



OUTCOMES FROM DEAKIN UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING 5, 2022 – 4 AUGUST

Deakin University Council met on 4 August 2022 at the Geelong Waterfront Campus and dealt with matters as follows in accordance with its legislative responsibilities and 2022 business schedule.

Setting the strategic direction of the University

Strategic updates and planning

Council considered a report from the Vice-Chancellor covering the status of current matters including:

- *Trimester 2 enrolments*
Council was pleased to note action by the Australian Government to fix delays in processing international student visa applications. The backlog of applications which built up in July has largely been cleared.
- *Student engagement, campus life and Open Days*
The reactivation of campus life is proceeding and in-person Open Days are resuming, however the University recognises the continuing impact of the prevalence of illnesses and isolation requirements. The University is committed to ensuring students are not disadvantaged and can attend campus to engage in learning and other experiences.
- *Staff wellbeing*
Council welcomed the announcement of two wellbeing leave days for staff over the end of year close-down period in recognition of the contributions and commitment of staff through recent challenges.

Sector comparative analyses

Council considered a presentation from Justin Bokor, author of 'The Decade Ahead: How Australian Universities are positioned for the post-Covid rebound'.

Council received the report 'Results of 2021 Audits: Universities' by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office and noted findings of that report as discussed by Committees of the Council.

Overseeing the management and control of finances

Financial report

Council reviewed the Finance Report for the period to 30 June 2022 and noted the mid-year position for underlying surplus and balance of cash and cash equivalents. Council noted that the financial plan 2023-2025 is under development for detailed consideration at upcoming meetings.

Major projects

Council considered the Major Projects Report for the period to 30 June 2022. The period saw the completion of major projects on the Waurin Ponds Microgrid and the next stage of the Geelong Future Economy Precinct.

Council noted reports on progress against budget, scope and timelines of projects funded through the Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund (VHESIF).

Management of shareholdings in listed companies

Council approved an interim framework for reviewing strategic equity investments, including equity holdings in spin off companies. This is an area of ongoing work and Council noted that the framework would continue to be developed for further consideration in the future.

Overseeing risk management and monitoring systems of control and accountability

Council considered a report from the Audit and Risk Committee on:

- actions arising from a cyber-security data breach on 10 July 2022, which resulted in students receiving phishing text messages; Council noted follow up communication and support to students
- health, safety and wellbeing performance for the June quarter
- the University's insurance coverage and insurance renewal strategy.

Programs to prevent sexual harm

Council recalled its earlier consideration of results from the 2021 National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) and welcomed a comprehensive follow-up report and presentation on preventing sexual harm by Mel Martinelli, Executive Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Laura Burge, Manager, Respectful Communities.

Council agreed that while for the majority of students Deakin is a safe place, even one instance of sexual harm is too many. Council encouraged management to continue building a strong culture of safety, respect and inclusion.

Council was impressed by the work being progressed across Deakin and strongly supported the emphasis on educating students about respectful behaviour for life. Council also welcomed the role that Deakin is playing to lead initiatives with other Victorian universities to ensure a consistent approach across the sector.

Council thanked Mel Martinelli and Laura Burge for their informative presentation and excellent contributions in this area.

Overseeing and monitoring of academic activities

Council considered an oral report from the Chair of the Academic Board., Professor Chris Hickey, on the Board meeting held the previous day. Council also considered comments by Council member, Stuart Hamilton, who attended that meeting as an observer. Council welcomed Stuart's comments about the professionalism and dedication to high standards with which the Board and its committees discharged their responsibilities.

Council invited Professor Hickey to comment on recurring media reports about the prevalence of cheating by some students in the sector. Professor Hickey advised that Deakin is maintaining its vigilance in its day-to-day activities and has a number of research projects pioneering sophisticated detection and investigation methods, including through the Deakin Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE).

Professor Hickey added that, in addition to Board meetings, he holds meetings with students elected to the Board and that in these meetings students bring up the importance of preventing cheating. They recognise that reports of cheating have the potential to discredit all students. They are heavily invested in supporting the University's vigilance.

Program Streamline Phase 1

Council approved funding for the re-scoped Streamline Program (previously called Research Transformation Program). This followed detailed scrutiny by the Finance and Business Affairs Committee.

The Program will uplift research support and liberate researchers and administrators from time consuming manual processing and work arounds. Specifically the funding is to:

- replace current outdated core technology for the management of grants and contracts
- provide technology to streamline workflows and generate integrated data, reporting and analytics
- prepare the way for the introduction of digital management of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) training.

Council agreed that more sophisticated and streamlined technology and workflows were critically important to support the University's research growth and to maximise the value of research investments.

Council's own affairs

Council approved the appointment of Georgina Williams to the Audit and Risk Committee and Stuart Hamilton to the Remuneration Committee, effective 4 August 2022.