

## **OUR CONTEXT**

**The Australian College of Optometry** (ACO) and the communities we work alongside have experienced significant change and challenge over recent years.

The landscape of optometry and our stakeholder expectations are evolving together with the growing needs of diverse and ageing populations. The impacts of COVID-19 are varied and far reaching.

While providing the best of eye care for patients, it is important to remain relevant and sustainable, in an operating context that is rapidly changing (i.e. low cost spectacles offered by large retailers).

ACO will deliberately sharpen our focus to deliver unique research, educational and clinical outputs, and partner with external stakeholders in the delivery of shared offerings.

Many eye health services struggle to keep up with demand. Waiting lists for tertiary eye care remain stubbornly high. The gap between funding indexation and service delivery cost continues to challenge organisations including ACO.

Concurrently, emergent technologies have been expanding scope of practice with early intervention and management. Integrated models of care are being enabled by advancements in technology such as mobile, wearables and robotics.

National and state specific healthcare provision has been impacted by ongoing epidemiological and macroeconomic changes fuelled by various factors including the pandemic, declining tax revenue, retiring healthcare professionals and geopolitical instability. Extreme weather events and food and housing insecurity are increasing. Additionally, our organisation will continue to be exposed to the ongoing pressures of high inflation and expected recessionary conditions impacting already constrained resources.

Meanwhile, the landscape of work and its requirements (i.e. staff expectations and digital/remote work interventions) are changing with ongoing workforce challenges. ACO will enable workforce planning and redesign to align with these changing conditions.

Our capacity to innovate has been stymied by our sub-optimal infrastructure and constrained future-ready thinking and decision making.

There has been significant underinvestment in workforce, facilities and systems that is having an impact now, where service delivery is constrained by legacy systems, ways of working and outdated technology.

ACO's professional education is operating in an overcrowded CPD market. As we focus on providing high quality clinical care and education, staff attraction and retention strategies are being refreshed to stay relevant in the current talent market.

Translational clinical research remains an important part of ACO's work. We will ensure research efforts are working synergistically to achieve best patient outcomes.

The need to rebuild ACO's external reputation is strong, however equally importantly we must work internally to collaborate better and become OneACO to ensure greater synergy and momentum.

With over 80 years of experience as a strong foundation, ACO recognises the need to focus and harness on our unique capabilities that clearly distinguishes what we do.

ACO is committed to forging a new path forward, to be future-ready, with our people at the heart of what we do, and building capability to be a global leader in public health eye care.

## **ACO STRATEGY**

## **Strategy Statement**

The Australian College of Optometry aims to be a global leader in primary public health eye care. We are unique because we provide best practice and holistic care to patients primarily in need. ACO achieves this through clinical excellence, clinical research and building knowledge. Patient-centred models and synergistic collaborations with various stakeholders underpins what we do. Organisational culture lies at the heart of our success.

### **Strategic Focus and Action**

Our success will be underpinned by four interconnected 'pillars'. These pillars express a fundamental shift in the mindset and culture of ACO as we embrace the interconnections between our traditional work in research, education and clinical practice. At this juncture, it is critical that we bring what were previously three siloed areas of work together as OneACO with a clear focus on patients at the centre of our model. This strategic plan sets us on an ambitious pathway of organisational transformation so that we can deliver leading models of eye care as a reshaped and re-energised organisation.

We recognise that these times demand a more agile approach to execution of our strategic plan. Our priorities against each pillar will be reset as we learn what is most impactful for our patients through achieving our strategic focus and intent.



AT A HIGH LEVEL OUR PILLARS AND PRIORITIES EXPRESS A CLEAR STRATEGIC DIRECTION that will enable us to be focussed. Behind this summary are a range of strategy source documents which will support us to be agile and adaptable in our execution. These include: timelines, projects and initiatives, indicators of how we will measure progress and value and our baseline view of the conditions, opportunities and risks that the strategy addresses.

COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS IS KEY TO DELIVERING ON OUR STRATEGIC INTENT. Our stakeholder partners include:



# **OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS**

Our strategic pillars were formed through close consultation with the ACO Council and Executive Management Team. ACO staff and external stakeholder workshops along with objective research and analysis were also instrumental in shaping the future direction of ACO.

LEAD

# INTEGRATED PATIENT CENTRED CARE

We will lead the way for new models of patientcentred and integrated eye care enabled by research, technology and multiprofessional collaboration.

We will do this through translational clinical research, teaching and education, leveraging our data and technologies as OneACO; achieving clinical excellence. **EVOLVE** 

#### **ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY**

We will evolve our organisational capabilities to deliver models of care and research that have socio-economic impact in reducing the burden of vision impairment and eye disease.

We will do this by modernising our governance, redesigning our workforce structures and investing in systems and technologies which attract and retain talent. SUSTAIN

### **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

We will secure financial sustainability to enable sustainable growth and minimise organisational risk.

We will do this by diversifying revenue streams, workforce transformation and formulating distinctive strategies to reduce financial pressures. CARE

### **CULTURE**

We will embed a culture of caring for each other and for the community through shaping a safe, inclusive and socially responsible workplace.

We will do this by ensuring our policies, practices and behaviours embrace equity, diversity and inclusion. We will support new thinking and ideas that lead to continuous improvement, actively addressing social, economic and environmental issues aligned with the mission and values of the ACO.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our priorities address the opportunities and risks that will ensure ACO is equipped to generate long-term sustainable value that aligns with the expectations of patients, employees, key stakeholders and our broader community.

LEAD

# INTEGRATED PATIENT CENTRED CARE

- Reimagine service delivery models and platforms with patients at the core
- Work with key stakeholders to develop modernised, effective, patient-centred models of care
- Use our data and insights to achieve measurably better patient outcomes
- Implement technology that supports modernised service delivery standards
- Embed integrated models of teaching, graduate training, clinical excellence, research and professional development which help the profession broadly
- Enable retention and development of ACO employees by aligning our key areas of output
- Strengthen team-based inter-professional approaches to patient care, including enhancing our relationship with ophthalmology and GPs

**EVOLVE** 

#### ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

- Refresh and modernise our Constitution and governance structures to ensure we are future fit
- Upgrade critical systems, technology and processes to be future fit
- Align organisational resources, structures and work practices
- Reposition our brand to be distinctive, representing a reinvigorated ACO purpose that resonates with employees, patients and communities
- Improve leadership capability and skills to foster and support a positive workplace culture
- Align staff development with technology advancements and leading-edge care models as a point of difference for ACO – for employees, patients and stakeholders

SUSTAIN

### **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

- Formulate distinctive strategies to ensure financial sustainability, including through a critical review of the current workforce and cost structures
- Secure and diversify funding sources to reduce financial pressures, minimise risk and establish foundations for growth
- Establish new commercial practices/ models through focussed and appropriate investments in innovation – across research, education and clinical practice
- Reimagine asset use to optimise current clinical premises
- Prepare for a future where the value of physical spaces will change through mobility, technology and changing work practices

**CARE** 

#### **CULTURE**

- Become an exemplar of a safe, inclusive and caring workforce culture as core to an authentic Employee Value Proposition and a platform for innovation and transformation
- Improve and extend organisational policies, practices and decision-making to promote equality, equity and diversity
- Be a strong ally for ACO Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and stakeholders including the continued implementation and embedding of the Reconciliation Action Plan
- Continue to work with culturally and linguistically diverse communities and stakeholders to ensure that all who use ACO receive quality care
- Improve our organisational response to climate change and sustainability
- Encourage continued and growing focus on addressing social and economic inequity in the community
- Strengthen our efforts in raising the profile of public health eye care and the unique value-add we provide to our communities



**The ACO's mission remains** to improve the eye health and well-being of communities through innovation, partnership and leadership in:



**Clinical Optometry Services** – providing high quality public health eye care for communities in need and leading best practice.



**Research** – undertaking high impact internationally recognised research to improve the understanding of vision science and eye care.



**Education** – providing best practice learning pathways for optometrists from pre-registration through to professional practice.





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