



# ENGAGING ALUMNI FOR EMPLOYABILITY GOOD PRACTICE GUIDES

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE GOOD PRACTICE GUIDES

The Engaging Alumni for Employability Good Practice Guides are part of a suite of resources developed during the National Learning and Teaching Fellowship: Partnering with Alumni for Student and Graduate Success, funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training and led by Griffith University.

This five-part collection of good practice guides are intended to provide recommendations, frameworks and examples of practice that will empower universities, academics and professional staff, to authentically engage with alumni.

The guide has been structured to specifically support engagement from the following stakeholders:

- University administrators and leaders seeking to maximise alumni engagement and improve student outcomes;
- Educators seeking to strengthen their connection to alumni, improve the curriculum and support student employability; and
- Alumni professionals interested in establishing sustainable working relationships with academic staff.

Further detailed information regarding the fellowship, outcomes, methodology, additional resources and case studies can be accessed via the Final Fellowship Report and website ([www.engagingalumni.com](http://www.engagingalumni.com))

## ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

This National Learning and Teaching Fellowship aims to redefine the role of alumni in Australian Higher Education and encourage new models of alumni engagement that facilitate authentic partnerships between a university and its graduates.

The Fellowship engaged a mixed-methods approach to explore the perceptions of academic staff, students and alumni professionals in relation to the value of alumni and the key challenges they experience when developing and maintaining alumni communities. Recommendations and frameworks developed during the Fellowship were informed through insights gathered from the following sources:

- Published literature;
- Desk audit of publicly available website information regarding alumni engagement practices from 42 Australian universities;
- A suite of semi-structured interviews (n=115) and focus groups (n=164 participants) with participants from 11 Australian and 27 international universities; and
- Surveys of students (n=288), Health Science academics (n=40) and alumni professionals (n=23).

Across the course of the Fellowship, Professor Vanderlelie deeply engaged with the sector and presented workshops and keynote presentations to 1301 participants and engaged with 28 Australian and 27 international universities.



# **1 ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT CONCEPTS AND GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES**



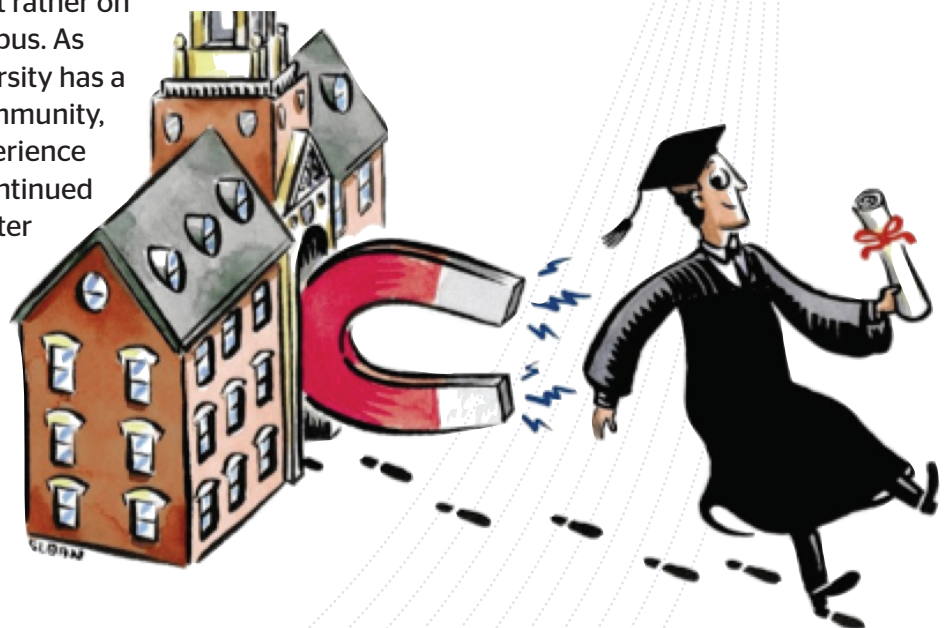
## OUR ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGE

More than 250,000 students graduate each year from Australian universities (Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching [QILT], 2018), many with a strong relationship to their institution built upon the foundation of a high-quality student experience (Button Renz, 2010) and a personal connection to the academics that 'made a difference'. With over 80% of graduates not maintaining connection to their institution (Coolman, 2011), a wealth of information about the student experience and key knowledge about the realities of the ever-increasing challenges of navigating 'new worlds of work' is being lost. For schools, faculty and universities interested in improving undergraduate retention, ongoing student success and graduate outcomes, connection to alumni must be facilitated beyond our requests to provide financial 'donations' and brand capital (Creamer, 2013). The relationship instead must be supportive of the graduate and provide them with a range of 'value add' experiences, facilitating their involvement in ways that have personal meaning (Myran, Baker III, Simone, & Zeiss, 2003).

The Council of Alumni Association Executives (Forbes, 2014, p1) defines alumni engagement as 'Activities and experiences designed to identify, cultivate, steward, solicit and manage gifts of time, talent and treasure from former students and graduates of a given institution in service to the needs of both alumni and alma mater'.

To reshape our connection with alumni, we need to consider the 'world' of a new graduate and challenge our notions of having 'done our job' once a graduate successfully completes their studies. By adopting a 'Friend Raising' (Myran, Baker III, Simone, & Zeiss, 2003) before fundraising approach, we have the opportunity to reshape alumni university relationships into an intentional and mutually beneficial partnership with student and graduate success as the overarching, shared goal.

The key challenge in facilitating deep alumni engagement is to maintain meaningful connection post-graduation. Despite the best efforts of our central alumni teams to connect with graduates, the key time to establish these relationships is not when a student walks across a graduation stage, but rather on the very first day they come to campus. As such, every staff member at a university has a role to play in creating a vibrant community, providing a supportive student experience and communicating the value of continued connection to the university long after graduation.

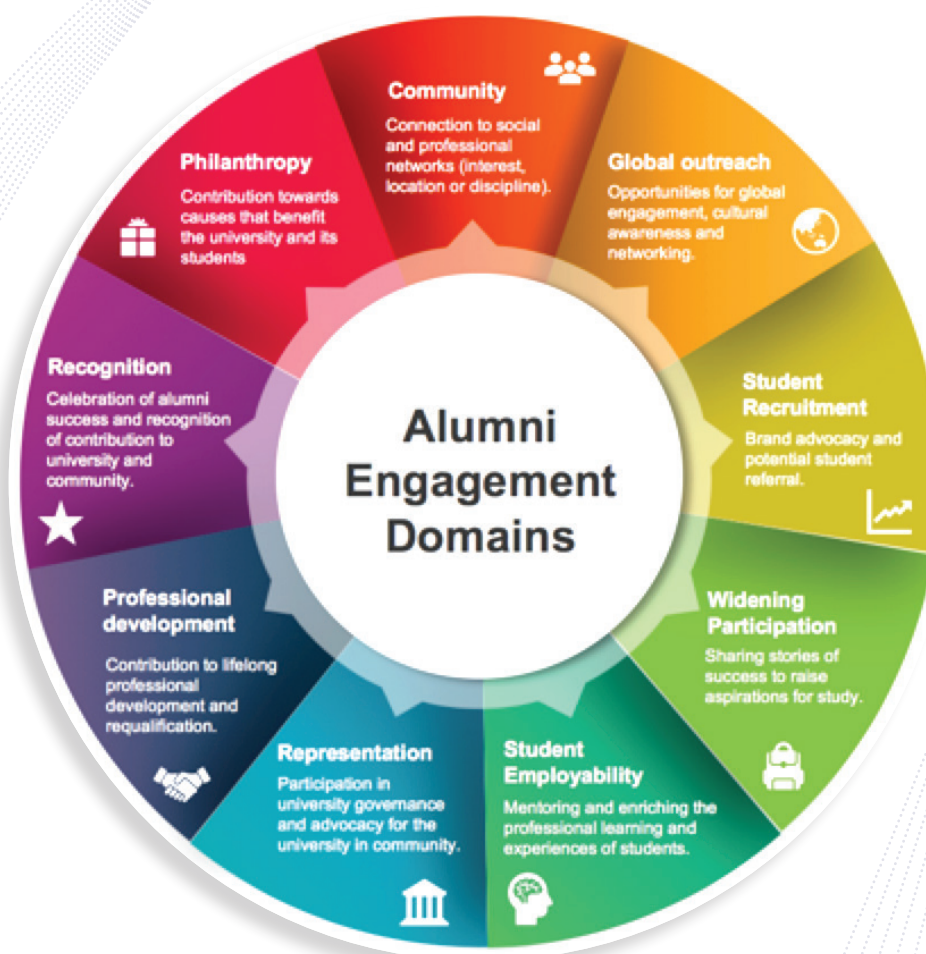




## HOW ARE WE ENGAGING ALUMNI?

Alumni engagement practices are diverse and wide reaching yet align to a number of common themes. By analysing the range of engagement activities conducted across Australian institutions, the following typology of alumni engagement domains was developed. This work builds upon and contextualises the foundational taxonomy proposed by the Council of Alumni Association Executives (Forbes, 2014).

### Typology of Alumni Engagement Domains

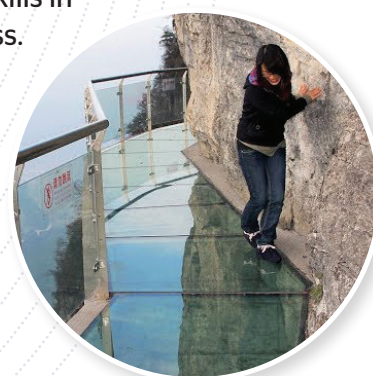


## ALUMNI: THE UNTAPPED EMPLOYABILITY RESOURCE

Supporting students to develop their professional identity, competency and skills in career management is fundamentally important for ensuring graduate success. In this context, employability is not merely an attribute of the new graduate and goes beyond preparation for a single graduate job, to encompass more broadly, the development of life long skills and career resilience.

### Defining Employability

Activities and experiences that support the development of knowledge, professional skills and personal capabilities to enhance a graduate's lifelong professional success.





## Graduate Transition - The Employability Hole

The transition to the world of work is often a time of mixed emotions for graduates as they balance the excitement of this new phase of their lives with feeling daunted by the task of finding work. Despite the best efforts of universities, approximately 25% of students struggle to find work in the four months post-graduation (QILT, 2018).

A number of challenges face graduates in the transition from university (Jackson & Wilton, 2017). Key issues include:

- Lack of personal and professional awareness;
- Limited capacity to identify and articulate key skills;
- Level of awareness of the supports available through the university; and
- Varied understanding of the path ahead and the realities of job search

Much work has taken place across the sector in relation to the key drivers for supporting employability and the power of the curriculum to support student employability is widely recognised. However, alumni have been a significantly under-utilised resource in the process of enhancing both the quality of higher education and the capability and employability of graduates (Irani, 2012).






## HOW CAN ALUMNI SUPPORT EMPLOYABILITY?

By building strong connection with alumni, we have the power to enrich curriculum in a manner that is informed by industry experience and facilitate the co-creation of programs and activities through the continued investment of alumni in the teaching and learning community. For our students, embedding employability in this way will strengthen their sense of purpose and the connection between theoretical knowledge and professional application, while also broadening their understanding of what it means to be an alumnus. For our alumni, we offer a rewarding opportunity to contribute to the development of a student's professional identity and capabilities and the benefit of belonging to a strong network that will support their careers long into the future.

The nature of alumni engagement for employability can take many forms, from guest lectures and industry panels, to informational interviews and work placements. The Engaging Alumni for Employability Framework has been designed to support staff to consider when and how to engage alumni to enrich the student experience and answer key questions that students may have across the student lifecycle.

The framework demonstrates opportunities to infuse alumni knowledges into recruitment and outreach activities. By scaffolding employability experiences across a degree, not only are students encouraged to consider their employability from day one at university and build their skills over time, alumni are also provided with diverse opportunities to engage and connect with students of all year levels.

# ENGAGING ALUMNI FOR EMPLOYABILITY FRAMEWORK

Stage	Transition	Activities to Engage Alumni	Questions Answered
 <b>Aspiration</b>	<b>Towards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing alumni stories at respective secondary schools</li> <li>• Alumni profiles to showcase at outreach activities</li> <li>• Alumni presence at 'Open Day'</li> <li>• Alumni stories in promotional materials</li> <li>• Engagement at community events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Is uni for me?'</li> <li>• 'Which degree is right for me?'</li> <li>• 'What can I do with this degree?'</li> </ul>
 <b>Awareness</b>	<b>In</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect students with alumni at orientation</li> <li>• Demonstrate pathways for success and 'tips'</li> <li>• Build professions awareness with alumni examples</li> <li>• Begin to connect students &amp; alumni through LinkedIn</li> <li>• Alumni stories for outreach activities in schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Am I in the right degree?'</li> <li>• 'Do I belong here?'</li> <li>• 'How do I succeed at uni?'</li> </ul>
 <b>Networks</b>	<b>Through</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair students with alumni for informational interviews</li> <li>• Invite alumni to present at career information sessions</li> <li>• Networking functions</li> <li>• Alumni as facilitators in the classroom</li> <li>• Provide industry relevant examples for teaching</li> <li>• Make skills for the professions explicit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'What do I want to do?'</li> <li>• 'What's out there?'</li> <li>• 'How do I make a network?'</li> <li>• 'What skills will I need to develop?'</li> </ul>
 <b>Experience</b>	<b>Out</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect final year students with alumni mentor</li> <li>• Work experience and internship opportunities</li> <li>• Alumni co-designing final year projects (capstones)</li> <li>• Industry visits and shared perspectives in class</li> <li>• Alumni on panels for graduate interview preparation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'What's it like in the real world?'</li> <li>• 'How do I get experience?'</li> <li>• 'Do I need further study?'</li> <li>• 'What do employers look for?'</li> </ul>
 <b>Support</b>	<b>Up &amp; Back</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alumni-alumni mentoring</li> <li>• Contribute to curriculum renewal</li> <li>• Collaborate on research</li> <li>• Professional development and lifelong learning</li> <li>• Employ graduates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Where do I begin to find a job?'</li> <li>• 'I'm ready for a career change but what can I do?'</li> <li>• 'How can I support students?'</li> <li>• 'Can I get involved?'</li> </ul>

# GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach to alumni engagement. These Good Practice Principles are designed to support universities, schools and staff foster authentic alumni relationships, form sustainable networks and leverage the power of alumni to improve student outcomes.

## **Principle 1: Build your community**

**A strong alumni network hinges on a deep sense of community**

- Welcome to the family: Discuss that students belong to the school 'family' and university 'community' from day one on campus and throughout their lives.
- Communicate your intention and commitment to establish and maintain a lifelong relationship.
- Share stories of past graduates, their achievements and challenges with students and alumni.
- Celebrate the success of your alumni, by regularly profiling their achievements via platforms such as newsletters and social media and through an official university alumni awards program.
- Model what it means to be an alumnus to current students by engaging graduates across the student lifecycle from orientation to graduation.
- Communicate the value of connection to the network by clearly answering the question 'what's in it for me?'
- Understand that alumni engagement must be earned: Demonstrate this by inviting alumni to events where you DON'T ASK ANYTHING of them.

## **Principle 2: Provide a supportive experience**

**Alumni have an emotional attachment to the university based on their relationships as a student**

- Let students contribute: Provide opportunities for students to provide feedback about their experience and contribute to the operations of the school and university.
- Have fun: Provide co-curricular activities for students that facilitate connection with academic staff, peers and alumni.
- Show you care by encouraging staff to be friendly and supportive of students.
- Help students connect to their peers and alumni through formal and informal networks that leverage the power of technology.
- Celebrate the diversity of backgrounds and experiences of students and draw upon alumni to normalise the challenges of study for all.
- Provide tangible benefits of engagement that are supportive of alumni and their needs.
- Make engagement authentic by coordinating a diverse program of activities tailored to the discipline context.



### Principle 3: Explicitly address employability

Alumni are industry that deeply care about the university

- Talk to students about their career goals, encourage reflection upon these goals across the degree and provide opportunities for alumni to provide guidance.
- Develop authentic curriculum and experiences for students by drawing upon alumni to inform learning design.
- Support professions awareness: Draw upon experienced alumni to showcase career options, the realities of the professions and a pathway to success.
- Be open about the challenges: Invite new graduates to share their experiences of transitioning to work.
- Support placement and work experience with alumni partners.
- Facilitate mentoring by providing opportunities for student-to-alumni and alumni-to-alumni mentoring.
- Continue to care by acknowledging your role in supporting graduates as their careers unfold, through times of success and transition.

### Principle 4: Engage early and coordinate the approach

If we wait until graduation, it's already too late

- Connect students early to the school and University alumni network so they understand the full benefit of continuing involvement.
- Make it easy to stay connected by developing discipline specific networks and encouraging all students to join while studying and leveraging social media.
- Maintain a comprehensive database of alumni and their details by collaborating with the Alumni Office and avoiding 'secret' lists.

- Draw upon the expertise of the alumni office to support schools/disciplines with the coordination of events and developing a communication strategy.

- Track engagement between alumni and all areas of the university to ensure that you are not overburdening active alumni.
- Take an active role in maintaining connection by encouraging staff to remain connected with graduates and providing opportunities to bring alumni together.
- Map alumni relationships with staff to ensure those staff with the strongest connection are in the loop if approaching an alumnus for a request.





## **Principle 5: Clear institutional strategy and support**

### **We are all on the same team**

- Position alumni engagement as a key area of strategic priority for the institution and communicate this with staff, students and alumni.
- Communicate clearly the engagement philosophy and university intentions regarding fundraising to academic staff at all levels of the institution.
- Provide resources to faculties and schools to encourage and support authentic engagement with alumni.
- Develop a clear organisational structure and make internal processes clear to encourage collaboration between academics, schools and the Alumni Office.
- Identify champions to lead alumni engagement within schools/disciplines to provide a consistent point of contact to the Alumni Office.
- Provision workload and reward achievement for staff supporting alumni engagement activities.
- Support staff training and development in the fundamentals of relationship management, social media and online networking.



## **2 GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR SENIOR UNIVERSITY STAFF**





# SUPPORTING STRONG ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

The development of a vibrant and sustainable alumni community is of significant value to any institution. The responsibility for this endeavour usually rests with the Alumni and Advancement Office of the university and senior university executives. An opportunity exists to engage the whole university in supporting deep alumni engagement. To achieve success requires considered action across four key domains.

1. Strategy - Aligning institutional strategy to maximise engagement.
2. Staffing - Developing a sustainable approach to building capability and facilitating staff activity with alumni engagement.
3. Engagement - Approaches for a successful institutional alumni engagement strategy.
4. Communications - Facilitating two-way communication between alumni and the University

The following matrix and action recommendations provides a framework from which to consider the planning and strategy for an institution.

## University Strategy and Planning Matrix for Alumni Engagement

Strategy	Strategy	Philanthropy	Partnership
Staffing	Workload planning	Reward and recognition	Training
Engagement	Support	Representation	Celebration
Communications	Website	Digital communities	Feedback

# ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE LEADERS AND SENIOR UNIVERSITY STAFF

**Strategy** - Clearly define and articulate your institutional strategy for alumni engagement and fundraising. Consider the alignment of alumni in the broader contexts of student employability and community and industry engagement.

**Philanthropy** - Provide robust mechanisms through which to capture the true ROI of alumni engagement. Executive leaders are encouraged to consider establishing a 5-year timeframe post-graduation before approaching alumni in annual philanthropic appeals.

**Partnership** - Prioritise alumni engagement as an integral component of your strategy for industry partnership. Ensure relational connections to relevant staff are tracked and maintained.

**Workload Planning** - Be intentional in the provision of allocated workload to staff (both academic and professional) engaged in working with alumni. Identify academic staff champions to lead engagement in Schools.

**Reward and Recognition** - Recognise and reward academic and professional staff who work collaboratively to support alumni engagement. Consider the explicit inclusion of alumni engagement in promotion criteria and as a category in annual staff and teaching award programs.

**Training** - Provide targeted training to staff across the organisation in alumni engagement practices including relationship management, event planning, communications and philanthropy.

**Support** - Provide explicit support to your alumni as they transition to the world of work and offer targeted programs suited to their career stage and profession. Consider offering lifetime email, library access and careers support as part of your benefits program.

**Representation** - Provide opportunities for alumni to contribute to academic governance and program level advising at all levels of the institution.

**Celebration** - Celebrate the success of your alumni through a yearly award program and more regularly through alumni stories and profiles shared to both internal and external audiences.

**Website** - Clearly include a section for alumni on the homepage of your university website and ensure greater prominence is given to 'support' over 'giving'.

**Digital Communities** - Establish institutional social media group(s) for alumni and encourage Schools and Departments to establish sub-groups that are connected. A diverse social media presence will facilitate stronger connection.

**Feedback** - Provide opportunities for alumni to provide feedback about their experiences and the supports offered by the university. Consider utilising benchmarking tools such as the Barometer of Alumni Sentiment.



### 3 GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR ACADEMIC STAFF





# ROLE OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Alumni hold a wealth of experience with the potential to enrich the student experience, support student employability and authentically infuse industry knowledges into the curriculum.

Academics play a fundamental role in supporting a thriving and sustainable alumni community, as students develop strong connections to their school and academic staff during their studies. Often, the power of this relationship is undervalued or worse yet allowed to lapse as time from graduation extends. Active engagement from academic staff is key to ensuring students see value in the alumni network and sends a strong message to alumni that the university is committed to maintaining a relationship beyond requests for money.

To achieve success, it is important to challenge notions of an academic's role ending once a student has successfully completed their studies. Academics can support a vibrant alumni network in a range of ways including supporting the development of discipline-based alumni networks that are connected to the broader university network.

## HOW CAN ACADEMIC STAFF GET INVOLVED?

- Speak to students in class about what it means to be an alumnus.
- Embed employability in the curriculum.
- Invite alumni into class.
- Attend graduation ceremonies.
- Connect with graduates on LinkedIn.
- Contribute posts to school alumni groups.

### CHECKLIST FOR BUILDING YOUR ALUMNI COMMUNITY

- ✓ Talk about the school 'community' from orientation. Show your students that you care about their career development and help them to understand what it means to be an alumnus.
- ✓ Provide a supportive student experience (everyone's business).
- ✓ Talk to students about their career goals.
- ✓ Connect students to your school and university alumni social media pages during the degree.
- ✓ Support mentoring and opportunities for students and alumni to connect.
- ✓ Invite new grads as well as more experienced alumni to speak to students.
- ✓ Invite alumni to events where you DON'T ASK anything of them.
- ✓ Support placement/work experience with alumni partners.
- ✓ Profile your graduates and celebrate their success.
- ✓ Keep connected.

## CHALLENGES FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

The specific challenges identified by academic staff working in alumni engagement include:

- **Difficulty tracking students after graduation** – LinkedIn is a powerful tool that can support you to see where your graduates have gone.
- **Workload** – It is important that supervisors value both the time and effort involved in connecting with alumni.
- **Issues maintaining contact** – Setting up a social media network during the degree is the most successful way to keep graduates connected.
- **Connection to the school fades** – Developing a School branch of the University alumni network helps keep students connected.
- **Generic degrees as stepping stone to further study** – Students will maintain their connection if they see value.
- **Limited understanding of the best engagement methods** – The Alumni Office are experts in engaging alumni, so utilise their expertise and collaborate closely.
- **There is limited budget** – There are a lot of activities that are very inexpensive. Check out the Alumni Engagement Planning Matrix for ideas.
- **Not sustainable if staff leave** – Protect against this by ensuring multiple academic staff are collaborating to support the network.
- **Difficulty connecting with the Alumni Office** – Establish a key contact in your school to be the connection with the Alumni Office as this will make the communication much more consistent.

## DISPELLING MYTHS

**Myth: The Alumni Office only want our alumni for their money.**

Only a small proportion of alumni contribute philanthropically. The greatest benefit for engaging alumni is the in-kind support they provide through mentoring and advocacy.

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**Myth: Alumni aren't interested in connecting.**

Significant evidence suggests that alumni do want to engage and will if provided with opportunities they see as having value.

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**Myth: I don't have time to engage alumni.**

There might be some additional work to stay connected with alumni, but there are significant benefits to your teaching and to your students.

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**Myth: I don't know how to engage with alumni.**

Maintaining connection to alumni is a team effort. The Alumni Office is your best ally and has a range of support they can provide.

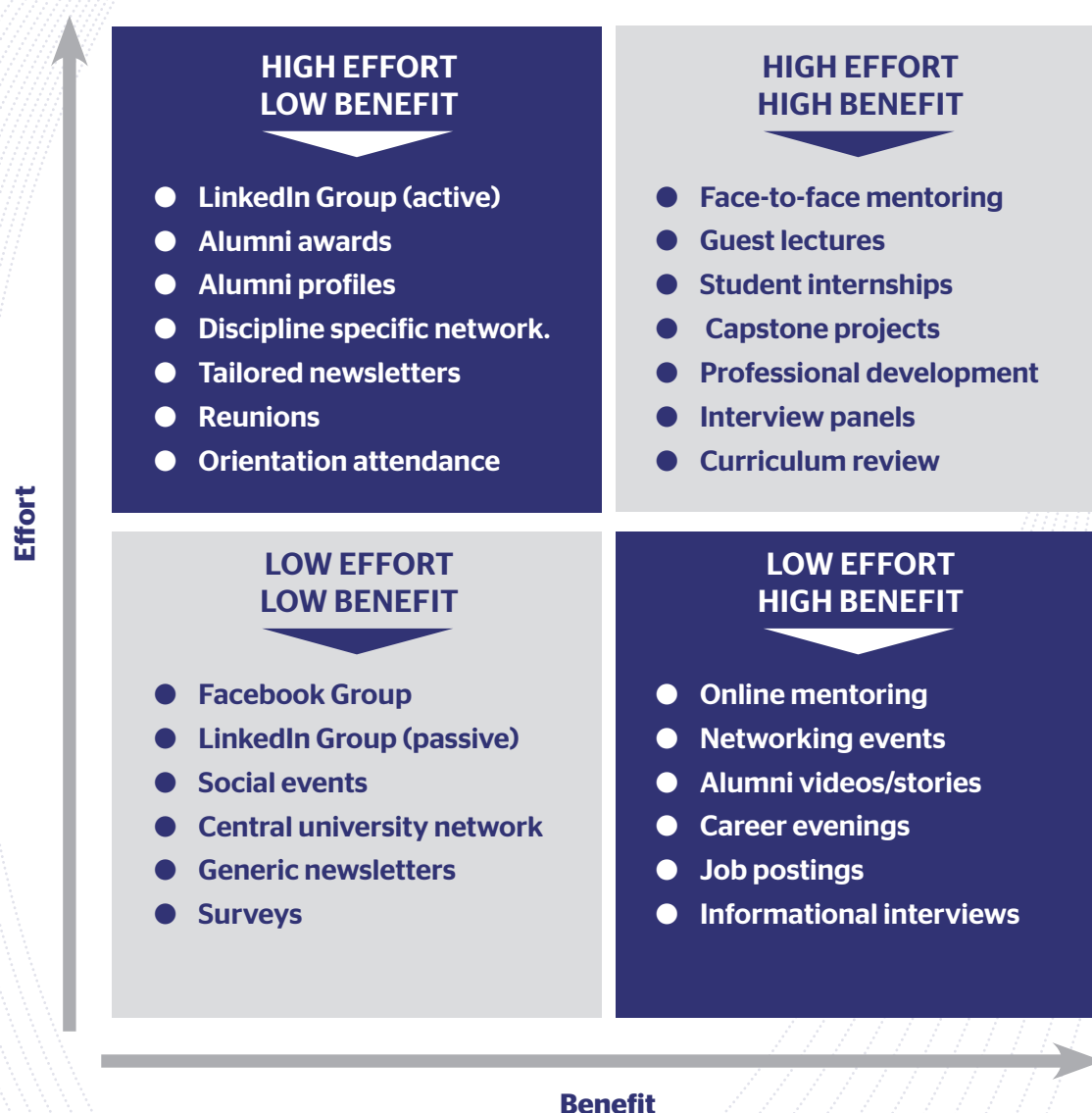
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# PLANNING YOUR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Developing a sustainable and targeted engagement strategy is key to the success of any alumni network. There are a range of activities that can enrich the experience of your alumni and support continued connection to the institution. The following Alumni Engagement Activities Matrix plots potential activities in relation to the effort and resource requirement involved in coordination against the benefit for alumni engagement and student learning.

There is no 'correct' strategy, as this will depend on a range of factors including staff involvement, budget and maturity of the network. However, it is useful to map current or planned activities on the matrix to maximise the spread of activities across quadrants.

## Alumni Engagement Activities Matrix





## TOP TIPS

### Connect Early

Relationship building starts on the first day at university if not before. Talk about what it means to be an alumni and create opportunities for students to connect with alumni throughout their degree.

### Stay Connected

Be sure to encourage students to join the alumni network social media pages during their degree and foster the continuation of professional connections with academic staff.

### Harness the power of social media

Utilise your social media channels to post regularly. Remember to go beyond sharing 'News' and provide content that will help build careers (e.g. work-life balance, leadership and personal branding).

### Facilitate conversations

Provide opportunities for alumni to speak with current students and staff and use this as an opportunity to discuss the changing nature of the profession and potential postgraduate opportunities.

### Work with the Alumni Office

Develop a plan for engagement in partnership with the Alumni Office and coordinate events to ensure you limit overlap and maximise channels for communication.

### Update Contacts

Ensure your contact list is always up to date by collecting current email details at events. Don't forget to share these with the Alumni Office.

### Always prompt action

Include a call to action in all your communications with alumni to be sure to get the best engagement.

## THINGS TO AVOID

### Waiting until graduation

Connecting with your students as part of a supportive student experience is the most important way you can establish a network of graduates that WANT to stay connected. Waiting until graduation is a missed opportunity.

### Doing it by yourself

Work with the Alumni Office as they are an invaluable resource that can support efforts to engage alumni and ensure your relationships and alumni contributions are recorded.

### Organising on the fly

Being systematic about your strategy for engaging alumni within your School/discipline will allow you to plan and identify the best alumni to engage and avoid exhausting your highly active contacts.

### Only ever asking

Alumni want to feel part of a community and it is important that you recognise their contributions and provide support and assistance for them to connect with other professionals and plan their careers.



## 4 GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR ALUMNI PROFESSIONALS













The Alumni Office is the primary connection to alumni for most universities. Whether the operating model takes the form of a whole of institution or distributed (faculty-based) approach, the alumni engagement team plays an integral role in the leadership and implementation of engagement strategy and connection to graduates. As the power of alumni to enrich the student experience and employability is realised more widely across higher education, the pressure on the Alumni Office to support the connection and engagement of alumni will increase and with it the requirement to ensure the integrity of the engagement practices undertaken by others across the institution.

Developing a supportive and sustainable alumni community is a shared responsibility with the best outcomes achieved through close partnerships between the Alumni Office and academic elements of the institution.

## CHALLENGES FOR ALUMNI PROFESSIONALS

Alumni professionals face a number of challenges when working with academic staff to support alumni engagement:

	<b>Time</b>	Academic staff have a number of competing demands (grant writing, papers, teaching) on their time and are not as responsive as is required.
	<b>Contact</b>	Maintaining consistent contacts within a School is difficult as academics are promoted, take study leave or exit the institution.
	<b>Transparency</b>	Academic elements frequently keep their own lists of alumni contacts that are often not connected to the central alumni database.
	<b>Organisation</b>	Event planning and organisation frequently occurs later than required for a coordinated approach and deep engagement with alumni.
	<b>Training</b>	Academics require greater support and training in the fundamental principles of relationship management.
	<b>Priority</b>	Alumni engagement is not always considered an academic priority and as such commitment and energy can fluctuate.
	<b>Collaboration</b>	Frequently, academic elements work in silos and do not consider connecting and collaborating with the Alumni Office as a key step.
	<b>Communication</b>	The communication of engagement processes, events and key contacts is often not shared amongst the school or with the Alumni Office.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALUMNI PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH ACADEMIC STAFF

1. Communicate the University's alumni engagement philosophy, strategy and intentions around fundraising.
2. Work with Schools/disciplines to identify academic champions to lead alumni engagement across the institution and liaise with the Alumni Office.
3. Leverage employability as a 'foot in the door' to connect academic elements with alumni.
4. Request opportunities to contribute to orientation and transition activities in Schools.
5. Make the processes for engagement with Alumni Office clear to all staff.
6. Feedback stories of graduate success to Schools that identified potential contacts.
7. Implement training programs for staff that support academics to develop skills in relationship management, alumni engagement practices, social media and establishing and maintaining online networks.



## 5 GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDIES





## THEME 1: COMMUNITY

### **Murdoch Business and Governance Connect - Murdoch University**

Murdoch Business & Governance Connect is a branded alumni/student social media platform that supports the school to directly engage with current students and alumni in a secure platform. The Graduway platform provides the School of Business and Governance with the opportunity to stay in contact with alumni, connect current students to alumni through a mentoring network and promote current course offerings. Alumni also have the opportunity to post jobs, events and photos and network with alumni based in companies or industries they wish to break into.

Members can log into the system using their LinkedIn profile. This allows the institution to gather professional information about the individual that supports the institution to track graduate career trajectories and personalise communications to members. The Murdoch Management Connect network has over 500 members from across the world.

#### **Learn more**

<http://www.murdoch.edu.au/School-of-Business-and-Governance/Business-%26-Governance-Connect/>

### **Deadly Alumni Chapter - University of South Australia**

Deadly Alumni was the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alumni chapter to be established in a South Australian university. The chapter was initiated by Professor Peter Buckskin, Dean, Indigenous Scholarship, Engagement and Research. Since 2014, the Deadly Alumni has coordinated a number of high profile events including a reunion of over 40 years of graduates from the University of South Australia's Aboriginal Teacher Education Program and a cocktail reception with fellow alumnus Dr James Charles, 2017 National NAIDOC Scholar of the Year.

The chapter provides opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alumni to reconnect and strengthen relationships, develop a strong professional network, enhance their career opportunities and access graduate internships. Deadly Alumni also support existing university and secondary school students through mentoring.

#### **Learn more**

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/About-UniSA/Governance-and-management-structure/Indigenous-Scholarship-Engagement-and-Research/Alumni-Chapter/>





## THEME 2: GLOBAL OUTREACH

### Health Sciences Alumni Mentoring Program, international - The University of Sydney

An initiative of the University of Sydney Faculty of Health Sciences and their Alumni Association, the mentoring program offers opportunities to graduating international students returning to Singapore, Hong Kong or Canada. The six-month program pairs students and alumni in a one-on-one partnership. Mentors provide advice and guidance and support students to develop their understanding of networking and workplace dynamics, career goals and professional development and may also include support to develop a career portfolio and job shadowing.

Mentees are required to attend an online information session, undertake a minimum of three face-to-face mentoring meetings and complete an online mid- and post-program evaluations.

#### Learn more

<https://sydney.edu.au/students/alumni-mentoring-program/health-sciences-alumni-mentoring-program.html>

### Alumni Ambassador and Buddy Program - La Trobe University

The La Trobe University 50th anniversary provided the University with an opportunity to reconnect and increase engagement with their global alumni networks. In response, the University developed a tailored volunteer led program to provide service to international alumni. The International Ambassador Program is an extension of the La Trobe Domestic Alumni Ambassador Program implemented since 2013.

The International Alumni Ambassador Program complements the in-country alumni engagement activities coordinated by the university and enables alumni to stay involved and connected throughout the year. Ambassadors recruited to the program love La Trobe and are enthusiastic, engaged and well connected in their home country. Through the program alumni volunteer their time to coordinate Chapters, run events and facilitate networking opportunities for their network.

A student facing extension of the International Ambassador Program was launched in 2018 and sees Ambassadors 'buddied' with a current student on exchange.

Through the Buddy Program, alumni Ambassadors connect with the student to answer any questions they may have as they move and settle in to their new home, while also remaining available to provide advice on local matters as required. The capacity to provide in-country support to a student travelling on exchange is particularly important for students from non-traditional backgrounds who may be travelling overseas for the first time. Currently all students on exchange have been offered an alumni buddy, with outstanding feedback.

#### Learn more

<https://www.latrobe.edu.au/alumni/get-involved/overseas>



## THEME 3: STUDENT RECRUITMENT

### Alumni Hub at Open Day – Swinburne University of Technology

The Swinburne University Alumni Hub provides the opportunity for prospective students to network with recent alumni and for the university to showcase its talent. Alumni Ambassadors from across multiple study areas volunteer their time to host the day. Alumni Hosts are available to answer student questions, share insights into their time at Swinburne and provide information about study options. Those visiting the Hub had the opportunity to win a masterclass from Swinburne Professional.

Like many other universities, Alumni also played an integral role in the promotion of Swinburne's Open Day. Interestingly, Swinburne offered insights into the student and alumni stories behind each individual that featured during the campaign.

**Learn more**  
**Alumni Hub**

<https://www.swinburne.edu.au/events/departments/alumni/2018/07/alumni-hub-at-open-day.php>

### Open Day campaign

[https://knowing.swinburne.edu.au/post/174901177414/meet-the-open-day-campaign-crew?fbclid=IwAROWs-mepuDpNqPm8gSImlV\\_qGRgJvK4wRONbQFxoAy7JIJX4Z3tk9guLDfc](https://knowing.swinburne.edu.au/post/174901177414/meet-the-open-day-campaign-crew?fbclid=IwAROWs-mepuDpNqPm8gSImlV_qGRgJvK4wRONbQFxoAy7JIJX4Z3tk9guLDfc)

### Spring Fest Community Open Day – Flinders University

SpringFest was a 50th Anniversary campus activation strategy that engaged the university staff, students, alumni and members of the community. The 'Alumni by the decades' marquee formed a central part of the SpringFest program. The concept behind the marquee was to develop a highly visible meeting place for alumni where they could meet each other and reconnect with the university.

A key component to the marquee was a 'Flinders by the decade timeline' and photo booth. The timeline was wrapped around the inside of the marquee and alumni were encouraged to place a photo of themselves on the timeline and add their name, degree and year. They were also encouraged to Instagram their photo. Over 200 visitors had their photo taken and were added to the timeline.

**Learn more**  
<https://www.flinders.edu.au/about/history/springfest>

## THEME 4: WIDENING PARTICIPATION

### UWA Year 12 Indigenous Leadership Seminar – The University of Western Australia

The University of Western Australia provides a range of programs for indigenous secondary school students in years 7-12 to raise aspirations for university study, encourage secondary school completion and facilitate informed study choices. A core component of the University's programs, the Year 12 Indigenous Leadership Seminar, financially supports approximately 40 Indigenous students from remote areas of Western Australia to attend a 5-day residential retreat.

During the seminar, students connect with current students, staff and alumni as they undertake a range of academic, social and cultural activities while also being introduced to the various study options available at The University of Western Australia and other universities in the Perth metropolitan area. Indigenous alumni play a key role in the seminar as role models, mentors and supervisors. In 2018, students visited Domain stadium to hear from indigenous leaders from the West Coast Eagles, including Brendon Ah Chee, a year 12 Leadership Seminar alumnus.

**Learn more**  
<http://www.sis.uwa.edu.au/outreach/yr12>

## THEME 5: STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY

### **Making Employability Real - Flinders University**

In a collaboration between the Flinders University Careers and Employment Service and the Alumni Engagement Office, a range of high-quality, experiential professional development workshops are delivered to both current students and early career alumni. Workshops support the development of the non-technical skills required for employability success and are delivered in the style of professional workplace training, with a focus on current and future workspace skills. Each workshop is delivered in partnership with industry organisations who host the workshops on their premises. This allows the program to explicitly articulate and also demonstrate employability alignment and relevance, while also connecting students and alumni. Key workshop topics include: Effective Decision Making, Professional Resilience, Design Thinking, Leveraging Workplace Diversity and Presentations and Public Speaking.

#### **Learn more**

<http://www.flinders.edu.au/careers/>

### **Leave No One Behind - Monash University**

Leave No One Behind blends learning and competition to support students and recent graduates (within 5 years of graduation) to develop skills in social and business entrepreneurship and generate ideas to address disadvantage in their local communities. The three-month program was designed with leading social entrepreneurs. Participants learn how to define a problem, develop and test solutions and pitch their ideas. The program begins with the Social Innovation Summit that allows participants to learn about sustainable development and social business and prepare those considering entering the Leave No One Behind competition to form a team. At the conclusion of the Summit, teams are supported throughout the competition phase through mentoring and regular workshops to assist them to develop their business proposal and final competition business plan. Teams then present their pitch for a chance to win \$10,000 to bring their idea to life.

#### **Learn more**

<https://www.monash.edu/leavenoonebehind>

### **Lunch with Alumni - The University of Melbourne**

ABP Future Leaders is a multidisciplinary alumni network supported by the University of Melbourne that aims to foster the professional development of young professionals and students. Through their research, ABP Future Leaders identified the key challenges that limit students from making the most of networking events and in partnership with the student association (Built Industry Group), co-created a 'Lunch with Alumni' initiative to connect current students with alumni.

The 'Lunch with Alumni' program pairs three students with one alumnus based on commonalities including age, career interest or background. The group share lunch (supported by the network) and discuss a range of career-related questions that support students to understand the profession. In 2018, over 100 students participated in the 'Lunch with Alumni' program, with 94% of students reporting that it was one of their best career development experiences.

#### **Learn more**

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/abpfutureleaders/>



## THEME 6: REPRESENTATION

### Course Review and Design – Central Queensland University

The Professional Communications Degree at Central Queensland University deeply engages alumni in the design, delivery and review of its course and subjects. The active Advisory Board is comprised of a number of high-profile alumni from relevant industries. Engagement of Board Members extends beyond simply cursory oversight of the curriculum in that the courses have been designed with industry partners who are also a key part of the regular course review process. The Advisory Board members also play an active role in the delivery of the program by providing guest lectures, taking students for placements and mentoring current students.

During the course of the year, alumni are also actively engaged with students in year level lunches, where graduates speak with current students about their experiences, the subjects they undertook and their current careers. To facilitate engagement, the program has a Facebook network with more than 200 members (students, staff and alumni) where job opportunities, and discussions of interest to the discipline are regularly posted by members.

#### Learn more

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/170835311011/>



### Alumni Advisors in Student Association – Griffith University Gold Coast Student Guild

The Griffith University Student Guild provides representation advocacy and non-academic services to students of the Gold Coast Campus of Griffith University. Since 2000, the association has engaged graduates of the institution that held office within the Student Guild Board of Directors. These key alumni were appointed as Honorary Life Members of the Guild and engaged in an advisory capacity, providing mentoring support and guidance to incoming student Presidents support for the delivery of Board induction programs, assistance in staff recruitment and strategic guidance to Student Guild Staff.

#### Learn more

<https://www.gugcstudentguild.com.au>

## THEME 7: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Alumni Experience Conference - Monash University

In a collaboration between the Faculty of Education and the Alumni Engagement Office, the first Alumni Experience Conference was held in Melbourne 26-27 September, 2018. The conference provided an opportunity for alumni, academics, researchers and students to explore the theme 'Alumni Knowledge and Experience: Reflecting on Real-World Transition Practice'. Opened by the Indonesian Consul General, the conference included keynote presentations from international employability experts and high-profile international Monash alumni. In addition, Professional Development sessions were hosted by scholars from across the sector and alumni were invited to share their employment and job search experiences and advice for current students and institutions.

#### Learn more

<https://www.monash.edu/alumniconference>

### Young Alumni Community - The University of Western Australia

The Young Alumni Community of The University of Western Australia offer new graduates the opportunity to build their personal brand and develop their continuing employability. In addition to access to Career Services such as workshops, job listings, online resources and mentoring, The University of Western Australia supports young alumni through targeted events such as the 'Career Café for Recent Graduates'. This evening event sees successful graduates from a range of industries share their stories and network with participants.

The University also engages the alumni community to author a range of career-related articles and expert podcasts that share useful tips and lived experiences for those embarking on their careers as well as current students.

#### Learn more

<https://alumni.uwa.edu.au/newgrads>

### UQ Young Alumni Convention - The University of Queensland

In 2018, the University of Queensland provided its network of 85,000 young alumni with a TEDx-style event to support their career development. The UQ Young Alumni Convention hosted speakers from a range of industries and disciplines, and covered topics including finding professional purpose, career change and progression and social enterprise and entrepreneurship.

The Young Alumni Convention is a key component of the University of Queensland Young Alumni Program which provides a number of engagement and professional development activities across the year. Other events include the UQ Future Leaders breakfast, Young Entrepreneur workshops and the Young Professional Series ('Tax Hack' and 'Get Finance Fit' workshops).

#### Learn more

<https://alumni.uq.edu.au/young-alumni>



## THEME 8: RECOGNITION

### **Alumni Awards - Western Sydney University**

Alumni award programs are common across the sector. The awards program at Western Sydney University stands out for the range of award categories available to acknowledge and celebrate outstanding alumni achievement.

The seven award categories align strongly to the University's social inclusion mission and include:

- Chancellor's Alumni of the Year
- Professional Excellence
- International Alumni Leadership
- Hawkesbury Alumni
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community Impact
- Young Alumni
- Community Champion

The awards are open to all graduates of Western Sydney University and its antecedent institutions. Up to three finalists are selected for each award and each finalist, and their guests, are invited to a presentation event hosted by the university. Winners are announced on the night and profiled across a range of communication channels.

#### **Learn more**

[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/alumni/alumni\\_awards](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/alumni/alumni_awards)

### **Vice Chancellor's Fellows - Monash University**

The Monash University Vice-Chancellor's Professorial Fellows recognise persons of national and international eminence and engage them in a professional capacity with the university for a 12-month period. These prestigious positions provide in-residence status at the university through which Fellows contribute to the university's mission in the development and implementation of strategic, student, research and operational activities. Fellows also play a role in outreach by encouraging public intellectual discourse and debate, supporting leadership development and providing mentorship to students and staff. The Monash program differs to those at other Australian institutions in that Vice-Chancellor's Professorial Fellows hold the title of Professor for the duration of their appointment. Since 2015, eleven distinguished alumni have been appointed as Vice Chancellor's Fellows.

#### **Learn more**

<https://www.monash.edu/about/structure/senior-staff/vice-chancellor/fellows>



## THEME 9: PHILANTHROPY

### **Students' Future Fund - Griffith University**

Through the Students' Future Fund, Griffith University supports high achieving students who are experiencing financial or personal hardship. This overarching scholarship program is the core of the Griffith University Annual Appeal and Staff Giving Programs, drawing together donations from philanthropic and Staff Giving sources under one clearly designed framework. A key component of the communications about the campaign is the commitment from the university to matching all funds raised through both the Annual Appeal and Staff Giving Program. The university shares stories of Students' Future Fund scholarship recipients with the alumni and staff communities through the website and at networking events where donors have the opportunity to connect with recipients.

#### **Learn more**

<https://www.griffith.edu.au/development-alumni/giving/annual-appeal/students-future-fund>

### **Southern Cross Entrepreneurs Fund - Southern Cross University**

Southern Cross University developed the Southern Cross Entrepreneurs Fund to enable a larger proportion of students to develop their potential as entrepreneurs in the local community. Recipients of support through the Entrepreneurship Fund gain access to the Southern Cross Enterprise Lab which offers targeted programs for students to develop their projects and build entrepreneurial skills. Throughout the program, students also have access to mentoring from industry and alumni to assist them to build their strategic investor network and learn important skills required for success as a start-up.

#### **Learn more**

<https://www.scu.edu.au/enterprise-lab/>



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