

PURPOSE

INNOVATION

IMPACT

The Yunus Centre

Innovation

The creation, development
and implementation of new
products, processes
and services



Impact

The net positive effects of
activities on the betterment and
wellbeing of people, places
and the planet

Experimentation

Creativity
Leadership
Learning
Purpose



Implementation

Accountability
Collaboration
Action
Outcomes



Towards an impact economy

We are entering a pivotal decade. Society is undergoing rapid economic and technological change, shifting how we work, live, and engage. We also face unprecedented risks in respect to rising inequality, precarious employment, social isolation, and climate change. Navigating this emerging reality requires fresh thinking, new knowledge and capabilities, risk-taking, empathy, and greater cooperation across all sectors, professions and communities.

Vibrant, prosperous, equitable societies depend on economies that meet the needs of all their members, including the most disadvantaged. But for too long, delivering public value and social impact has been seen as a cost and a collective burden, rather than a common interest and everybody's business.

As a result, complex and fundamental issues from place-based disadvantage, youth disengagement, obesity, and domestic violence, to environmental degradation and the loss of biodiversity, have been written off as externalities of development, and largely left to state and charitable interventions to rectify.

While these efforts have provided remediation and a safety net for some, they have not altered the root causes of such issues, nor created the foundations for real transformation.

It's time to move beyond siloed approaches, deficit thinking, and the acceptance of market failures. Time to repurpose the tools of innovation, so that well-being, creativity, participation, and regeneration are pursued as the drivers of the future economy, and understood as the proof points of prosperity. We need to reshape our thinking, organisations, institutions, policies and markets to enable this transformation. In fact, society is increasingly demanding it.

Pursuing and achieving this goal is an impact-led innovation agenda, and it requires equal attention from governments, civil society, and businesses to build strong futures for all.

Impact-led innovation is the business of The Yunus Centre at Griffith University. Our purpose is to equip people with the know-how to navigate change and create positive, societal impact.





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Every single
social and global
issue of our day
is a business
opportunity in
disguise.**

Peter Drucker
Father of modern management thinking

Food Connect Shed

In 2018 Food Connect, with the support of The Yunus Centre, spearheaded an equity crowdfunding campaign to purchase Brisbane's first local food hub. The company's vision is to create a world where everyone has access to healthy, fresh, ecologically-grown food that is fair to growers, buyers, and the planet.



What is The Yunus Centre?

Part of Griffith Business School, The Yunus Centre is a University-wide platform to research, advise, educate, and create global connections on impact-led innovation. The Centre reflects Griffith University's longstanding commitment to social justice, sustainable business, and innovation. Based out of a new Hub space at Logan, we are active across all of Griffith's campuses and work at local, regional, national, and international levels.

Central to The Yunus Centre is the belief that social well-being and inclusive economies must go beyond alleviating symptoms of disadvantage, towards building systems and market arrangements that understand value holistically, and place impact at their core.

This is not blue-sky thinking or theoretical fancy. Governments are already acting, albeit with mixed results: in Australia, initiatives like the NDIS, new aged-care funding packages, and mechanisms for allocating natural resources, such as water and carbon, represent the first experiments to form markets that blend outcomes.

Civil society is innovating in numerous ways and adopting hybrid business models that empower communities and tackle complex problems. Leaders in the commercial sector are embracing concepts such as 'impact investment', 'shared value' and the 'circular economy'. Young people are asserting expectations that will redefine the role of business in the 21st century, and First Nations peoples are recreating economies built on traditional values and self-determination.

Globally, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals set an ambitious framework for mission-oriented innovation but also highlight the size of the task ahead of us.

Progressive change is happening. What we need now are ways to strengthen, amplify, and connect these efforts through improved knowledge and capability, and expanded innovation ecosystems that prioritise impact. Universities are uniquely placed to lead transformation in this space, and this is the work of the Yunus Centre.

Specifically, we're focused on:

- 1 Navigating impact-led innovation:**
Understanding the history, context and conditions for societal change and the impact economy.
 - 2 Developing impact literacy:**
Improving capabilities for designing, measuring, and demonstrating impact.
 - 3 Growing the impact economy:**
Designing and implementing impact-led approaches to investment, market building, and commissioning and collective action.
 - 4 Fostering impact entrepreneurship:**
Capability-building for change-making, venture development and business models.
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What we do

Learning and development

We're developing a new generation of leaders and professionals in a diverse range of industries and environments. We offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses, community education, online learning, work-integrated learning, and executive education.

All of our courses and programs are designed to be transdisciplinary, available to anyone from any discipline. They are relevant, critically robust, and highly applied. We go beyond simply conveying knowledge—guiding participants to think, experience, share, connect, and grow through the learning process.

Jobs of the future will require innovation skills and the ability to work across disciplines, so we can work together to address the challenges society is facing.

Partnerships and engagement

The Yunus Centre is a social business, wholly owned by Griffith University. This provides us with a unique opportunity to harness the resources and networks of Griffith University to support innovators, field-builders, and leaders in the impact ecosystem.

Through this platform we want to support the pioneers and enable the enablers—increasing their capacity, influence, connections, and effectiveness. This includes Griffith itself, and starts with supporting the diverse impact-led innovation already going on across the University. Industry engagement will inform our strategy, ensuring that our approach remains relevant.

The Yunus Centre also convenes diverse stakeholders to diagnose and catalyse opportunities for systems innovation. We will support and host impact focused incubators and accelerators, host a Fellowship program, and run Challenge Prizes to better understand—and positively impact—complex issues, from sustainable food systems to regional economic regeneration. Collectively these activities will unlock new solutions in business, community action, finance, policy, commissioning, and supply chains.

Applied research and insights

Our research approach is applied, accessible, and collaborative—drawing on Griffith University’s rich and diverse fields of scholarship. The five areas we are currently exploring are:

- + Diversifying policy, markets and accounting mechanisms that focus on generating social, cultural and environmental value.
- + Innovative resourcing for impact that goes beyond funding, and that is focused on investing for purpose and impact; not just financial return and profit.
- + Testing and assessing the efficacy of models that aim to deliver social impact; growing a deeper understanding of social impact through the connection of design, measurement, evaluation, learning, and implementation.

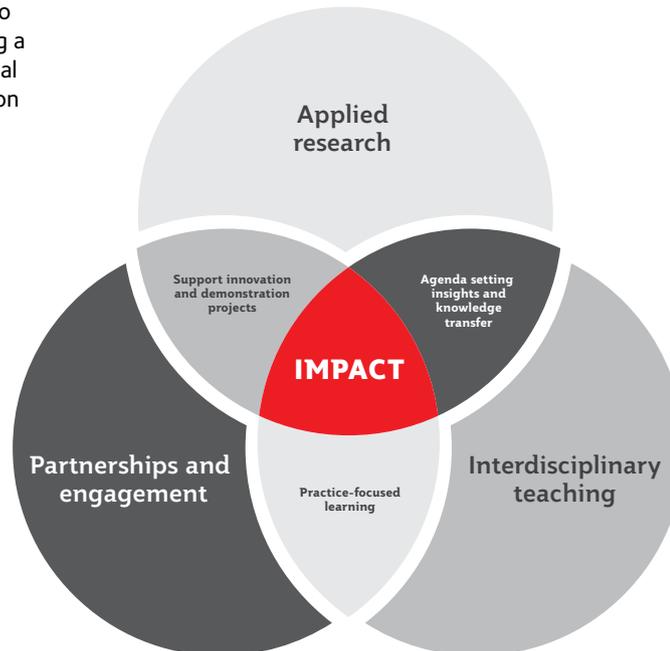
- + Business modelling that spans all aspects of social enterprise and purpose-led business, and includes reshaping whole value chains.
- + Creating ecosystems and infrastructure for impact and inclusive economies, particularly in regional areas.

We offer tailored advisory work across the impact-led innovation field, host demonstration projects, and will develop ‘what works?’ labs over time.

Global connections

The Yunus Centre’s scope of work goes from hyper-local to global, building partnerships with complementary organisations, institutions, and networks around the world.

This includes working with like-minded universities to foster the exchange of talent, knowledge, and practice. It will also include commercial partnerships where we will seek to both increase our impact and generate revenue through the provision of applied research, consulting, and the deployment of our educational resources and programs.





Principles of practice

Impact is everyone's business

No single discipline, sector or entity can deliver on impact alone. It is everyone's business. Our engagement, education, and research are transdisciplinary, and intentionally seek to dissolve sector boundaries.

Rethinking the status quo

We seek to foster rigorous and robust conversations. Creating better outcomes requires us to rethink some fundamentals: what constitutes 'value', who creates it, and what will be exchanged in the markets of the future. What will be gained and what will be lost? How do we understand 'growth' in the context of inclusive and sustainable societies? Our aim is to explore and navigate these tensions rather than sidestepping debate.

Learn from First Peoples

We recognise the unique place of Australia's First Peoples in our history and culture and the importance of respecting Indigenous knowledge, culture and talent. We seek to integrate this knowledge into our ways of working.

Explore, test, learn by doing

We believe the best way to change things is through cycles of action, reflection, and learning. Our nature is to do first, learn through doing, share what works, and generate insights on what might be possible next. We're prepared to take risks in order to test ideas and create new knowledge.

We love finding ambitious partners who want to work and learn with us. And we pride ourselves in ensuring all our research and teaching delivers meaningful dividends for the communities in which we work.

Reciprocity and mutuality

We recognise there are many people working in this field of impact and innovation, aiming to make a difference. We want to collaborate with them, learn from them, and offer support where we can. We are not alone in this work, which is lucky: there is much to do.

Embrace the hard, complex and invisible work

It is easy to focus on what's simple to talk about, and changes that result in 'quick wins'. Yet much of what's needed to create real change is complex, involves trade-offs, and is harder to communicate.

Lots of this work also takes place behind the scenes. It is about unpicking regulatory regimes and fixed mindsets. It is about understanding money flows and processes, like procurement and commissioning. It involves reworking governance and institutional arrangements. It requires engaging in deliberate negotiations with multiple parties, to create structural and systems change.

We want to face this work and generate a passion for action on these critical issues that aren't easy or readily visible.



Leadership

Our co-directors



Professor Ingrid Burkett

Ingrid is a social designer, designing processes, products and knowledge that deepen social impact and facilitate social innovation. She has contributed to the design of policy and processes in a diversity of fields, including community development, local economic development, disability, procurement and social investment.

Ingrid led the foundation of social procurement in Australia with a number of guidebooks and research reports, and provided much groundwork for Australia's entry into social and impact investment. She has designed the foundations for a number of key place-based initiatives aimed at addressing entrenched disadvantage.

She has worked in community development finance institutions, the social enterprise sector and in overseas development, most recently as the Director of Systems Innovation at The Australian Centre for Social Innovation, leading the growth of this exciting field across Australia.

Ingrid has qualifications in social work, business and community economic development, and graphic design. She is recognised internationally for her work in community economic development and finance.

Professor of Practice Alex Hannant

Alex has a background in capacity building, partnership brokering, and social innovation. He has broad international experience, working in a range of fields, including poverty alleviation, sustainability, climate change, education, social enterprise, and impact investment.

Based in the UK, Alex was Director of Programmes at LEAD International, a global and cross-sector leadership network focused on sustainable development, and was also Head of Partnerships at the Climate and Development Knowledge Network.

As CEO of the Ākina Foundation, Alex played a leading role in facilitating the most recent evolution of New Zealand's social enterprise ecosystem. This included leading a team that supported impact enterprises, provided impact consulting services, and became the Government's strategic partner on sector development.

Alex serves on the Board of B Lab Australia and New Zealand, and has been a visiting lecturer on social entrepreneurship and enterprise at Victoria University of Wellington since 2014.



**“
In all parts of society
there is an opportunity to
advance an impact
agenda.”**

Alex Hannant

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