

UNSW Submission – 2025-26 Pre-Budget Submission

The University of New South Wales (UNSW) welcomes the opportunity to contribute a submission for the 2025-26 New South Wales Budget.

UNSW Recommendations for the 2025-26 NSW Budget

Building a stronger and more prosperous NSW

1. That the NSW Government continues its support for NSW as the preferred study destination for higher education, and advocates to the Commonwealth Government regarding the significant economic and cultural contributions of international students to NSW and Australia.
2. That the NSW Government, together with UNSW and other interested public sector partners, establish a civic compact. This would articulate how UNSW can develop and enhance its civic role and its collaboration with the State's regional and metropolitan communities for mutual benefit, in alignment with the ambitions of the forthcoming NSW Higher Education Strategy, the recently launched NSW Skills Plan, and other Government priorities.
3. That the NSW Government work with First State Super and UniSuper to establish a research commercialisation future fund that accelerates the delivery of new technologies to global markets from NSW, where the NSW Government's investment is paid back by profitable startups and spinoffs under a profit-contingent loan scheme.
4. That the NSW Government establish a research translation policy fund, which better enables public institutions to work with the NSW public service to deliver tangible, evidence-based outcomes to support the people and communities of NSW. This could be supported by a biennial Statement of 'evidence needs' or 'priority partnerships', under the NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework, that articulates the NSW Government's policy priorities.

Using university expertise for public benefit

5. That the NSW Government increase awareness of and support for collaboration opportunities and enhance public sector capability uplift by:
 - Clearly articulating the State's policy priorities so that the sector can align expertise and evidence bases, including at a whole-of-government level and at the level of individual departments' policy challenges and priorities, similarly to the NSW Department of Education's Research Statement and Guide to Evidence Needs;
 - Proactively approaching the broader research community to understand different areas of expertise;
 - Creating a new scheme under Procurement Board directions for engaging public sector research organisations for NSW Government policy and research advice, with NSW public universities automatically included in this scheme, to better enable a suitable risk-based approach to be taken with contract management between NSW Government and NSW public universities;
 - Amending the Grants Administration Guide to articulate and preference a two-stage grants application process for all research-related grants, contracts, and projects,

including an initial EOI followed by an RFP for applications that are highly regarded, to better streamline and prioritise engagements with research organisations;

- Building institutional relationships with university partnering teams to broaden the pool of expertise, including through a Policy Fellowship Program between the NSW public service and the state's public universities;
- Adding universities to the Government Service Recognition Tool, to better enable the movement of public sector employees between the university and Government sectors, in the same way that the Australian Public Service recognises prior service of university employees.

Transport, infrastructure, access and amenity

6. That the NSW Government continue to develop its plans to build metro rail to Randwick, which is strongly connected with existing metro and rail hubs, including to west and south-west Sydney.
7. That the NSW Government partner with UNSW to establish a Research Translational Facility in Liverpool and with networks across Greater Sydney.
8. That the NSW Government note UNSW's strong support for the \$6.3 million over 3 years request from the Liverpool Innovation Precinct to establish an incubator and small business program that will support up to 40 new businesses and up to 200 new jobs in Liverpool.

Education

9. That the NSW Government develop a 'public service capability priorities' statement, to better enable the sector to deliver against the professional learning needs of the State's public service.
10. That the NSW Government work with UNSW and other public university partners to develop a suite of "Uni-Ready" skills-based modules for secondary students, including accredited training modules for teachers to equip them to deliver these modules, and which are recognised in student achievement records.
11. That the NSW Government work with the tertiary sector to develop a framework for 'higher apprenticeship' style qualifications, particularly in areas of skills shortage and industry demand aligned with NSW Government priorities for the state.
12. That the NSW Government advocate to the ABS for a better measure of individual relative advantage and disadvantage.
13. That the NSW Government partner with UNSW to create a new pathway program for a diverse group of career changers, such as veterans, to become primary and secondary school teachers.
14. That the NSW Government investigate options to provide more integrated transition support for students with special needs moving from high school to university.

About UNSW

UNSW is one of the world's top 20 universities¹. We are a leading research and teaching-intensive university, known for innovative, pioneering research and high-quality education with a longstanding global impact. For 75 years, we have been supporting current and future generations through learning, teaching, research, and impact. We are determined to leave our world better than we found it. We improve access to education and expand opportunities for the vulnerable, launch research initiatives that increase access to clean, affordable energy, advance healthcare for all, and find breakthroughs that help everyone live healthier, more sustainable, and equitable lives.

Across seven faculties, UNSW educates more than 70,000 current students with the support of more than 7,500 staff². While UNSW's main campuses are in Kensington, Paddington (Faculty of Arts and Design) and the ACT (UNSW Canberra), UNSW has a huge footprint across NSW, including throughout Greater Western Sydney and regional locations, including in Albury, Coffs Harbour, Griffith, Port Macquarie, and Wagga Wagga.

Part of our aspiration to provide a world-class university experience is supporting students to attain fulfilling lives and careers. In 2024, UNSW was named 'AFR Most Employable University' for the fifth consecutive year³. We take great pride in supporting students to develop their skills, experiences, and knowledge to ensure they secure rewarding jobs in the future – be that in NSW, in Australia or around the globe. Given the broad need across NSW and our nation to lift Australia's productivity performance and to fill critical worker shortages, UNSW stands ready to provide the education, research, and innovation needed to boost the economy.

1.1. Building a stronger and more prosperous NSW

UNSW was established in 1949 by the NSW Government as a university for all of NSW. Since our foundation, our aim has been to improve and transform lives through excellence in research, outstanding education, and a commitment to advancing a just society. We are committed to making a difference by focusing on areas critical to the future. UNSW research informs policy and expert commentary on a wide range of issues facing society, as well as underpinning the development of new technologies, creating economic opportunity, and the jobs of the future.

These economic benefits are realised through the productivity uplift driven by graduates, the return on investment in research, and through industry partnerships. Our cutting-edge research impacts a wide range of areas including water technology, waste management, hydrogen energy storage, and cancer research. For example, solar photovoltaic cells invented from UNSW research continue to play a critical role in the global transition to renewable energy.

For the third consecutive year, the annual *AFR Boss* ranked UNSW's Business School first in Australia⁴, and we are proud to be a gateway to Sydney for the international business community. Sydney is a global financial centre, and by working together with the NSW Government, UNSW continues to bring global partners to Sydney and NSW more broadly.

It is in our DNA to work together with government, industry, and other institutions to boost innovation, attract investment and strengthen collaborations across the sector and the state. UNSW is always

¹ <https://www.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/news/2024/06/UNSW-Sydney-retains-Top-20-position-in-QS-World-University-Rankings#~:text=The%20University%20has%20placed%2019th,20%20universities%20in%20the%20world>.

² <https://www.unsw.edu.au/content/dam/pdfs/unsw-adobe-websites/about-us/unsw-at-a-glance/2024-08-unsw-at-a-glance-2024-A5-digital.pdf>

³ <https://www.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/news/2024/02/UNSW-students-top-employability-for-fifth-consecutive-year0>

⁴ <https://www.afr.com/work-and-careers/education/this-is-the-top-business-school-for-the-third-year-in-row-20241001-p5kezl>

looking for opportunities to combine our expertise and resources with Government and accelerate innovation and commercialisation in NSW to drive new sources of jobs and industries.

1.1.1. The value of international students to the NSW economy

International students are a valued and important part of our vibrant student community at UNSW and add an extraordinary richness to our campuses and to Australian society more broadly. It is our priority to provide the best possible experience for all students regardless of their background. As a globally leading research and teaching university, we are committed to providing the necessary support for all our students to succeed in their studies and undertake impactful and world-changing research. This aligns well with the NSW Higher Education Strategy 2021-25 that aims to ensure wider participation in quality higher education and to position NSW globally by reinvigorating and diversifying international education and engagement.

Furthermore, international students significantly support the NSW and the Australian economy. In 2023, universities in NSW welcomed 88,592 international students, with the total course fee revenue from overseas students returning to the pre-pandemic level of around \$3.4 billion across all of NSW⁵. Moreover, according to Austrade, 69% of the international tourism spend in Australia is generated by international education⁶. Without international education, Australia would thus likely have an international tourism sector one-third its regular value.

A thriving international education sector is also critical to bringing talent and investment into NSW. International students thus create not only cultural and social benefits to the NSW communities they study, live, and work in, they also contribute to the NSW economy. As outlined in the Draft International Education and Skills Strategic Framework⁷, attracting high-performing international students enhances innovation and economic growth and strengthens Australia's global competitiveness.

Recommendation 1:

That the NSW Government continues its support for NSW as the preferred study destination for higher education, and advocates to the Commonwealth Government regarding the significant economic and cultural contributions of international students to NSW and Australia.

1.1.2. Establish a civic compact

Universities have become major contributors to driving our standards of living, including economic, social, cultural, and environmental wellbeing, while also becoming some of the largest local employers. As such, universities are uniquely placed to drive productivity and enhance national, state, and local prosperity. To develop and enhance the university's civic role and responsibility, and to deepen the links between universities and their larger communities, several jurisdictions have commenced a civic compact. A civic compact can take the form of a formal agreement between universities and the State to collaborate and exchange knowledge and resources for mutual benefit⁸.

UNSW is committed to strengthening our engagement with our larger communities and demonstrating how universities can solve societal problems through engaged scholarship. We would welcome

⁵ <https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/universities-2023>

⁶ https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Tourismandeducation/Interim_Report_-_Inquiry_into_Australias_International_Education_Sector/Chapter_2_-_The_value_of_international_students_to_Australia#:~:text=2.14Austrade%20noted%20at%20the,international%20tourism%20spend%20in%20Australia.

⁷ <https://www.education.gov.au/international-education/resources/draft-international-education-and-skills-strategic-framework-pub>

⁸ See, for example, this Civic University Agreement from Manchester in the UK: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61361b280fcb44302576aeec/t/61518420786cf067415198cd/1632732194402/Greater_Manchester_Universities_Civic_University_Agreement.pdf

exploring our civic role collaboratively with our local, state, national, and global communities to understand the needs we can help to address.

Recommendation 2:

That the NSW Government together with UNSW and other interested public sector partners establish a civic compact. This would articulate how UNSW can develop and enhance its civic role and its collaboration with the State's regional and metropolitan communities for mutual benefit, in alignment with the ambitions of the forthcoming NSW Higher Education Strategy, the recently launched NSW Skills Plan, and other Government priorities.

1.2. Research Commercialisation and Translation

Universities such as UNSW play a vital role in enhancing Australia's prosperity, both through social, scientific, and technological innovations that can improve our quality of life, as well as through their contribution to economic growth and productivity. It is estimated that every dollar invested in university research generates a \$5 return to the economy⁹. For example, to help address the risks from climate change, UNSW created the world's first early warning system for extreme bushfires that has become an invaluable tool for firefighting services.

The forthcoming NSW Government Innovation Blueprint (Blueprint) provides an opportunity to identify fiscally responsible and agile policy responses to boost NSW's innovation, commercialisation, and economic growth. The innovation expertise and capability within the state's universities remain an under-utilised asset that could be leveraged with the NSW Government's support to unlock additional investment capital and attract foreign direct investment, driving economic complexity. UNSW looks forward to the release of the Blueprint and engaging with its recommendations. As outlined in UNSW's submission to the Blueprint's discussion paper, we are excited to be working with the NSW Government to enhance the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of the state's innovation ecosystem.

UNSW contributes to NSW's economic and social prosperity by attracting and retaining talent to NSW to ensure intellectual capital is incentivised to stay in NSW. We also foster innovation, collaboration and commercialisation of R&D by developing and progressing innovation precincts, as well as co-location initiatives with industry partners. The proposed research translation fund outlined in the discussion paper would assist with this by accelerating the delivery of new technologies developed in NSW to global markets, leveraging our expertise against trade and investment opportunities the State is pursuing, and promoting the global contributions of NSW's higher education and research sectors to international audiences.

Recommendation 3:

That the NSW Government work with First State Super and UniSuper to establish a research commercialisation future fund that accelerates delivery of new technologies to global markets from NSW, where the NSW Government's investment is paid back by profitable startups and spinoffs under a profit-contingent loan scheme.

Recommendation 4:

That the NSW Government establish a research translation policy fund, which better enables public institutions to work with the NSW public service to deliver tangible, evidence-based

⁹ <https://www.unsw.edu.au/content/dam/pdfs/unsw-adobe-websites/about-us/reports-publications/2022-12-DAE-UNSW-Economic-Contribution-Final-Report.pdf>

outcomes to support the people and communities of NSW. This could be supported by a biennial Statement of 'evidence needs' or 'priority partnerships', under the NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework, that articulates the NSW Government's policy priorities.

1.2.1. Using university expertise for public benefit

Universities can and should play an important role to inform and advise the NSW Government through technical expertise and skills. At UNSW, we encourage the distribution, advancement, development, and delivery of expert contributions and knowledge to lead and inform debate, policy making and global issues and see a significant opportunity to contract university researchers to provide external, evidence-based expertise to the public service.

UNSW, across its seven faculties, has significant capability that can support policy design and evaluation as well as strategic and technical analysis of major projects. UNSW expertise can also assist as independent expertise on assessment panels by providing scientific insights and evaluating whether the advice provided is based on up-to-date research. To achieve this, UNSW stands ready to facilitate NSW Government access to university experts that can provide advice on key technical or policy questions or other services such as economic modelling. Possible examples for future collaboration between UNSW and the NSW Public Service could include unpacking new health financing models, translating climate science into decision-useful information for government, or technical engineering expertise for major infrastructure projects.

UNSW is looking forward to working with the NSW Government to foster collaboration and trust between academics and policy practitioners. This includes broadening the pool of expertise by helping broker access to researchers across all our faculties and assisting the NSW Government in raising awareness of the issues the government would like research to address and of the work to be contracted by the NSW Government.

Recommendation 5:

That the NSW Government increase awareness of and support for collaboration opportunities and enhance public sector capability uplift by:

- Clearly articulating the State's policy priorities so that the sector can align expertise and evidence bases, including at a whole-of-government level and at the level of individual departments' policy challenges and priorities, similarly to the NSW Department of Education's Research Statement and Guide to Evidence Needs;
- Proactively approaching the broader research community to understand different areas of expertise;
- Creating a new scheme under Procurement Board directions for engaging public sector research organisations for NSW Government policy and research advice, with NSW public universities automatically included in this scheme, to better enable a suitable risk-based approach to be taken with contract management between NSW Government and NSW public universities;
- Amending the Grants Administration Guide to articulate and preference a two-stage grants application process for all research-related grants, contracts, and projects, including an initial EOI followed by an RFP for applications that are highly regarded, to better streamline and prioritise engagements with research organisations;
- Building institutional relationships with university partnering teams to broaden the pool of expertise, including through a Policy Fellowship Program between the NSW public service and the state's public universities;
- Adding universities to the Government Service Recognition Tool, to better enable the movement of public sector employees between the university and Government sectors, in

the same way that the Australian Public Service recognises prior service of university employees.

1.3. Transport, infrastructure, access and amenity

Greater Sydney will face big challenges in terms of rapid urbanisation, more pressure on infrastructure, and the need for sustainable solutions to address energy, transportation, and environmental concerns. UNSW stands ready to work with the NSW Government to enhance access to our main campus in Kensington. This will not only ease congestion and bring our students and staff to campus in a more sustainable fashion, but also provide a better transport solution for key workers in the nearby Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct and support the sustainable growth of the nearby area in Randwick more broadly.

UNSW continues to increase its impact across Greater Sydney with a focus on Greater Western Sydney, as one of the fastest growing populations in Australia. Of note, 38 percent of our students are from the region. Our commitment to Greater Sydney aims to bring the UNSW experience closer to more people in our existing communities and provide greater opportunity and access for future students.

UNSW already has a presence throughout Greater Sydney, including the Parramatta Engineering Hub, School of Clinical Medicine at Liverpool, Campbelltown and across south-west Sydney, our Flying Operations Unit at Bankstown Airport, and the Water Research Laboratory at Manly Vale. We are currently canvassing key business, industry and government leaders across Greater Western Sydney on how UNSW can best contribute to the region and are planning our future footprint through evidence-based analyses to ensure ambitious and sustainable commitments to communities in Greater Sydney.

1.3.1. Extend the metro rail to Randwick and Sydney's south east, to support the area's rapid growth

As Sydney's population continues to grow, it is crucial that people and communities have strong public transport connectivity, to ensure they can easily move about the city. This is especially true for areas where housing density is increasing, and to connect 'key workers' to their place of employment where nearby housing may not be affordable.

Transport for NSW's South East Sydney Transport Strategy outlines a vision for improved connectivity and reduced congestion through the development of new metro lines. The proposed metro line extension from the city, and then between Randwick and Kogarah, scheduled for completion between 2041 and 2056, offers a range of benefits in support of the Government's current priorities. It would greatly support increased housing density in the south-east of Sydney, including around our Kensington campus and the adjacent Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct, while also easing access for students and staff who do not live nearby.

With 38 percent of our students coming from Greater Western Sydney, interconnectivity in public infrastructure is critical. The benefits of a south east metro link will make it easier for nurses and other key health workers to access the hospitals within the Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct and connect them to the St George hospital and health precinct as well. The metro extension will not only support Sydney's growing population to access the university and critical health precincts, but also address congestion challenges by encouraging staff and students to take public transport.

Recommendation 6:

That the NSW Government continue to develop its plans to build metro rail to Randwick, which is strongly connected with existing metro and rail hubs including to west and south-west Sydney.

1.3.2. Research Translational Facility in Greater Sydney

The establishment of a specialised research facility in Bradfield would represent a significant opportunity to advance scientific and technological innovation in Greater Sydney. To support this initiative, we intend to seek Government partnership, alongside industry and other partners, to secure space in Liverpool for specialised equipment. This investment will not only enhance the research capabilities of the university but also position Bradfield as a hub for cutting-edge research and development. UNSW is a research powerhouse, and we are excited to be championing innovation locally by providing the capabilities and facilities to foster an innovation ecosystem in Western Sydney.

The proposed facility will serve as a collaborative space where researchers from various disciplines can come together with industry to address complex scientific challenges, and to bring their innovations to fruition. We aim to create an environment that supports interdisciplinary research and innovation. The project will involve partnerships with other universities in Greater Sydney, as well as with research institutions to ensure a diverse and dynamic research community. This collaborative approach will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise, driving forward advancements in key areas such as biotechnology, materials science, and environmental sustainability.

Recommendation 7:

That the NSW Government partner with UNSW to establish a Research Translational Facility in Liverpool and with networks across Greater Sydney.

1.3.3. Liverpool Innovation Precinct

The Liverpool Innovation Precinct (LIP), anchored to Liverpool Hospital, is a successful and globally recognised health, research, and education innovation precinct. The LIP is a partnership between UNSW and the South West Sydney Local Health District, NSW Health, Liverpool Council, Western Sydney University, the University of Wollongong, TAFE NSW and organisations like the Primary Health Network. Its goal is to increase the opportunity for health, education, research, and innovation investment around the Liverpool hospital. It is also intended to create a new, vibrant environment to boost the Liverpool economy and create career opportunities and jobs for the rapidly growing community living in Sydney's south-west.

UNSW supports LIP's request for an investment of \$6.3 million over 3 years to generate and support innovation and new business creation in one of the fastest growing regions in the state economically and by population. The value will be enhanced by co-investment by LIP academic and industry partners. The funding would establish an incubator and small business program to be run by the LIP, projected to support the creation of 40 new businesses and 150-200 jobs, attracting an estimated capital of \$28 million over the 3-year period.

Recommendation 8:

That the NSW Government note UNSW's strong support for the \$6.3 million over 3 years request from the Liverpool Innovation Precinct to establish an incubator and small business program that will support up to 40 new businesses and up to 200 new jobs in Liverpool.

1.4. Education

The knowledge and skills required to successfully respond to today's challenges and opportunities are changing, making it paramount to equip primary and secondary school educators with the right tools to respond to those challenges. At UNSW, we continually develop and deliver our innovative curriculum,

capitalising on UNSW’s tradition of curiosity and discovery, entrepreneurship, and digital technology, as well as our commitment to social justice. We are also actively supporting our educators, enabling them to deliver excellent learning experiences for our own students, including those studying teaching. We are keen to work with the NSW Government to design new pathways for those interested in a career change to become teachers and leverage their transferable skills. We are also eager to work together to make the transition from secondary to tertiary education as smooth as possible by supporting students with special needs to succeed at university.

1.4.1. Public Service Capability Priorities for Lifelong Learning

Technology is changing the working world as we know it – and fast. This not only applies to those working in the private sector, but also to the public sector where staying up-to-date with changes in technology and society is critical in assisting Government to serve our community. UNSW is committed to providing tailored lifelong learning opportunities. We believe that lifelong learning shifts viewpoints, opens minds, and builds on existing knowledge.

To better help NSW Government uplift skills in the public service workforce, UNSW encourages the Government to develop a ‘public service capability priorities’ statement. This would help universities across the state to better deliver against the professional learning needs of the State’s public service and support it to adapt to a rapidly evolving environment.

Recommendation 9:
That NSW Government develop a ‘public service capability priorities’ statement, to better enable the sector to deliver against the professional learning needs of the State’s public service.

1.4.2. "Uni-ready" skills-based modules for secondary students

To equip secondary students with the essential skills needed for university success, such as critical thinking, numeracy skills, and academic writing, UNSW encourages the NSW Government to develop a suite of “Uni-Ready” skills-based modules. Integrating these modules into the final two years of high school would mean that they are part of the student’s achievement record.

To effectively deliver these "Uni-Ready" modules, they will need to be developed in concert with accredited training programs for teachers to ensure high-quality instruction and consistent delivery. By investing in this kind of teacher training, the NSW Government would not only enhance the quality of education but also foster a culture of continuous professional development among educators.

UNSW stands ready to work with the NSW Government and other public university partners to develop these “Uni-Ready” modules, building on the ‘UniReady’ Toolkit already developed in partnership with UNSW, University of Sydney, and University of Newcastle, which received support from the NSW Government.

Recommendation 10:
That the NSW Government work with UNSW and other public university partners to develop a suite of “Uni-Ready” skills-based modules for secondary students, including accredited training modules for teachers to equip them to deliver these modules, and which are recognised in student achievement records.

1.4.3. Higher degree apprenticeships

Higher apprenticeship style qualifications combine on-the-job experience with a university degree, thus ensuring that university graduates have the right technical skills for the workplace. These higher apprenticeships can be tailored to areas of skills shortages and industry demand aligned with the NSW Skills Plan 2024-28, for example around net zero and energy transition, advanced manufacturing, and digital and cyber¹⁰. However, to create a higher apprenticeship style qualification, articulation and mutual recognition pathways between vocational and higher education institutions in areas of strong student demand are needed.

UNSW encourages the NSW Government to work across VET and Higher education accreditation and regulatory requirements to identify suitable degrees for a higher apprenticeship, thus enabling students to transition, for example, from early childhood education to primary or secondary school education, or from electrotechnology to engineering disciplines.

A higher apprenticeship would also make better use of work integrated learning and stacked qualifications to ensure multiple entry and exit points for students. It will also create earn-while-you-learn opportunities for students together with industry partners, thus addressing some of the financial barriers students face who have to support themselves while undertaking their chosen degree.

Recommendation 11:

That NSW Government work with the tertiary sector to develop a framework for 'higher apprenticeship' style qualifications, particularly in areas of skills shortage and industry demand, aligned with NSW Government priorities for the state.

1.4.4. Better understanding socio-economic advantage

The use of the ABS's socio-economic indexes for areas (SEIFA) can result in significant underreporting of socio-economic disadvantage in areas where the most and least disadvantaged individuals live in close proximity. To better gauge how much additional support universities need to provide to students to enable them to succeed at university, UNSW encourages the NSW Government to advocate to the ABS to use a measure of individual relative advantage and disadvantage to understand low SES participation rates as opposed to using area-based indices.

Recommendation 12:

That the NSW Government advocate to the ABS for a better measure of individual relative advantage and disadvantage.

1.4.5. Addressing teacher shortages by encouraging career-changers

Teacher shortages pose a significant challenge to the delivery of education in New South Wales, particularly in rural and remote areas. A 2023 survey by the NSW Department of Education revealed a 42 per cent shortfall in the number of casual teachers available to teach classes, with this problem being even more pronounced in parts of Sydney's west and southwest and rural and remote areas¹¹. To address this issue, UNSW proposes the development of specialised pathways for diverse career-changers such as veterans and enlisted personnel to transition into teaching roles. This initiative would

¹⁰ See <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/nsw-skills-plan-2024-2028--building-skills-and-shaping-success#Strategic3>

¹¹ <https://education.nsw.gov.au/news/latest-news/impact-of-teacher-shortages-in-nsw-public-schools-revealed>

not only fill the critical gaps in the teaching workforce but also bring a wealth of experience and diverse perspectives of career-changers to the classroom.

Career-changers possess a range of transferable skills that make them well-suited for teaching, including veterans who are well-accustomed to working under pressure. Drawing inspiration from successful programs in the UK, where veterans have been effectively integrated into school teaching¹², UNSW is exploring ways to create a robust training and certification process tailored to the needs of a diverse group of career-changers.

This program would provide aspiring teachers with the pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills necessary to excel in educational settings, while also offering them a rewarding second career. By supporting this initiative, the NSW Government can not only address immediate teacher shortages but also invest in the long-term development of a resilient and adaptable education system that benefits all students.

Recommendation 13:

That the NSW Government partner with UNSW to create a new pathway program for a diverse group of career changers, such as veterans, to become primary and secondary school teachers.

1.4.6. Special needs transition from high school to university

The transition from high school to university is a critical period for all students, but it poses unique challenges for students with special needs. Currently, the support systems in place for special needs students in high school do not automatically extend to tertiary education, creating significant barriers to these students' academic success and overall wellbeing, as well as administrative burden. Bridging this gap would ensure a seamless transition for special needs students from secondary to tertiary education, thus promoting inclusivity and equal opportunities for all. By providing continuity of support, we can reduce dropout rates and increase the likelihood of these students completing their tertiary education.

UNSW is committed to ensuring full, effective access and participation for all our students by removing barriers students with disability face when it comes to accessing and succeeding in tertiary education. To ensure a smooth transition between secondary and tertiary education, UNSW encourages the NSW Government to think about how this transition could best be designed to create a more inclusive and equitable education system.

Recommendation 14:

That the NSW Government investigate options to provide more integrated transition support for students with special needs moving from high school to university.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the 2025-26 New South Wales Budget.

Should you wish to discuss any issue raised in this submission, please do not hesitate to contact our Director of Government Relations, Mr Robin Schuck, on 0411 124 258 or r.schuck@unsw.edu.au.

¹² <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/funding-and-support/if-youre-a-veteran>