



CHANCELLOR P.E. (PAUL) JEANS AND VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT PROFESSOR ALEX ZELINSKY AO

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

This has been a year of achievement, reflection and forward thinking at the University of Newcastle.

In just 55 years, we have achieved a national and global standing that belies our relative youth. Our 2020 QS World University ranking of 207 puts us within reach of the top 200 in the world and we are pushing the boundaries of research and innovation, with our best Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) result to date, declaring 95 per cent of our research to be 'at' or 'above' world standard.

The University of Newcastle continues to deliver sound financial performance in an increasingly challenging operating environment. The University has delivered an operating surplus in 2019, driven by unrealised gains on our investment portfolio.

This 2019 Annual Report coincides with a key juncture in strategic planning for the University of Newcastle. 2019 marks the last year of our *NeW Futures Strategic Plan 2016–2025* and we report on the completion of a number of the strategic objectives from that plan. 2019 was also a year of extensive consultation and development for the University's next strategic plan, scheduled for launch in March 2020. The *Looking Ahead University of Newcastle Strategic Plan 2020–2025* provides the framework for the next phase in the continued growth of the University. Driven by our vision to be a world leading university for our regions, the *Looking Ahead Strategic Plan* places delivering an outstanding student experience and serving our communities at the heart of all we will do.

With nearly 38,000 students, including more than 7,000 international students from 113 countries, our focus on an outstanding student experience will guide us in the years to come. This work will build on initiatives delivered in the *NeW Futures Strategic Plan*, including our commitment to Work Integrated Learning (WIL). During 2019, we were able to provide over 23,000 WIL experiences and a core commitment in the *Looking Ahead Strategic Plan* will be to expand this program so that all students have the opportunity for a WIL experience in their undergraduate program.

During the year, the University celebrated significant milestones that reinforce the important role we are playing in our regions. 2019 heralded our 30th anniversary on the Central Coast. The development of the Central Coast Clinical School and Research Institute and the ongoing planning for a campus in Gosford is a clear demonstration of our commitment to this important region. In 2019 we also commemorated 20 years of Yapug, our Indigenous pathway program, and graduated our 100th Indigenous medical doctor.

Looking further afield, we formed partnerships to create and explore new opportunities, such as the partnership with the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC) and Nurture Higher Education, to offer a new double-degree program in Bangkok. Further, the Pacific Node, an initiative between the University and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in Apia, Samoa, is empowering students and researchers to tackle environmental issues in vulnerable island and ocean ecosystems.

With the environment in sharp focus throughout 2019, we launched our response to climate change. Our *Environmental Sustainability Plan 2019–2025* set ambitious targets for us, with an early commitment of a new electricity supply contract that will provide the University with 100 per cent renewable electricity from 1 January 2020.

We remain committed to addressing issues of inequity. In November, we launched our *Maligagu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2020–2025*. This aims, among other things, to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working at the University of Newcastle. We have set recruitment targets because we know that having a diverse and inclusive workforce leads to better decision making and a better experience for all of our staff and students.

Our *Progress to Equity Plan*, which includes many of the actions we committed to under our successful SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze Award application, is our blueprint to tackling persistent gender inequality challenges. We have achieved an above sector average ratio of 30 per cent women in Level E (Professorial) academic roles in 2019. We were also proud to be recognised as an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality for the sixth consecutive year, but there is more to do. The appointment of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Assistant Dean in each of our faculties signals our commitment.

Our staff continue to be the key to our ongoing success. We thank them for their excellence in education, research and professional services and for their ongoing contribution to the communities we serve. We thank Council colleagues, executive, staff, students, alumni, partners, community supporters and donors who have contributed to our success in 2019.

We take great pleasure in sharing some of our successes with you in our 2019 University of Newcastle Annual Report.



P.E. (Paul) Jeans  
Chancellor



Professor Alex Zelinsky AO  
Vice-Chancellor and President