



The Advancing Kangaroo

The Australian National University at Acton on the suburbs of Canberra is among the world's top research-led universities that provide students with an exceptional environment for discovery and learning that set them apart

• **Celine George**

Australia offers an unparalleled opportunity for nature-lovers. Its world-famous beauty spots like Alice Springs and Ayers Rock, its unique and exotic fauna – from kangaroos, wallabies and koala bears to emus, humming birds and kookaburras, makes it a nature lover's paradise. Studying in its beautiful capital city, Canberra, otherwise known as Bush Capital, presents international students with exciting experiences. Opportunities to receive a Canberra education are highly sought by students from around the world, who find the blend of exceptional educational institutions, capital-city living and close proximity to mountain sports, as well as various other outdoor activities, appealing.

The Australian National University at Acton on the suburbs of Canberra is among the world's top research-led universities that provide students with an exceptional environment for discovery and learning that set them apart. This spirit of discovery is reflected in the university's motto, *Naturam primum cognoscere rerum*, which means 'First to learn the nature of things'.

ANU was established by an Act of Federal Parliament, in 1946. From its inception, ANU was built around a group of Australian scholars who had already achieved international distinction, including Sir Mark Oliphant, a leader in radar development and nuclear physics; Sir Howard Florey, discoverer of penicillin and eminent historian, Sir Keith.

The research-intensive learning environment gives one the kind of degree that is ranked among the world's best, along with a unique learning experience. In fact, here there are more educators and mentors per student than many other universities.

Graduate education is a major focus of the university. Over one-third of the total student enrolment is in postgraduate study, with almost half undertaking study towards PhD. Postgraduate

students and postdoctoral fellows form an important and integral part of the research fabric at ANU, contributing to its intellectual and creative capacity. There are seven discipline-focused colleges, made up of research and education centres, schools and faculties. These colleges link research and teaching at undergraduate, postgraduate and higher degree levels, creating a vital focus from which to achieve research at the highest standards of excellence.

College of Arts and Social Sciences is one of the largest of the colleges at ANU, with areas of scholarship covering the Humanities, Social Sciences and Creative Arts. More traditional areas in Social Sciences, such as Philosophy and Political Theory, are regularly placed in the top handful of departments in the world, while Visual Arts practice in the School of Arts has a significant international reputation.

College of Asia and the Pacific dedicated to the highest quality of research on, and education about the most dynamic region of the world is the centre of Australia's intellectual engagement and scholarly dialogue with the many societies, worlds of thought, economies and cultures of Asia and the Pacific. Research is focused on anthropology, archaeology, economics, history, human geography, international relations, gender studies, regulatory institutions, linguistics, political science, resource management, and strategic and defense studies. Through partnerships with the Commonwealth Government, the college has jointly established the Asia Pacific College of Diplomacy, the first of its kind in Southern Hemisphere.

College of Business and Economics integrates research and teaching in its key areas of strength including economics, finance, accounting, statistics, management and marketing.

College of Engineering and Computer Science conducts the research and teaching that aims to



They provide an academic, cultural and social environment and are a great place to learn, rather than merely a place to stay while studying.

Sporting, social, and cultural activities feature prominently in the typical university student's lifestyle, and the ANU Students Association coordinates the social and cultural clubs and societies on campus. There is a diverse range of groups to join: from debating and public speaking societies, to sports and recreation clubs,

deliver solutions to some of the most pressing technological and environmental challenges that the world faces.

College of Law relies on world-class research and both coursework and research degree programmes are offered. The college's postgraduate programme is the largest coursework programme at ANU.

College of Medicine and Health Sciences has a unique perspective on health and medical science with the capability of combining research teams across a number of disciplines to take a broad view of health issues. Research from the college attracts national and international recognition and awards, and includes three Nobel Prizes.

ANU College of Science comprises five Research Schools, a Centre, an Institute and a large faculty (itself comprising several schools and departments). Its major strengths in both teaching and research fall into broad discipline areas. Home to some of the best scientific minds in the world, the ANU College of Science represents Australia's foremost university-based research activities.

International students are attracted by the high standard of Australia's education and training, its national qualifications framework, welcoming environment and diverse society and make up roughly one quarter of all students at ANU. The International Education Office (IEO) on campus is the first point of contact for every overseas student. Through a strong international presence and links with the world's leading universities in the US, UK, Europe and Asia, the university has over 13,000 students, representing 94 countries.

The campus is on a 145-hectare site in Australia's national capital, Canberra. The whole green campus is having more than 10,000 trees within its grounds. It is a very attractive site, adjoining native bush land, Lake Burley Griffin and the city centre. The campus provides a safe, enjoyable and friendly study environment. With a large proportion of students staying in student residences, the campus is like a small town, offering accommodation, restaurants, cafes, art galleries, concert halls, banks, sporting facilities and medical services. ANU offers a dynamic social atmosphere, and a commitment to student support. Student halls of residence are thriving communities of scholars actively seeking knowledge and understanding.

or groups where you can meet other students from your home nation. The ANU Sports and Recreation Association hosts specific sporting clubs such as tennis, badminton, soccer, rugby, and rowing and there are a wide range of facilities available to students including a gymnasium, aerobics classes, sporting grounds and ovals, equipment hire, and squash and tennis courts.

For outdoor lovers, Canberra has a lot to offer. Nature-based pursuits popular in the district include bushwalking, mountain biking, mountain climbing, canoeing, orienteering, triathlon, and fishing.

The auditorium on the ANU campus is one of the premier venues in Canberra and regularly hosts live international and national bands. The city and nearby suburbs of Manuka and Kingston have a choice of cafes, theatres, cinemas, pubs, and nightclubs. Theatre, drama, music, and art performances are prominent both on campus and in the city. Distinguished by its relentless pursuit of excellence, ANU keeps attracting leading academics and outstanding students from Australia and around the world.

With almost 75 per cent of academic staff holding PhDs, ANU has the most highly qualified staff in Australia. Each year ANU staffs are honoured with many awards and prizes such as Carrick Awards for outstanding contributions to student learning, the Onsager Prize of the American Physical Society, the Prime Minister's Award for Science, the Shaw Prize for Astronomy and Australian Archaeology's highest award, the Rhys Jones Medal. ANU has earned a distinguished national and international reputation for excellence in research and teaching, including five Nobel Prize winners who have strong connections with ANU. ♦

‘Australia Set to Translate Geopolitical Realities into Global Edu Leadership’



Professor the Hon Gareth Evans AO QC is Chancellor of Australian National University and a Professorial Fellow at The University of Melbourne. He is President Emeritus of the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, which he led from 2000 to 2009. He previously spent 21 years in Australian politics, 13 of them as a Cabinet Minister. As Foreign Minister (1988–96) he was best known internationally for his roles in developing the UN peace plan for Cambodia, concluding the Chemical Weapons Convention and initiating new Asia Pacific regional economic and security architecture.

He has written or edited nine books, most recently *The Responsibility to Protect: Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and for All* (Brookings Institution Press, 2009), and has published over 100 journal articles and chapters on foreign relations, human rights and legal and constitutional reform.

He has co-chaired two major International Commissions, on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2000–01) and Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (2008–10). In May 2010 he was awarded the 2010 Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute Four Freedoms Award for Freedom from Fear for his pioneering work on the Responsibility to Protect concept, and his contributions to conflict prevention and resolution, arms control and disarmament.

In an interview with *Asian Educator*, Prof Gareth Evans was enthusiastic about the educational opportunities in Australia. *Excerpts:*

According to you, what are the distinctive features of Australia as a brand in education?

Australia is a safe place to live and study, with a stable political system and high standard of living. It is also a thriving multicultural nation, with fully 27% of those living there being born overseas, a third of them in Asia. Around 1,90,000 Asian students study in Australian universities, each one typically making up three-quarters of the overseas student population.

Our academic environment reflects in every way that we are part of the Asian region as it rises in power and influence. Commitment to excellence is an often-used catch phrase, but it is a guiding principle and a reality across Australian universities - and a crucial reason why education has become our third-largest export industry.

Could you explain the strategic initiative taken by you and your team to make ANU Australia's No 1?

ANU is consistently ranked No 1 among Australian universities in the great majority of international rankings. According to the latest Federal Government research assessment, 94% of our academics were active in ANU research fields ranked above - or well above - world-class.

But in a highly competitive domestic and global environment, we know we cannot be complacent. We are about to release a new strategic plan, ANU by 2020, which outlines specific targets for staying at the top nationally and improving our position internationally.

The plan focuses on sustaining and enhancing our excellence, with many new metric targets, in the three key areas where all great universities excel: research, research-led teaching in a stimulating learning environment; and contribution to the development of national and international public policy.

Under the plan the vast majority of ANU staff will be required to be 'highly research-active'. And the university is establishing a \$10-million fund to attract and retain new world-class staff, at senior and mid-



‘Australia is a safe place to live and study with a stable political system and high standard of living. It is also a thriving multicultural nation, with fully 27% of those living there being born overseas, a third of them in Asia’

career levels.

How friendly are Australia, ANU campus, faculty and the environment to international students?

ANU's 9,600 undergraduate students come from over 100 different countries, making our campus a wonderfully vibrant and diverse place. Many are from Australia's regional neighbours, including China, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Vietnam and Indonesia. Others

have travelled from South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America. Overall, nearly one-third of ANU's total student body was born in Asia.

All these students live and study alongside Australians and are supported by the ANU International Students' Department, which assists in the transition involved in living and studying in a new country, and organizes a wide range of social, cultural and academic events.

Canberra is a particularly safe and pleasant city for students. ANU is an intimate, single campus institution, nestled close to the heart of the city, with all facilities, a walk or short bicycle ride away. While violent incidents involving international students remain extremely rare everywhere in the country, in Canberra and on the ANU campus there have been none at all in living memory.

ANU has international links with leading universities in Asia, the US, and Europe and the university's students and staff all have numerous opportunities for collaboration and exchange that contribute to its rich intellectual climate.

Employability of graduates is a major concern the world over. How do you reconcile this problem in Australia/ANU?

Employment rates for ANU graduates are above the national average, with 78% of our undergraduates in full-time work soon after

graduation. In the wake of the global financial crisis, take-up rates have been lower than usual, and we expect that if and when the world economy returns to a more normal state, these will again increase.

Tertiary study does not guarantee you a job in Australia, but it makes a rewarding career much

“Commitment to excellence is an often-used catch phrase, but it is a guiding principle and a reality across Australian universities - and a crucial reason why education has become our third-largest export industry”

more likely. Only 2.7% of recently-graduated Australians are not in work, compared with 8% of those without a degree.

As a veteran politician of Australia, a social activist, an educationist and the Chancellor of ANU how do you envisage the future of the university and prospects of Australia as a leading player in education?

Australia, geographically straddling the



Campus -- an aerial view



Indian and Pacific Oceans alongside Asia, with its commitment to the region and strong tradition of research and teaching excellence, is perfectly

‘Australia, geographically straddling the Indian and Pacific Oceans alongside Asia, with its commitment to the region and strong tradition of research and teaching excellence, is perfectly poised to translate the new geopolitical realities of the 21st century into continued international educational leadership’

poised to translate the new geopolitical realities of the 21st century into continued international educational leadership.

And ANU, as both Australia’s *finest* university and its only national university, is poised in turn to go on to even greater heights, enhancing its status as already one of the great universities of the world. Compared to other Australian universities, ANU has the highest percentage

of staff with a PhD, a very high concentration of internationally renowned scholars, a high graduation rate, a high proportion of graduates going on to further study, a high satisfaction rating amongst students and a low student-to-staff ratio.

ANU is the only Australian university in the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU), a strategic partnership based on a shared global vision of the world’s best education and research institutions. The other members are Oxford, Cambridge, Yale, Berkeley, Peking, Tokyo, NU Singapore, Copenhagen and ETH Zurich. And this is the league in which we are determined to continue to play.

According to you, what are the challenges our universities have overcome to meet the needs of a growing economy?

One of the central missions for all Australian universities is to build the skills and stimulate the ambitions of new generations of students to ensure a prosperous future for this nation and for others.

As Australia’s national university, ANU has a special relationship with the Federal Government. We work closely with policy makers to help ensure that public policy - that which shapes the daily lives and futures of our citizens - is based on the best thinking and knowledge available. That collaboration works across all disciplines, and addresses the critical issues facing the nation and the globe, including many that relate to the demands of growing economies like food supply and population growth, climate change and health care for an ageing and growing population.

Just last month ANU joined forces with other universities and financial institutions to establish a new centre that will make Australia a hub for finance sector expertise. The new centre will examine regional, national and international financial sector developments, and the impact of regulation on economies, legal systems and policy.

How are our universities helpful to industry? Or, otherwise, how can we make them industry forerunners?

ANU academics, as in most leading Australian universities, work closely with industry and government, with tangible results, across a huge range of areas, from cutting-edge research in cheaper and more efficient solar technology to vaccines for HIV and to life-saving cancer and malaria research.

A very recent example is collaboration between ANU and Bayer CropScience to fast-track new technology that will produce higher-yielding food crops. Once developed and tested, the cutting-edge technology will be provided at no extra cost to farmers in less developed countries so that they can feed expanding populations. ♦