ACED AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING DEANS

Annual Report 2025

About us

The Australian Council of Engineering Deans (ACED) has formally been in operation for more than 20 years, with the stated mission "To create economic and social impact by advancing engineering education, research and scholarship on behalf of Australian universities."

ACED does this in the national and international interest, which for education and research includes assuring the public that engineering graduates will conduct their work in the public interest with due regard for human safety and the sustainability of the environment.

ACED is an incorporated association whose members are the Australian public universities that provide undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs and research in engineering.

The Council elects a President for a two-year period. The President is supported by the Executive Committee, whose members are elected by the Council.

The Council meets in full twice a year (Autumn and Spring).

ACED has strong links with the Australasian Association of Engineering Education (AaeE) whose members are primarily engineering academics in Australian and New Zealand universities. ACED sponsors the annual AaeE award for Excellence in Teaching.

ACED invites a representative of the New Zealand Council of Engineering Deans to attend Council meetings. ACED supports and encourages members to become members of the Global Engineering Deans Council (GEDC).

ACED also has strong links with Engineers Australia (EA). Representatives of the EA Accreditation Centre attend all ACED meetings to inform and discuss with members developments in the national engineering program accreditation system as well as matters of importance arising within the International Engineering Association (IEA) that has oversight of the international engineering education Accords of which EA is a member.

ACED Governance

Executive Committee (at 31 Dec 2025)

President	Professor Tim Finnigan
Deputy President	Professor Bouchra Senadji
Past President	Professor Vishnu Pareek
Members	Professor Charles Lemckert
	Professor Emad Gad
	Professor Maurice Pagnucco
	Professor Zora Vrcelj
	Professor Ray Eaton (representing the ADTL Group)
	Professor Rocco Zito (representing the ADR Group)
	Professor Scott Smith (representing ADI Group)
	Professor Prasad Yarlagadda (representing ACED on AaeE)
Executive Officer	Em. Professor Doug Hargreaves AM
Contact Officer to the Office of Fair Trading NSW	Dr Rob Jarman

Observers (at 31 Dec 2025)

Assoc Professor Sasha Nikolic (representing the AaeE)
Ms. Bernadette Foley or Ms Helen Fairweather (representing Engineers Australia)

ACED Objectives

- Promotion: To provide a forum for Australian leaders of engineering education to discuss matters of mutual concern and national importance, thereby contributing to matters such as raising general community awareness on the need for and value of high-quality engineering education, research training in the higher education sector.

- Engagement: To further the interests of engineering education and research in the higher education through engagement and outreach with relevant national and international bodies, particularly EA, AaeE and NZCED.

- Policy: To develop positions and make statements on relevant issues in response to government inquiries and concerns of professional and industry bodies, and to the media and the general community.

- Projects: To initiate and conduct reviews and projects consistent with its mission. This would include monitoring the state of engineering education and scholarship, benchmarking programs and resources and the quality of outcomes.

- Leadership: To support the development of leaders of engineering education and research within the faculties and schools.

ACED Meetings 2025

The Council met for the AGM on 22 March by Teams on-line and for Ordinary meetings on 10-11 February at Australian National University and 8-9 October at The University of Adelaide and University of South Australia.

Parliamentary Friends of Engineering (PFoE)

The inaugural meeting of PFoE was held at Parliament House, Canberra on 1 Sept 2025 co-convened by Minister Hon Tim Ayers MP, Hon Brigette McKenzie MP and Hon Andrew Charleton MP with about 50 persons present. [Hon Garth Hamilton MP was an apology]. "Engineering" was represented by Engineers Australia (EA), Australian Council of Engineering Deans (ACED), Science and Technology Australia (STA), Consult Australia (CA) and Academy of Technology Sciences and Engineering (ATSE). The purpose was to raise the profile of engineering in government and to seek further initiatives that increase participation in the sector. More meetings are planned for 2026.

ACED Strategic Plan

Members of the Executive Committee met in person on two occasions in 2025 to discuss and formulate a revision to the Strategic Plan. It has been agreed that ACED could re-define its mission and purpose. Some of the themes that emerged from discussion include:

- Taking a renewed approach to partnering and advocacy
- Updating the 2035 initiative to include current engineering challenges
- Elevating research and industry-engagement, alongside education, in the scope of ACED activities

The Executive Committee intends to present a revised strategic plan to (draft) to members, following further development.

ACED Project "Engineering 2035" Implementation Phase

Engineering Futures Initiative (EFI)

Early in 2025, this initiative was paused. It was decided to continue with the Capstone Showcase project and some seed funding. The following summary is taken directly from the final report that can be found on the ACED website.

The inaugural *Engineering for Society Capstone Showcase* was convened as a featured component of the 36th Australasian Association for Engineering Education (AAEE) Conference, hosted at the University of Queensland on Monday, 8 December 2025. Recognising the significance of the initiative, the AAEE organising committee scheduled the Showcase at 5:30 pm as an exclusive session, ensuring it did not compete with concurrent papers and workshops.

Justine Lawson, A/Prof. Benjamin Taylor, and A/Prof. Scott Daniel coordinated the Showcase. The hybrid format was managed with Justine joining through Zoom, Scott providing local Zoom and live audience support, and Ben presenting. Following the screening of selected student projects and Q&A sessions, an expert panel facilitated a reflective discussion, offering diverse perspectives to conclude the program.
Six projects representing 22 students from institutions across Australia were selected for presentation. These exemplars demonstrated both technical proficiency and sociotechnical integration, highlighting engineering's capacity to deliver tangible human and community impact.

Over 60 people attended the event in person, with an additional 14 students online. Four students attended in person due to financial support from their university. The event showcased six projects by 22 students and facilitated discussions for each project between the students and conference delegates.

The informal feedback about the event was overwhelmingly positive, with students sending many delightful comments:

- *Thanks again from all of our team for all of your help and support for the showcase, it was a really great experience we all thoroughly enjoyed!*
- *Thank you so much. It was an absolute honour and privilege to be able to attend. I also really enjoyed getting to see all the other fascinating projects. Thank you so much for this memorable experience.*
- *Thank you so much for everything you've done for tonight! I love seeing how engineering is shifting and being a part of that.*

ACED Representation on other bodies

ACED worked closely with Engineers Australia (EA), and during 2025 had several discussions with EA officers on engineer shortages, the contributions that the universities can make to increasing supply and accurate data on the number of graduates from Australian universities. In 2025 this included input into the EA

Strengthening the engineering workforce in Australia report. (https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/publications/strengtheningengineering-workforce-australia). The report was informed by ACED produced statistics for engineering education and analysis of migrant/visa data.

The President and Executive Officer ACED represent ACED on the ***Tripartite Committee,*** together with representatives of the Academy of Technology and Engineering (ATSE) and Engineers Australia (EA). No meetings were held in 2025.

ACED renewed its membership of the Sciences Technology Australia (STA) and re-engaged with the CEO and leadership team, with a view to strengthening participation and leveraging support for connecting with and influencing government and industry stakeholders. ACED plans to participate in the annual Science Meets Parliament program in Canberra, from 2025.

Publications and presentations at national and international conferences

- "Engineering for Society Capstone Showcase" AaeE 2025 conference University of Queensland, 7-10 December 2025.

Projects supported by ACED

- "Achieving assessment security without sacrificing assessment validity"
  Dr Joshua Burridge, The University of Melbourne; Dr May Lim, UNSW; Dr Ghislain Bournival, UNSW; Dr Winn Chow, The University of Melbourne; Dr Shannon Rios, The University of Melbourne; Dr Andrew Valentine, The University of Melbourne
- "The Equitable GenAI Co-Pilot: Enhancing Learning for Future Engineers"
  Dr Liuxin Chen, James Cook University; Dr Amir Tophel, Monash University; and Dr Sarah Grundy, UNSW
- "Generative AI and the Future Engineer: Mapping Workforce Skills and Guiding Curriculum Reform"
  Dr Mohammad Polash, University of Sydney; Dr Winn Chow, The University of Melbourne; Dr Muhammad Sajjad Akbar, University of Sydney; Dr Armin Chitizadeh, University of Sydney; Mr Jose Meza, University of Sydney; Dr Basem Suleiman, University of New South Wales; Dr Yining Hu, University of Technology Sydney; Dr Spyros Schismenos, RMIT University; Dr Stella Peng, The University of Melbourne; Dr Xi Wu, The University of Sydney; Dr Aneesha Bakharia, The University of Queensland; Dr Vi Truong, The University of Melbourne; Dr Andrew Chester, The University of Melbourne

ACED submissions to national reviews

ACED responds to requests to make submissions to the Australian Government's consultation processes on matters that relate to engineering education and research. These responses are normally then published on the ACED website.

"Reinforcing the Foundations of Australia's Future Through Mathematics Education" Joint submission by the Presidents of ACDS ACED, ACEDD, Sept 2025.

ACED Financial Report (from Auditor's report)

Opening Balance (1 Jan 2025)	$ 456,258
Income (members' dues + interest)	$ 232,318
Total Expenditure	$ (173,727)
Retained surplus (31 Dec 2025)	$ 514,849
Total Current Assets (cash and debtors)	$ 535,364
Total Current Liabilities	$ (20,515)
Nett Assets	$ 514,849

ACED Website

The ACED website [www.aced.edu.au] was continually updated.

ACED Statistics

ACED compiles an annual report on higher education student enrolments and graduations in engineering and related matters, from the most recent data published and collected by the Australian Higher Education Statistics Unit.

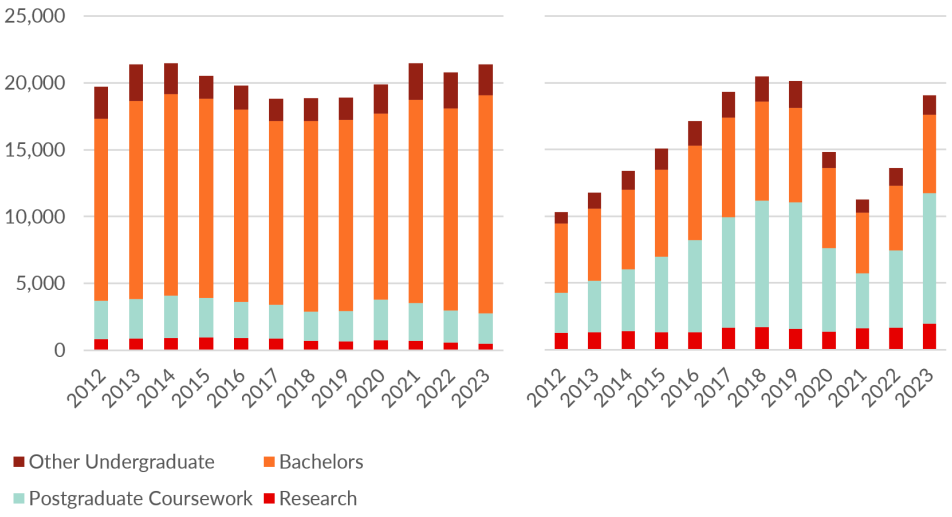
In 2025 this included input into the joint EA-ACED report 'Australian Higher Education Engineering Statistics 2013-2023' which provided updated statistics and insights following the last publication in the series in September 2024. The number of domestic graduations decreased slightly in 2023, reflecting the impacts of disrupted study between 2020 and 2022 to the higher education system (and with residual impacts lasting to the present). The 2024 data was released in April 2025.

Summary statistics are shown in Figure 1 for Graduations and Figure 2 for Commencements.

Figure 1: Higher Education Graduations (domestic left, international, right) in Engineering & Related Technologies 2013-2023

Graduation data confirms the ongoing effects of COVID-19 reducing enrollments in the preceding years. Excluding higher degrees by research (HDR) completions the number of internationals student completions is below the 2020 level for all award levels. The most significant reduction has occurred at the Coursework Masters level, a smaller reduction of around 10 percent in 2023, compared to the 40 percent decline for 2022 when compared to 2020. The number of domestic graduations has decreased slightly when compared to 2022, reflecting reduced postgraduate commencements in the preceding years.

Figure 2: Higher Education Commencements (domestic left, international right) in Engineering & Related Technologies 2013-2023.



Domestic commencements increased in 2023 to their highest level at 21,416, only slightly below their all time high in 2014. There was a promising recovery in international student numbers in 2023, predominantly at the Masters level, with 5,632 additional commencing students. The recovery for international students has largely been at the postgraduate level, with undergraduate qualifications less so.

The Department of Education is available in an interactive format at https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/student-data

Contact us

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