



ACNM Strategic Plan – Dual Sector

FY2015-2017

*‘Transforming lives through educating natural health and holistic professionals
in the health, fitness and wellness sectors.’ (ACNM Purpose)*





ACNM STRATEGIC PLAN - DUAL SECTOR FY2015 – 2017

Preamble

This high level document outlines the means through which Australian College of Natural Medicine Pty Ltd (ACNM) delivers its educational priorities over a three year planning cycle.

ACNM, through its educational offerings in Health, Fitness and Beauty, is one of the largest natural health and wellbeing education providers in the Southern Hemisphere.

The organisational structure is built around the three pillars of Health, Fitness and Beauty and across the dual sectors of Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET). The educational registrations are held in the name of Australian College of Natural Medicine Pty Ltd which in turn trades under a number of brand names – Endeavour College of Natural Health (HE), FIAFitnation (VET), College of Natural Beauty (VET), College of Natural Health & Homeopathy (VET-NZ) and Wellnation (Clinics).

Through organic growth, ACNM will extend the range of courses across the three pillars of Health, Fitness and Beauty and increase spread of courses into the Allied Health sector. Throughout this cycle, ACNM also aims to extend the group's physical and online footprint in Australia to international markets using an offshore online study strategy for 100% online HE and VET courses where it is appropriate.

Guiding Principles for Directors and Management

Governance: We practise good corporate and academic governance supported by a comprehensive and rigorous compliance framework. Quality and continuous improvement underpins our business strategy and operations against a backdrop of stringent regulatory environments.

Connectedness: We are knowledgeable about our organisation, our people and sector. We make meaningful connections with students, graduates, staff, employers, associations, industry and stakeholders. We are a physical and intellectual destination for like-minded people.

Technology: We cleverly and commercially apply technology and digital services to create experiences that engage and delight our students, staff and stakeholders. We are experts in online learning methodologies using the latest delivery platforms to remain at the forefront in providing an online environment that is second to none across all educational pillars.

Innovation: We value innovation and creativity as it helps us to reinvent ourselves and our organisation. We provide a stimulating environment for conversations about ideas. We are experts in our field and strive to continuously educate others as well as self.



Vision

To promote and advance the philosophy and practice of natural medicine and wellbeing by producing high-quality graduates who will go on to be leaders in their fields of practice. We will do so by being the pre-eminent provider of education to the Australasian natural health, allied health and wellbeing sectors as evidenced by the quality of our teaching and the competence of our graduates.

Values that guide every interaction we have with students, staff, consumers and stakeholders

Authenticity: We do not pretend. We do not have false friends or colleagues. We are warm and genuine and understand that robust discussions aim to support openness and growth.

Clarity: We speak to the facts. We do not create mythology based on incorrect information. We verify the data and we act in the interests of clarity.

Happiness: We value positivity, joy, encouragement and strive to be in the moment. We affirm our own actions, those of others and the organisation.

Embodiment: We teach, support, live and breathe natural medicine and wellbeing. Be the contributions large or small, we consciously find ways to contribute to an holistic approach in everything we do.

Responsibility: We take personal ownership of our actions. We do not blame others. When we commit – we follow through. We model the very best in ethical conduct.

Student Centricity: All students are central to our existence. We work to engage and satisfy our prospective, current and past students like no other tertiary institution.

Planning Cycle and Embedded Resource Framework

ACNM operates under a three year rolling strategic planning cycle whereby the broad strategic direction is articulated for the forward three year period. Each year the plan is reviewed by the Corporate Board and Executive Management to ensure it is fit for purpose. Twelve month (financial year) Operational Plans or Overviews are produced annually by each department and/or business unit.

The Executive Management team align their respective department objectives, goals and performance measures contained within the Operational Plans to the current Strategic Plan. The annual budgeting process follows and is informed by the Operational Plans.

A bottom up approach budgeting philosophy has been adopted. For academic input, Academic leadership in each pillar consult their respective academic communities. The Health pillar Program Leaders of each modality consult with their staff nationally on an annual basis and in doing so, refer to the Learning and Teaching Plan which in turn informs the Operational Plans.



Tertiary Education Sector Environmental Scan – Next 12 Months

The Australian tertiary education environment continues to be in a constant state of flux with more promised to eventuate in the coming year.

The largest changes have come about or are promised to come due to the significant planned education reforms in the Abbott government's budget released in May 2014. Budget cuts have already impacted the **Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)** with staff who are leaving not replaced and current staff workloads consequently increasing. This has seen ACNM lose its case management team with which a good rapport had been built and maintained over the last 12 months of relative stability. The College's new case manager is unfamiliar with our history.

Key drivers in the tertiary education sector include:

- The 2014 Federal budget included plans for large-scale reform of higher education funding arrangements. This included budget cuts for TEQSA and the uncapping of university fees (granting universities the power to set their own fees). It also included a change to funding support (Commonwealth Supported Places) for students by way of a single, coherent income-contingent loan scheme accessible to students wherever they choose to study (currently only available to those studying at an approved university). These changes are scheduled to come into effect in January 2016, and should have a strong positive effect on Endeavour's enrolments as students will no longer be restricted to study at university to gain Commonwealth support.
- The Higher Education Standards Panel (appointed by the Federal Minister for Education) has continued its review of the Higher Education Standards Framework and has sent out three consultation papers in the 12 months to June 2014. It is anticipated that the final version of the revised Higher Education Standards will be presented to the Minister for Education for consequent legislative changes and finalisation sometime in the first half of 2015. It has been explained that there will be a transition period into the new standards when they come into place.
- Over the last 12 months, TEQSA's regulatory approach has changed significantly to have much more of a case-management approach rather than a distanced, rules-based approach. This has seen significant opportunity for relationship-building with the College's Case Management team and the emergence of a much more collegial relationship.
- The **Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)** has been working closely with TEQSA for dual sector providers such as Endeavour wherever possible, however there are many points of difference between sector requirements. In 2014 Endeavour's compliance team has begun to focus on building the infrastructure behind the VET business. The Quality and Compliance Coordinators have developed significantly more detailed Validation and Moderation processes, and are in the process of developing detailed Language, Literacy and Numeracy processes (a current strong focus of ASQA's regulatory reviews). This work is being conducted in preparation for a VET audit anticipated to occur in 2016 (although a mid-term audit could occur at any time).
- The **Chinese Medicine Board of Australia (CMBA)** (for registration of acupuncture practitioners) released their new Accreditation Standards in December 2013, and require all providers who were 'grandparented' over from the previous registration body to apply for full accreditation under the new Standards by the end of 2014. Endeavour's application for this process is well underway and it is anticipated that the approval of this application will occur in 2015, which will ensure our newest campus, Sydney, is also covered under CMBA from that time.



- 2015 will see the implementation of the Federal Government's **Unique Student Identifier** initiative (USI) for VET. A USI will be allocated to each VET student and will allow all of a student's training records which have been collected through the national VET data collection to be linked and accessed by the student at any time. It will ensure that students can print one single transcript of all of their VET achievements. It will be available online at no cost to students, and will help institutions with educational pathways assessments also.
- In October 2014 the Federal Government's discussion paper 'Reform of the ESOS Framework' was released. This begins the process of reforming the legislation around educating international students in Australia, with the main focus being reducing unnecessary red tape for institutions implementing the framework. The reform process is expected to gain more ground in 2015, with likely finalisation in 2016.
- Also in the international student sector, in early 2014 ACNM's four **CRICOS** registrations were successfully amalgamated into one. For students, this means much more portability of their studies, as any international student can now transfer from one campus to another without any additional government red tape.
- The **Community Services & Health Industry Skills Council** (CS&HISC) is currently undertaking a review of a number of Complementary Medicine (CM) VET qualifications, as part of the wider review of the HLT07 training package. One major recommendation which has been proposed out of this review is the removal of the Advanced Diplomas of Homeopathy, Naturopathy, Nutritional Medicine and Western Herbal Medicine from the market, and making Bachelor degrees in these fields the minimum standard for practice. As yet no announcements have been made about minimum standards.
However if the recommendations are adopted, it would mean that Endeavour, as the pre-eminent provider of Bachelor degrees in these fields in Australia, could expect significant numbers of students wanting to upgrade their qualifications, and would provide room in the VET space for expansion into other related fields such as counselling.
- On the competitive front, two significant private providers have obtained accreditation of Bachelor of Health Science degrees in Naturopathy, Nutrition and Western Herbs, with another seeking registration as a higher education provider and accreditation of similar courses. This will mean the marketplace will be more crowded and Endeavour will need to strategise accordingly.
- ACNM Pty Ltd trading as Endeavour College of Natural Health has committed to no Bachelor degree fee increase in calendar year 2015.



Strategic Goals

As a result of the FY2014 strategic planning process guided by the Corporate Board and Executive Management a number of the key goals have been consolidated and an additional key goal has been added. The FY2015 Key Goals are:

Key Goal 1: Create an Exceptional Student Centric Environment

- Focus on proactive student care and support with a concentration on rapid service excellence
- Ensure all students, irrespective of campus, modality, course or mode of learning, receive equivalent quality educational experience
- Codify national processes through clear policies and procedures that are consistently applied across all campuses and pillars
- Improve management of students throughout the entire life cycle from applicant to alumni
- Improve student extra- and co-curricular college experiences, particularly for International students
- Fund and communicate meaningful 'green' and sustainable practices
- Create a student centric Endeavour learning environment through the clever refurbishment and maintenance of our downtown campuses.

Key Goal 2: Deliver Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Course Delivery

- Aspire to state-of-the-art programs and clinic experiences based on curriculum designed to improve student engagement and exemplify current best practice in health sciences education
- Support research activities that inform learning and teaching amongst all academic staff
- Continuously improve existing courses in relation to student engagement, teacher experience and new developments in education
- Focus on reducing attrition rates via a whole of organisation retention strategy
- Increase completion and graduation rates
- Retain the focus on creating and delivering high quality e-learning
- Provide funded opportunities for students to engage in research activities through the Office of Research to develop their understanding of postgraduate research for future study options
- Embed student population diversity as a principle within the organisation.

Key Goal 3: Grow and Develop Staff

- Ensure staff are friendly, helpful, enthusiastic, supportive, professional and engaged
- Recruit, retain and develop highly qualified teaching staff who are either dedicated practitioners, passionate academics or leaders in their field
- Provide staff with the conditions and flexibility to perform their roles efficiently, effectively and safely
- Determine an academic progression scale that recognises qualification level and longevity of service and link it to a performance culture
- Provide multiple annual opportunities for staff to be involved in research activities through the Office of Research which are appropriate to their job role and which enhance their scholarship in their chosen field
- Provide staff development programs that enhance health, positivity, resilience and happiness.

Key Goal 4: Build integrated offerings in Health, Fitness and Beauty VET

- Build a framework of pathways – VET to VET and VET to Higher Education to allow mobility within the dual sector structure
- Seek industry feedback and endorsement of training offerings to ensure relevancy and quality of qualifications



- Develop career pathways to create employment opportunities for graduates
- Research new and innovative accredited VET Diploma level qualifications in a range of wellness areas.

Key Goal 5: Employ the Clever Use of Technology and Digital Services to Enhance Teaching Delivery and Brand Experience

- Embrace and adopt technological advances to improve operational efficiency and deliver improved/automated services. Support student learning and teaching via the deployment of classroom, library and online digital resources
- Investigate the use of devices for communication to students (prospective/current/alumni)
- Train all staff (academic and operational) on digital literacy and appropriate IT applications
- Continue to leverage social media channels to engage followers and target markets with pillar brands and expert commentary
- Ensure early adoption of digital advancements that improve the online learning experience and teaching engagement
- Enhance Wellnation clinic booking system to underpin the growth of student clinics as measured by an increase in paid patient bookings throughout the national network.

Key Goal 6: Become a Significant Influence within the Wellbeing and Natural Health Sectors

- Position the organisation to be a source of credible, verifiable information about health, fitness and beauty
- Produce reliable, supportable clinical research to underpin the efficacy of complementary medicine
- Fund a career services unit to underpin market employment and to open new job channels
- Focus on a stakeholder strategy to inform associations, government, regulators and interested parties about the College and holistic practices
- Become an active participant on association and stakeholder groups
- Investigate ways to engage the conventional medicine community in integrative medicine education underpinned by holistic and complementary medicine principles
- Produce relevant and meaningful health services research to communicate the role and place of complementary healthcare to key stakeholders.

Key Goal 7: Manage Financial and Physical Resources to Deliver Optimum Efficiency and Return

- Ensure a robust resource management framework underpins strategic planning, operational planning and budgeting
- Provide proactive and expert advice to P&L owners and Business Units
- Provide adequate funding support for research activities developed and managed by the Office of Research
- Produce meaningful management reports that help academic and operational leaders manage resources under their control
- Ensure Facilities and the Asset Management Plan replicates TEFMA benchmarks
- Exercise a rigorous risk management framework
- Deliver on EBITDA results that show 20-25% growth per year.



Office of Research

The Office of Research was established in January 2014 and sits beside the higher education academic structure as a stand-alone unit. The Strategic Research priorities for the Office of Research are:

1. Contemporary practice – examines facets of professional CAM practice in contemporary health systems
2. Consumption and utilisation – examines aspects of CAM utilisation by the public
3. Innovation in education – examines effective methods for the delivery of CAM education as well as exploring innovative approaches to CAM education
4. Treatments and therapies – examines clinical safety and effectiveness of CAM treatments, products and practices with approaches which respect the principles and philosophies underpinning many CAM disciplines.

Future Aspirations

It is the Corporate Board and Management's aspiration that Endeavour College of Natural Health (ACNM's higher education brand) seeks to be a self-accrediting institution and then further seeks and is awarded university status. In that time closer ties will be established with mainstream medicine in the development of holistic, preventative and integrated medicine. As well it will create a Graduate School structure through which to offer Graduate Certificates/Graduate Diplomas and Masters level programs in what will become the School of Health and Wellness.

In the medium to long term, over the next five to ten years, Endeavour will grow to incorporate three distinct Schools or Faculties.

Using the principle of offering practical Bachelor level course offerings in areas that are not normally or universally offered by the Australia's public university system, Endeavour will grow to incorporate a School of Health and Wellness (current Natural Medicine degrees), a School of Leadership and Entrepreneurship (with a paid internship in an entrepreneurial company) and a School of Digital and Futures (a futures oriented school that offers bleeding edge qualifications in emerging career areas).

Related Documents

- FY2015 Budget
- FY2015-2017 Operational Overviews
- FY2015-2017 Learning and Teaching Plan – Higher Education
- Academic Governance Framework