

# Strategic Plan 2025–2030



AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR  
CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE



December  
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# Background

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C; the Centre) was established on 2 June 1998 as a partnership between the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn and Charles Sturt University. The partnership Deed establishes the Centre with a focus on the impact of Christianity on Australian culture, theological research and inter-faith dialogue.

The Centre is located on Blackall St, Barton in Canberra, the national capital. It sits on the edge of the Parliamentary Triangle on five hectares and includes an office block, chapel and separate meeting pavilion. An area of the grounds is set aside as a conservation reserve. The grounds also include a Pilgrim Walk, labyrinth and outdoor chapel.

This strategic plan spells out the Centre's vision for Australian culture and specifies the way in which the ACC&C will contribute to achieving that vision through its purpose statement, theological framework and the values that it lives out in everything it does. The plan specifies the action and key issue areas the Centre will work in over the next five years and the way it will approach and determine the value of that work.

# Vision and Purpose

## → Vision

A just and peaceful Australian culture that is resilient, inclusive and harmonious.

## → Purpose

Our purpose is building communities where the whole of creation flourishes. We do this by sharing in dialogues and action that deepen our understanding of, and show, how Christian values and theology contribute to those communities. Our engagement is based on research, discerning wisdom for the common good and creative engagement with the social issues that affect us all.



# Values

Through the filter of yindyamarra winhanganha<sup>[1]</sup> the ACC&C lives out its values of:



Harmony

With love, grace, kindness and optimism promoting peaceful social cohesion and inclusivity



Intentional Relationships

Through hospitality, communication and deep listening promoting trust, dialogue, engagement and collaboration



Justice

With dignity, courage, compassion and resilience promoting reconciliation, social justice and ethical leadership, and



Inspiration

Through creativity and excellence in the arts, inspiring others to join us in building a good and grace-filled world in which the whole of creation can flourish.

<sup>[1]</sup> This is a Wiradjuri phrase meaning the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in.

# Theological Framework

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## → **Within the broad faith parameters of the NCCA:**

“The National Council of Churches in Australia gathers together in pilgrimage those Churches and Christian communities which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and commit themselves to deepen their relationship with each other in order to express more visibly the unity willed by Christ for his Church, and to work together towards the fulfilment of their mission of common witness, proclamation and service, to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

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## → **With priority on the four pillars of the ACC&C:**

- Wisdom in civil society;
  - Peace through new religious engagements;
  - Resilience in institutional life and ethical leadership;
  - Creativity through the arts, sciences and culture
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## → **With a deliberate approach that emphasises the common good, rather than promoting individual piety or the particular interests of Christian churches or traditions**

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## → **With an intended openness to expressions of faith that foster faithful innovation in areas such as:**

- theology
  - social justice and
  - developing different forms of the Body of Christ
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## → **With a priority on discipleship, that walks in the steps of Jesus and gives attention to those who have been marginalised, including by the church as an institution.**

# Strategic Action Areas

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## → Action strategies

- Public dialogues, public engagement and shared action on key issues
- Research
- Creativity in the arts, sciences and culture

## → Operational strategies

- Income and resource generation
- Information and knowledge management
- Public relations, promotions, and communication
- Relationships and collaborative partnerships, and
- Evaluation





# Four Pillars

The Centre has *Four Pillars* that guide its work and engagement with Australian society

- Discerning wisdom in civil society
- Peace through new (ecumenical and interfaith) religious engagements
- Resilience in institutional life and ethical leadership, and
- Creativity through the arts, sciences and culture

Our strategic action areas and integrated action packages are the context within which the four pillars are implemented. This is reflected in the implementation plans for each of the three action strategies (integrated action packages, research strategy and creativity dreams).


# Key focus issues

2025-2030




Indigenous  
matters

because justice and inclusion are  
not possible otherwise



Climate change  
and the  
flourishing  
of the whole  
creation

because we cannot survive if the  
planet doesn't



Youth mental  
health and  
community  
engagement

because young people are our  
present and our future, they are  
more immediately and more  
harmfully impacted by global  
mega-trends than ever before, and  
connection is critical for mental  
wellbeing

**An integrated action package is implemented for each key focus issue. Integrated action package streams are:**

- academic
- collaborative
- artistic
- religious
- leadership
- structural
- influencers

The action package streams reinforce each other to maximise impact and effectiveness. They produce outcomes in research, resources, reputation and relationships.



# Financial Statement

The Centre exists as the result of a partnership between CSU and the ADCG. The Deed specifies that the partners are not obliged to provide money to the Centre. However, given an ongoing commitment to the intentions expressed in the Deed and a desire to see the Centre produce outcomes that are of value to both partners, a policy of co-investment is beneficial.

The ACC&C must generate sufficient income to achieve its intentions.

It must have multiple passive and active income streams to achieve this goal, which do or can include:

- Events – venue hire, ticket sales, potential ACC&C memberships
- Research grants, and possible consultancy work
- Tuition fees from education programs (micro-credentials)
- Returns on funds invested
- Fundraising – donations, bequests, Chairs funded by partner organisations
- Sponsorships and scholarships for specific actions in Integrated Action Packages
- Commercial use of the Barton site, including passive income streams from parking or office letting, and active income streams from event hires and management
- Commercial rents from a developed Barton site.
- Pro-bono contributions such as grounds management, student placements, internships and secondments.

These generated funds are then combined with the funds invested by the partner agencies to support the ongoing work of the Centre, the achievement of outcomes that are valued by both partners and have beneficial effects in Australian society.

# Risk identification and mitigation

The ACC&C sits within a complex context. It is affected by the environments of both the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn and Charles Sturt University. Both these partner agencies have their own risk appetites and means of mitigating risks. Both experience changes in risk appetite as the views and political positions of their leadership changes. Both are currently facing restrictions in their financial capacity. Despite this, both have remained committed to the ACC&C for 25 years.

## Risk Appetite

The Centre's risk appetite varies over different timeframes and different topics. At present, the risk appetite is high in terms of implementing action but low in terms of investing resources or expressing a position on controversial social issues.

A risk appetite statement is one of the documents that underpins this strategic plan and focuses on the ACC&C's risk appetite in each of the following areas:

- Financial
- People
- Academic
- Commercial
- Theological
- Reputational

## Overall Risks

The Centre is facing major risks arising from its operations and from its context. These risks are currently at a much higher level than has been the case in the past. The Centre needs to actively mitigate existential risks within short timeframes. High level risks include:

- University or the Diocese pulls out of the Deed; the Centre ceases to exist as a result of dissolution of the partnership between the agencies.
- Dependence on a single income stream: The partner agencies do not provide financial support, and/or the ACC&C fails to generate significant revenue to offset operational costs; the Centre is unable to sustain its activities due to lack of resources.
- Failure to attract and retain staff, particularly senior staff, including the Executive Director; the Centre is unable to sustain its activities or performs them in a way that contributes to reputational failure.

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In addition, there are three significant risks for the ACC&C's research program:

- Failure to attain an ERA rating of 3 in FoR codes Theology (5005) and Religious Studies (5004) by 2027.
- Failure to win grants for research in theology and/or religious studies, with few grants awarded by the ARC or philanthropic funders in such disciplines.
- Failure to recruit and retain high quality researchers, or establish and maintain high quality, effective research collaborations, in theology, religious studies and key focus issues.

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Finally, there is a specific operational risk:

- Consecutive or concurrent failure of many of the planned activities for the next 3 – 5 years due to resource constraints, staff capability and capacity, changes in environment or partner commitment and contribution, or a 'crowded marketplace' meaning that the ACC&C is having little advantageous impact; the Centre ceases to achieve outcomes that are valued by the partners.



# Key Performance Indicators

**2025**

- The ACC&C venue and facilities are 75% booked on average across the year
- The ACC&C demonstrates collaborative action in one key focus issue
- Income generation and evaluation strategies are developed.
- The ACC&C generates 10% of its overall operating budget

**2026**

- The ACC&C venue and facilities are 75% booked on average across the year
- The ACC&C demonstrates continuing and new collaborative action in two key focus issues
- The ACC&C generates 15% of its overall operating budget.
- Evaluation activities indicate formative outcomes in implemented integrated action packages
- One new income-generating research activity is instigated

**2027**

- An ERA rating of 3 (or equivalent) is achieved in 5004 (religious studies) and 5005 (theology).
- Research income target commensurable with ERA rating of 3 (to be derived from publicly available HERDC data)
- The ACC&C demonstrates continuing and new collaborative action in three key focus issues.
- The ACC&C generates 25% of its overall operating budget.
- The ACC&C evaluation activities demonstrate the achievement of staged outcomes in each implemented integrated action package



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