

ACU Stewardship Framework



Message from the Chief Operating Officer

“Stewardship is not a new concept. It has a long history in Catholic social thought with a particular focus on the responsible management of resources as God-given gifts in the pursuit of the common good. As a Catholic university, stewardship is a priority for ACU as outlined in our Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and this framework provides an explicit statement of our commitment to implementing an integrated, whole of university approach to stewardship at ACU.

Stewardship at ACU is underpinned by our mission

and values and is a part of our eco-system. Everything we do at ACU is linked to our overall responsibility to strengthen the institution, to make it sustainable and adaptable. The development of this framework has been guided by the aspirations and goals expressed by Pope Francis through *Laudato si'*.

The Stewardship Framework is a call to action for all of us. We all have a shared responsibility to understand the concept of stewardship and to be fully engaged. Our commitment to this framework will honour

ACU’s rich history. We have benefitted profoundly from those that came before us at ACU and, through this framework, commit ourselves to leaving the University an even better place than we found it. We will be measured not by our words, but by our actions. Working together to implement this framework will ensure we create an enduring ACU legacy.”

Dr Stephen Weller,
Chief Operating Officer, ACU



Introduction: **What is stewardship?**

Stewardship is a concept with an established definition in Catholic Social Teaching and a long tradition in service organisations.

- Stewardship is not a new concept. Stewardship of Creation is one of the nine principles of Catholic Social Teaching. It refers to our shared duty to act as ‘stewards in the care of the physical environment, our own bodies, and the resources we are given for the Common Good’. Human beings are not ‘owners’ of the earth and its resources but ‘stewards’ with a duty to care for the earth as a (God-given) gift to all. Likewise, we are stewards of ACU with a duty of care to the organisation, its stakeholders, its reputation and resources.
- Stewardship is a model of service leadership based on care and moral responsibility, in which leaders and staff share a duty to marshal the resources of an organisation towards a common purpose. The focus of stewardship is sustainable impact for current and future generations to ensure the creation of an enduring legacy for the university and the communities it impacts. Stewardship

is also a way of working built on organisational cohesion, collective goals, ethical behaviour, trust and community.

- Beyond ACU, stewardship has a long history in service-led organisations, including other Catholic universities, Catholic organisations, and not-for-profit organisations. There is also extensive literature exploring the concept of stewardship including Catholic Social Thought, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, *Laudato si’* and texts on the application of stewardship in the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors.



Introduction: **Why a stewardship framework?**

The stewardship framework will create a shared understanding of what it means to be a 'steward' at ACU and demonstrate how we can act as stewards in service of our mission.

- ACU's mission commits the university to the pursuit of knowledge, the dignity of the human person and the common good. Stewardship is expressed in the ACU Strategic Plan 2020 - 2023, within Strategic Priority 6: 'Service, Stewardship and Sustainability'. The concept of stewardship is consistent with the principles expressed in the Strategic Plan: respect, honesty, courage and sustainability. Good stewardship exists at ACU, but there is more we can do.
- More than 200 staff and students from across ACU have provided feedback about the concept of stewardship and its application at ACU. There was overall agreement on the strong alignment of stewardship with ACU's mission and values and the need for a whole of university approach which clearly articulates the concept and how it can be realised at ACU.
- Internal and external consultations and the environmental scan supported stewardship being focused both on the institution, its mission and strategy, and caring for people.
- Stewardship enables ACU to embody and pursue its mission more fully. It places particular value on the responsible management of resources (be they the natural, physical, intellectual, financial or cultural) in the pursuit of the common good, with a particular focus on serving those in need, recognising creation in light of its Creator.
- The stewardship framework will build on the service ethos and achievements enabled by the ACU Service Excellence Framework. It will articulate how we can achieve a greater level of service to the university, our stakeholders and our communities, what that means for different ACU stakeholder groups, and how we intentionally amplify and apply it to the way we work on a day-to-day basis.



Vision

We are custodians of the university.
As stewards we have a duty to leave the university a better place than we found it.
Our vision is that stewardship becomes amplified and a shared ethos at ACU, realised through the following **five pillars**:

Stewardship Pillars

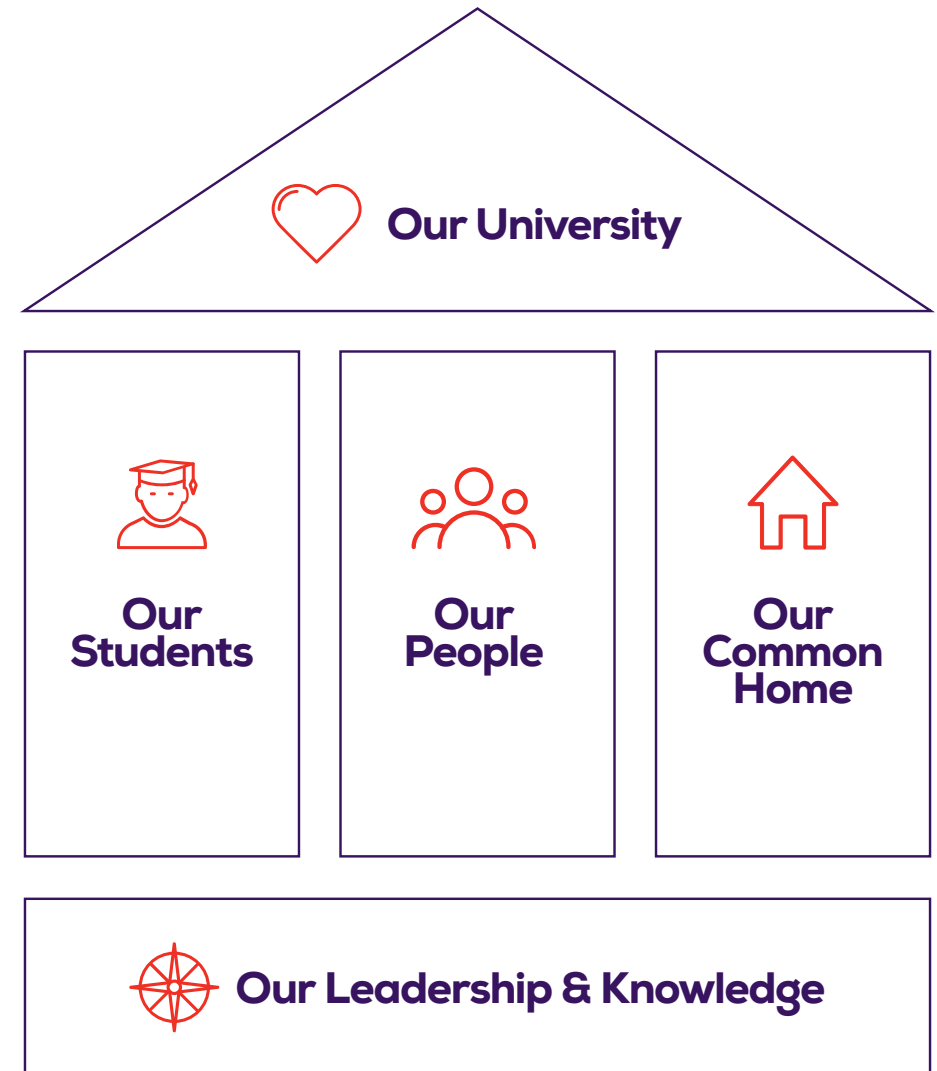
Our university: we are stewards of a thriving Catholic institution with the relationships, capability, resources, programs and reputation required to advance our mission and identity, now and in the future.

Our students are at the heart of our mission. We are stewards of their intellectual, ethical, personal and professional growth during their time at ACU and beyond as alumni. We build the capacity of students to make positive and lasting differences to communities and societies.

Our people: ACU staff are valued, trusted, empowered and accountable. We are stewards of their professional energies, growth and potential. The work environment supports and encourages staff in caring for themselves and others.

Our common home: we acknowledge the First Peoples, the traditional custodians of the lands and waterways where ACU campuses are located, and as caretakers of our earth we all have a responsibility to serve the common good. We manage a network of vibrant campuses and workplaces, minimise our environmental footprint and maximise our impact in our communities.

Our leadership and knowledge: we are stewards of Catholic scholarship, our disciplines and cross-discipline innovation. We nurture a vibrant academic and professional culture of creativity, discovery and innovation. We translate research into impacts that benefit society.





Objectives

Stewardship is one of the key priorities in ACU's Strategic Plan and this framework aims to embed stewardship across the university in all aspects of its leadership and operations, through these **3 objectives**:

1. Develop a shared understanding of stewardship at ACU.
2. Strengthen alignment of operational practice with the five pillars of stewardship at ACU.
3. Further embed stewardship within the ACU Strategic Plan 2020-2023 guided by the five pillars of stewardship with a particular focus on Strategic Priority 6: Service, stewardship and sustainability.

“...our “dominion” over the universe should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship”

Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*

The framework is supported by an implementation roadmap that identifies specific actions to progress these objectives.

BALLARAT

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BLACKTOWN

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STRATHFIELD

CANBERRA

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