



OUTCOMES FROM DEAKIN UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING 3, 2020 – 21 MAY 2020

Deakin University Council met on 21 May 2020 by videoconference in accordance with the provisions for approved methods of communication for Council meetings under the *Deakin University Act 2009*. Council dealt with matters as follows in accordance with its legislative responsibilities and 2020 business schedule.

Setting the strategic direction of the University

Council considered a report on progress towards developing the University's next strategic plan. The plan will be developed during 2020 to commence in 2021. The Vice-Chancellor outlined the revised timetable for consultation, which the COVID-19 shutdown has so far prevented. Council endorsed the revised timetable, noting that it is essential to allow adequate opportunity for engagement and feedback from the University community.

Business recovery from the COVID-19 crisis

Council considered a report from the Vice-Chancellor and members of the Executive on actions across the whole of Deakin as the University has moved from the business continuity to business recovery stage of the COVID-19 crisis. Council noted that in anticipation of a gradual increase in on-campus activity, a *Deakin aNew* group has been established to design and implement arrangements for a 'new normal' for students and staff.

Australian Universities Job Protection Framework

Council considered a report on the Australian Universities Job Protection Framework proposed by the National Tertiary Education Union. Council agreed that the Framework merited careful consideration, and weighed very carefully the benefits of adopting the variations to Deakin's existing Enterprise Agreement proposed by the Framework, against those of proceeding with the implementation of the overall response to the impact of COVID-19 endorsed by Council at its meeting on 7 May.

Following detailed consideration Council resolved that Deakin would continue to implement the overall response to the impact of COVID-19 it had previously approved and that Deakin would not be a signatory to the proposed Australian Universities Job Protection Framework.

Overseeing the management and control of finances

Council considered the Financial Report, a presentation from the Chief Financial Officer on the Rolling Forecast and the Major Projects Report for the period to 30 April 2020. Council noted the progress of major projects against budget, scope and timelines and noted the reasons for any variation from targets. Council noted several major projects had been postponed and that a number of projects were close to completion and would be concluded in the near future.

Council discussed the funding initiative announced by the Victorian Government on 20 May 2020 to support university capital projects. The criteria for funding have not yet been finalised but are certain to place importance on projects which support or create employment in the general community.

Council approved a proposal for Deakin to seek permission from the Victorian Treasurer to increase its borrowing limit. Council resolved that, subject to approval being obtained, that any specific borrowing program will be proposed on the basis of a business case to be presented to the Finance and Business Affairs Committee and Council. Approval will only be granted if borrowing is a better economic option than drawing down on the Future Fund.

Council considered the Investment Committee's deliberations on the reallocation of funds. In addition to the usual commercial and ESG considerations the Committee is very conscious of the importance of maintaining liquidity in the current environment if required to support the operational needs of the University.

Overseeing risk management and monitoring systems of control and accountability

Council noted the Audit and Risk Committee's consideration of matters including:

- adjustments to the schedule of internal audits for 2020 in response to the COVID-19 crisis
- integrity of assessment.

Overseeing and monitoring of academic activities

Council received a report on the outcomes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on 22 April 2020 and noted:

- following broad consultation the Academic Board would consider the revised Board Regulations arising from the project to reform the University Statute and Regulations at its next meeting
- the amended terms of reference for the Academic Board Executive Committee endorsed by Council had been implemented and were proving effective
- the outcomes of the 2019 annual review of the Academic Board were very positive and reflected a high performing Board.

Council also received an oral report from the Chair of the Board addressing the Audit and Risk Committee's discussion about ensuring the integrity of assessment where all students are undertaking assessment tasks online. The University has a range of relevant controls including authentic assessment tasks which test individual learning and multiple forms of assessment rather than single assignments or tests. Where online examinations occur there are controls such as multiple exam papers and alternative banks of questions to guard against the sharing of questions and answers. The University is also trialling invigilated online examinations in a select number of courses where this has been approved through academic governance processes.

University legislation and policy

Council noted the progress of work to reform the University's statutes and regulations to ensure that they are clear, relevant and up-to-date. The reform is a longer term project which will deliver lasting benefits through streamlined and better coordinated Regulations. The reformed suite is far less detailed and prescriptive than the existing legislation. The COVID-19 situation has highlighted the importance of this work because the existing Regulations have not easily accommodated the adaptations required in a situation such as COVID-19.

Council's own affairs, appointments and effectiveness

Council:

- elected Mr John Stanhope AM as the Chancellor of Deakin University for a second term of office of five years, from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2025 and paid tribute to the contribution of Mr Stanhope during his first term
- reappointed Ms Philippa Kelly as a Council appointment member for a further term from 1 January to 31 December 2021.

Council approved the conferral of the title of Emeritus Professor upon two esteemed Professors.