

# Council Communiqué

Meeting 3, 2026 – 6 August



Deakin University is established in the public interest by the [Deakin University Act 2009 \(Vic\)](#) to deliver accessible, high-quality education and research to meet the needs of students and the community. The University's objects are set out in the Act and at the end of this communiqué.

The University Council actively oversees the University's strategy, performance, risk management, culture and compliance consistent with its purpose and in the public interest.

The Council met on 6 August 2026 at the Geelong Waurin Ponds Campus and dealt with matters as follows in accordance with its governance responsibilities and [2026 business schedule](#).

This communiqué provides a summary of the key decisions and strategic discussions from the meeting.

## Strategic focus

### Finance

Council considered the Financial Report to 30 June 2026. Long term financial sustainability is a regular item on the Council agenda, and Council and the Executive Leadership Team had a full and broad-ranging discussion on the year-to-date financial results, current challenges, and mitigation strategies.

Council considered and approved the audited Financial Statements for GIFT City International Branch Campus for the financial year 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 and authorised that they be lodged in accordance with Indian government regulations.

### Workplace change and reflections

Council received a summary of key themes to emerge from the workplace change consultation, which was formally withdrawn on 18 June 2026. Council considered feedback from staff, students, community members and the Executive Leadership Team, including Council members' individual reflections of the change process.

Council highlighted the importance of consultation and ongoing transparent communication and reiterated that staff and student wellbeing remain paramount.

Council acknowledged the need for Council and the University to reflect on the systems and process under which we govern and considered next steps to ensure that these recent events are an opportunity to learn and improve.

## Key matters

### Vice-Chancellor Appointment

Council established a Vice-Chancellor Appointment Advisory Committee to assist with the recruitment and selection of the Acting Vice-Chancellor and ongoing Vice-Chancellor. The Committee consists of the Chancellor, Council members (including the staff and student elected Council members), and external experts from the higher education sector. The Terms of Reference for the Committee can be found on the Deakin Council [website](#).

### Major Projects

Council held a session on the Digital Core Program, a project that aims to deliver a renewal of Deakin's core enterprise platforms covering student, curriculum, workforce, payroll and finance functions.

Council and Executive engaged in a full and broad-ranging discussion of the program and key considerations.

Council requested additional data to assist them in making an informed decision, noting this matter will be considered as a priority by the Finance and Business Affairs Committee prior to returning to Council for deliberation.

### Antisemitism and social cohesion

Council received an update from the Vice-Chancellor regarding the coordination of Deakin University's anti-racism definition as required under amendments to the Higher Education Standards Framework.

## Risk culture

### *University Risk Appetite Statement*

Council considered a review of the Deakin Risk Appetite Statement based on feedback received at the December 2025 and May 2026 Council meetings. Council noted the intention for the Statement to remain high level, with more detailed guidelines set out at a policy/procedure level. Council noted that Deakin's policies are public facing documents and clearly articulate the University's position on matters of public interest.

### *Risk Management Policy and Risk Matrix*

Council considered and approved amendments to the Risk Management Policy and its Schedule A Risk Matrix, which reflect the University's current risk environment and contemporary risk management practice.

## Compliance with workplace obligations

Council discussed the latest report on the University's ongoing Enterprise Agreement Compliance Assurance program and noted recent system improvements. This a standing item on the Council agenda and reflects Deakin's firm commitment to meeting workplace obligations on an ongoing basis.

## Academic governance

Council considered a report from the Chair, Academic Board on academic governance matters including:

- the successful renewal of the University's TEQSA reregistration without conditions for a period of seven years. Council congratulated all involved in this exceptional achievement
- the review and approval of changes to the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedures
- the departure of Dr Matt Brett, Director Academic Governance and Standards, who is departing Deakin for a role with Universities Australia. Council acknowledged the significant uplift in academic governance under Dr Brett's leadership and wished him the best of success in his new role.

The Chair thanked the Academic Board for the informative report which added value to Council's understanding of the work of the Board.

## Deakin Distinguished Professor

Council considered recommendations to confer the title of Deakin Distinguished Professor and approved that the title be conferred upon the following individuals:

- Professor Nick Birbilis
- Professor Kate Buchanan

- Professor Jane McGillivray
- Professor Bodi Rasmussen
- Professor Yong Xiang.

## Policy and Governance matters

### Review of policy

Council approved amendments to the Compliance Management Policy and the introduction of a new Compliance Management Procedure which provides greater clarity and a more comprehensive compliance management framework.

Council approved amendments to the University's Policy Framework which provides additional context around translation education policy matters, compliance with the Principles of the Expert Council on University Governance and the process for administrative policy amendments.

### Naming of roads

Council supported a proposal to name multiple internal roads across the Burwood, Geelong Waurin Ponds and Warrnambool campuses that do not have official names.

### Committee reports

Council received the minutes from recent meetings of its committees, including reports on progress against the University's Gender-based Violence Action Plan and reports to advance gender equity and achieve a more balanced workforce profile.

### Special acknowledgement

Council expressed its deep appreciation to Dr Glenn Nicholls, University Council Secretary, who retired from the University on 7 August 2026, acknowledging his almost 15 years providing a high level of support to Council and the governing bodies. Council paid tribute to Dr Nicholls' outstanding stewardship of Council and university governance.

## Presentation

Council received a presentation from Deakin Distinguished Professor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous, Mark Rose, on indigenous strategy and innovation in the age of Treaty.

Council congratulated Professor Rose on his appointment as First Nations Commissioner of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC), acknowledging the significant role he has played in advancing indigenous education, not only at Deakin University but across the wider higher education landscape.

## Concluding matters

In closing the meeting, the Chancellor acknowledged the dedicated work across the University on the range of important items considered at the meeting.

The next Council meeting will be held on 1 October 2026.

## Disclaimer

Please note that 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. It has regard to the need for decisions of the governing body to be kept confidential for legal or commercial reasons.

Inquiries and requests for further information can be directed to the University Council Secretary at [council-secretary@deakin.edu.au](mailto:council-secretary@deakin.edu.au).

## Further information

Please see the [Council's webpage](#) for detailed information on Council's membership, committees, Charter, annual business schedule, Operating Provisions, Operating Protocol and reports addressing a range of governance matters.

Please see the University's [Policy Library](#) for:

- University Statute and Regulations, including the Council Regulations
- Council approved policies relating to the governance of the University, including the University's Policy Framework.

The Objects (aims) of the University (from s 5 of the Deakin University Act) are as follows:

- (a) to provide and maintain a teaching and learning environment of excellent quality offering higher education at an international standard;
- (b) to provide vocational education and training, further education and other forms of education determined by the University to support and complement the provision of higher education by the University;
- (c) to undertake scholarship, pure and applied research, invention, innovation, education and consultancy of international standing and to apply those matters to the advancement of knowledge and to the benefit of the well-being of the Victorian, Australian and international communities;
- (d) to equip graduates of the University to excel in their chosen careers and to contribute to the life of the community;
- (e) to serve the Victorian, Australian and international communities and the public interest by—

- (i) enriching cultural and community life;
  - (ii) elevating public awareness of educational, scientific and artistic developments;
  - (iii) promoting critical and free enquiry, informed intellectual discourse and public debate within the University and in the wider society;
- (f) to use its expertise and resources to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia in its teaching, learning, research and advancement of knowledge activities and thereby contribute to—
    - (i) realising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations; and
    - (ii) the safeguarding of the ancient and rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage;
  - (g) to provide programs and services in a way that reflects principles of equity and social justice;
  - (h) to confer degrees and grant diplomas, certificates and other awards;
  - (i) to utilise or exploit its expertise and resources, whether commercially or otherwise.