



OUTCOMES FROM DEAKIN UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING 1, 2025 – 20 MARCH

Deakin University Council met on 20 March 2025 at the Geelong Waterfront Campus and dealt with matters as follows in accordance with its legislative responsibilities and 2025 business schedule.

Indigenous acknowledgement and initiatives

Council opened its business schedule for the year with an Acknowledgement of Country and presentation on Indigenous initiatives by Deakin Distinguished Professor Mark Rose, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous.

Professor Rose spoke about the University's engagement with Indigenous truth-telling and education initiatives across Victoria and the progress of the University's Indigenous strategy.

While acknowledging that much work remains to be done, Council was pleased that the University is engaging constructively with community initiatives and that Indigenous education has moved from the periphery to the centre of the University.

Council welcomed the good work by Faculties on Indigenous Compacts and by the Research and Innovation Portfolio on research protocols relating to Indigenous research.

Council expressed its wholehearted appreciation to Professor Rose for his presentation and reiterated its strong support for his important work.

Vice-Chancellor's strategic update

Council considered a report from the Vice-Chancellor on current matters including:

- the latest information on student enrolment numbers for 2025, which are shaping up well, consistent with 2025 budget settings
- the opening of the Deakin Lancaster Indonesia Campus in February and the important role being played by Professor Greg Barton as Rector and highly respected scholar in Indonesia
- policy and political issues in higher education in Australia, including the Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities, the commencement of work by the National Student Ombudsman and the upcoming Commonwealth budget.

Council received the 2024 end-of-year report on University performance against strategic plan KPIs.

2024 Annual Report

Council approved the 2024 Deakin University Annual Report including full year Financial Statements.

Council thanked the Finance Team for their work achieving high standards in the presentation of the Financial Statements and a clear audit outcome. Council also thanked all staff across the University who contributed to a readable and polished Annual Report, which reflects a strong year of achievement by the University's staff and students.

The Report will be forwarded to the Hon Gayle Tierney MP, Minister for Skills and TAFE and Minister for Water for tabling in the Victorian Parliament in May 2024, after which it will be published on the University's website.

Financial performance

Council was pleased that the University's financial performance continues to be consistent with the long-term sustainability strategy agreed to achieve recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. All nine metrics of financial viability and sustainability tracked by Council are stable or improving.

Council discussed volatility in international trading and investment markets in the context of the Trump Administration's tariff and America First policies. Council is confident that the University's long-term investment strategy is soundly structured to withstand periods of volatility.

Council approved updates to the University's Strategic Equity Investment Review Framework.

Overseeing risk management and systems of control

Council considered a detailed report from the Audit and Risk Committee encompassing a range of compliance, risk management and audit issues. This included attention to follow-up actions from the recent procurement audit.

Programs to prevent and respond to gender-based violence

Council considered the Deakin University Respect and Sexual Harm Prevention 2024 Annual Report and approved its publication on the University's website.

Council also considered an update on the 2025 Respect and Gender-based Violence Action Plan.

Council welcomed the informative and clear-written Report and the updated Plan, which demonstrate deep engagement with this important issue across the University.

Council noted that the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence was introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament in February 2025 as part of proposed legislation.

Overseeing and monitoring of academic activities

Council considered a report from the Chair of the Academic Board on the Board's first meeting for 2025 and on the concerted work of the International Branch Campus Working Group.

Council approved amendments to the Council Regulations to establish the category of University Initiatives in University legislation and the Deakin Applied Artificial Intelligence Initiative (A²I²) as the first such Initiative. This follows the Specialist Research Groupings Review Report in 2024.

University governance reviews

Council discussed scrutiny of governance in the university sector. Deakin does not shy away from scrutiny and is confident that, as evidenced by objective measures and external reviews, the University's governance arrangements are sound and are supportive of high achievement at the University by students and staff.

Council received the University's submission to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Inquiry into Quality of Governance at Australian Higher Education Providers.

Council adopted the updated Code of Governance Principles and Practice for Australia's Public Universities (December 2024) and approved the University's Statement of Compliance against that Code. Consistent with the Council's commitment to transparency and accountability, this Statement will be published on the University's website.

Expression of appreciation to Professor Liz Johnson

Council expressed its deep appreciation to Deakin Distinguished Professor Liz Johnson, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic on her retirement from the University after distinguished service in leadership positions from 2014 to 2025. Council paid a warm and appreciative tribute to Professor Johnson's leadership in uplifting Deakin's education agenda, student learning experience and student support.

Council joined the Vice-Chancellor in congratulating Professor Johnson on being appointed an Emeritus Professor of the University, which will continue her engagement with Deakin.

***Disclaimer:** This report provides an overview for the University community of the Council's decisions and actions at the relevant meeting. It is not intended to cover every decision made at the meeting or the full detail of decisions and discussions. Inquiries and requests for further information can be directed to the University Council Secretary on council-secretary@deakin.edu.au.*