

Australian Universities QS World Rankings – A 2025 Update

Professor Emeritus Frank P. Larkins

School of Chemistry and

Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education

The University of Melbourne

f.larkins@unimelb.edu.au

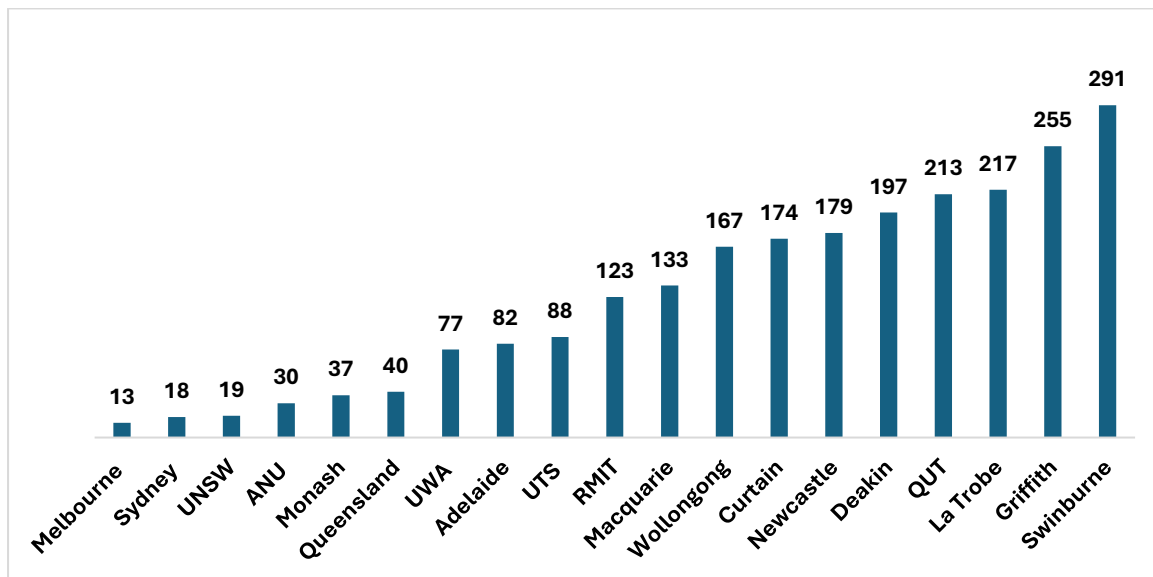
In a recent paper the trends in the world rankings of Australian Universities over twenty years to 2024 were published. Three ranking schemes were compared (1). The Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Times Higher Education and Quacquarelli Symonds schemes. It was noted that by 2024 some 1500 universities were being ranked annually world-wide with Australian having 38 universities assessed. Six Australian universities have consistently ranked in the top 100 world ranked universities in all schemes with all but one maintaining or improving their standing over the past decade.

The Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) group changed its methodology very significantly in 2024 as outlined in the previous paper (1) with the addition of indicators to recognise strength of international research networks, employer outcomes and sustainability. Based upon nine instead of six indicators some 29 of the 38 Australian Universities improved their QS world rankings with nine universities now in the top 100 worldwide compared with six for the Times Higher Education and Shanghai Jaio Tong rankings. The QS scheme has consistently provided Australian universities with a higher world ranking (lower rank number) than the other two schemes. The 2025 QS world rankings were published in June 2024 (2). Some 21 of the 38 Australian universities have maintained or further improved their rankings. This is an exceptional performance.

The 2023, 2024 and 2025 QS rankings for Australian universities are shown in appendix 1 along with the ranking changes from 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 (a negative value represents an improved ranking). Universities are listed from the highest 2025 world ranking (Melbourne) to the lowest (Notre Dame). The improvements in rankings from 2023 to 2024 are shown in column 4 and discussed earlier (1). The analysis showed that for the top ten ranked universities the average improvement was 22 places. ANU was the only university in the top ten not to improve its ranking in 2024. This outcome highlighted the superior performance of Australian universities compared with many other international universities in terms of quality of the international research networks established, the strength of student employer engagement and the actions taken to improve sustainability in management, teaching and research practices.

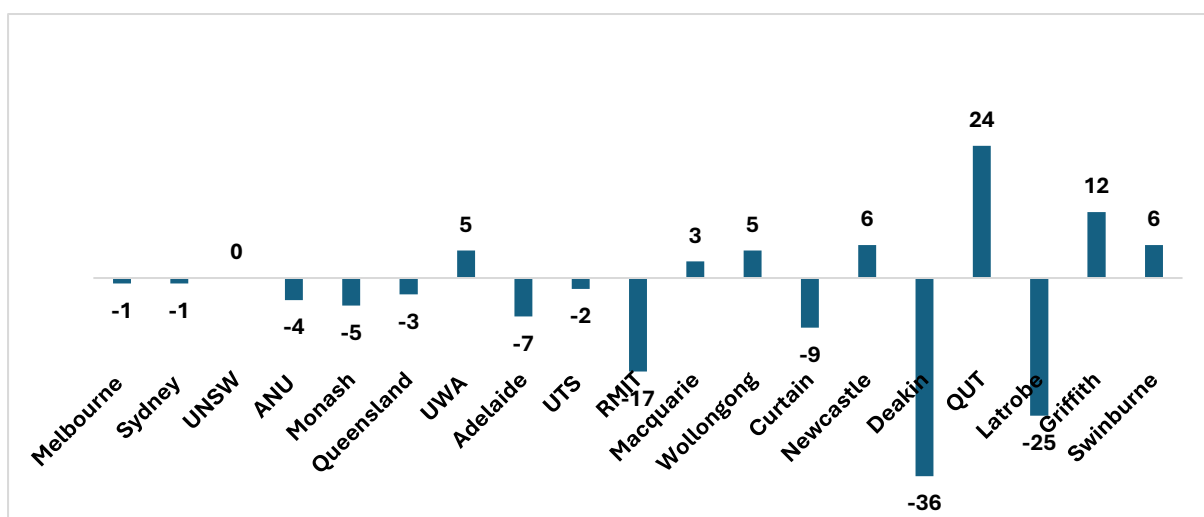
The 2025 QS ranking values for the first 18 universities are presented graphically in figure 1 using the data in appendix 1. Where a ranking range is quoted by QS for a university the middle of the range is chosen when plotting the graph. The change in ranking for each university from 2024 to 2025 is presented in figure 2. A negative value indicates an improved ranking. The corresponding information for universities ranked 20 to 38 in Australia is shown in figures 3 and 4.

Figure 1. The 2025 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings for the 19 highest ranked Australian Universities



The group of eight universities are the highest ranked. UTS was assessed to be the ninth Australian university in the top 100 worldwide – a significant achievement. Three of the six universities ranked between 100 and 200 were former technical institutions. They all benefitted from the inclusion of the additional QS indicators.

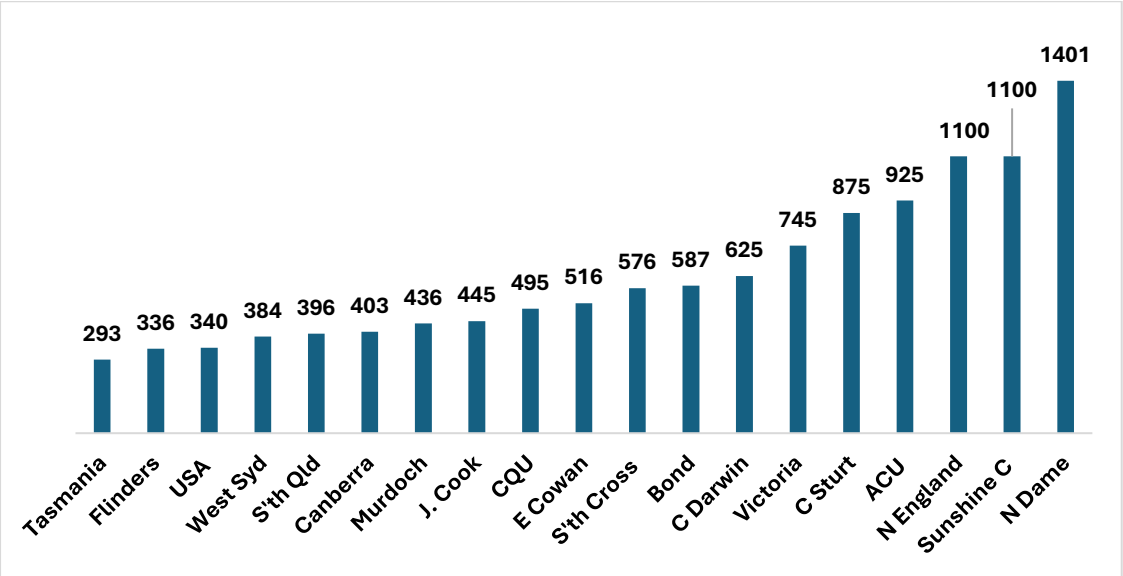
Figure 2. The Change in Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings for the 19 highest ranked Australian Universities from 2024 to 2025.



From the 2024 to the 2025 rankings the top ten Australian universities improved their ranking by an average of 3.5 places. The exception was UWA. Its ranking was lowered from 72 (2024) to 77 (2025). In the next group shown RMIT improved 17 places, Curtin 9, Deakin 36 and La

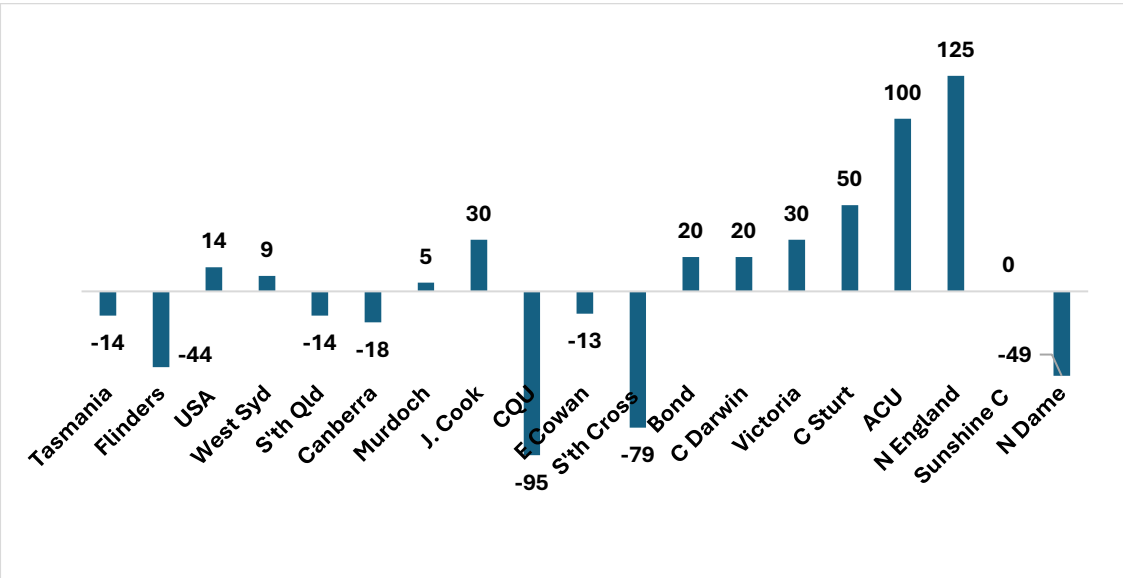
Trobe 25. The increased recognition of the performance of these universities is most encouraging. However, six of the second group achieved a lower ranking for 2025 than for 2024, with QUT (from 189 to 213) being the university most impacted.

Figure 3. The 2025 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings for the 20 to 38 ranked Australian Universities



For the 19 universities shown in figure 3 there is a very wide range of 2025 rankings from Tasmania (293) to Notre Dame (1401). Given that some 1500 universities are assessed, the fact that Australia has 28 of 38 universities in the top 500 is a significant achievement.

Figure 4. The Change in Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings for the 20 to 38 ranked Australian Universities from 2024 to 2025.



In this second group four universities Flinders (improvement 44 Places), Edith Cowan (95) Southern Cross (79) and Notre Dame (49) have made major ranking gains. On the other hand, Charles Sturt (decrease 50), ACU (100) and New England (125) were strongly negatively impacted by the 2025 rankings.

Overall, Australian universities continue to perform strongly on the QS World-Wide Ranking scheme. Relative to many other overseas universities they seem to have managed the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic very well. The QS rankings need to be kept in perspective because the performance of Australian universities is not as strong on the Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Times Higher Education ranking schemes where different indicators are used.

Professor Frank Larkins is a former Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Melbourne with portfolio responsibilities for research and global relations. He has also served as Dean of Science and Dean of Land and Food Resources. He is a Professor Emeritus in the School of Chemistry and an Honorary Fellow at the Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education.

References

1. Larkins F.P., Reflections on Twenty Years of Australian Universities World Rankings, Published 6 February 2024 and available at https://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/publications/fellow-voices/_recache, and <https://franklarkins.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/twenty-years-of-australian-university-rankings.docx>
2. Quacquarelli Symonds, *QS World University Rankings: Top Global Universities 2025*, June 2024, <https://www.topuniversities.com/world-university-rankings?countries=au>

Appendix 1. Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranking for Australian Universities from 2023 to 2025 with the changes.

Rank	University	QS-2023	QS-2024	QS-2025	Change 2023 to 2024	Change 2024 to 2025	Rank	University	QS-2023	QS-2024	QS-2025	Change 2023 to 2024	Change 2024 to 2025
	Column	1	2	3	4	5			1	2	3	4	5
1	Melbourne	33	14	13	-19	-1	20	Tasmania	293	307	293	14	-14
2	Sydney	41	19	18	-22	-1	21	Flinders	428	380	336	-48	-44
3	UNSW	45	19	19	-26	0	22	USA	363	326	340	-37	14
4	ANU	30	34	30	4	-4	23	West Syd	505	375	384	-130	9
5	Monash	57	42	37	-15	-5	24	S'th Qld	675	410	396	-265	-14
6	Queensland	50	43	40	-7	-3	25	Canberra	515	421	403	-94	-18
7	UWA	90	72	77	-18	5	26	Murdoch	565	431	436	-134	5
8	Adelaide	109	89	82	-20	-7	27	J. Cook	461	415	445	-46	30
9	UTS	137	90	88	-47	-2	28	CQU	675	590	495	-85	-95
10	RMIT	190	140	123	-50	-17	29	E Cowan	625	529	516	-96	-13
11	Macquarie	195	130	133	-65	3	30	S'th Cross	725	655	576	-70	-79
12	Wollongong	185	162	167	-23	5	31	Bond	481	567	587	86	20
13	Curtain	193	183	174	-10	-9	32	C Darwin	725	605	625	-120	20
14	Newcastle	192	173	179	-19	6	33	Victoria		715	745		30
15	Deakin	266	233	197	-33	-36	34	C Sturt	900	825	875	-75	50
16	QUT	222	189	213	-33	24	35	ACU	900	825	925	-75	100
17	Latrobe	316	242	217	-74	-25	36	N England	900	975	1100	75	125
18	Griffith	300	243	255	-57	12	37	Sunshine C	1100	1100	1100	0	0
19	Swinburne	296	285	291	-11	6	38	N Dame	1300	1450	1401	150	-49