

## ACU announces recovery management plan

Australian Catholic University (ACU) will use a combination of cost-saving measures and reinvestment of surpluses to address the financial impact of COVID-19 as part of its recovery management plan outlined to staff on Friday 12 June.

Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Greg Craven told staff in a video message that the ACU Senate had endorsed the university's response to the loss of revenue brought about by COVID-19, and that retaining staff was a key priority.

Professor Craven emphasised that while the challenges the university is facing were serious, it was in a relatively good position and he was confident the strategic measures would assure a sustainable future for ACU.

ACU is forecasting a loss of almost \$126 million in revenue over three years to 2022, due directly to COVID-19 and the associated decline in student numbers.

The revenue shortfall for this year is expected to be around \$22 million; for 2021, it is forecast to be \$50 million; and in 2022, just over \$54 million.

As part of its cost-saving plan, ACU will:

- reduce its surplus by \$53 million from this year to 2022
- reduce salary costs by \$42 million to 2022 within the Enterprise Agreement through
  - reassessment of work requirements where work may be undertaken differently, redistributed, or discontinued
  - reducing casual and sessional employment
  - leave management
- cut \$31m in non-salary measures including capital expenditure.

Professor Craven said the approach was designed to save a significant number of jobs and the crucial functions that go with them, but that some losses could not be escaped.

“This is an unavoidable reality within a sector-wide impact of COVID-19 and the decline in student numbers and revenue.

“As always, the wellbeing, safety and success of our people are our highest priorities. We are doing all we can to keep losses to a minimum.

“Senate and I acknowledge the tremendous efforts of staff over this period, our success in transitioning swiftly to online delivery, and the flexibility and adaptability shown through these challenging times.”

Professor Craven said ACU was planning on a staged return to on-campus learning, blended with online delivery, in Semester 2. “We are eager to enable the majority of our students to continue their education among their classmates and colleagues.”

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