

Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion Division

Active ANU Strategy



Australian
National
University



Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian National University (ANU) acknowledges the Ngunnawal and Ngambri-Kamberri people, who are the Traditional Owners of the land upon which the University's Acton campus is located.

This Ngunnawal and Ngambri-Kamberri land supports students and staff throughout their time at ANU. It will continue to hold a space for future generations to come together and learn from Country and one another.

We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Indigenous peoples, past, present and future, and acknowledge that this land from which we benefit has an ancient history that is both rich and sacred.

The ANU community makes a commitment to always respect the land upon which we stand and to ensure that the voices of this land's Indigenous peoples are both heard and listened to so that we may move towards a future marked by cooperation and mutual respect.

Contents

Introduction	3
<hr/>	
Vision	3
<hr/>	
Objectives	3
<hr/>	
1. Create active communities	11
<hr/>	
2. Create active environments	13
<hr/>	
3. Create active people	14
<hr/>	
4. Create active systems	15
<hr/>	
Recommendations	10
<hr/>	
1. Increase awareness of on-campus resources	11
<hr/>	
2. Introduce commencing students to the local environment while supporting their transition to university	13
<hr/>	
3. Health Campus accreditation	14
<hr/>	
4. Monitoring and evaluation impact	15
<hr/>	
5. Promote physical activity	15
<hr/>	
6. Provide a space for mind and body activities	15
<hr/>	
7. Free gym	15
<hr/>	

Introduction

Physical activity has numerous and wide-ranging physical and mental health benefits. For example, it reduces the risk of numerous non-communicable diseases, increases people's self-esteem, cognitive functioning, and mood, and can help buffer against symptoms of anxiety and depression (e.g., see Biddle et al., 2021). These benefits can be achieved through a variety of activities, including structured exercise sessions at community gyms, participating in individual and team sports, and activities that align with a healthy lifestyle more broadly (e.g., active transport). To ensure the University undertakes a holistic, whole of student and whole of university approach to supporting engagement in these activities, the Active ANU Strategy complements existing and emerging strategies related to the student experience, such as the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

For the purpose of the Active ANU Strategy (the Strategy), 'active' is a broad term that refers not only to being physically active, but also to being active in the ANU community, and undertaking a proactive approach to wellbeing. The strategy encourages active engagement within the ANU community and Canberra-wide events and activities, where the engagement leads to improved wellbeing and connectedness.

The Strategy is designed to support our diverse community of student and staff, encompassing all levels of study, work and ability. It sets out our university's broad vision for a more active ANU, as well as a series of specific objectives to help this vision be realised. These align with the aims of ANU to provide a well-rounded university experience that meets the social, recreational, cultural, and intellectual needs of students and a work environment for staff which fosters their sense of belonging, affinity to the institution, greater mental health, and overall success.

The Strategy is to be used as a set of guiding principles for assessing the efficacy and relevance of activities and resources supporting the health and wellbeing of ANU staff and students.



Vision

Support the University mission in research, teaching and learning by fostering a healthy and flourishing ANU Community

Objectives

The following objectives aim to support all staff and students to engage in an active lifestyle in line with their needs and abilities.

These objectives draw on those outlined in World Health Organisation's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030: More Active People for a Healthier World, which serves as the foundation for the Active ANU Strategy. These objectives are also underpinned with the principles of education, accessibility, and accountability.

1. Create active communities

We intentionally facilitate an ANU community with a positive understanding of healthy lifestyles and access for all. Specifically, we will aim to:

1.1 Ensure a well-developed, positive social understanding of healthy lifestyles by:

- Demystifying what engagement in sport can look like;
- Celebrating people for their activities and achievements aligned with their needs, interests, and abilities; and
- Promoting how students and staff can be physically active through a range of activities such as volunteering and artistic endeavours, and other community engagement.

1.2 Remove barriers to engagement with a healthy lifestyle by:

- Ensuring the affordability of activities and access to facilities; and
- Increasing visibility of activities, events, and facilities to maintain or increase health and wellbeing.

1.3 Create new opportunities for staff and students to be active and a norm of engagement by:

- Providing events on campus (e.g., fun runs) in which all students and staff can participate

2. Create active environments

We ensure there are safe and inclusive spaces and facilities to be active and which promote physical activities and engagement across campus. Specifically, we will ensure:

2.1 Equitable access to spaces

2.2 Safe and inclusive spaces to be active across campus

2.3 Facilities that promote physical health by:

- Providing clear information about the location and use of facilities that support physical activity throughout campus;
- Ensuring the protection and maintenance of the campus environment to be utilised and enjoyed for this purpose, specifically the green spaces, and waterways; and
- Expanding the community understanding and use of locations for non-physical activities that are active and creative, such as podcasting studios, musical practice rooms, meditation spaces and MakerSpace.

3. Create active people

We encourage ANU community of all ages and abilities to engage, educate about the benefits of physical activity, and provide programs and opportunities for physical, social and community engagement. Specifically, we will:

3.1 Encourage ANU community of all ages and abilities to engage by:

- Engaging people of all abilities, and based on their interests, fitness levels and future goals; and
- Supporting people to reach their potential as an individual, through team sports and other activities.

3.2 Educate the ANU community about the benefits of physical activity by:

- Helping people expand their understanding of themselves and their potential; and
- Supporting the growth mindset of our students.

3.3 Facilities that promote physical health by:

- Offering a wide range of physical and sports activities; and
- Offering a range of healthy lifestyle activities based in nutrition and community building.



4. Create active systems

We facilitate connections and collaborations through the implementation and evaluation of the Strategy. Specifically, we will:

4.1 Ensure connections and collaborations through a shared understanding and language by:

- Communicating what is being done and providing opportunities to collaborate across professional and academic staff; and
- Providing resources and information for people to apply the Strategy to their work and evaluate it for impact.

4.2 Holding ourselves accountable to deliver and evaluate outcomes aligned with the Strategy by:

- Measuring impact and outcome over time through research, including the physical and mental health of our community; and
- Linking research with outcomes and initiatives to strengthen connections between academics and practitioners.

Recommendations

To achieve the objectives outlined above, key resourcing and programming should be implemented or expanded. To that end, the following recommendations are made, enabling us to meet the objectives.

1. Increase awareness of on-campus resources

Target	ANU community
Existing infrastructure and policy	There is currently a 2019 map that highlights the exercise equipment locations on campus, as well as one from 2021 indicating where bike enclosures are located on campus.
When	By middle of 2026
Proposed action	Undertake an audit and mapping of physical activity resources available around campus and facilities that support physical activity such as end of ride facilities, bike storage, and lockers. Include an indication of key areas for upgrades, spaces to add new equipment, how accessible resources are or how individuals with accessibility requirements access/use them, and improved wayfinding to encourage movement around campus.
Proposed person/s responsible	Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion Division, Campus Environment, and ANU Sport
Desired outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a centralised page that lists physical activity resources, locations, and information about how to access. • Ensure that resources are of high quality and safe for use. • Increase utilisation of these resources within the University community • Promote the physical environment of campus and highlight how it has been designed to encourage engagement with the environment.
Potential resources and funding required	Work with all halls of residence and their student leaders to develop local approaches and plans for improving the state of gender equity, identifying areas where further training for staff is needed.

2. Introduce commencing students to the local environment while supporting their transition to university

Target	Commencing students
Existing infrastructure and policy	The University established an Orientation and Transition Framework in 2021 to progress towards a whole-of-university approach to improve student retention and ensure incoming students are set up for success academically and socially, preparing them as leaders in Australia and internationally in their chosen fields. Since 2021 various aspects of the orientation and transition process have been improved. Currently the orientation program consists of centrally coordinated pre-arrival communications, a whole-of-university Orientation Week, peer-to-peer mentoring programs, residential hall orientation programs, and cohort specific orientation programs (ex. Tuckwell and Kambri scholarship, Australia Awards Introductory Academic Program, and First-Year Experience).
When	ANU Orientation Week, 2026
Proposed action	Trial an outdoor orientation program to embed engagement with the local environment, physical activity, and community building, into the transition experience while aligning with aims and goals of Orientation and Transition Framework.
Proposed person/s responsible	Student Engagement and Education Management Division (SEEM)
Desired outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per research on outdoor orientation programs, this would aim to benefit participants with increased retention, academic outcomes, sense of belonging and connection with community. • Support students to connect with nature while challenging themselves physically in a safe environment.
Potential resources and funding required	<p>\$103,000 approximate - \$75,000 (.5 FTE ANU 6/7 overseeing the program design, implementation and evaluation) + \$22,000 (program cost) + \$3,000 (ANU hoodie) + \$3,000 (bus hire).</p> <p>An application will be submitted to utilise SSAF to run this program in line with funding for the whole-of-university Orientation Week.</p>



3. Health campus accreditation

Target	ANU community
Existing infrastructure and policy	There are currently a range of available resources, services and supports available across ANU aimed at promoting and encouraging an active community, but due to the decentralised and siloed nature of the University, these are not clearly articulated or highly visible for the community.
When	2025-2027 (two-year process for accreditation)
Proposed action	Implement initiatives, activities and resources to achieve accreditation through the FISU (International University Sports Federation) Health Campus to demonstrate our commitment to the University community.
Proposed person/s responsible	Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion Division (EWI)
Desired outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and promote the objectives of the Active ANU Strategy. • Articulate the range of available resources, services and supports available across ANU aimed at promoting an active community. • Provide a clear pathway on how to improve our community in line with the Active ANU Strategy by utilising best practice, and the available support and training provided by the FISU Health Campus program.
Potential resources and funding required	The cost of the accreditation process is approximately \$7,000 over two years, this will be built into the program of work for University Experience and ANU Sport over 2025-2027. Funding will be requested via appropriate SSAF processes.

4. Monitoring and evaluation impact

Target	All students
Existing infrastructure and policy	The Student Experience Survey (SES) is an annual survey run to measure student experiences in higher education to facilitate improvements and changes to benefit students and the university community. Currently a sense of belonging scale and personal wellbeing index are included in standard University surveys such as the SES, those related to residential experience, orientation and transition, and Student Experience of Learning and Teaching (SELT).
When	2026
Proposed action	Implement appropriate measures of impact of strategy, commitment, and outcomes through adding validation measures into Student Experience Survey, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and university wide standard surveys.
Proposed person/s responsible	Planning Service and Performance, with support from Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion Division and Office of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Research) (OPVCGR)
Desired outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor our progress on the objectives of the Active ANU Strategy. • Provide data to allow a data-informed approach to continuous improvement related to the physical health of the ANU community.
Potential resources and funding required	No additional resources required at this stage. In line with the Student Safety and Wellbeing Plan, the Evaluation and Reporting Working Group will undertake the consideration and implementation of appropriate measures.



5. Promote physical activity

Target	ANU Community
Existing infrastructure and policy	Several platforms exist across the University to promote activities, events and resources to the community. This includes On Campus, all student and all staff emails, promotional screens in key locations across campus, communication from key stakeholders (ex. ANUSA), and local newsletters (ex. Residential hall, School/College specific).
When	2025
Proposed action	Utilise structured, scheduled health promotion campaigns focusing on key messages and activities to increase awareness, engagement and encourage the community.
Proposed person/s responsible	Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion Division, in collaboration with ANU Sport
Desired outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of the Active ANU Strategy. • Increase awareness of benefits of a physically active lifestyle; resources to support physical activity, including the local environment; and programs for community members engagement. • Provide key messages to encourage physical activity across the community.
Potential resources and funding required	No additional resources required at this stage, this is built into the calendar of work for both University Experience and ANU Sport for 2025.





6. Provide a space for mind and body activities

Target	ANU Community
Existing infrastructure and policy	The University community currently has two gyms and outdoor exercise equipment for physical activity, with limited spaces held for activities that focus on alternative mind and body activities related to physical activity and health.
When	2025
Proposed action	Establish a gym equivalent space focused on activities such as art and meditation for accessibility to alternative established spaces supporting the mind and body.
Proposed person/s responsible	ANU Sport, Campus Environment, Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion Division, Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Research)
Desired outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consistent space created to host alternative mind and body activities. • Intentionally designed and designated spaces for these activities will demonstrate the value placed on them by the University, and encourage participation.
Potential resources and funding required	No additional resources required at this stage. ANU Sport has secured the top floor of building 18 and has funding to undertake the required work to implement this space.

7. Free gym

Target	Students with financial needs
Existing infrastructure and policy	There are currently a range of opportunities for students to access a gym on campus at no cost. This includes: free membership to ANU Sport for Tuckwell students; free membership to ANU Sport for First-Year Experience students; free membership to ANU Sport or Club Lime for undergraduate domestic students through the Community Connect Financial Support form; free and discounted membership to ANU Sport through ANU Counselling; free access to 10 group classes per week at ANU Sport through ANUSA; free 1 hour facility per week at ANU Sport.
When	2025
Proposed action	<p>Provide access to a gym to students with financial needs, free of charge. This will support those students who are unable to access these facilities and sporting engagement and compliments the various food relief programs which provides free access to nutritious food for students.</p> <p>Additionally, provide access to a gym to students with accessibility requirements, on campus or at an alternative gym as required. Or, provide access to required equipment to facilitate student participation in sports and activities.</p>
Proposed person/s responsible	Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion Division, ANU Sport, and Club Lime
Desired outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and promote the objectives of the Active ANU Strategy. • Support students to undertake physical activity, especially in a financial constrained environment. • Promotes physical wellness in students (Hoffman, 2016). • Support students to build community through utilisation of the gym (Hoffman, 2016; Miller, 2011). • Increase academic outcomes (Belch, Gebel, and Maas, 2001; Milton, Williamson, Brubaker, and Papania, 2020). • Improve mental health of students in relation to depression, anxiety and distress (Singh, Olds, Curtis, Dumuid, Virgara, Watson, Szeto, O'Connor, Ferguson, Eglitis, Miatke, Simpson, and Maher, 2023) • Increase utilisation of the University campus by students, particularly those living off-campus (Miller and Croft, 2022).
Potential resources and funding required	No additional resources required at this stage, this has been built into appropriate budgets of UE and ANU Sport for 2025, and a discounted price has been agreed with Club Lime. A key improvement for 2025 will be promotion of this opportunity, and in particular the ability for students to access required equipment to support their active needs.



← Fenner Hall

Contact us

The Australian National University

Canberra ACT 2600 Australia

[Address Details go here](#)

W anu.edu.au



facebook.com/TheAustralianNationalUniversity



twitter.com/ANU_Events



instagram.com/ouranu



youtube.com/ANUexperience



i.youku.com/ANUexperience



ANU_Australia [WeChat]



[LinkedIn](#)



Future students enquiry: 1800 620 032