

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023–2026



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and systems that is having an impact now, where service delivery is constrained by legacy systems, ways of working and outdated technology.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.



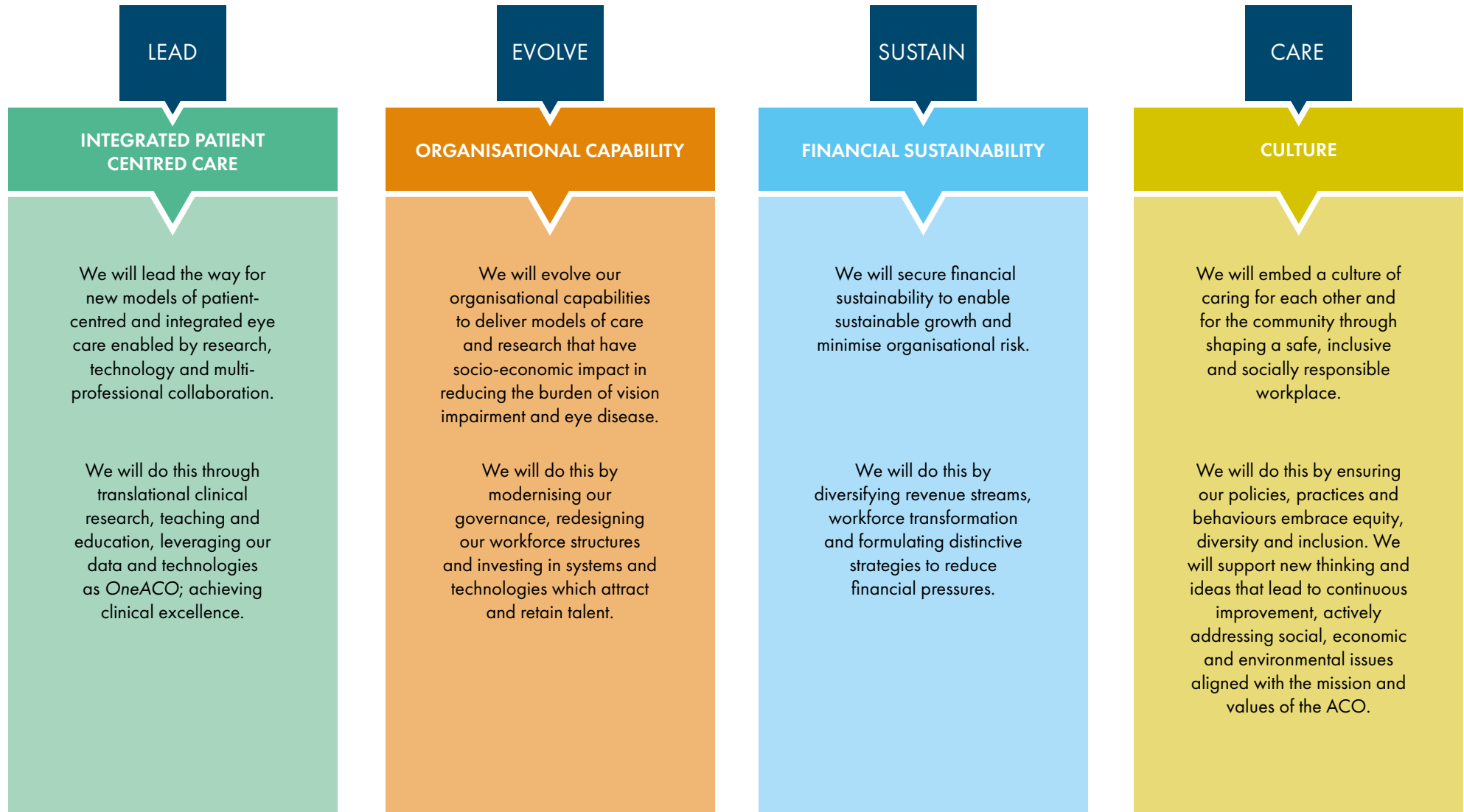
COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS IS KEY TO DELIVERING ON OUR STRATEGIC INTENT. Our stakeholder partners include:

Patients / Community	ACO Staff	Students / Universities
Scientific / Allied Health / Medical Community	Government / Funding Agencies	Members / Supporters

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.

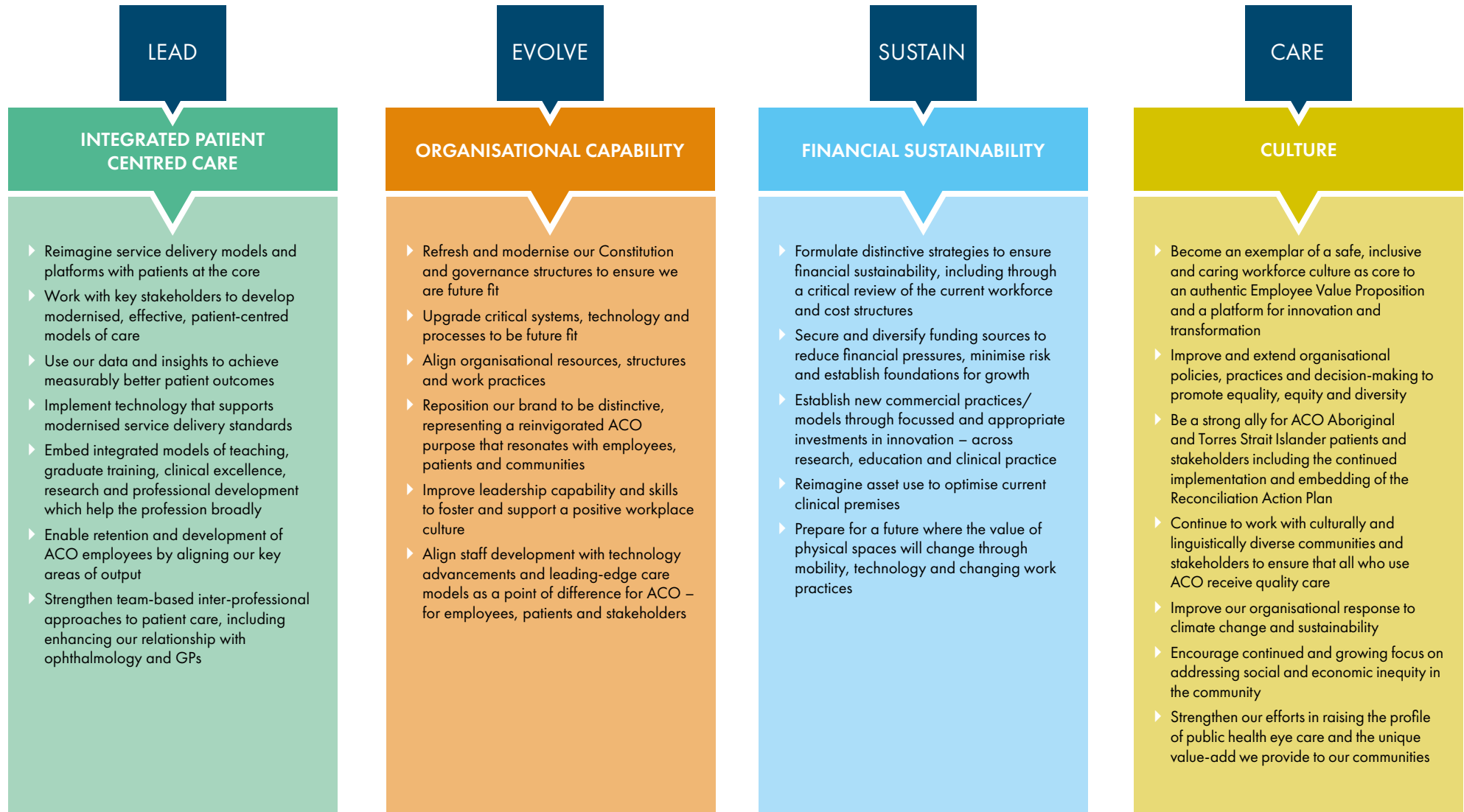
OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

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.



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.





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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