SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Overview

In 2025, UQ contributed to SDG 16 with activities spanning governance, education, outreach, research and innovation. UQ's Research Roadmap recognises that as a leading public research university, UQ has a major role to play in working collaboratively at the state and national level to address complex challenges facing Australia. UQ also supports reconciliation as well as Australia's commitment to capacity-building across the Indo-Pacific.

Operationally, UQ ensures that decision making includes a wide range of perspectives through a strong governance model with diverse representation on committees and through the UQ Student Union (UQU), which plays a key role in student advocacy.

The University's collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, local councils and civil society organisations shape many of UQ's research initiatives, supporting empowerment of people and communities. Government engagement is also critical, and UQ regularly provides expert advice, customised training and evidence-based technical and strategic input into shaping policy.

In teaching and learning, UQ offers legal education in criminal law, human rights and anti-corruption that includes hands-on experience in legal clinics, internships and international programs, ensuring students are equipped to make a real-world difference to leading change, both locally and globally.

Progress made in 2025 towards SDG 16 is reported here with reference to the following domains and enablers from UQ's Strategic Plan 2022-2025:

- learning and student experience
- research and innovation
- enriching our communities
- our global profile
- securing our future.

Related SDGs

- SDG 3 Good health and wellbeing
- SDG 4 Quality education
- SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 13 Climate action
- SDG 14 Life below water
- SDG 15 Life on land.

Learning and student experience

UQ courses on law enforcement

UQ plays a vital role in advancing SDG 16 through its comprehensive legal education programs. UQ's Bachelor of Laws (Honours) and associated dual degrees are designed to develop graduates who are not only legally proficient but also ethically grounded and socially responsible.

Courses such as Foundations of Law (LAWS1700), Criminal Law (LAWS2708), Human Rights Law (LAWS5124) and Public International Law (LAWS3705) provide students with a deep understanding of legal systems, human rights and the rule of law. These courses explore the intersection of law with social justice, governance and institutional integrity, aligning with SDG 16. Students critically examine issues such as access to justice, Indigenous legal perspectives, and the role of law in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

UQ also offers specialised electives in areas such as Environmental Law, Anti-Corruption Law and Human Rights Advocacy, enabling students to tailor their studies toward global justice and institutional reform. Practical learning is embedded through moot court competitions, legal clinics and internships with courts, government agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

The Pro Bono Centre, a flagship program of the UQ Law School, further reinforces this commitment by enabling students to contribute to real-world legal challenges faced by vulnerable communities. These experiences cultivate a strong sense of civic duty and prepare graduates to uphold justice and strengthen institutions in Australia and internationally. The Centre facilitates student and staff participation in pro bono legal activities, particularly public interest research and law reform. The Centre increases access to justice for the wider community through pro bono student contributions, while offering diverse pro bono opportunities to UQ students to provide them with a wide range of learning opportunities and inspire the community lawyers and volunteers of the future. The Pro Bono Centre also supplies skilled law students to legal professionals, barristers, Community Legal Centres, NGOs and charities to help with pro bono or public interest matters. It creates legal information resources and holds events to support pro bono work.

UQ's Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences postgraduate programs include the Master of Governance and Public Policy, with projects such as policy design and implementation, economic analysis, dynamics of governance, globalisation and international crisis management. This program equips students with a transferable skill set, allowing them to meaningfully address key policy issues and improve policy outcomes in both the public and private sectors. Students gain an in-depth understanding of the way governments operate as well as the major issues confronting society.

UQ's Rotary Peace Centre is part of a global program to advance research, teaching, practical training and knowledge on issues of international relations, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It offers a tailored Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, one of only 7 such programs worldwide. It is aimed at potential world and community leaders and designed to have a practical effect on peacebuilding and addressing international and regional conflicts. As part of the 18-month program, participants undertake a compulsory applied fieldwork placement aligned with their specific regional and professional interests.

Opportunities to engage with government and industry representatives

UQ aims to nourish intellectual vitality through inclusive access to debates, public lectures and cultural events. In 2025, seminar series and events provided opportunities for students and broader community members to meet practitioners and hear perspectives on current issues.

How we achieved this

- Current Legal Issues Seminar Series is a collaboration between UQ's School of Law, the Bar Association of Queensland and the Supreme Court Library Queensland. It seeks to bring together leading scholars, practitioners and members of the Judiciary in Queensland and from abroad, with a view to:
  - providing a forum for the critical analysis and discussion of current legal issues
  - bringing to bear upon those issues the different perspectives offered by leading academics, legal professionals and the judiciary
  - forging stronger links between academic and practising lawyers in Queensland.

  In 2025, the following workshop and seminars were held:
  - 'Transnational organised Crime and Corruption' workshop on 21 February
  - 'Frail Lawyers and Their Fearless Logics: What Drives Ethical Error?' seminar on 21 August
  - 'Contemporary Issues in the Australian Legal System' seminar on 3 September
  - 'A Second Chamber for the Queensland Parliament: Four Reasons, Four Features and Four Design Principles' seminar on 30 October
  - 'Sexual Offences – Has the Pendulum Swung too Far?' seminar on 13 November
- The UQ alumni and community events took place in-person and online throughout the year and often featured senior government officials and experienced industry practitioners. For example, Sustain Queensland 2025: co-hosted summit on Queensland's transition economy and industry decarbonisation on 21 August 2025 featured Andrew Petersen, CEO of the Business Council for Sustainable Development Australia.

Research and innovation

In 2025, UQ demonstrated a strong commitment to SDG 16 through diverse research initiatives that promote justice, strengthen institutions and support inclusive governance. Two key themes are 'access to justice and legal reform' and 'institutional trust and governance'. Through its research, UQ aims to not only advance academic understanding of justice and governance but also ensure that research outcomes inform real-world policy and institutional reform.

Justice and leagal reform

How we achieved this

- The UQ Law School's Pro Bono Centre collaborates with the Queensland Prisoners' Legal Service on The Deaths in Custody Project. Established in 2016 as the first

publicly available national database of deaths in custody, the project is staffed by law students and continues to compile and publish data about deaths in prisons, police operations and other custodial environments around Australia each year. This is an important resource for researchers, coroners and members of the public and allows for comprehensive analysis of national trends and comparisons between jurisdictions as part of work that will address this problem.

- The UQ/Caxton Human Rights Case Law Project is an initiative of the UQ's Law School and Caxton Legal Centre Inc. The project aims to ensure that practitioners, researchers, students and members of the public have easy access to all published cases that refer to the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld).* Expanding its human rights research, the School of Law leads an ARC linkage project on human rights dispute resolution in Australia, with partners Australian Human Rights Commission, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, Queensland Human Rights Commission, Caxton Legal Centre and Canberra Community Law.
- Research in the Law and Justice Theme of the UQ-led ARC Centre of Excellence for Indigenous Futures Centre (IFC) explores how the criminal justice system and other closed environments shape and perpetuate Indigenous educational, economic, health and wellbeing inequities. 2025 Annual Report highlights key initiatives including:
  - 2025-2026 pilot project 'Stories of Change in Townsville', which is led by IFC Research Fellows Drs. Janine Gertz and Krystal Lockwood in partnership with local community organisations and the Queensland Government. This project centres Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's voices to highlight positive life pathways following contact with the justice system. By identifying policies and practices that support healing and long-term wellbeing, the initiative generates practical strategies to advance multiple Closing the Gap targets and builds an evidence-based foundation to support pathways away from ongoing justice system involvement.
  - a historic 2025 research partnership established between IFC and Moorgumpin Elders-in-Council Aboriginal Corporation (MMEIC), which is rooted in Quandamooka ethics, values and community priorities. Working alongside the MMEIC Justice Reinvestment team, IFC Research Fellows Dr. Pekeri Ruska and Dr. Krystal Lockwood facilitate community-led research, justice outcomes and the development of evaluation frameworks aimed at self-determination.
- The mission of Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P) is to deepen knowledge, advance policy on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle and facilitate effective prevention and response mechanisms to mass atrocities within the Asia–Pacific region. In 2025, researchers published several policy reports including:
  - Climate Change and Mass Atrocities: Towards a Blueprint for Future Research
  - Crisis' escalating in Myanmar: Assessing Atrocity risks for 2025 and beyond
  - Ahead of Harm: Integrating Gendered Early Warning into ASEAN's WPS Regional Plan of Action

  Other events included an expert panel discussion to mark the launch of the Centre's report Climate Change and the Responsibility to Protect: Insights from the Pacific on 25 March 2025 and the immersive virtual reality experience 'Nobody's Listening: The

Forgotten Voices of Sinjar on 3 July 2025 that commemorates the Yazidi Genocide of 2014 in Northern Iraq.

APR2P also partners with the George Georges Scholarship Support Committee, which provides an annual scholarship to support a UQ undergraduate student seeking to undertake a research project in an area relating to peace, nuclear disarmament, trade unionism, environmentalism, social justice, human rights or other areas that reflect the values and goals of the late Senator George Georges.

- In 2025, researchers from the School of Law's Transnational and Organised Crime theme continued their work exploring the causes and conditions of organised crime and corruption, working towards durable solutions to prevent and suppress transnational crimes ranging from drug trafficking, smuggling of migrants and corporate crime, to trafficking in persons, wildlife crime and money laundering. To do this, it brings together experts from government, international organisations, industry, the judiciary and the legal profession to exchange experiences and develop solutions that drive policy change and law reform at national, regional and international levels. An ongoing annual initiative of the theme is Transnational Organised Crime (LAWS5231), a joint Bachelor of Laws elective course offered annually at UQ in cooperation with the University of Vienna (Austria), the University of Zurich (Switzerland), the University of Cologne (Germany) and the University of Ferrara (Italy). The course involves an international network of emerging and established scholars working within a structured research and learning framework to produce high-quality research outcomes on a topic of current, international concern. Under the overarching theme of transnational organised crime, a specific research topic of particular significance is chosen each year by the course coordinators and the course host rotates between the participating universities.

  Key 2025 activities highlighted engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, including:

  - Guns, drugs and smuggling – how UQ experts joined a global quest to fight organised crime
  - Taking a Modern Approach to an Age-Old Problem

- Funded through an ARC Discovery Project, the 'Predicting the benefits of legal reform for marine and coastal restoration' project aims to build the case for legal reform to facilitate large-scale marine and coastal restoration. It addresses current regulatory barriers where restoration is hindered by the need to obtain numerous development and environment approvals and engage with legal processes not designed for restoration. The project will draw together legal research, social science, restoration science and environmental modelling to build a robust evidence base. Expected outcomes include a comprehensive framework demonstrating why reform is needed, how reform can be done and what difference this reform can make to ecosystem health. Major benefits include supporting the restoration needed to meet international restoration targets and securing critically important ecosystem services.

- Led by Dr Rebecca Wallis from the UQ's School of Law, the 'Advancing Fair and Effective Criminal Justice through Evidence Law' project examines evidence law and victim protections to influence criminal justice policy and practice in Queensland. A major area of impact has been the evaluation of Queensland's Video Recorded Evidence in Chief (VREC) Pilot Program for domestic and family violence matters. This

evaluation directly informed reforms where legislation was introduced into the Queensland Parliament in 2025 to make video recorded evidence a permanent feature of the criminal justice system to support victim centred justice. During 2025, Dr Wallis's research also informed Queensland Government guidance on domestic and family violence and sexual violence reporting to translate legal research into practical reforms and strengthen justice systems through collaboration with government agencies.

- Led by Dr Melissa Johnston from the UQ's School of Political Science and International Studies, the 'Brideprice, Conflict, and Violence Against Women in Asia' study aims to investigate where, how and why brideprice facilitates armed conflict and violence against women. Emerging evidence shows paying high brideprice incentivises men to join armed groups, and global modelling correlates brideprice and armed conflict. However, despite the exorbitant sums exchanged as brideprice in many societies, the socio-economic mechanisms connecting brideprice and conflict are not well understood. Expected project outcomes include data on volumes and prevalence of brideprice, and understanding links to armed conflict and violence against women in Southeast Asia. This project's findings will support more effective Australian gender equality and peacebuilding programs that take account of brideprice.

Institutional trust and governance

How we achieved this

- The Indigenous Business Hub is a unique collaboration between UQ academics and industry that strengthens the positive impact of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in Australia by supporting meaningful and ethical Indigenous engagement. The Hub aims to:
  - create a learning environment that provides pathways for empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, academic staff, industry and community to achieve positive outcomes
  - activate reconciliation and healing through meaningful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and Indigenous knowledge by staff and students
  - authentically and ethically engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities through research, student engagement and industry partnerships.

  Importantly, the Hub provides mentoring for non-Indigenous researchers, ensuring that all research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and relevant matters is conducted in a culturally appropriate and respectful way.
- The UQ Business School continued its work in 2025 through the Net Zero Observatory (NZO), which was established with the recognition of the complexity of issues for businesses around failing to meet ambitious net-zero obligations. The NZO aims to support industry action and community support for rapid decarbonisation, which includes helping companies navigate the often conflicting and confusing decarbonisation requirements. In 2025, The NZO's work included a project examining emission reduction technologies for 5 of Queensland's economic sectors supporting the State's emission reduction targets. Also, in partnership with the UK's Chartered Banker Institute, the NZO developed and is delivering climate change executive

education to the Bank of Queensland, aligned with the UN Principles of Responsible Banking. Members of the NZO have also been examining organisational behaviour change in response to mandatory climate disclosure requirements for the Australian Accounting Standards Board. In addition, under the Net Zero Australia project, NZO researchers are leading a project examining trust in the net zero transition with a focus on communities.

- UQ Business School's Trust, Ethics and Governance Alliance (TEGA) leverages world-leading research at the interface of trust, ethics and corporate governance. TEGA brings together global experts and thought leaders to develop evidence-based insights that address complex and rapidly evolving challenges faced by industry, government and not-for-profit organisations in managing ethics, stakeholder and governance issues. In 2025, TEGA, in conjunction with the Practice and Process Studies Hub, hosted a 'Café Philo' series for academics and students to explore how philosophy can enrich and make research more meaningful, relevant and impactful. Topics included breaking free from preconceived concepts, ontology (the science of being), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), agency (the capacity of an agent to act and bring about change in the world) and normativity. The group also hosted an international academic from Curtin Singapore and a workshop on ethics and artificial intelligence with Professor Christoph Lütge from Technical University of Munich.
- Funded by ARC Discovery Project and led out of UQ's School of Economics, the 'Voter behaviour and polarisation: The role of social preferences' project improves understanding of factors that distort election representation and outcomes. This project aims to investigate how peer pressure and other social concerns affect voter participation, vote choice and political polarisation. It combines behavioural experimental economics with political economics and makes use of complementary experimental methods that allows for the study of carefully controlled elections, followed by a large-scale real-world test of the results. Expected outcomes include improved understanding of how social media, other social factors and political institutions, such as compulsory voting, can distort electoral representation and outcomes. Major benefits include the ability to advise policies to reduce polarisation and improve political institutions to ensure they reflect true societal preferences.
- Funded through an ARC Future Fellowship, the 'Normalising Ability Diversity through Career Transitions: Disability at Work' project investigates how the higher education sector can better support people with disabilities to transition from economic exclusion to work. This project aims to address regulatory failures and challenges that prevent rights to education and work from being exercised on an equal basis. It examines international legal norms, theories and strategic and operational practices in the higher education sector. Expected outcomes include advances in scholarship on ableism, informed policy reform and transferable operational processes for the education and employment sectors. Major benefits include the developed capacity to improve the transition of people with disabilities to work and ensure equal exercise of fundamental rights.
- From 2023 to 2025, UQ's Institute for Social Science Research conducted an independent evaluation of the Fast Track Sentencing Pilot program, which is part of Queensland's youth justice system. By focusing on stakeholder perspectives, including time taken, number of young offenders and their mental health and wellbeing, findings

from the evaluation support evidence-informed policy and program development for future youth justice interventions.

Enriching our communities

UQ is committed to being an innovation partner for the whole state, not only helping solve community challenges but also contributing to Queensland's economic development. While UQ remains a trusted institution, navigating today's fast-evolving market requires a shift from traditional models to a more responsive, agile partnership approach. To become the partner of choice, the University is intensifying its collaboration with industry, government and communities.

Platforms to discuss issues

As part of its service to the community, UQ aims to nourish intellectual vitality through inclusive access to debates, public lectures and cultural events. It provides a variety of forums for diverse stakeholders to discuss contemporary challenges and potential solutions.

Dialogues Across Difference speaker series

In 2025, UQ's newly appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Campus Culture and Leadership) launched the Dialogues Across Difference speaker series, aiming to strengthen understanding, respect and cohesion across our UQ community. The series was developed with a working group composed of academic and professional staff and the student union. Events in 2025 include:

- 'Skills for Dialogue' on 21 May, which provided strategies for listening, communicating clearly and engaging respectfully across diverse perspectives.
- 'Why is it so hard to talk?' on 27 August, which explored how people can have better, more respectful conversations and debate in light of increasing challenges during the past decade, especially about the big issues.

School of Political Science and International Studies open forum

UQ's School of Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS) holds open forum events for stakeholders to join in discussion of topical events and challenges. Topics that were covered during 2025 include:

- 2025 Rotary Peace Fellows' Seminar 'Pathways to Peace: From Theory to Practice' on 22 March, which provided an opportunity for the Class XXII Rotary Peace Fellows who were nearing the completion of their Masters in Peace and Conflict degrees to present not only on their studies, but also on the applied fieldwork experience undertaken over the summer break. This activity is vital in building and maintaining inks between the Rotary Centre and Rotarians. The Seminar provides a platform for our Fellows to share their experiences firsthand with Rotarians, who can hear about their academic progress and their journeys as both scholars and practitioners. It is also the University's way of thanking Rotary for its contributions, support and funding of the program and indeed for its enlightened decision some time ago to work towards world peace, justice and understanding. These values are jointly shared by UQ and are

reflected in our substantial commitment to the School's teaching and research program in peace and conflict resolution.

- In Conversation with Mr Kishore Mahbubani: Can Australia learn geopolitical lessons from ASEAN? on 17 July 2025, which explored how Australia has been receiving a geopolitical dividend of peace from the continued competence of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in managing its geopolitical environment. It presented lessons from ASEAN on how to manage the dramatically different global geopolitical environment of the 21st century.
- 'Who killed the Liberal International Order and what comes next?' on 17 September. In this inaugural professorial lecture, Professor Andrew Phillips drew on historical and contemporary examples, offering a post-mortem of the Liberal International Order's decline and asking what might emerge from its ruins. The event offered a compelling exploration of the global forces shaping our future and why they matter for Australia, the Indo-Pacific and the world.

Policymakers and lawmakers' outreach and education

How we achieved this

- UQ's Institute for Social Science Research short courses in Social Research Methods provide upskilling and capacity-building in design, implementation and evaluation of research projects, policy and programs. They are ideal for professionals in government, non-government, corporate and university sectors, as well as postgraduate students who want to learn more about methods for social analysis and how to translate scientific social research into public policy outcomes. Courses held in 2025 include:
  - Gathering and Analysing Qualitative Data. This online course over 6 half days equips participants with qualitative skills to design, collect, analyse and make evidence-informed decisions based on qualitative data or qualitative data integrated with quantitative data (mixed-methods).
  - Evaluating Social, Health and Human Service Programs. This 2-day face-to-face course introduces key evaluation concepts and techniques. It provides participants with the foundational skills to plan, conduct or commission social, health or human service program evaluations.
  - Data literacy, storytelling and influencing decision makers. This 1-day online course introduces essential knowledge and skills to enable data to be translated into compelling narratives to influence decision makers.
  - Survey Design. This 3-day online course provides participants with the skills to plan, conduct or commission cost-benefit analyses for social, health or human service programs.
  - From Data to Insight: Applied Introduction to Quantitative Analysis. This 3 half-days online course introduces the essential skills to prepare and statistically analyse social science data.
- UQ's Executive Education partners with Queensland Futures Institute (QFI) to deliver a range of short courses, within the UQ-QFI Public Sector and Industry Program.

Tailored specially for public sector policy professionals, program managers, administrators and regulators across the Queensland Government, the following offerings were run in in 2025:

- Adaptive and Inclusive Strategies for Collaborative Change
- Public and Private Stakeholder Engagement
- Building Cross-Sectoral Trust and Relationships
- Systems Thinking for Enhanced Decision Making.

In 2025, UQs Executive Education also co-developed an artificial intelligence (AI) Executive Leadership Program with Queensland Department of Customer Services, Open Data, Small and Family Business to deliver a 6-month program targeting executive public sector leaders. To design the course, UQ brought together leaders from across 24 different departments and government owned corporations to inform the program development and strategic priorities in this area. The program built AI capability across senior leadership to support informed, ethical and confident decision-making, while equipping leaders to guide trusted, human-centered innovation and enhance public value in an AI-enabled future.

- Hosted by UQ's School of Law, Law Matters series is a thought-provoking webinar series open to the legal, academic and general community which delves into new and meaningful research with community-wide impact. The series showcases world-leading researchers in collaboration with guest speakers from industry, academia and the legal profession on important topics in law and social policy including Indigenous rights, disability rights, defence technology and deaths in custody. In 2025, the School partnered with the Institute for Molecular Bioscience to deliver the Mattick Lecture on the intersection of science and the legal system, featuring internationally recognised researchers from Denmark who discussed how genetics, protein science and expert evidence contributed to the acquittal of Kathleen Folbigg. The session explored how advances in genetics and medical research can shape legal decision-making and influence justice outcomes.
- During 2025, UQ delivered 44 international development programs for more than 1,000 participants from 44 different countries addressing key development challenges including climate change and resilience, poverty and inequality, access to quality health and education, food security, gender equity and inclusiveness, economic development and good governance. Many of these programs were tailored for government employees and key industry stakeholders, directly supporting Australia's foreign policy, international relations and national interest objectives.

Partnership with government

Through strong partnerships and collaboration with industry and government, UQ aims to support the building of Australia's prosperity and sovereign capability. In 2025, the University actively partnered with local, state, national and international governments to support policy development, research collaboration and public education.

UQ's specialist government partnerships team works across the University to deliver a coordinated approach to government partnerships that respond to the needs and priorities of local, state and federal governments. This partnering cultivates collaborations with

government and industry stakeholders to deliver commercial outcomes, assists government in navigating the research landscape to drive priority outcomes, and supports policy debate and solutions by leveraging experts and cutting-edge research.

Centre for Policy Futures

UQ's Centre for Policy Futures plays a central role in translating academic research into policy-relevant insights. In 2025, the Centre continued to collaborate with governments, international bodies and NGOs to address complex policy challenges. Key themes include climate adaptation, digital governance and food security. The Centre informed the Queensland Government on a variety of prescient topics during 2025 via the following parliamentary submissions, policy briefs and reports:

- Towards a movement map for Australia: final report, which focuses on organisations classified as 'promoting or protecting human rights,' examining how their actions align with the SDG framework. This digital mapping provides a baseline for understanding which SDGs are most and least addressed, how they are distributed geographically across Queensland, and the extent to which Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are engaging with multiple and interconnected goals. As the first of its kind in Australia, this pilot SDG Data Observatory for Queensland boosts visibility of CSOs' contributions to sustainable development. It offers a collaborative platform for data sharing, policy dialogue and impact reporting, while supporting efforts to localise the SDGs by identifying gaps, fostering partnerships and improving government policy coherence.
- Mapping the SDG Ecosystem of Civil Society Organisations in Queensland. Published in September 2025, this policy brief recommends that governments should prioritise funding, capacity-building, and co-governance mechanisms that empower CSOs to contribute to SDG debates and local implementation.
- Social Justice and the 'Right to Food'. Published in September 2025 and based on the Fair Food Futures project research, this policy brief recommends tacking food poverty, reforming institutional procurement, strengthening civil society engagement, and co-designing research and policy to build a fairer, more sustainable Australian food system.
- Response to the National Food Security Strategy ('Feeding Australia') discussion paper: Recommendations on progressing food security through the Right to Food and inclusive food governance. Published in September 2025, this submission provides recommendations for the Australian Government's National Food Security Strategy to move beyond a narrow focus on supply chains, productivity and competition. To be effective, the Strategy must be grounded in the Right to Food and institutionalise participatory food governance, providing the foundations for addressing the structural drivers of food insecurity, such as poverty, inequality, over-reliance on charity and the exclusion of community voices from decision-making.
- Policy pathways to advance Australia's biomethane sector: learning policy lessons from international jurisdictions, which was published in May 2025. Examining the current state of biomethane production, policy instruments, enablers, barriers and opportunities in Australia, the report contrasts with initiatives employed in a number of international jurisdictions with more mature biomethane industries. Potential policy mixes that could be applied to the Australian context are identified and discussed.

- Building a resilient and sustainable workforce for the future report. Commissioned by Anglicare Southern Queensland (ASQ), this research investigates the specific factors influencing workforce attraction and retention in aged care and youth work roles through a mixed-methods study involving focus group discussions (FGDs), semi-structured interviews (SSIs) with current and former workers in the community services sector, and a large-scale discrete choice survey experiment (DCSE).
- The Global Job Quality Divide: Evidence of Winners and Losers in the World of Work. Published in June 2025, this policy brief investigates the question of what a 'good' job is and who gets it, via at typological analyses of job quality in a global sample of countries.
- Social Science for Meeting Australia's Ocean Goals. Published in November 2025, this white paper presents a structured framework that groups the enabling role of marine social sciences into 3 interlinked functions including understanding human-mediated drivers, designing human-centred ocean actions and innovations, and science programming of integrated, participatory and future-facing marine science.

Queensland Decarbonisation Hub

The Queensland Decarbonisation Hub is a multi-institutional initiative funded by the Queensland Government and led by UQ's Centre for Policy Futures. The Hub works in direct partnership with the government, providing expert advice on how to achieve net zero emissions and lead the state's approach to climate adaptation. This is done through interdisciplinary research that is demand-driven and collaborative, policy brokerage that enables two-way dialogue with decision makers, policy advice that is scoped and timed to inform live decisions, and outputs and deliverables that are designed for system-level influence. Connecting Queensland universities, industry, government and communities, the Hub draws together existing decarbonisation knowledge to develop research and policies that can support the state's industries and communities while safeguarding and enhancing its natural environment.

During 2025, the Hub provided expert advice to government through a range of strategic research, engagement and knowledge translation activities, including:

- progressing a major research collaboration with Queensland Treasury on the Queensland Climate Pathways Review 2025: Sectoral Emission and Technology for a Resilient, Low-Emissions Future.
- launching a co-designed research partnership with the Queensland Farmers' Federation to examine pathways for agricultural decarbonisation and regional transition.
- undertaking an Interim Hub Review, involving extensive stakeholder consultation, to strengthen the Hub's strategic direction, governance and research priorities.
- delivering a series of webinars for government, researchers and industry on the Queensland Government's Net Zero Plan, the launch of the Hub's 8 new research projects and the decarbonisation of the health sector, together with contributing to major knowledge exchange initiatives including Quantum Meets Decarb and AlterCOP.

- undertaking more than 50 targeted engagements across Queensland Government agencies, universities, industry, national organisations and community stakeholders to strengthen collaboration, identify emerging policy priorities and support research translation.

During 2025, the Hub also produced a range of research and policy outputs to inform government decision-making, including:

- *Building an Investment Pipeline to Decarbonise Regional Queensland: Pathways for Positive Action*, examining opportunities to strengthen regional investment and economic development in support of Queensland's decarbonisation objectives.
- a draft Sector Plan Report *Queensland Climate Pathways Review 2025: Sectoral Emission and Technology for a Resilient, Low-Emissions Future*, which prepared in collaboration with Queensland Treasury, to support Queensland's sector-based decarbonisation planning.

Policy influence and legislative impact

How we achieved this

- In 2025 UQ's School of Law made 21 submissions to national and international bodies, often informing policy reform beyond Queensland, including:
  - Review Outcomes - ARNECC Functional Requirements Review
  - Submission on behalf of the UQ Network for Carers of Children with Special Needs and Serious Chronic Illnesses to the Australian Government's Disability Discrimination Act Review
  - Submission to Independent National Security Legislation Monitor: Defining Terrorism - Review of the definition of a 'terrorist act' in section 100.1 of the Criminal Code Act 1995
  - Submissions to the review of the definition of a 'terrorist act' in section 100.1 of the Criminal Code Act 1995. Barton, ACT, Australia: Independent National Security Legislation Monitor.
  - Harnessing data and digital technology – Interim Report Submission to Productivity Commission
  - Progressing the Legal Review of Autonomous Weapon Systems: Report of an Expert Meeting (Geneva, 10–11 March 2025)
  - Submission to the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor, Review of Australia's Espionage, Foreign Interference, Sabotage and Theft of Trade Secrets Offences
  - Non-fatal strangulation: section 315A review – investigating, prosecuting and defending non-fatal strangulation in Queensland. Brisbane, QLD Australia: Queensland Law Reform Commission.
  - Commonwealth Reviews considering the definition of a 'Terrorist Act' in s 100.1 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)

  - Australia's Legal Definition of Terrorism: United Nations and Five Eyes Comparison
  - For Women Scotland: fastening the “biological” straitjacket
  - Policy pathways to advance Australia’s biomethane sector: learning policy lessons from international jurisdictions
  - Panel Discussion: Launch of U21 Disability Inclusion Policy Mapping Report (U21 Senior Leaders Workshop, UC Davis, 8 May 2025)
  - Report Key findings, insights and recommendations: Launch of U21 Disability Inclusion Policy Mapping Report (U21 Senior Leaders Workshop, UC Davis, 8 May 2025)
  - Principles of responsible military artificial intelligence and applicable international law
  - Submission to Queensland Law Reform Commission Review of Particular Criminal Defences
  - Report of the Quality Review Group to the University of Limerick School of Law
  - Non-fatal strangulation: section 315A review – a holistic review of the non-fatal strangulation offence. Brisbane, QLD Australia: Queensland Law Reform Commission.
  - Non-fatal strangulation: section 315A review – ‘I just want to be heard’: the voices of strangulation victim-survivors. Brisbane, QLD Australia: Queensland Law Reform Commission.
  - Evidence to the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor, Review of the Surveillance Legislation Amendment (Identify and Disrupt) Act 2021 Public Hearing
  - Internal Report on Criminalisation Provisions Relating to Smuggling of Migrants - Middle East and North Africa

- From 2021 to 2026, the ‘Co-designing Indigenous education policy in Queensland’ study aims to provide an evidence base and framework for the new co-design approach being implemented across State and Commonwealth Indigenous policy domains. Investigating co-design within the specific context of Queensland's Indigenous education policy, the project creates a large data set on how co-design is conceptualised and enacted. Because co-design is an emerging concept in Indigenous policy development, this project is expected to generate new knowledges that will benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, schools, policymakers and governments, addressing the critical social justice issue of education inequalities through investigating best practices in education policy development and enactment.
- In collaboration with an NGO, The Bryan Foundation, and The Queensland Government, researchers from UQ’s Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) and UQ’s School of Education and Business School have created a FamilyLinQ Evaluation Framework and Plan to assess the effectiveness of FamilyLinQ. FamilyLinQ is an integrated school-based hubs initiative funded by the Queensland Department of Education, running from 2022 to 2025. It brings together education, health and

community services to support children and their families, with the goal of improving life outcomes by making it easier for families to access the help they need in one place. The evaluation project, which runs from 2022 to 2026, will lead to a full review, and the results will guide future best practice and policy in the form of improvements and new initiatives for the Queensland Government.

- Led by UQ, the ARC Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course, known as Life Course Centre, focuses not only on describing and understanding the key causes of disadvantage but also on developing innovative solutions to address them. By examining how people construct their lives, the Centre strives to identify the drivers of disadvantage, and the critical life course junctures and opportunities for innovative public policy and change. In 2025, the Centre embarked on its most ambitious project to date, the 'Life Course Roadmap for the Future'. This project identifies long-term strategies and actions needed to embed a life course framework into policy, practice and research to improve outcomes for all Australians. Guided by a priority-setting exercise, deep engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholder workshops, the Roadmap will be launched in 2027.
- From 2022 to 2025, UQ's Institute for Social Science Research partnered with the Australian Institute for Family Studies to develop a new approach to evaluate the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) program and Community Support Program (CSP). The Australian Government Department of Home Affairs commissioned this work to assess how well CRISP and CSP are achieving strong integration outcomes for refugees compared to existing programs such as the long-running Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP). This evaluation sources input from all parties involved and will use both existing data and new surveys and interviews to examine the programs' effectiveness. The goal is to use this feedback to inform improvements for future participants and achieve strong integration outcomes for refugees.
- From 2024 to 2026, UQ researchers from the School of Business are working with Natural Hazards Research Australia and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) to evaluate the Resilient Homes Fund, demonstrating the success factors and lessons learnt as they apply to the 4 resilience dimensions, including physical, financial, social and emotional. Their evaluation built knowledge and capability to feed into policies for making Australian people and communities more resilient to disasters. This collaborative model enabled the co-design of key elements of the research process to ensure the project's findings and outcomes are academically rigorous and practically applicable. Building from the success of this partnership, UQ researchers are now also working with Natural Hazards Research Australia and the NSW Reconstruction Authority (NSWRA) to evaluate the Resilient Homes Program and the Assisted Relocation program, which fall under the NSW Climate Adaptation plans from 2025 to 2028. This form of partnership highlights the benefit of academia and government working together to develop, implement and evaluate policy that builds resilient communities and creates lasting, meaningful change. In 2025, the team published an interim report: Resilient housing policies: A framework for evaluation.

Our global profile

UQ's core purpose is to deliver for the public good through excellence in education, research and engagement with its local, national and global communities and partners. As a leading university in the development sector, UQ's mission is to deliver global development leadership for a better world. Its development practitioners, researchers and students are working to address the most pressing challenges facing the world today, including climate change and the environment, agriculture and food security, renewable energy, governance, health and wellbeing and gender equality. UQ's work positively impacts societies globally through real-world application of its development expertise across program delivery, research, policy and advisory services. Empowered leadership skills are imperative for diversifying governance and strengthening public policy procedures in fields such as finance, criminal justice, gender equality, agribusiness, disaster risk reduction and many more.

How we achieved this

- Announced on 25 March 2025, UQ is leading the Safe Sport Regional Hub Feasibility Study for the Pacific region, as part of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)'s Safe Sport Regional Hub Initiative. In collaboration with the Burnet Institute, Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka and Workforce Blueprint, this 'by the region, for the region' initiative is designed to foster safeguarding in sport and address interpersonal violence and abuse across the Pacific. UQ's role includes bringing together expertise to evaluate the current state of safeguarding systems, identify gaps and co-develop actionable strategies. The study responds to specific Pacific regional challenges, including geographic dispersion, limited resources and complex cultural contexts. It is intended to provide access to locally contextualised support for those experiencing interpersonal or gender-based violence in sport and improve cooperation between local sport-based and non-sport-based safeguarding systems. An 11-member Pacific Region Advisory Council has been established to provide strategic advice throughout the study. In June 2025, Pacific leaders met at UQ for the first meeting of the Council, including Fijian table tennis Paralympian Mere Roden and Team Up Advisor Roshika Deo, ensuring the voice of the Pacific is central to the project. This engagement demonstrates UQ's contribution to community-informed safeguarding, regional capacity building and collective action to strengthen safer sporting environments across the Pacific Island region.
- Funded by the Australian Federal Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Australia Awards are prestigious, transformational scholarships, fellowships and short courses offered to emerging leaders from developing countries for study, research and professional development in Australia and the region so they can return home and contribute to their nations' development, prosperity and resilience. Programs delivered by UQ in 2025 include:
  - 'Governance and Public Policy Making for Subnational Governments' short course. UQ International Development (UQID) unit supported capacity building for government officials from Aceh and Eastern Indonesia through this Australia Awards short course program. A pre-course workshop was hosted in Jakarta from 2 to 4 September 2025 by Australia Awards in Indonesia (AAI) and the Australia–Indonesia Partnership Program for Strengthening Basic Services (SKALA),

focusing on enhancing participants' knowledge and skills in planning, budgeting and the development of more inclusive public policy. Key themes included strengthening basic services, advancing gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI), and using digitalisation to support better governance. Australian experts, including Professor Ken Smith and former Queensland Minister Rachel Nolan, contributed their expertise and practical experience in government and public administration. A total of 27 participants took part in the workshop, including officials from Indonesia's national ministries together with representatives from provincial governments. The workshop formed the first stage of a broader international capacity-building program, with participants scheduled to undertake intensive training in Australia. Through leadership, expertise and engagement, UQ contributed to strengthening institutional capacity and fostering collaborative approaches to public sector reform and development.

- 'Development Effectiveness and Partnerships in the Pacific' short course. Managed by AAI and delivered by UQID, UQ contributed technical leadership, training design and delivery expertise to support development capability and partnership-building in the Indo-Pacific. The course aimed to build capability among agencies responsible for Indonesian development cooperation, share Australia's whole-of-government approach and help participants better understand how effective development assistance can strengthen Indonesia's diplomatic relationships with Pacific Island countries. It built a shared understanding of the importance of Pacific primacy and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, while examining donor coordination, multilateralism, GEDSI principles and climate resilience. The course was delivered to 23 mid- to senior-level civil servants with strong leadership potential. Participants engaged with senior aid and development officials from DFAT, academics and practitioners to build practical knowledge of development programme design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, transparency, accountability and strategic communication.
- Australia Awards South Asia and Mongolia (AASAM) 'Bridging Research to Policy' short course. Designed to strengthen the capacity of Sri Lankan policymakers, researchers and other key stakeholders to use research effectively in the development of evidence-based policy, the course engaged 20 mid to senior-level professionals from Sri Lanka, working in policy, practice and research roles across government agencies, non-profit organisations and private organisations. UQID played a key role in the design, delivery and management of the short course which combined activities delivered across Sri Lanka and Australia, providing opportunities for participants to engage with policy-relevant learning in both national and international contexts. The programme's learning objectives supported innovation, productivity and sectoral development, citizen engagement, and institutional support for evidence-informed decision-making. Through professional development and cross-sector engagement, the short course enhanced participants' ability to apply research in policy settings and contribute to more effective and inclusive governance.
- AASAM 'Executive Leadership' short course. Designed and delivered by UQID in 2025, this program worked alongside course leaders from the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) to support 28 senior public officials

from Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka to strengthen executive leadership capability and build networks among senior public sector leaders. The program enhanced participants' understanding of Australian public governance policies, institutions and systems, including Australian Public Service values and leadership practices, while also focusing on executive leadership development. The course combined online pre-learning with a 5-day program in Canberra. By convening senior government officials from three South Asian countries and facilitating engagement with Australian governance institutions and leadership practitioners, the short course promoted international knowledge exchange, professional networking and capability development in the public sector.

– Africa short course in Mining Governance, delivered by experts from UQ's Sustainable Minerals Institute and UQID. In 2025, the course engaged African government, geological and regulatory participants whose work supports policy development, safety and environmental standards. The program enhanced participants' capacity to contribute to effective, inclusive governance, while broadening professional networks across Africa and Australia. Activities combined technical learning and cross-sector exchange, including site visits across Queensland's key resource regions to engage with government stakeholders, infrastructure, mines and Indigenous communities. Country presentations allowed participants to share local challenges, while GEDSI considerations were embedded throughout. Participants also engaged with Indigenous leaders and industry speakers on cultural heritage and mine management, supporting reflection on responsible, inclusive and context-aware mining governance.

Securing our future

University governance and responsible practice

As a large organisation, UQ takes its responsibility as a leader and role model for students, staff and community seriously. UQ prides itself on strong governance, including the appointment of external stakeholders alongside elected University representatives on its governing body, the UQ Senate. The Senate ensures that the appropriate structures, policies, processes and planning are in place for UQ to effectively manage its activities and achieve its goals.

Seeking multiple perspectives on key issues provides robust procedures across various areas of our operation. UQ aims to make informed decisions that are evidence-based, community-centric and measurable, through capturing community sentiment towards UQ as a values-based organisation and establishing a method to integrate these insights into the planning for UQ decision making. As such, the Senate includes diverse appointees from inside and outside the University who contribute expertise and ensure local and regional needs are reflected in strategic planning. Similarly, various UQ faculties and institutes maintain advisory boards, often with membership from relevant industries or organisations, who meet regularly to discuss strategic direction in teaching and research, including strengthening connections with industry.

This approach also extends to students. To support their future employability, students are invited to stand for election for Senate or Academic Board, be a member of a School or Faculty Committee or Advisory Group, or become part of UQ's student union, the UQ

Union (UQU) and the Association of Postgraduate Students (APS), which are recognised as independent student bodies that represent the interests of students. UQU or APS representatives sit on all important University committees and work with other elected representatives to advocate for student interests at all levels of governance at UQ. Particularly, the University collaborates with the UQU on a range of issues, including negotiating the Services Agreement to maintain critical student services and legacy student spaces.

UQ's approach to genuine consultation is also reflected in ongoing initiatives such as the Queensland Commitment, which involves regular regional consultations, allowing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, educators and local government officials to shape the University's outreach and priorities through mechanisms such as the Regional Roadshows. The Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2025-2027 is also underpinned by consultation to ensure genuine partnership between UQ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, giving voice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the decisions that affect them. These efforts reflect UQ's broader goal of being a university that listens, collaborates and delivers for the public good.

The promotion of strong, responsible and ethical governance also extends to our research practices. UQ's Responsible Research Management Framework Policy includes principles taken directly from the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. UQ has 2 Human Research Ethics Committees and 6 Animal Ethics Committees. All of these committees require and value the perspectives of community members in assessing research proposals, ensuring that projects involving human participants or the use and care of animals meet their respective ethical obligations. Any research involving humans is governed by the Human Research Ethics procedure, which includes sharing of resources, such as the Australia Clinical Trial Alliance Consumer Involvement and Engagement Toolkit, to provide practical advice for researchers and research organisations wishing to conduct patient-centred research. In addition, the UQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Innovation Strategy 2021-2025 aims to provide UQ's non-Indigenous research community with the knowledge, trainings and systems to support ethical and impactful research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. UQ also provides staff and students with support and resources to help embed the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) code of ethics, as well as information on Indigenous research data management for research involving Indigenous data, information and knowledge.

A range of resources support UQ staff to engage meaningfully with external stakeholders. This includes an Integrity Framework, which sets out expected behaviour when interacting with colleagues, students and community. Other related policies include Conflict of Interest Policy, Public Interest Disclosure Policy and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusive Behaviours Policy.

Similarly, the University upholds its principles and commitments on corruption and bribery through the Fraud and Corrupt Conduct Policy, and supports academic freedom for all academic staff, in choice of research topics and in speaking and teaching, through the Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy. UQ also publishes an Annual Report that includes audited financial information.