



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2011-2015



University of the  
Sunshine Coast  
The best of both worlds

In its first 15 years as a new public university for the Sunshine Coast region, USC has demonstrated its viability in terms of student demand, enrolment growth, teaching and research outcomes, campus development, financial position, regional contribution and reputation. The University is poised for its next stage of development with a new leadership team, ambitious research goals and plans to double enrolments within the next decade.

## PROGRESS

The 15 years from 1996 to 2010 represented the establishment period for the University. During the early years it built the Sippy Downs campus, drew on the experience of other Australian universities to create its institutional structures and functions, and commenced with general undergraduate programs in the humanities, sciences and business. In a second wave of development from 2004, USC committed strongly to professional and paraprofessional programs, and focused heavily on engaging with the local region, providing access to higher education and seeking to catalyse regional development. It also initiated research, research training and innovation in collaboration with regional and national organisations.

By the time the inaugural Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Thomas AM, retired at the end of 2010, USC had proven its viability, created an enviable master-planned campus and grown to 8,000 students (13 percent from overseas) and 600 staff. It had an annual budget of \$120 million, achieved consistently high ratings for teaching quality, and gained national and international recognition for niche areas of research. Through the development of the Innovation Centre, with its business incubator and accelerator, the University had deepened its connections with the regional community and economy.

## THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The course for this next phase of USC's development will be set by a new Vice-Chancellor and President, and new priorities. Other significant changes to USC leadership in 2011 include a new Deputy Vice-Chancellor and a foundation Pro Vice-Chancellor Research. In addition, the retirement of two of the three Deans presents opportunity for review of the academic structure.

The early period of USC's second 15 years will be characterised by naturally reinforcing themes.

Deregulation of student enrolments, including a student-centred, demand-driven funding system from 2012 and targets for higher education participation and low-SES students, will impact on the University's profile and teaching. Learning and teaching at USC will build on its existing reputation and become an exemplar of access and success in the Australian higher education sector. Opportunity will be provided over a broader region, and students and the wider community will have educational, cultural and economic possibilities well beyond current provision.

Research outcomes and outputs will increase in both quantity and quality. Existing areas of research concentration will be strengthened through collaboration with the best researchers in these fields in Australia and internationally. Strategic partnerships will be expanded with related government agencies, industry and business. In addition, there will be substantially more applied research conducted with, and for the benefit of, the wider community.

Rapid growth of the University and the region it serves presents a major challenge for USC's institutional capacity and capability. Professional development of staff at all levels will be a priority, the University's systems will undergo major reinvestments and core infrastructure will be expanded. Above all, development of strategic partnerships at regional, national and international levels will advance USC's footprint, profile and performance.

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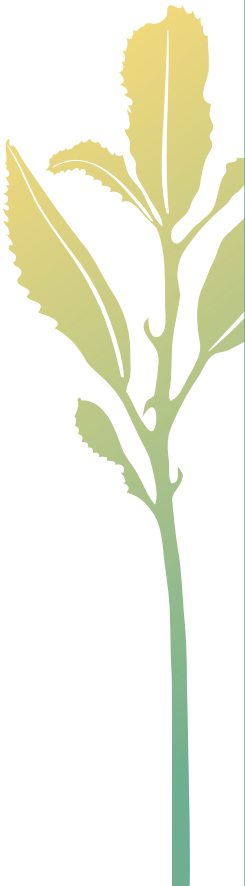
## NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

**A new strategic plan for 2011–2015 was approved by USC Council in December 2010.**

**The vision/mission reaffirms USC's regional relevance and focuses more directly on national and international excellence.**

The strategic plan was developed after extensive consultation with the University community. Convergent thinking on what we have achieved to date and what we stand for has become the platform for defining where we need to go and what we aspire to be. The plan is ambitious and reaching the goals will require commitment by all staff to the tasks and a measured approach to managing the risks inherent in the journey.

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## VISION

The University of the Sunshine Coast is regionally relevant and recognised, nationally and internationally, for excellence in teaching, research and engagement

## VALUES

The University is committed to

- Creating and disseminating knowledge through innovative and effective teaching and research
- Fostering freedom of inquiry and expression
- The process of lifelong learning
- Engaging in and responding to the region's intellectual, cultural and economic challenges
- Adopting consultative processes and ethical behaviours in all activities
- Engendering respect throughout the University community
- Fairness, openness, honesty, trust and effective communication
- Developing the University and supporting the region as a sustainability exemplar
- Advancing human rights within a tolerant and inclusive community, in which respect for Indigenous peoples is fundamental

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The University has four strategic priorities. The University will

1. enable access to the USC experience
2. deliver high quality teaching, learning and graduate outcomes
3. build research productivity and output significantly
4. develop USC for a sustainable future



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:

## ■ To enable access to the USC experience

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### KEY STRATEGIES

- 1.1 Recruit and support a diverse student population
- 1.2 Provide a high quality student experience
- 1.3 Develop a vibrant and healthy University community and identity
- 1.4 Engage with the regional community through educational, cultural, creative, economic and recreational activities
- 1.5 Extend learning opportunities throughout the region

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:

## ■ To deliver high quality teaching, learning and graduate outcomes

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### KEY STRATEGIES

- 2.1 Embed academic excellence in all teaching and learning activities
- 2.2 Support diverse learning and teaching styles to maximize student participation and success
- 2.3 Offer innovative programs, in particular via partnerships
- 2.4 Produce graduates with knowledge, skills and attributes to succeed in a world characterised by rapid change

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:

## ■ To build research productivity and output significantly

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### KEY STRATEGIES

- 3.1 Strengthen research capability
- 3.2 Develop research groups in disciplinary and cross-disciplinary areas
- 3.3 Focus research on regionally relevant and strategic areas
- 3.4 Leverage research outputs to enable productive partnerships

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:

## ■ To develop USC for a sustainable future

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### KEY STRATEGIES

- 4.1 Develop and enable staff to manage change and contribute to achievement of the strategic plan
- 4.2 Invest in and continuously improve information management systems, business processes and workforce planning
- 4.3 Advance the University through key strategic partnerships
- 4.4 Maximise opportunities to develop well designed, technology rich, sustainable University sites



## PERFORMANCE MEASURES BY 2015

### Access and engagement

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- 12,000 students by 2015
- SES participation

### Learning and teaching

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- Student satisfaction
- Graduate outcomes

### Research output

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- Research grants income
- Weighted publications
- Higher Degree Research students:
  - load
  - proportion in selected areas of research strength

### Sustainable future

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- Employment costs as a percentage of total revenue
- Operating margin
- Capital improvements: proportion of total income invested from operating funds

## IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The role of the strategic plan is to articulate the broad goals and aims of the University over the next five years. Specific strategies are set out in the top level plans which have been developed in the areas of

- Access to the USC experience
- Delivery of high quality teaching, learning and graduate outcomes
- Increased research productivity and output
- Development of USC for a sustainable future

Supporting strategies guide the University's involvement in international activities and regional engagement.