



## OUTCOMES FROM DEAKIN UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING 7, 2023 – 15 DECEMBER

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Deakin University Council met on 15 December 2023 at the Geelong Waurn Ponds Campus and dealt with matters as follows in accordance with its legislative responsibilities and 2023 business schedule.

### Setting the strategic direction of the University

#### ***Strategic position***

Council discussed that the 2023 review documents and the inaugural AFR ranking of Australian universities in 2023 confirmed Deakin's strategic position of *balanced excellence*.

Deakin is unique among Australian universities in being in the top 10 for both teaching and research, validated by external measures.

Council agreed that this position is a key strategic asset and that maintaining it will continue to inform decision making.

#### ***International branch campuses***

Council was pleased to note good progress towards the opening of Deakin's international branch campuses in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City India (GIFT City) and Bandung Indonesia.

Rapid progress is being made in India in terms of infrastructure, marketing and recruitment of staff. Council approved a series of resolutions to enable Campus operations.

### Overseeing and reviewing the performance of the University

#### ***2023 reviews***

Council considered reports on achievements against strategic key performance indicators in 2023 and was pleased to note important achievements across the University.

Council expressed its appreciation to University staff for their hard work and high standards.

#### ***Addressing and preventing sexual harm***

Council reviewed a report about the intergovernmental *Draft Proposal: Addressing gender-based violence in higher education and Draft Action Plan* and relevant actions underway at Deakin.

Council will continue to devote close attention to this important issue.

### Overseeing the management and control of finances

Council considered financial performance to the end of November 2023. The period continued trends throughout the year. Variances to budget and earlier Outlooks are positive to budget.

Progress on major projects is sound and the Waterfront car park approaching completion to be ready for the commencement of the new academic year.

## Overseeing risk management and systems of control

### ***Risk Appetite Statement***

Council considered the annual review of the University Risk Appetite Statement and approved a series of updates recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee. Council also agreed on work to continue to enhance the Statement.

Council was pleased to note that the Statement is a 'living' document which is being actively used for planning across the University.

Council also examined the following risk and compliance items:

- academic and research integrity
- internal audit findings and progress on addressing recommendations
- plans for international branch campus audits
- compliance with the Universities Foreign Interference Taskforce Guidelines.

## Overseeing and monitoring of academic activities

Council received the minutes of the Academic Board meeting on 22 November 2023 and the Board's annual report on actions to uphold academic freedom, standards and quality.

### ***Deakin University Code for Upholding Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom***

Council noted the actions taken by the Board to uphold and promote the Deakin University Code for Upholding Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom.

Council also noted Deakin students gave positive feedback on questions related to freedom of expression in the 2022 Student Experience Survey conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Education, published in 2023. In both years since the introduction of these questions in the 2021 Survey, Deakin's results have exceeded the Universities Australia and the Victorian benchmarks.

### ***Academic risk oversight***

Council considered detailed information on the Academic Board's comprehensive program to oversee and manage academic risks and to ensure compliance with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) threshold standards. A key activity in 2023 was mapping risk oversight roles into the standing committees of the Board. This means that expert knowledge is brought to bear on each risk area and provides a strong level of assurance.

### ***Expression of appreciation to the Academic Board and its outgoing Chair***

Council paid tribute to the Academic Board and its outgoing Chair, Professor Chris Hickey for the Board's excellent governance standards and for its informative reporting to Council.

Council is appreciative of the Board's effectiveness in upholding the highest standards in teaching and research and fostering a healthy academic atmosphere at the University. The Board has a clear focus on the good of the University as a whole.

Council looks forward to a continued constructive working with the Board under its incoming Chair from 2024, Professor Judy Currey.

## Presentation on the Faculty of Business and Law

Council received a presentation on the Faculty of Business and Law from Professor Jenni Lightowlers, Executive Dean. Council thanked Professor Lightowlers for her engaging presentation and expressed its strong support for the initiatives she is leading.

## **Council's own affairs**

### ***Council membership***

Council membership for 2024 is settled and published on the [University's website](#). Council reviewed its updated Skills Matrix.

### ***Acknowledgement of outgoing members of Council***

Council acknowledged with acclamation the service of outgoing members, Professor Chris Hickey, Chair of the Academic Board since 2016, and Jonathan De La Pena, student member in 2023.

Council expressed its best wishes to both outgoing members for their future work, Chris as Professor of Education at Deakin and Jonathan as incoming Secretary of the National Union of Students.

### ***Membership of Council Committees and related Boards***

Council approved appointments to Council Committees in 2024 and noted that the Governing Board of the Recycling and Clean Energy Commercialisation Hub (REACH) has been established with well credentialed members, under the Chair appointed by Council, Mr Shaun Cox.

### ***2023 Council review documentation***

Council received the following documents and noted that they demonstrated that Council and its Committees had fulfilled all their responsibilities under relevant legislation and governance codes:

- 2023 review of Council approved policies
- register of Council delegations and report on exercise of those delegations in 2023
- report on Council's fulfilment of its 2023 business schedule.

### ***2024 Council business schedule***

Council received its 2024 business schedule.

## **Acknowledgements and conclusion of business for 2023**

Council closed its business for 2023 with an expression of thanks to the staff and students of the University for their hard work and contributions to the life of the University during the year.

Council looks forward to the continuing contributions of staff and students in 2024, which promises to be an exciting year for our education and research programs here and abroad, and in which we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the University's establishment.