

The image of Edith Cowan, the first woman to be elected to the Australian Parliament, is a familiar sight in the wallets of Australians, gracing the front of the \$50 note. But the politician and campaigner also has a university named after her, in recognition of her tireless work to raise funds for students to attend further education. Established in 1991, Edith Cowan University has grown rapidly into a quality university that produces research at exacting international standards. The university aims for a five-star quality service and this is reflected in the supportive learning environment provided by a variety of top quality, on-campus, student and staff focused services and facilities.

Located across three campuses in the Perth, Western Australia, Edith Cowan University covers 110 hectares and is home to around 23,000 students – with notable alumni including Oscar-nominated actor Hugh Jackman – in addition to 1800 staff members.

Students arriving for the first time at the university's headquarters on the Joondalup Campus are struck by the battlement-style structures of the Chancellery Building, which create an iconic and unforgettable skyline. The site includes a new engineering building, a multimillion-dollar sport and fitness centre, an award-winning library and student hub, an outdoor cinema screening The Perth International Arts Festival during the summer and on-campus student accommodation.

Close to Perth's central business district is the university's Mount Lawley Campus, which includes Perth Graduate School of Business, a range of performing arts facilities, a sport and fitness centre and on-campus accommodation. Approximately 200 kilometres south of the city is the South West Campus, which includes teaching facilities and student accommodation. The gross floor area across all the sites is 190,000 square metres.

Offering more than 300 courses across four faculties, Edith Cowan University has built a reputation for research excellence and houses a number of research centres within its key academic disciplines, with further building expansion underway. More than \$34 million worth of major capital projects were in progress during 2013, with a further \$54 million happening this year.

Current developments under construction at Joondalup include, a new Student Services building covering 11,000 square metres of gross floor area, which will provide much needed space for a range of student amenities and free up space for research. Construction of the 5500-square metre ECU Health Centre commenced in January 2013, at a cost of \$22 million, which includes the state-of-the-art Wanneroo GP Super Clinic. This major facility will play a key role in providing healthcare in Perth's northern suburbs and is due for completion this summer. Other projects include construction of additional student housing which will be completed in January 2015 and a new 1200-square metre engineering pavilion due to be completed before December 2014.

Managing the buildings and services

Integral to the success of the new building projects is the relationship between the Buildings and Services Maintenance team and the Asset Delivery team, which work closely together to avoid any potential management and maintenance problems down the line. The on-site technical staff within the Maintenance team work closely with the Asset Delivery manager and engineering consultants through each construction project. This enables them to provide significant input around the specification of the engineering plant and systems, and helps the university to achieve a much more positive outcome.

One example where this relationship has worked particularly successfully is in the Student Services Building, on the Joondalup Campus, where there was a particular focus on the heating and cooling of the substantial internal atrium. One of the university team's engineers played a key role in working with the external consultants to address some of the operational challenges and, once construction is complete, the same engineer will be responsible for running that building. "Through the normal course of events," says Kevin Hall, manager for Buildings and Services, "you wouldn't have that same level of engagement or such a good outcome." However, it wasn't always like that. "In the past, the Maintenance team didn't have much input into the design and build process," explains Hall. "Then, the construction team would just hand the asset over to us when it was ready. As a result, there have been operating issues because of a lack of engagement through the projects. All that has changed." The Maintenance team now has a key role in providing insight to the design team and contributing during the build. This in-depth understanding of plant, equipment and procedures has made a major difference in the ongoing maintenance of buildings.

Hall, who has been with the university for more than two years, has a background in FM in financial services. Working for KPMG in Perth, he was instrumental in its move to and occupation of the eight-storey Bishops See building, Western Australia's first five-star Green Star – Office Design v2 building, where KPMG was the anchor tenant. But it was his experience of working in the UK schools market that fuelled his passion for the education sector. "I love the diversity within the sector, which includes facilities consisting of student accommodation and scientific laboratories to sports facilities and the large green open spaces, through to the seasonal nature of the work and the different types of customers: students, academics, support staff and consultants."

Sustainability

Having an in-depth understanding of how the university's assets are used is Hall's passion. "One of our challenges is obtaining reliable information around our utility use, for example." A campus-by-campus picture already exists, but an understanding of the use of gas, electricity and water on

a building-by-building basis is required so that this can be benchmarked and a strategy introduced to manage energy consumption. To support this, the university has introduced a program to install individual meters in every building across the three campuses, over a period of time, with the aim of creating a league table of the buildings' energy performance.

A solution for measuring energy consumption in real-time through a dashboard, which will reveal what is being used by which area at any one time, is also being introduced. "We will use it to identify irregularities, which might indicate a leak," says Hall. "Once we understand who uses what and when, the next step is to share the information with each faculty, demonstrate the cost per building, or per faculty, and raise their awareness of the financial and environmental cost of that energy use."

Graphical illustrations are planned for each building to demonstrate its performance and engage students to become more energy conscious. "I particularly want to build up a relationship with the faculty of engineering and science, where sustainability sits as a topic, and work with the students," says Hall. "They will be able to see from a practical perspective how the university can use energy more efficiently, which will inform their studies." The university already participates in annual benchmarking across Australasian universities through the Tertiary Education Facilities Management Association (TEFMA).

Day-to-day operations

In addition to providing valuable input into the new buildings program, the Buildings and Services Maintenance team of 30 staff, which includes engineers and contractors, has responsibility for mechanical, electrical, buildings and grounds maintenance across the campuses. Soft services, such as security, commercial leases and cleaning are run by the manager for Campus Services, John Hayes.

Most of the facilities services are outsourced under preferred supplier agreements and long-term contracts. The university is currently reviewing its supplier base through an open market review. It has a number of service providers, but the aim is to rationalise them and create a more simplified operating model with greater consistency and quality across campuses.

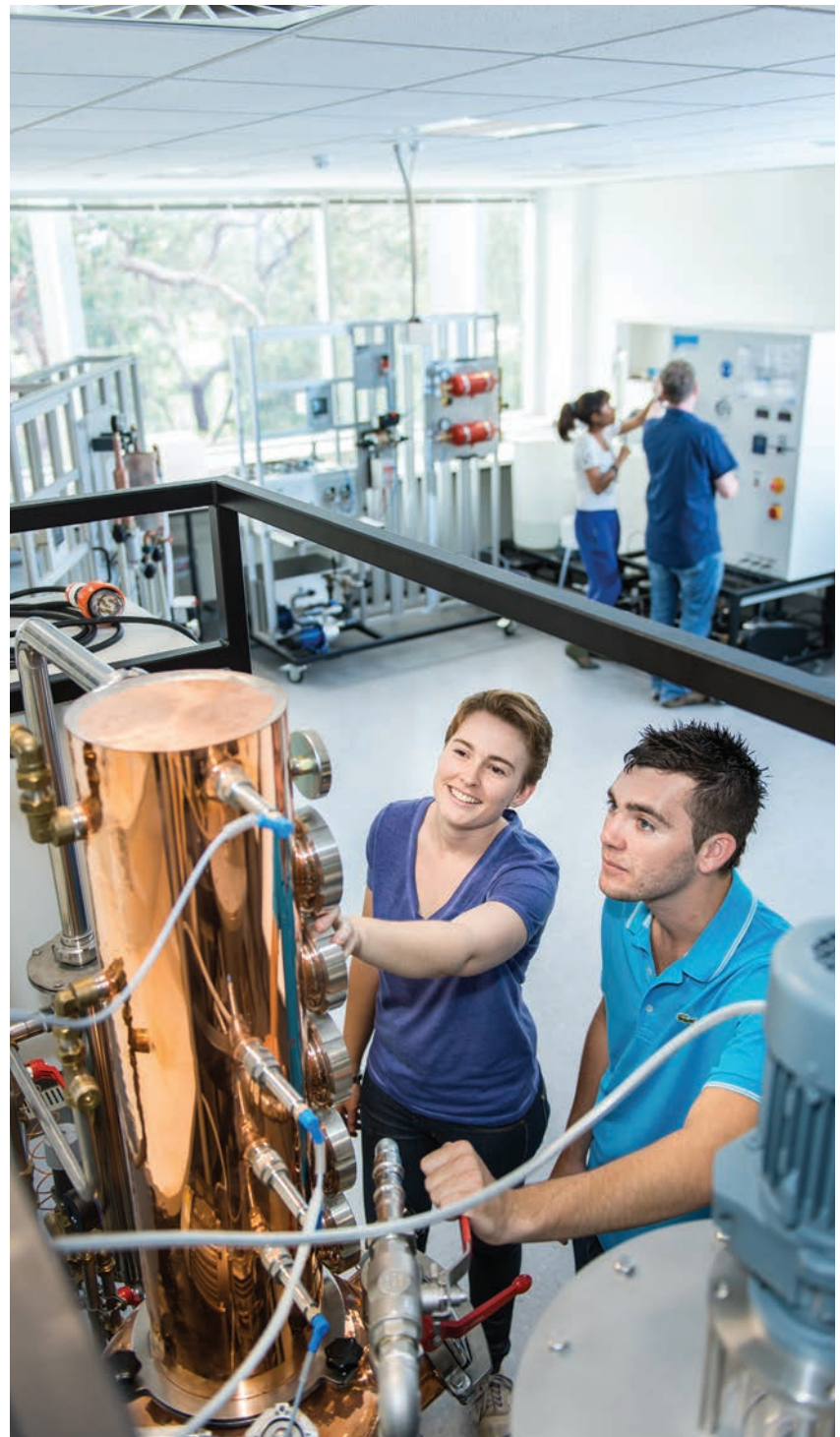
While total or integrated facilities management looks like the future for Edith Cowan University, and the university sector more generally, it is not happening yet. "I see a more integrated approach happening in other sectors in Australia such as mining, defence, government and health, but not yet in education, where we still typically split contracts between hard and soft services," says Hall. If Edith Cowan University does introduce a total facilities management model, it will be one of the first universities in the country to do so.

A long-term approach

Although Edith Cowan University is renewing and expanding its estate, it recognises the importance of maintaining

existing facilities in order to remain at the forefront of academic and research excellence. Information is being collected about how the assets perform alongside a 10-year maintenance plan that is being created to ensure funds are in place to keep the new builds well-maintained and bring older premises up to a better standard.

One of the primary challenges for the Buildings and Services team is the need to implement process improvements and ensure that, as well as completing tasks efficiently, building performance information is captured. As part of that drive, in December 2010, the university replaced



its maintenance management system that had limited functionality, with QFM facilities management software from Service Works Global. Information on over 6200 assets is now contained within the software database and is used to manage reactive, planned and preventative maintenance as well as cleaning tasks from bases around the campus.

The team uses the QFM software to schedule and manage planned maintenance activities, such as condition audits, for Edith Cowan University's \$1 billion portfolio of assets. Reactive maintenance requests come into a centralised call centre, where the details are entered onto the system by the help desk operator, who then assigns each request to the most appropriate person and applies response and rectification times appropriate to the criticality of the request, to improve facilities' efficiency and minimise impact upon students.

The software also helps with controlling backlog maintenance. Although a number of the buildings are ultimately due to be demolished as part of the strategic asset management plan, while they are still in use they need to be maintained. The team uses the software to prioritise contractors' workloads, identify duplicate jobs and therefore avoid wasted call-outs, and automates reminders to enable the effective management of repairs. Snapshot reporting of pending and overdue work orders allows managers to quickly assess the status and value of backlog maintenance.

Reporting

As well as enabling better scheduling and maintenance, reporting information from the software acts as a key driver for operational efficiencies and enhances the wider facilities management function. Monthly operational reports are generated for the Building and Services team across four priority ratings. Priority 1 requests require a one-hour response and a 24-hour fix, whereas a Priority 2 task has a 24-hour response time and fix. The team has a 100 percent target for Priority 1 items. Should targets be missed, the QFM software allows the team to drill down into the details of the report to see why performance may have dipped for any particular service line or area.

The reporting functionality provides Hall and his managers with insight into KPI performance and allows them to address operational issues, in order to optimise the efficiency of the Building and Services team. "All of this information, combined with the data from the individual energy meters and energy dashboard, allows us to rapidly identify trends and patterns upon which we can make decisions and drive future strategy. The university is expanding and we need to meet the educational needs of our student community and reinforce Edith Cowan University's reputation as a global academic and research leader, as well as an example of best practice facility management." ●

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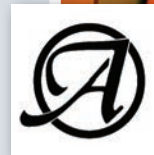
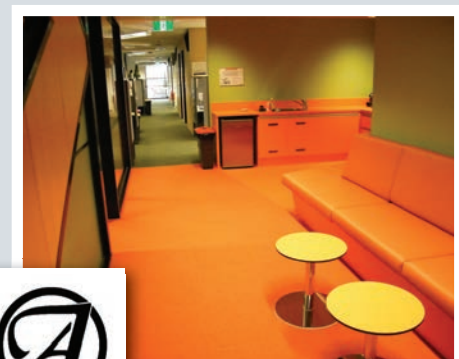
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