



## **OUTCOMES FROM DEAKIN UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING 1, 2021 – 18 MARCH**

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Deakin University Council met on 18 March 2021 and dealt with matters as follows in accordance with its legislative responsibilities and 2021 business schedule.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

Professor Mark Rose, Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Innovation joined the meeting to provide the Acknowledgement of Country.

Professor Rose also provided an update on the University's Indigenous education and engagement programs and confirmed that, following consultation with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation, Deakin's new residential college at the Geelong Waurin Ponds Campus has been named *Willem Yaluk*, meaning River Home.

Council thanked Professor Rose for his words and expressed its strong support for his work.

### **Overseeing University performance and setting strategic direction**

#### *University strategy*

Council considered a report from the Vice-Chancellor on key developments relating to the University's strategy:

- results from the latest national student satisfaction survey; Deakin retained the leading position in Victoria but slipped down the national list as Victorian universities suffered significant drops due to the extended COVID-19 restrictions in 2020
- community concern about sexual harm and harassment in the workplace, which has been subject of public demonstrations and extensive media reporting; members of the Executive emphasised management's commitment to maintaining policies, practices and a culture to provide a learning, work and social environment that is free from sexual harm
- launch of ManuFutures 2 with funding from the University and the Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund.

#### *2020 Deakin University Annual Report*

Council approved the 2020 Deakin University Annual Report, including:

- 2020 Financial Statements
- statutory reporting required under the Standing Directions and Financial Reporting Directions under the *Financial Management Act 1994 (Vic)*
- review of operations – the Report reflects a watershed year for Deakin in which the University not only faced the COVID-19 pandemic but concluded the era of the *LIVE the future* strategic plan and developed the new strategic plan *Deakin 2030: Ideas to Impact*.

The Report will be forwarded to the Hon Gayle Tierney MP, Minister for Training and Skills and Minister for Higher Education for tabling in the Victorian Parliament in May 2021, after which it will be published on the University's website.

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

### *Financial Report*

In addition to the 2020 Financial Statements Council considered the Finance Report for the period to 28 February 2021. Council was satisfied that the University's financial performance is satisfactory in the difficult circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council recalled that the University would be revising its 2021-2023 Financial Plan in the first half of 2021 to take account of the latest financial indicators and forecasts.

### *Major projects*

Council considered the Major Projects Report and updates on a number of projects, notably the recent completion of Stage 3 of the Building Facade Remediation Works (to remove flammable cladding), the Renewable Energy Microgrid, IISRI expansion and SEBE Building KA refurbishment at the Geelong Waurn Ponds Campus, and the upcoming official opening of the Deakin Law School Building at the Melbourne Burwood Campus.

Council welcomed the completion of the project on building facade remediation, noting that the works had been proactively and professionally managed across 43 university buildings.

## **Overseeing risk management and monitoring systems of control and accountability**

Council considered the minutes and an oral report on the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 1 March 2021, attended by Council members whether or not they were members of the Committee.

In connection with the 2020 Deakin University Annual Report Council noted advice from the Committee that the:

- University had sound governance, risk management and control frameworks in place regarding the reliability and integrity of financial and operational information
- 2020 Financial Statements represented a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the University and had been cleared without qualification by the Office of the Victorian Auditor-General
- statutory reporting and risk management sections of the Annual Report were complete and accurate
- Internal Audit function's independence and objectivity had been maintained throughout the year.

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

### *Short courses and Deakin's course portfolio*

Council considered a presentation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellors Education and Global Engagement on the six-month short courses Deakin offered with Government support in 2020 and 2021 and their relationship to Deakin's course portfolio.

Council noted that there was very strong uptake of the courses (graduate certificates) and that offering the courses had provided the University with useful experience and insights. Building and maintaining meaningful industry and professional connections has been an important element of the short course programs, as with Deakin's broader course portfolio. Course Advisory Boards across the University play a very important role in this regard.

### *Academic Board report and policy*

The Chair of the Academic Board reported on the Board meeting on 22 February 2021 and the Board's consideration of a range of academic governance matters.

The University's streamlined Statute and Regulations came into effect on 1 January 2021, including the new Academic Board Regulations.

Council approved amendments to the Academic Board policy aligned to the new Academic Board Regulations.

### **Independent Review of the Adoption of the Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom by Emeritus Professor Sally Walker AM**

Council noted follow-up actions to the Walker review on universities' implementation of the Model Code on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom, as considered by recent meetings of the Academic Board and the Legislation Committee. Relevant reports and recommendations will be made to future Council meetings. The likely passage of the Higher Education Support (Freedom of Speech) Bill embedding the French Model Code definition of academic freedom will require Deakin to adopt this definition verbatim.