

ACU's innovative Step Up Into Teaching program wins national award

Australian Catholic University's innovative Step Up into Teaching (SUIT) has taken out the Future Builder People's Choice category at Universities Australia's prestigious [2025 Shaping Australia Awards](#).

The award, announced at Parliament House in Canberra, further cements ACU's position as a national leader in education innovation and community engagement.

SUIT national coordinator Jamie Sherson said the award recognised the strength of collaboration and community.

"It highlights the potential of partnerships between universities, schools, and dioceses in supporting equity and opportunity in education," he said.

The SUIT program gives students in Year 11 and 12 an early start to a teaching degree, helping boost the teacher workforce and support first-in-family, low-SES, and First Nations students to study at university.

Mr Sherson said that winning the Future Builder Award People's Choice category was an honour that recognised the impact of the program.

"These students are not only future teachers, but they are also future leaders who will inspire the next generation in their own communities."

ACU Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Zlatko Skrbis congratulated Mr Sherson on the award.

"We are delighted to receive this recognition from Universities Australia, and the Australian public," Professor Skrbis said.

"The SUIT program is part of ACU's mission to break down barriers to higher education and support the next generation of educators.

"This award belongs to our dedicated and passionate staff, our school partners and the many young people who have embraced the possibilities this program offers."

Universities Australia Chief Executive Officer Luke Sheehy said the awards recognised initiatives that made an outstanding contribution to society.

"These projects are transforming lives, and these awards celebrate the people driving change and making a real difference right across Australia," he said.

The SUIT program, which operates at ACU's Strathfield Campus and recently expanded to the university's Brisbane Campus, has seen a 50 per cent increase in enrolments over the past two years.

Graduates, who complete two tertiary level units during the spring and summer school holidays, receive conditional entry into an ACU teaching degree once they finish Year 12, and prior recognition for their studies.

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