



MEDIA RELEASE 05/03/19

Access for thousands of university students at Blacktown's new campus

Thousands of students in Western Sydney will have access to a new university campus in Blacktown City.

Blacktown City Council today announced it will partner with Australian Catholic University (ACU) in building a university campus in the Blacktown CBD with the first student enrolments scheduled for 2020.

Blacktown City Mayor Stephen Bali, MP, made the joint announcement with ACU Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Greg Craven.

"This is a game-changer for us. A university campus in Blacktown CBD is a vital part of Council's vision for transforming our city," Mayor Bali said.

"There are 18,000 university students living in Blacktown City – currently they all have to travel long distances to attend their courses, but now, our high school students will have the opportunity within three years to study at a university right here in Blacktown."

ACU is Australia's largest provider of graduate teachers and nurses and is ranked in the top 3% of university's worldwide*.

Professor Craven said he was looking forward to ACU forging deep ties with Blacktown City businesses, schools and community groups.

"By 2036 half of Sydney's population will live in Western Sydney yet currently only 18 per cent of university places are in the area.

"An ACU campus in Blacktown will stand at the cultural and geographical heart of the community. It will put the people first. We will strive to serve Blacktown's diverse local student body by providing innovative, quality higher education courses as well as state-of-the-art physical spaces for study, recreation and reflection," Professor Craven said.

Greater Blacktown Business Chamber Vice President, Bob Turner, said; "A university becomes a key economic and cultural driver of a community and the central location of the ACU Blacktown Campus will increase the vitality of the Blacktown CBD and stimulate business growth and activity.

"Blacktown City's 20,000-plus businesses and ACU both win through this partnership. A workforce starts with education and ACU Blacktown will become a valuable contributor providing the young population of Blacktown with new prospects and opportunities," Mr Turner said.

Blacktown City Council last year called for Expressions of Interest from universities to partner with Council and business to establish a campus in the Blacktown CBD.

“Following a rigorous assessment process, ACU emerged as the clear contender to join with Council and business in developing and building a university campus,” Mayor Bali said.

“ACU had proven it was capable of responding to the needs of a growing and diverse population. ACU was also willing to make a considerable capital investment in the construction of the campus.

“Our students can now look forward to getting a quality education without having to commute for hours across Sydney every day.”

“ACU already has a strong network of industry partners and expertise in Blacktown. We have our own considerable network of local providers who will build active partnerships with the University. Together, they will bring education, training, research and experience to the Blacktown community.”

More than 54,000 higher education students live within 30 minutes of Blacktown, and over 17 per cent of current ACU students and five per cent of staff currently travel from the Blacktown area to ACU’s Sydney campuses.

The new campus will at first occupy several floors of the council-owned building at 22 Main St, Blacktown.

ACU plans to partner Council in building two campus buildings in the Warrick Lane precinct in the CBD.

ACU plans to establish an information centre in the Main Street building later this year and then offer ACU College and Executive Education programs in 2020, followed by undergraduate and postgraduate programs in 2021.

The Council and University will consult closely with the community, industry, ACU staff and external experts to develop the design of the permanent campus within the Warrick Lane development, with occupation scheduled for 2024.

*Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2018/2019. Percentage calculated as ACU's world rank as a proportion of the total number of universities in the world: *International Handbook of Universities 2018*, Palgrave MacMillan

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