

Strategic Alliance of Catholic Universities elects ACU VC as new president

Professor Zlatko Skrbis, Vice-Chancellor and President of Australian Catholic University has been elected President of the Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities (SACRU) at the SACRU Governing Board meeting in Boston, Massachusetts on 30 July.

Professor Skrbis will serve an initial term of two years.

He is the second president of this young university alliance, succeeding Dr Josep M Garrell Guiu of Ramon Llull University in Barcelona.

In the two years since it was founded to promote shared values, the alliance of eight research universities from across the world has established working groups to facilitate global collaboration and consideration of critical contemporary issues the world faces today.

The alliance has published several papers and joint publications on issues of critical importance including the conflict in Ukraine, Women in leadership, and *Laudato sí* and environmental sustainability.

In November 2021, the alliance presented a virtual research student workshop, “A Sustainable Future: research delivering impact for the 21st century”, which brought together more than 60 PhD and other research students from each of the SACRU universities to present the results of their research on different disciplines related to sustainable development.

Professor Skrbis said the opportunity to lead the esteemed alliance was a great privilege. “I am delighted to have been elected President of this vital and active network of Catholic universities dedicated to global collaboration in research and teaching excellence informed by our shared identity as Catholic higher education institutions,” he said.

“The achievements of SACRU in just two short years, despite the impact of some of the most challenging issues in generations has been incredibly impressive.

“It is a real honour to be elected to this role and I look forward to SACRU continuing to flourish and develop over the next two years and to build on the wonderful work that has been done to date under Dr Garrell’s leadership,” Professor Skrbis said.

Background about SACRU

SACRU was formally established in 2020 and draws on its members’ shared commitment to the common good and informed by Catholic social teaching

Its purpose is to support and facilitate multi-disciplinary cooperation and collaboration across areas of common research and teaching capability and interest to help consider and address some of the critical issues the world faces today.

It has eight founding members from five different continents including Australian Catholic University, Boston College (USA), Sophia University (Japan), University Ramon Llull (Spain), Catholic University of Portugal, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Università Cattolica Sacro Cuore (Italy), and the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio De Janeiro (Brazil).

Background about Professor Zlatko Skrbis

Professor Zlatko Skrbis is the fourth Vice-Chancellor and President of Australian Catholic University (ACU). He previously held senior leadership positions at ACU, Monash University, and The University of Queensland.

He holds a PhD in sociology from Flinders University and undergraduate degrees in sociology and philosophy from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

It is his ambition to ensure that ACU is globally recognised as an institution that adheres to its strong Catholic principles and makes a tangible improvement to the lives of others through excellence in education, research and engagement.

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