



OUTCOMES FROM DEAKIN UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING 2, 2025 – 15 MAY

Deakin University Council met on 15 May 2025 at the Geelong Waterfront Campus and dealt with matters as follows in accordance with its legislative responsibilities and [2025 business schedule](#).

Vice-Chancellor's strategic update

Council considered a report from the Vice-Chancellor on current matters and the Strategic Plan KPI Report tracking metrics across Education & Employability, Research & Innovation, Sustainability, and Equity & Inclusion. Of the 19 top level indicators nine are rated as achieved, two partly achieved/within tolerance (equity participation, global footprint) and 8 are unrated pending data later in the year (notably research income and rankings).

Staff survey

Council had a detailed discussion on the results of the My Pulse 2025 staff survey. Discussion included trends in the quantitative measures – participation rates, favourable versus unfavourable ratings and variations between different groups of staff.

Council also had regard to qualitative data, specifically the themes attracting the most positive and negative comments in free text sections of the survey.

Council discussed how results are actioned both at the University-wide and individual workplace level. Council welcomed that information on actions was shared between teams, which enhances collaboration and continuous improvement across the University.

Strategic importance of AI

Council received a presentation on Artificial Intelligence from Deakin Distinguished Professor Svetha Venkatesh, Co-Director of the Applied Artificial Intelligence Initiative (A²I²). This focussed on large language models and covered the pace of change, implications for education and employment, and advice on effective and ethical use of AI tools.

Council engaged in a wide-ranging discussion including on implications for course strategy, assessment practices and University services. Council also discussed the opportunities presented by bespoke AI tools for specific sectors. These are already being used effectively in certain industry segments.

Council thanked Professor Venkatesh for her engaging presentation. Council noted that Deakin's digital capabilities and expertise augurs well for being the 'go to' university for leadership on informed, ethical use of AI.

Academic activities

Council extended a warm welcome to Deakin to Professor Jessica Vanderlelie, new Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic.

Council considered a report from the Chair of the Academic Board on the Board's second meeting for 2025 and noted the action plan arising from the Board's 2024 Performance Review.

Council received a presentation on the Deakin University Recycling and Clean Energy Commercialisation Hub (REACH). The presentation provided information on collaborative research programs with industry partners, PhD placements and engagement projects with industry, and REACH's regional and community outreach.

Council expressed its appreciation that REACH was meeting its milestone targets under the Trailblazer Universities Program and was demonstrating Deakin's capacity to deliver an innovative and ambitious program in association with partners.

Major Projects

Deakin Health and Community Trials Network

Council approved the establishment of the Deakin Health and Community Trials Network encompassing the Barwon-Deakin Clinical Trials Alliance and the Deakin Trials Hub. Council approved expenditure, consistent with the University's Financial Plan, for the establishment and inaugural operation of the Network.

Council thanked Deakin Distinguished Professor Rachel Huxley, Executive Dean Health, for the thoroughly considered business case. Council supported the vision underpinning the Network to enhance community health and equity and to deliver positive impact locally and globally.

Student Program

Council approved expenditure, consistent with the University's Financial Plan, for Phase 2 of the major project for the implementation of a new student management system. This involves numerous interconnections with other systems and services and consequently is called the 'Student Program'.

Council welcomed the carefully planned, multi-stage approach set out in the business case. Phase 2 will run in 2025 and 2026 and lead to the implementation phase from 2026 to 2028. The details of the implementation phase will be considered in 2026.

Financial performance

Council considered the Outlook 1, 2025 Financial Report. Council was pleased that financial performance for the year to date and the full year forecast are both positive to budget.

Council received the latest information on the impact of recent market volatility on the University's investment portfolio. Council confirmed its confidence that the University's long-term investment strategy is soundly structured to withstand periods of volatility.

Consistent with the long-term view Council approved updates to the University's Investment Management Procedure arising from the review of investment strategy undertaken by Council at its conference in February 2025.

2024 Modern Slavery Statement

Council approved the University's 2024 Modern Slavery Statement.

In conferring this approval Council acknowledged the comprehensive program of work to uplift Deakin's modern slavery framework; to address risks for international offices and new branch campuses in India and Indonesia; and to implement recommendations from recent Internal Audit and Commonwealth Government reviews and Fair Futures risk assessment and benchmarking.

Council conveyed its appreciation to staff for this important work carried out with care and professionalism.

***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.*