



## **OUTCOMES FROM DEAKIN UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING 3, 2024 – 1 AUGUST**

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Deakin University Council met on 1 August 2024 at the Geelong Waterfront Campus and dealt with matters as follows in accordance with its legislative responsibilities and 2024 business schedule.

### **Setting the strategic direction of the University**

Council considered a report from the Vice-Chancellor on matters of University-wide importance, including:

- enrolment numbers and teaching income, tracking ahead of budget
- enrolments for the first intakes in GIFT City India and the Navitas Foundation Course in Bandung Indonesia
- Deakin and other universities' involvement in Yoorrok Justice Commission hearings
- the upcoming Senate inquiry into antisemitism at Australian universities
- issues causing concern to international student visa holders (including the doubling of non-refundable fee for visa applications, and students having to leave the country to apply for a new visa from offshore). The University raised these matters in its submission on the International Education and Skills Strategic Framework, but the rule and fee changes are set by the Commonwealth Government, which shows no signs of changing its course of action.

### ***External landscape – Strategic considerations for 2025-2027***

Council had an extended, in-depth discussion about the confluence of regulatory and policy developments which are profoundly reshaping the higher education landscape in Australia.

Council discussed that some of these factors are certain (the regulation of casual employment is already legislation and the introduction of a cap on international student numbers will be implemented in one form or another), while others are under discussion and negotiation in the Commonwealth Parliament, with the Independents shaping as key to the implementation of proposed measures.

Council further discussed that the Vice-Chancellor and Executive Leadership Team has discerned a pathway through the change and uncertainty to a sustainable budget and operating position over the next triennium, although much detail is necessarily yet to be worked out.

Council thanked the Vice-Chancellor for presenting the issues and strategic questions openly and in a manner which was conducive to good, searching discussion.

### ***Carbon Neutrality***

Council considered a presentation on Deakin's carbon neutrality strategy.

### **Overseeing and reviewing performance of the University**

#### ***Key Performance Indicators Dashboard Report***

Council considered the measures and targets detailed in the latest iteration of the Strategic Plan *Deakin 2030: Ideas to Impact* Key Performance Indicators Dashboard Report. The Report demonstrated sound progress over the range of indicators.

## **Rankings**

Council was delighted that, in the latest reporting round, Deakin retained:

- number 1 ranking for overall student satisfaction in Victoria for the 14th successive year
- top 10 position in Australia in the Leiden research-based ranking.

The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that this was a tribute to Deakin staff and confirms the position of balanced excellence in teaching and research which the University continues to achieve.

## **Overseeing and monitoring of academic activities**

### **Academic Board**

Council considered a report from the Chair of the Academic Board on the Board's meetings held on 5 June and 31 July 2024.

Council noted that the Board:

- commended the 'hot topic' presentations given at these meetings on 'student partnerships for success' from the Dean of Students and student mentors, and 'Research quality and impact' from the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Planning and Governance
- approved the introduction of a new Clinical Trials Policy to provide a transparent, documented approach to support mitigation of risk to the University and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements in the governance of clinical trials
- considered the annual report on student breaches of academic integrity, and noted that the University will work with DUSA on concerns raised in the related procedure.

### **Performance of University Research Institutes**

Council considered the 2023 report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation on the performance of University research institutes against their objectives.

### **Institute Annual Reports**

Council received the 2023 annual report of the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN) and Institute for Frontier Materials (IFM).

## **Overseeing the management and control of finances**

### **Finances and major projects**

Council considered the Financial Report (including the latest information on cash flow), Major Projects Report and Progress Reports on Deakin's International Branch Campuses, for the period to 30 June 2024. Council noted that financial performance was in line with budget and full year targets.

Council considered information, requested at the previous meeting, providing a breakdown of employment cost drivers. This usefully illuminates this material cost line in the overall Financial Report.

Council noted the status of major projects, notably that:

- two projects would be submitting change requests to future meetings
- the significance of work commencing on planning the replacement of the student management system which is nearing end of life. This is mission critical work and will be among the most expensive major projects ever undertaken by the University.

Council noted that given increased project investment demands across the next triennium, projects will be rigorously assessed to ensure strategic priority objectives are met and that risk and compliance areas are mitigated against whilst keeping in line with budget constraints.

## **Investments**

Council considered the draft minutes and an oral report from the Chair on the Investment Committee meeting held on 31 May 2024. Council noted that the Investment Committee had considered the annual review of investment strategy, objectives and market assumptions and agreed that given the major changes made to the Strategic Asset Allocations in 2023 that there were no changes required to the portfolio at this time.

## **Risk reports**

Council considered a suite of reports on risk management and audit outcomes and strategy, including reports on the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency's 2022 and 2023 risk assessments of Deakin, cyber security management, and headline risks.

Council noted the Audit and Risk and Finance and Business Affairs Committees consideration of the findings set out in VAGO's Report to Parliament, ['Results of 2023 Audits: Universities'](#) tabled in Parliament on 28 June 2024. The report comprised eight Victorian public universities and their controlled entities and includes analysis on outcomes of audits and an assessment of financial performance and sustainability across the sector and risks to financial sustainability.

## **Presentations**

### ***Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE)***

Council considered a presentation from Professor Phillip Dawson on CRADLE's work in assessment and digital learning, especially in the context of rapid developments in artificial intelligence.

Council thanked Professor Dawson for his engaging and informative presentation and generous acknowledgement of his CRADLE colleagues, and expressed its wholehearted support and appreciation of the important program of research and work underway.

## **Council's own affairs, effectiveness and appointments**

### ***Appointment to the Investment Committee***

Council approved the appointment of Natasha Kronouer as an independent expert member of the Investment Committee for a term from 4 August 2024 to 31 December 2025.

### ***Implementation of recommendations from the 2023 Council Performance Review***

Council considered the final report on the implementation of recommendations from the 2023 Council Performance Review. Council noted that:

- all actions arising from the Review have been implemented in full and that those of an ongoing nature have been integrated into regular business and are now part of business as usual
- the report will form part of the information provided to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) as part of the University's 2025 renewal of registration process. TEQSA places weight on review recommendations being actioned and implemented because it reflects that universities' improvement and self-regulation systems are working effectively.

### ***2026 Council meeting schedule***

Council received its 2026 meeting schedule.

## **Honours and acknowledgements**

### ***Awarding of honorary doctorates***

Council approved the awarding of seven Deakin Honorary Doctorates to individuals for their outstanding contributions to the community aligned to the University's objectives.

### ***Conferral of the title of Deakin Distinguished Professor***

Council conferred the title of Deakin Distinguished Professor on 11 Professors for their outstanding and sustained contribution to furthering Deakin's research, teaching and learning:

- Professor Steve Allender
- Professor Cassandra Atherton
- Professor Julie Considine AO
- Professor Douglas Creighton
- Professor Judy Currey
- Professor Andrea Driscoll
- Professor Anita Harris
- Professor Chris Hickey
- Professor Trish Livingston
- Professor Jane Matthews
- Professor Mark Rose.

Council congratulated the awardees as individuals and as a group representing exceptional achievements across a breadth of disciplines.

### ***Revocation of named Chair***

Council approved that the *General Sir Francis Hasset Chair of Military Studies* be disestablished, effective immediately.

Council acknowledged the excellent, shared work of University and College staff over the decade of the Chair's existence. Supporting the request is consistent with Deakin's ongoing and multifaceted partnership with the College.