


Ahead of the game

Sports Strategy



QUT acknowledges the Turrbal and Yugara, as the First Nations owners of the lands where QUT now stands.

We pay respect to their Elders, lores, customs and creation spirits.

We recognise that these lands have always been places of teaching, research and learning.







THE STATE OF PLAY

Universities and sport.

Sport is part of the fabric of Australia's identity and international reputation. As the university for the real world, QUT's vision for sport should align with the priorities and ambitions of the whole university.

Against the background of organisational transformation and the announcement of the Brisbane Olympics in 2032 we need to outline a new vision that positions QUT for the Future Of Sport. A vision that is founded on a commitment to challenge conventional thinking and go beyond the accepted normality of sports practice to execute a new strategy for the 'real world'.

Conventional thinking can be defined as an over-reliance on past experiences as the cognitive underpinning for strategic decision making (McKenzie, Woolf, van Winkelen and Morgan, 2009).

Sport is being disrupted on multiple fronts with many institutions struggling to adapt to shifts in generational attitudes, issues of gender, diversity and equity for our First Nations people. A fresh approach is needed for the future.

The Sport Review of 2019 allowed us to examine and explore a new strategic vision for QUT Sport. It brought to light our strengths, but also exposed our shortcomings of conventional university sporting programs that have a singular focus on student sport experiences. This siloed approach fails to recognise the broader potential universities can assume within the sport sector by bringing an entrepreneurial element to university sport provision that extends into the sport industry.

The majority of Australian university sporting programs are managed by external subsidiary organisations akin to community sporting clubs and are often separated from the teaching and research. While they typically deliver activities within and external to the university environment, they are not reliant nor contribute to a cohesive strategy that aligns to industry objectives.

Informed by the megatrends that are shaping the future of sport, the initiatives implemented since the Sport Review's recommendations became a catalyst for change at QUT and a driver for a more cohesive university sporting strategy that foregrounds our distinctive 'real world' advantage.

Multiple trends including the rise of lifestyle sports, personalised health and fitness offerings and sport technologies, coupled with social, economic, and environmental changes are shaping the way communities, organisations and government are engaging with and funding sport for the future. As these trends continue to inform community behaviours, sporting organisations are becoming challenged to pivot and play to new areas that align with these megatrends.

Membership based sports organisations have already felt the impacts from the changing environment, with 800,000 more Australians participating in recreational sports over the 2016- 2020 quadrennium contrasting a slight increase (158,000) in member-based sporting groups.

The Australian Sports Commission's appointment of a CEO to take charge of both Sport Australia and the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) acknowledges that a unified and considered approach is needed to bring together the two disparate arms of Australian sport from the grassroots to the elite level (ABC, 2022).



Organised sport within the Australian University sector is no different to affiliated sporting entities. Students come together to participate in varsity and intervarsity events and annual University Championships operated by UniSport Australia, the peak body of university sport.

Unlike the British University and Colleges Sport (BUCS) model, clear selection parameters, pathways, and opportunities for students to compete in FISU sanctioned World University Championships are lacking. This highlights the need for a clear National university strategy that bridges participation with performance, aligns to industry objectives and benefits the student experience.

The BUCS model for organised University sport reflects the UK's ability to develop a model that considers the environmental, behavioral, psychosocial, and geographical attributes of its participants and sporting system. Creating a model for university sport in Australia must consider our own unique attributes relative the environment and our students, whilst embracing the changing nature of sport.

On average, each Australian university spends more than \$1.6 million per year on student sporting provisions across the sector (exceeding many state and national sporting organisations).

With a revised and enhanced systematic approach, the university sector is well positioned to kick even more goals and create greater impacts on a local, State and National level.

IN POSITION TO SCORE

Sport at QUT.

QUT is in the perfect position to change the game and challenge conventional thinking in sport at all levels.

We possess a distinct 'real world' advantage, with STEM and data-science credentials all backed by a first-class university-managed sport program, that's unencumbered by legacy issues.

Our vision is to redefine the role of universities in the national sport landscape by positioning QUT sport as a conduit and necessary medium between conflicting priorities of sporting organisations, misaligned agendas within the industry and fragmentation across participation pathways.

Creating a model for university sport that is future focused, embraces the changing nature of sport and intentionally addresses the systemic cultural issues prevalent in sport today. Our integrated approach focuses on aligning internal agendas, positioning QUT Sport as a firm nexus between teaching, research and its application. Our programs to date reaffirm our views of the significant benefits to be realised through a greater strategic commitment to sport at QUT.

Our strategic ambition is to position QUT as a leader in sport technology, and inclusive culture, pursuing deeper engagement with sport as an industry. Our strategy places the student experience and the improvement of community health and wellbeing outcomes at the center of its design. In developing a reimagined university sport culture intrinsically linked to the QUT values, we will co-create a sport identity for our community which further strengthens the QUT brand.

Balancing agility and control through experimentation across niche sports initiatives that address industry gaps has been our strategic approach to date. Through the process of strategic adaptation, our approach recognises the importance of hypothesizing, experimentation, learning, and action to quickly evolve and maintain a competitive advantage in the industry (Collis, 2021).

Building a foundation for the long-term, beyond the 'decade of opportunity' that Brisbane 2032 presents, will require the discipline of an athlete to maintain a holistic view of the ecosystem, while delivering focused programs that align with our strategic advantage.

QUT Sport puts participants at the forefront of sporting technology and immerses you in an interconnected, multi-faceted program uniting all areas of the university. We bring world-leading research together with social, competitive and innovative sporting initiatives, that have the power to influence industries and lifestyles.



THE GAME PLAN

The QUT Sport Strategy.

To complement Blueprint 6, QUT's wider strategic plan, the sport strategy will focus our energy on four distinct areas that underpin our plans, programs, and operations.

LEADERSHIP

Entrepreneurial in spirit, QUT aspires to become a leader in the university sector, developing a new model of sport for the future that contributes to and aligns with industry objectives.

FUTURE FOCUSED

We embrace new technologies and their convergence with sport and recognise the importance of technologies in transforming, connecting, innovating, and enabling future impacts and environments for sport.

CULTURE AND INTEGRITY

We are committed to ensuring social responsibility of sport and creating a culture of inclusion, respect and integrity. We will create a safe sporting community for all, centred around our respect for our First Nations people. We strive to be the preferred place for Indigenous Australians to engage with sport as an industry and as a vehicle for social impact.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We aspire to be the place where our community develop an affinity and belonging to the University through quality health and wellbeing services that transform into lifelong and positive health habits.





STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE

Leadership

QUT seeks to develop a new model for university sport that's in a league of its own. Integrating teaching, research, learning and engagement we are committed to developing a coordinated approach to our offerings and bridging opportunities to the wider industry.



We recognise the importance of ensuring research outcomes are translated and have a positive influence at a practical level. We're committed to developing educational products and supporting programs that influence industry where technology converges with sport, reinventing our engagement and consumption.

QUT WILL DO THIS BY:

- > Building integrated pathways for the recreational through to the performance-based participants, that are aligned to the principles of Blueprint 6 and that recognise our unique position in the market in holistically supporting developing athletes, coaches and administrators.
- > Developing and maintaining professional sporting programs that operate in the community and

form grounds for faculty to impart practical teaching, learning and research outcomes that contribute to the performance outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

- > Using our expertise to enhance existing and create new educational products that inform QUT and industry practice across interdisciplinary areas influencing sport.





QUT-AIS SCHOLARSHIP

To ensure closer alignment with sporting industry objectives, QUT partnered with the Australian Institute of Sport to enact a National first scholarship initiative that both financially, and academically supports categorised athletes in Nationally funded sports. Athletes also receive streamlined support from the Career Practitioner Network and are actively engaged in initiatives that enhance career outcomes beyond the sporting arena.



WOMEN IN SPORT LEADERSHIP

The Women in Sport Leadership conference was held for the first time in 2021 and created a platform for discussions and shared knowledge to contribute towards the goal of minimising gender inequity in sporting leadership across the many roles women play in the industry. Through the development of forums that spark conversations, develop support groups and foster collaboration across university and industry, we seek to create meaningful and life long change that contributes to positive reform.

QUT PARA SPORT COACH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

QUT in partnership with Paralympics Australia has developed a coach-education program focused on upskilling coaches engaged in targeted Paralympic based sports Nationally.

Coaches undertake educational sessions with QUT's world- leading coaching practitioners, whilst undertaking micro-credentialling short courses to hone skills in group facilitation and leadership in preparation for athlete talent development programs delivered by Australia's peak sporting bodies.





FUTURE FOCUSED

Setting the pace for the industry

QUT aims to raise the bar when it comes to integrating technology into sport. This includes in areas such as social marketing, fan engagement, facilities technologies, performance analytics, wearables, event management, media, broadcasting, and sponsorship.

We recognise the importance of sports technologies in transforming, connecting, innovating, and enabling future impacts within environments and the role we can play as a leader in the Queensland university sector and partner to the wider industry.

As the industry is predicted to stay on a growth trajectory, averaging a 14.7% annual growth rate expected to reach US\$93.8 billion by 2027, QUT is well positioned to capitalise and influence industry sports technologies across a range of related disciplines (Flanders Investment and Trade, 2020).

QUT WILL DO THIS BY:

- > Developing leading sports technology-based programs that are central to the development of industry governance and operational standards and that provide platforms for student learning, engagement, and research application.
- > Integrating new technologies with traditional sporting models to create unique engagement opportunities that encourage regional and rural participation and that contribute to reducing the digital divide in isolated communities.
- > Leveraging new technologies to improve health and wellbeing outcomes that contribute to greater connectedness amongst our students, staff, and community.



Our new state of the art cycling arena draws on the expertise of our leading faculty researchers, whilst engaging students in sports and wellbeing activities that explore the amalgamation of both the physical and virtual worlds.



THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL WORLD OF CYCLING

Clearinghouse for Sport (2021) suggests that future modelling of traditional sport will see greater amalgamation with esports, resulting in a new model of sport which QUT has been quick to embrace. Our new state of the art cycling arena draws on the expertise of our leading faculty researchers, whilst engaging students in sports and wellbeing activities that explore the amalgamation of both the physical and virtual worlds.

Jessica completed a Bachelor of Nursing with QUT whilst participating in the Zwift-Academy, a training program which sees cyclists from across the globe take part in a training program which culminates in a grand final event, with the winners receiving a pro-cycling contract with a professional team. In 2019, Jess won the Zwift-Academy and took her cycling to the next level, moving from Brisbane to Girona



Jessica Pratt, Bachelor of Nursing Student.

and competing with the best cyclists across the Globe. QUT's new dedicated facility will make more opportunities like these possible, as well as opportunities to focus on general fitness and socialising within our dedicated physical-virtual space.

VIRTUAL TRIATHLON

QUT Sport in partnership with VisER hosted a Virtual Triathlon in the Cube, a QUT first initiative that highlighted the convergence of technology and sport. 6x Student-athletes took part in a sprint distance event completing the swim, bike and run using both physical and virtual environments, ergonomic bikes and featuring esports casting and streaming systems that showcase the future of sport. The event was run as a pilot in preparation for a new dedicated virtual cycling centre in development at the Gardens Point campus and was live streamed to QUT Sport's Twitch channel, which hosts regular esports events run on campus.

View the stream: Highlight: Zwift QUT Virtual Triathlon - Twitch

QUT ESPORTS PROGRAM

QUT was the first University in Australia to develop a comprehensive esports program that includes scholarship offerings for talented gamers, operating industry leading events within our purposely built state-of-the-art esports arena and in community sporting facilities. Our program remains practically focused, enabling work-integrated-learning and research initiatives for students across multiple disciplines. Our intentional efforts to engage, support and educate the high school and university market have led to significant developments in governance and cyber-safety, positioning the University as a leader in this area in the absence of a global governing body.





NEVER DROPPING THE BALL

Culture and Integrity.

QUT is committed to ensuring the social responsibility of sport is embedded within the foundations of our program to create an even playing field for all.

We strive to create a culture of inclusion underpinned by our core values and will ensure QUT Sport is the vehicle to addressing systemic issues affecting sport, enacting positive change internally and in the wider industry.

We strive to become the preferred place for Indigenous Australians, and we recognise the importance of working with our First Nations people to create pathways, develop capabilities, and increase participation at all levels of sport.

We will strive to ensure our sporting identity encompasses the centrality of our first nations community and importance of diversity and inclusion in nurturing a sense of belonging amongst our students, staff, and community.

We're committed to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are foregrounded in all that we do, situated at the heart of our sporting programs. In aligning to the wider strategic priorities of the University's blueprint, we're invested in ensuring equal opportunity, reducing barriers to participation and celebrating diversity.

QUT WILL:

- > Deliver culture and integrity training for all teams representing the University at sporting events.
- > Be intentional in our approach to developing pathways for Indigenous Australians to achieve their ambitions in all sporting environments.
- > Ensure Indigenous Australians are a visible component in all our sporting priorities.
- > Ensure our staff undertake professional development training that reflects our objectives in enhancing the culture of sport in all environments.
- > Reduce and ultimately eliminate the barriers to participation, whilst focusing on developing para and women's sporting initiatives on campus and with industry partners.
- > Where gaps exist, we focus on developing targeted initiatives which are modelled within our women's esports league, accessible football program and disability wellness program.
- > Ensure we're positively contributing and enacting initiatives that enable greater gender equity across all sport programs.



JUNIOR MURRI CARNIVAL AND MURRI NETBALL CARNIVAL

The Junior Murri Carnival and Murri Netball Carnival are delivered annually through the development of a strong partnership between QUT and the Institute for Urban and Indigenous Health (IUIH). Attended by Indigenous communities from across Queensland, these sporting events create environments for students, families, and friends to reconnect and build new social networks whilst participating in sport for its health and wellbeing benefits.

AIS RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOURS PROGRAM

QUT was the first University to pilot the Respectful Behaviours Program, an AIS initiative targeting High Performance Sporting teams. Delivered online, the program focuses on improving sporting-based culture, addressing issues of safety, and enhancing wellbeing. With over 50% of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games membership being student-athletes, QUT recognises the benefits in collaborating with industry on programs and initiatives focused on reforming culture, integrity and equity whilst creating opportunities and environments that support talent, ensuring a targeted and coordinated approach to their design.





COVERING ALL OUR BASES

Health and Wellbeing.

QUT is committed to enhancing the health and wellbeing of its students, staff, and community. We acknowledge our role and are committed to ensuring our stakeholders develop an affinity to the university through the provision of health and wellbeing services that transform into lifelong and positive habits. This is an end goal that we are always aiming for.

Through a suite of physical activities and programs, sport plays a critical role in contributing to the wider University health and wellbeing strategy and is informed by the changing social, economic and environmental influencers that form the megatrends of how sport is consumed by different groups of people.

QUT WILL:

- > Continue to operate social sport and wellbeing activities that enrich the student experience with a goal of increasing our engagement and extending our provisions to attract and retain more participants in popular, well attended recreational activities.
- > Expand the functions of our health and wellbeing clinics and sports facilities to facilitate additional placements, work integrated learning, and career development opportunities for students in sports related disciplines.
- > Identify and increase opportunities for students, staff and the community to engage in sport through fan engagement and participation tactics that build a sense of collegiality and belonging to the University.
- > Institute strategies for our developing and elite athletes that increase access and engagement with health and wellbeing initiatives that support their student-athlete journey.



RECREATIONAL SPORT ENGAGEMENT

Participating, coaching, umpiring and administering recreational based sports initiatives sits at the core of the QUT Sport program's nexus of opportunity.

In partnership with the School of Exercise & Nutrition Science, Creative Industries, Education and Business and Law, QUT Sport facilitates work integrated learning opportunities that provide platforms for student employment as graduates. Engaging more than 7,500 students annually, QUT Sport's diverse and immersive recreational sport program sits at the heart of the sporting agenda.

"... One student from Iran said at QUT she had learnt to swim and to weld, both opportunities she wouldn't have had in her home country."

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS LEARN TO SWIM AT QUT

Few international students come to university expecting to learn how to swim, but that's exactly what's happening at QUT thanks to an innovative program teaching water safety to overseas students.

QUT sports project coordinator Michael Jordan said many students arrived in Australia unable to swim, so in 2019 QUT launched its Swim Safety Program to give students the skills to participate more safely in Australia's outdoor culture.

"They can now enjoy swimming at the beach or at a pool, and some of them even joined the dragon boat regatta, which is an experience many of them wouldn't have dreamed was possible," he said.

Mr Jordan said the free program had proved incredibly popular, with more than 100 students taking advantage of weekly sessions that were scheduled around their academic requirements.

"We get so many letters saying thank you. One student from Iran said at QUT she had learnt to swim and to weld, both opportunities she wouldn't have had in her home country."



KNOCKING IT OUT OF THE PARK

Our Strategy for Sport.

VISION

The University for the Real World | Motivation, inspiration, and enablement for everyone to participate, improve health and wellbeing and engage in sport at QUT. Our vision is to be the most forward-thinking University in the market. To lead by example and make positive contributions to society through sport.

OUR VALUES

- > Ambition
- > Curiosity
- > Integrity
- > Inclusiveness
- > Innovation

Our principles

QUT Sport aligns to QUT's broader strategic principles of:

CONNECTING TALENT TO OPPORTUNITY	CONNECTING KNOWLEDGE & DISCOVERY	CONNECTING WITH THE REAL WORLD	CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PURPOSE	CONNECTING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY
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Our program is built on foundations of:

LEADERSHIP	FUTURE FOCUS	CULTURE & INTEGRITY	HEALTH & WELLBEING
Entrepreneurial in spirit, QUT Sport aspires to become a leader in the university sector, developing a new model of sport for the future that contributes to and aligns with industry objectives.	We embrace new technologies and their convergence with sport and recognise the importance of technologies in transforming, connecting, innovating, and enabling future impacts and environments for sport.	We are committed to ensuring social responsibility of sport and creating a culture of inclusion and integrity. We strive to become the home and preferred place for Indigenous Australians to engage with sport regardless of the role they play.	We aspire to be the place where our community develop an affinity to the University through quality health and wellbeing services that transform into lifelong and positive health habits.

QUT WILL DO THIS BY:	QUT WILL DO THIS BY:	QUT WILL:	QUT WILL:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building integrated pathways for the recreational through to the performance based participants, that are aligned to the principles of Blueprint 6 and that recognise our unique position in the market in holistically supporting developing athletes, coaches and administrators. Developing and maintaining professional sporting programs that operate in the community and form grounds for faculty to impart practical teaching, learning and research outcomes that contribute to the performance outcomes for all stakeholders involved. Using our expertise, enhance existing and create new educational products that inform QUT and industry practice across interdisciplinary areas influencing sport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing leading sports technology-based programs that are central to the development of industry governance and operational standards and that provide opportunities for student learning, engagement, and research. Integrate new technologies with traditional sporting models to create unique engagement opportunities that encourage regional and rural participation and that contribute to reducing the digital divide in isolated communities. Leverage new technologies to improve health and wellbeing outcomes that contribute to greater connectedness amongst our students, staff, and community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver culture and integrity training for all teams representing the University at sporting events. Be intentional in our approach to developing pathways for Indigenous Australians to achieve their ambitions in all sporting environments. Ensure Indigenous Australians are a visible component in all our sporting priorities. Ensure our staff undertake professional development training that reflects our objectives in enhancing the culture of sport in all environments. Reduce and ultimately eliminate the barriers to participation, whilst focusing on developing para and women's sporting initiatives on campus and with industry partners. Where gaps exist, we focus on developing targeted initiatives which are modelled within our women's esports league, accessible football program and disability wellness program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to operate social sport and wellbeing activities that enrich the student experience with a goal of increasing our engagement and extending our provisions to attract and retain more participants in popular, well attended recreational activities. Expand the functions of our health and wellbeing clinics to facilitate additional placements, work integrated learning, and career development opportunities for students in sports related disciplines. Identify and increase opportunities for students, staff, and the community to engage in sport through fan engagement and participation tactics that build a sense of collegiality and belonging to the University. Institute strategies for our developing and elite athletes that increase access and engagement with health and wellbeing initiatives that support their student-athlete journey.

MEASURING SUCCESS BY:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators of student attraction, retention, and engagement with our sporting programs at all levels of the development to performance pathway. Developing athletes to achieve selection in elite categorised programs within the wider sporting industry. Measures of enhanced teaching, research and learning through cross-faculty sporting related programs and initiatives that contribute to student success. Measures of performance within sports-tech related programs across the University sector and wider industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators of improved physical health and wellbeing outcomes and benefits for students, staff and our community. Participation rates in programs and initiatives within our Indigenous Australian communities. Measures of student satisfaction and diversity across all our programs and initiatives. Success and synergistic flow enabling an enhanced wellbeing experience for our community through our facilities and clinic operations. Indicators of increased sense of belonging and allegiance to the University through provisions that enable a whole of lifecycle approach to the student, staff and community experience.

Appendix.

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