

Having worked on inner city, suburban and regional university campuses nation-wide, our exposure to student accommodation projects extends beyond the role of advisor. We bring an independent and thorough approach to any scenario.

We push back when student accommodation providers aren't acting in the best interest of students or the long-term interests of our cities and towns. We also work with private providers who see student accommodation as a chance to acquire a long-term asset that's semi-government supported.

Student accommodation needs to support students, but it can support universities too.

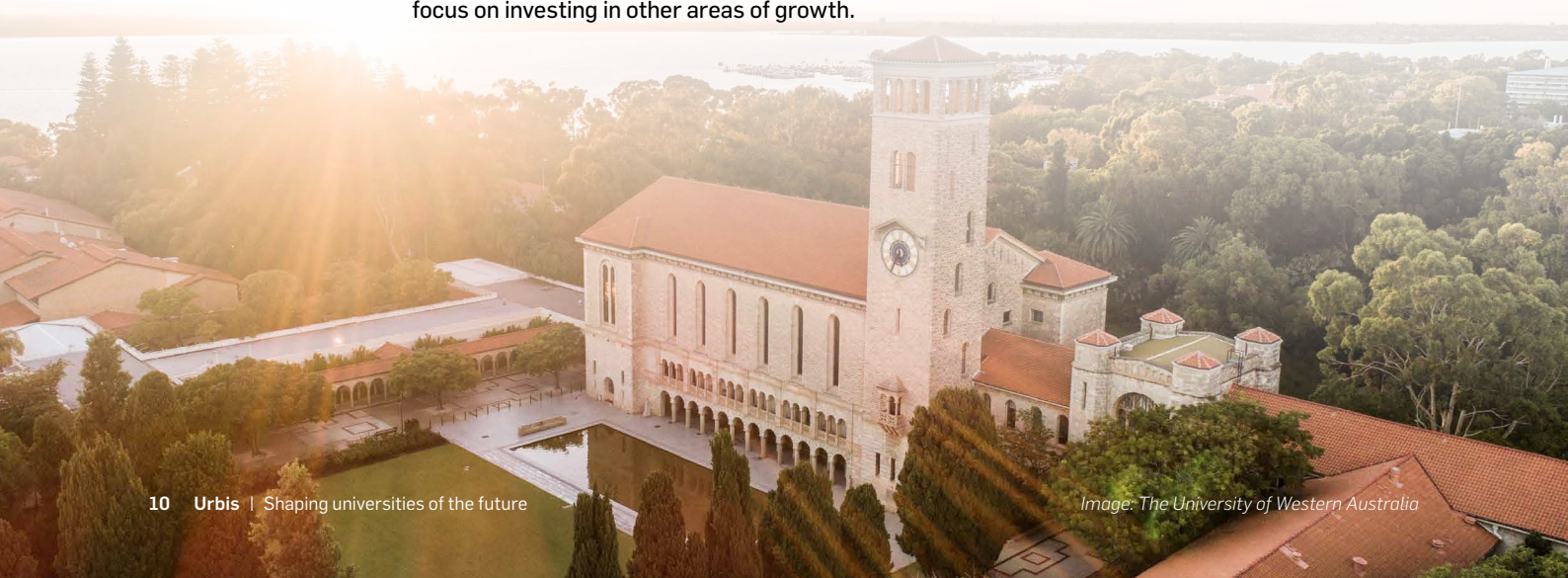




Image: Getty Images

**PROJECT**

**UNSW CLIFFBROOK CAMPUS RETREAT**

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)

Urbis is working with The University of New South Wales (UNSW) to create a bespoke residential and educational retreat for visiting postgraduates and executives from The Australian Graduate School of Management and UNSW Business School.

Cliffbrook campus has a coastal outlook over Coogee. The revitalisation of this unique site is part of UNSW's 2025 Strategy vision to establish itself as Australia's global university.

**SERVICES**

Planning

**PROJECT**

**DEVELOPING STUDENT ACCOMMODATION**

VARIOUS PERTH UNIVERSITIES (WA)

Urbis has been involved in student accommodation development across multiple campuses at Edith Cowan University and The University of Western Australia.

The current phase of development is focused around off-campus locations for student housing — giving students greater access to work and amenity when living in the CBD, while bringing activity and vibrancy into the city.

**SERVICES**

Planning | Economics | Research

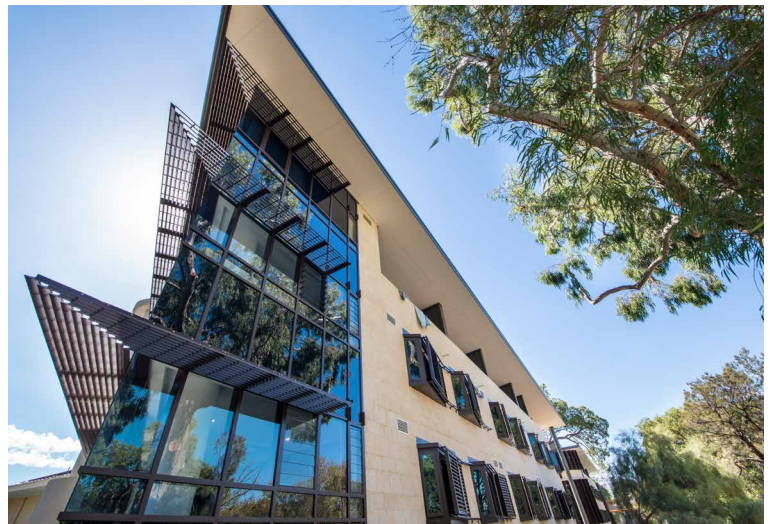


Image: St Catherine's College, Image courtesy of AJ+C Architects

# 06 MAXIMISE YOUR MAGNETISM

**Marketing to a diverse audience has its challenges — which is why Urbis invests in evidence-based engagement principles.**

Engaging in the broader story of students and staff is essential when planning for the future of any university. While there may be unifying experiences, like being in first year or completing a postgraduate qualification, most students are propelled by personal circumstances.

There's complexity at every level of user experience within a university: through our gender, education levels, cultural backgrounds and stage of life. We help universities to measure engagement as deeply as possible, so they can attract and retain new talent.

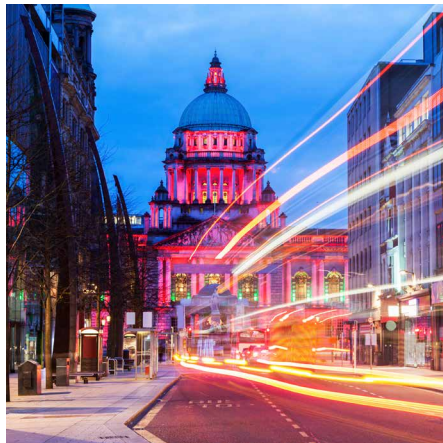
We understand the desire for universities to learn what kinds of campuses will keep them relevant in the long term. Attracting the best and brightest minds is a major drawcard for any university.

Researchers work with peers they admire, while investors are attracted to new technology and research, and alumni communities help to ensure a positive student experience lives on after graduation. We work with universities to consider their campuses and schools as part of the broader fabric.

What attracts students and staff to a campus? It could be access to public transport, on campus industry partners that are engaged with student life, work-related learning opportunities through nearby businesses or the availability of affordable housing close to campus.

The older university model — learning in an isolated context — is fading as planning projects and authorities catch up, allowing us to create a richer campus environment. Maximising a university's magnetism can attract students, staff and the broader community when planned for effectively.





**CASE STUDY**

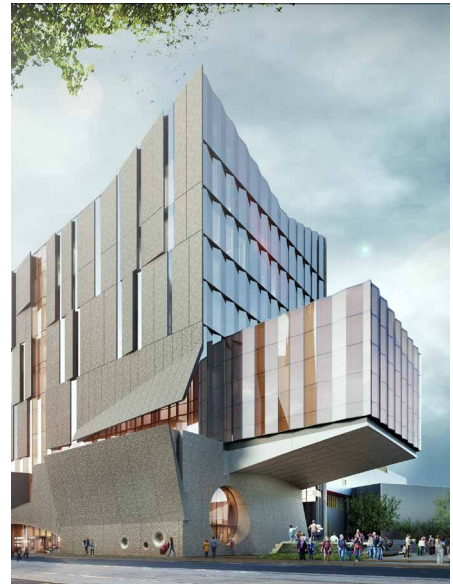
## SMART BELFAST – ULSTER UNIVERSITY

ULSTER UNIVERSITY  
(BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND)

**Ulster University established a city campus as part of Belfast’s vision of becoming a ‘smart city’ – Smart Belfast.**

This AU\$402 million site offers 75,000 square metres of space to accommodate 15,000 staff and students. Belfast City Campus is designed to be a world-class centre for research and innovation, while partnering with businesses, industry and communities.

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*Image: Getty Images*



**PROJECT**

## MELBOURNE CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE (VIC)

**The University of Melbourne engaged Urbis to help deliver the new Melbourne Conservatorium of Music at its Southbank campus.**

This project provides the missing link in the university’s art and music facilities in Southbank while helping to achieve the City of Melbourne’s vision for a thriving arts scene at Southbank, alongside Melbourne’s major art galleries, concert hall and performance venues.

**SERVICES**

Planning

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*Image: Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Southbank University of Melbourne; Architecture & Interior Design — John Wardle Architects; Image courtesy of John Wardle Architects*

# 07 CUT THROUGH COMPLEXITY

**Balancing a complex matrix of stakeholders, universities are now moving to work hand in hand with commercial partners to optimise outcomes. Clever negotiations with policy makers and careful navigation of planning controls are equally crucial for future success.**

Working with universities across Australia and New Zealand, Urbis has encountered most, if not all, planning contexts — at a local, state and national level. As universities become more multi-faceted, planning frameworks are being forced to adapt.

What was once an advantage — having specific planning laws — can now be a restriction. Universities are being urged to develop and expand their campuses in new ways, challenging the traditional notion of campus life.

Universities require a new depth of expertise and speed to meet these challenges. Project management within the university context, means that capital works often need to occur in semester break. Whilst some new projects can take up to 18 months, occurring across semesters, university timelines can put pressure on delivery schedules — for example, new student accommodation may need to open in time for a particular academic year.

Urbis has the breadth of expertise to help universities get to where they need to be. Our ability to interpret planning law effectively can be integral to the timing and pace of major projects — our technical expertise can fill the gaps where in-house resources may require support.

Partnering with commercial operators and research institutes may require planning approvals that are not strictly university related. We know how to facilitate changes to planning controls to meet the needs of universities, because we understand the complexities that mixed use developments require.

We're negotiators in the decision-making process. We can assist in advising universities on how to talk to government more effectively about planning issues, to help achieve the best outcome. However, it's not just the regulatory bodies we liaise with; there's a political framework that requires deftness too.

As complex communities, universities rarely have the time to manage intricate planning projects. We provide guidance in how to navigate processes, leverage opportunities and put the appropriate information in front of key decision makers.

As advocates for the university and education sector, we work with policy makers to help them understand the direction universities are moving in, whether it's regenerating urban land or building an innovation hub.



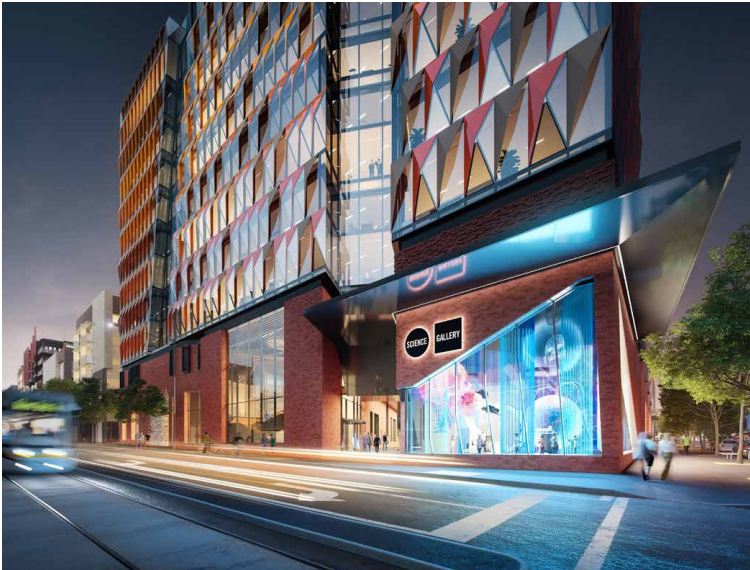


Image: The University of Melbourne, Image courtesy of Lendlease

**PROJECT**

**CARLTON CONNECT INITIATIVE**

LENLEASE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE (VIC)

Urbis worked with Lendlease and The University of Melbourne to facilitate approval for a new innovation precinct that's blazing new ground in bringing together higher education, research and commercial partners in a uniquely Melbourne design.

The 72,000sqm development is located in the Parkville National Employment and Innovation Cluster and will house the University of Melbourne's School of Engineering and major industry partners, supported by student accommodation and childcare.

**SERVICES**

Planning

**PROJECT**

**UQ ST LUCIA CAMPUS MASTER PLAN**

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND (QLD)

Urbis designed The University of Queensland's St Lucia Campus Master Plan to reflect future trends in education, the changing nature and role of students, new methods and flexibility in teaching and learning, and the need to adapt, participate and innovate within progressing global and digital economies.

Navigating complex policy and a matrix of stakeholders, we delivered a framework that looks to the future and remains true to the original campus legacy.

**WINNER**

2017 PIA Queensland Awards for Excellence (Best Planning Ideas — Large Scale); 2018 AILA Qld Landscape Architecture Award — Urban Design

**SERVICES**

Design | Research



Image: Urbis



# 08 OPTIMISE ALL ASSETS

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**How can we get the most out of older buildings in need of renovation? How can we take advantage of our location? Urbis helps universities to make the right decisions when it comes to selling, expanding or putting assets to work in a new way.**

While universities are not typically equipped to make the most out of their own assets, land or locations, our expert real estate professionals are trained in finding value in campuses that are as different to the next, each with a unique set of parameters.

At Urbis, we can analyse how your campus interacts with its surrounds and advise you on the best direction for the future. We might advise a university on retail outlets or scour for land to expand an over-crowded site.

Our expertise in real estate and property valuation enables us to help universities to make the most of campus facilities hamstrung by a seasonal calendar. With peaks and troughs, we can advise how to charge tenants fairly when the foot traffic drops off during holidays and how to optimise tenancy agreements to suit the campus context.

Whether it's establishing the optimum height and spacing for a new campus design, measuring how these qualities impact student engagement, or researching future plans for the region, we can make sure that all your assets are earning their keep.

At Urbis, we are regularly engaged to value university assets for financial reporting and accounting purposes. By planning ahead, we advise universities when buildings need updating or selling off. Our knowledge in this area is vast, having worked with the majority of universities across Australia.

Our real estate valuers work closely with our expert planners, to keep an eye on the ever-evolving regulations in every state and territory. Having a multi-disciplinary team of experts on hand to optimise your assets empowers you to make efficient decisions in a changing market.



**PROJECT**

## MURDOCH UNIVERSITY WHITBY CAMPUS MASTER PLAN

MURDOCH UNIVERSITY (WA)

**Urbis helped Murdoch University to move its agricultural pursuits from an inner urban campus to a more appropriate location.**

Whitby Falls Farm is a 203-hectare, heritage-listed property that was acquired in 2013 through a 42-year lease with the National Trust of Western Australia. Today, the \$200 million site supports multi-disciplinary teaching and learning across a range of disciplines, and partners with industry, using real life problems to meet the needs of businesses in the area.

**SERVICES**

Design | Planning

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*Image: Courtesy of Murdoch University*



**PROJECT**

## ACU NORTH SYDNEY CAMPUS AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY (NSW)

**Australian Catholic University (ACU) owns a number of different building assets that form its North Sydney campus. These assets are inter-mixed with other existing commercial and residential assets to the north of the North Sydney CBD.**

ACU has been investigating how to better position the various activities of the University into a more integrated campus as well as exploring the opportunity to expand its footprint in the precinct. Urbis has assisted ACU on planning and valuation advice associated with potential acquisitions, as well as undertaking a detailed review of the university's program needs and how the existing assets can be optimised.

**SERVICES**

Valuations | Research | Planning

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*Image: Courtesy of Australian Catholic University*

# 09

# SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS

**Universities are complex communities with a diverse population that's always in transition. With some as large as small cities, it is crucial that we understand how to create a safe and supportive campus for all.**

Students are drawn from many different cultures and from all corners of the world. Attending university is typically a time of major life transition for students, moving from school to higher education, and then from tertiary study into employment.

When students start university, they may have left home for the first time in their lives, with as many as one in four moving from overseas to Australia to study.

When they arrive on campus, they bring widely varying expectations, ambitions, academic capacities and diverse life experiences and social skills. Many are also transitioning into early adulthood.

Finding a safe and affordable place to stay is a key part of that life transition.

With all the excitement of attending university, there are also risks. Research shows that university students are more likely to experience mental ill health, excessive alcohol and drug use, sexual assault and harassment than other people their age. These are urgent problems that most universities are now tackling head on.

It's no wonder universities are keen to know and understand their students and the challenges they face. Urbis has taken a keen interest in understanding the stressors facing students and their support needs.

Our social researchers worked with 39 Australian universities to audit and review

on-campus student drug and alcohol and mental health services, as well as sexual assault initiatives in a bid to provide a safe environment for students. We understand the concerns of students across Australia.

We work with universities and the broader education sector to research social issues, develop policies and service models, and review strategies over time, to gauge whether universities are investing wisely in strategies and campuses that support the wellbeing of students and staff.

As universities strive to create safe campuses, Urbis is uniquely placed to guide universities through this sometimes difficult subject matter. We understand the student experience because we've listened and engaged with this topic both in and outside of university settings.

Many of our senior research staff have previously worked in universities and our two registered psychologists support this work. We have the credentials to assist universities on how to address a real increase in student mental ill health and alcohol consumption, as well as growing concerns about student safety.

Our award-winning experts in program evaluation can also advise on how to measure the success and Return on Investment of any new initiatives.



**PROJECT**

## **REVIEW OF ON-CAMPUS STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

**Urbis was engaged by the Federal Government to scope drug and alcohol and mental health support services provided by universities across Australia.**

This was the first time research of this kind had been undertaken and it allowed Urbis to consider the various stresses impacting on university students and how the structure, models and delivery of these services could be improved.

**SERVICES**

Economics | Research

**PROJECT**

## **RESEARCH ON THE AFFORDABILITY OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION**

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

**The Department of Education and Training enlisted the help of Urbis to research the supply and affordability of tertiary student accommodation in Australia, particularly in capital cities, following an Australian Government review into regional, rural and remote education.**

The review identified access to affordable accommodation as a key issue for students who need to relocate to study at university.

**SERVICES**

Economics | Research





# 10 INVEST IN CAREERS

**What's next? Careers counselling and education is becoming a valuable asset for universities — for students past and present.**

Where are students getting their careers advice as they travel through university? Is it reliable? Do students need different kinds of advice in this ever-changing workplace? Do they engage with on-campus careers advisory services? And if not, why not? What would make them more attractive or useful?

Careers education and advisory services are increasingly important to assist students to find a suitable career path and smooth the transition from university into employment. Graduate work destinations are a key measure of a university's success.

In 2017, Urbis worked with 14 universities in NSW and ACT surveying law graduates about their experience of university and other careers advisory services. We will track their employment outcomes over time.

We also conducted focus groups and surveys with university and secondary students, teachers and careers advisors across the country to inform the development of Australia's first National Career Development Strategy – with more than 5,000 people participating.

We have worked with peak bodies in the legal, medical, property and financial services sectors who want to develop closer links with universities to support career pathways and address any barriers to participation based on gender, ethnicity or language.

We have learned that university students are hungry to understand the reality of working in different sectors and jobs and need more direct contact and experiences with employers to help them make good decisions when leaving university.

We've worked with several universities to determine the quality of careers advisory services on campus and to capture the value of this work for students and staff. Our work in this area helps us to determine what university students really need — now and in the future.

Careers education and counselling is yet another way for universities to get to know their students. It also has the power to increase applications, enrolments and course completion rates, as well as boost overall engagement and reputation.





**PROJECT**

## LAW GRADUATE TRACKING STUDY

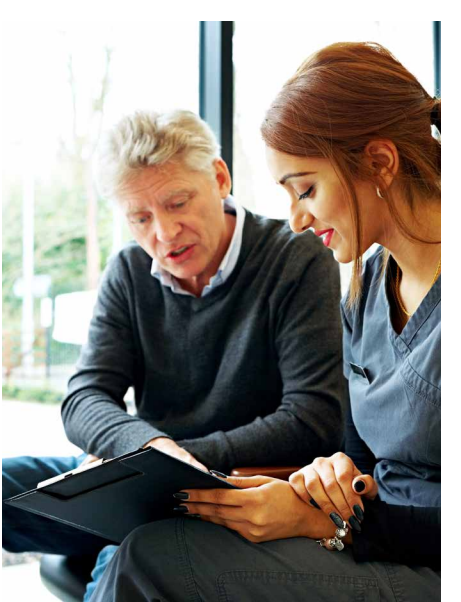
LAW SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)

**The Law Graduate Tracking Study was the first study of its kind in Australia.**

The Law Society of New South Wales engaged Urbis to conduct a study of all students graduating in law in NSW and the ACT in 2017, to determine their career intentions and track their employment experiences for up to five years after graduation. The findings helped inform universities in relation to improving student career counselling needs and post-university employment outcomes.

**SERVICES**

Economics | Research



**PROJECT**

## WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

NSW MINISTRY OF HEALTH (NSW)

**Urbis was commissioned to undertake a series of consultations on career development for medical students and junior doctors.**

The research revealed the types of career information, advice and guidance needed by medical students and doctors, and identified opportunities to address negative perceptions and increase engagement in medical careers in rural and regional NSW.

**SERVICES**

Economics | Research



# WHY URBIS?

**At Urbis, we have one simple goal – to shape the cities and communities of Australia for a better future.**

It's something we achieve by drawing together a network of the brightest minds. Think of Urbis as a creative community of practice experts, working collaboratively to deliver fresh thinking and independent advice and guidance – all backed up by real, evidence-based solutions.

Whether you engage with us in the areas of planning, design, policy, heritage, valuations, transactions, economics or research, you know you're dealing with the experts who will connect you to a better outcome, every time.

We help our clients find a way through the competing interests that surround any project involving people, places and property – community and social concerns, environmental and heritage values, planning policies, commercial imperatives.

We believe that the most workable and elegant solutions will emerge – and ultimately, the best cities and communities – when the best minds think and talk and work together.

**WE'D LOVE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT OPTIMISING UNIVERSITY AND STUDENT OUTCOMES TO PLAN FOR A VIBRANT FUTURE.**

To speak to one of our team, visit [urbis.com.au/people](http://urbis.com.au/people) or contact us on [info@urbis.com.au](mailto:info@urbis.com.au) and we'll put you in touch with the right people.



*Image: Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Southbank; University of Melbourne; Architecture & Interior Design: John Wardle Architects; Image courtesy of John Wardle Architects*



