

Accountability, Governance and Data

Co-Chairs: Hanah Rodriguez Colombo and Kailing Shen

Sponsors: Steven Roberts and Jonathan Churchill

Group members (alphabetic order): Ananyo Chakraborty, Divya Sahgal, Euan McNaughton, Friederike Gadow, Jay Prentice, Nicole Lawder, Patricia Teh, Philippe Bois, Sabeegah Jaldin, Sally Hall Dykgraaf, Sharon Sidhu, Sophie Holloway, Susan Danta, Yiming Cai



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A Shift to Embedded Accountability and Fit-For-Purpose Governance

Our Mandate: Build Trust, Establish Legitimate Accountability

Method: Rigorous Analysis, Targeted Stakeholder Engagement, Inclusive Communication.

The Five Pillars of Reform:

1. Robust Information Warehouse --- Accurate and Open Data used Responsibly and Ethically
2. Positive Practices --- Highlight Success & Drive Cultural Models
3. Trusted Reporting --- Safe, Prompt, and Consequential Feedback
4. Leadership Development --- Close Skill Gaps & Embed Cultural Stewardship
5. Process Streamlining --- Reduce Barriers, Enhance Operational Efficiency

Key Focus: Legitimacy, Incentives and Prioritise



Recommendation 1 - Accountability

Accountability systems should clearly identify who is responsible for the success of performance measures and there should be consequences for success or failure in achieving them.

1. Introduce regular **public reviews** in relation to academic units and professional divisions by the Vice-Chancellor, Provost and relevant senior executives.
2. All initiatives should include specific **agreed performance measures** and **implementation timeframes**, and the individuals should be accountable for their success.
3. Consult relevant areas on operationalising of strategic initiatives and ensure performance measures are in **alignment with the University's overall values and purposes**.
4. Ensure that at every level there are **appropriate consequences** for the success or failure to achieve agreed performance measures.



Current state - weak managerial culture and significant trust deficits

Erosion of trust and credibility - Culture of Complacency

- **Accountability** is largely absent or superficial, creating a sense of “governance theatre.”
- **Performance** monitoring is perceived as tokenistic and performative rather than impactful.
- **Underperformance** is tolerated, leading to staff disengagement.
- **Internal reviews** are not visible and shared transparently

Poor and inconsistent implementation of strategic initiatives

- **Public reviews** have proven ineffective, with past recommendations consistently unimplemented.
- **Key projects:** little incentive to follow through on commitments.
- **Execution** is inconsistent. Missed opportunities for innovation and improvement
- **Performance measurement** is poorly executed and opaque.
- **Consequences for success or failure** applied unevenly across the university.



Develop a transparent and fit for purpose accountability framework

Transparency in Reporting

- Implement reporting mechanisms to capture governance outcomes and decisions.
- Ensure transparent compliance with existing policies and regulatory requirements.
- Establish independent oversight for major initiatives to maintain objectivity.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Clearly articulate and consistently apply performance-linked consequences (both positive and corrective).
- Demonstrate accountability at senior levels, with leadership “walking the walk” through expected behaviors.
- Hold senior leaders accountable for task completion and addressing poor performance.
- Assign executive sponsors to major initiatives, with designated individuals responsible for delivering results.
- Establish clear escalation pathways for non-compliance or underperformance.

Progress Indicators

- Establish broadly applicable people-management KPIs (e.g., employee turnover, absenteeism, WHS incidents per 100 employees)
- University wide and College/School/Divisions initiatives underpinned by clear KPIs and timelines
- Monitor compliance with existing policies and regulatory requirements to drive continuous improvement



Build Management Culture and Leadership Capability

- Publish on the ANU website an **Accountability Calendar** identifying governance milestones and departments review schedule.
- Review and refine **committee structures** to ensure clarity of purpose, decision rights, and reporting lines
- Ensure governance oversight is active throughout **the lifecycle of initiatives** not just at initiation or closure.
- Invest in **targeted training** for leaders.
- Flag funds and build tailored data literacy through **persona-based training**, equipping leaders and staff to make confident, insight-driven decisions.
- Facilitate **mentoring** between experienced and emerging leaders,
- Celebrate areas that have been successful or shown **good behaviours**.
- Run pilot of **people-management KPI** set.
- Align accountability mechanisms with the **Enterprise Risk Management Framework** and strategic priorities.
- Consider workplace accountability, culture and equity recommendations as they arise from the ANU **Governance project**



Nixon Review Recommendation 8

Create a single accountability mechanism for strategic oversight of interconnected equity and wellbeing challenges

8.2 Through the Community Safety and Wellbeing Committee, provide consistent monitoring of actions and evaluation of major strategic initiatives including the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Gender Equity Strategy, the Disability Action Plan and the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy.

8.3 Be accountable to Council on institutional performance against wellbeing metrics and targets

8.4 Oversee and report on initiatives such as SAGE Athena Swan, Champions for Change,

8.5 Oversee and report on internal initiatives such as complaints and sexual assault/sexual harassment reporting and reporting under the National Code.



Current State

Siloed and Disconnected

Data is collected through a variety of sources, housed within individual business units, schools, service division, with minimal integration across systems and is heavily siloed.

While various metrics are reported to Council and its various sub-committees , it is unclear if anything results from this.

This siloed environment presents several challenges:

- Barriers to Decision making
- Limited visibility across functions
- Manual and redundant processes

The reporting is currently being reviewed to ensure compliance with the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence (enforced 1 Jan 2026).



Working Group Recommendations

Community Safety and Wellbeing Committee

- Review the current Committee's composition and ensure that any review of membership reflects the need for strong connections to ANU operational contexts, in alignment with the Nixon Review and the National Code. -- *fill vacancies promptly!*
- Oversee progress for implementation of action plans, assignment of accountability and alignment with all wellbeing related strategies for both students and staff
- Promote strong data literacy among Committee members
- Publish meeting minutes - to ensure transparency (while also ensuring privacy and confidentiality).

Increase Accountability

- Establish clear ownership – assign data stewards or custodians for high-risk data domains of data (e.g. specific DVC) and have the Executive hold owners accountable
- Create policies outlining how critical/confidential wellbeing data is collected, validated, stored, and shared (Align with broader institutional data governance initiatives)
- Build on the metrics being developed by People and Culture to measure various initiatives. These indicators should be visible as needed for accountability
- Commit to public reporting of harmful behaviour disclosures and formal reports for students and staff starting immediately



Working Group Recommendations – cont.

Aligned Data and Reporting

- Review current data sources and systems for alignment with the National Code best practice principles and a focus on long term sustainability (rather than interim solutions which will risk further siloing). Recommend changes to source systems
- Develop a unified data dashboard and reporting framework with clear indicators, risk considerations to consolidate inputs across Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Gender Equity Strategy, the Disability Action Plan and the Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy to avoid overlaps in reporting and improve transparency. This dashboard must be appropriately resourced and prioritised, with clear accountability for delivery.
- Provide directive for cross-unit participation in documenting implementation (“process data”), with agreed templates, definitions, and reporting frequency.
- Commission Legal, IT and Privacy Office to define privacy and de-identification standards, including secure processes for data-sharing with external stakeholders (e.g. DoE).
- National Code will require tracking timeframes for resolving complaints (these are referred to as 'Formal Reports' by the Dept and must be finalised within 45 business days, including finalisation of a disciplinary process - 5.15). There should be clear thresholds and success, failures, and government reports for this should be made visible and public. Ensure caution is taken to avoid compliance theatre, tick and flick compliance.



Finding 5: Poorly designed systems of work – tenure, teaching, research and service – contribute to exploitation, discrimination, and bullying

Recommendation 10: Service commitments and administrative support should be allocated fairly and transparently

10.1 Consult with Schools when significant changes to load planning are contemplated

10.2 Conduct a comprehensive review of the allocation and performance of service commitments across the schools and publish the results internally

10.3 From the various information uncovered under 10.2, circulate information about what various service obligations entail and the time required to competently perform them, to enable people to accurately understand expectations and plan for delivery



Working Group Recommendations

Conduct these reviews

- Draft guidelines for ANU best practice
 - Areas that are currently working well / other universities
- Consult with local areas
- Set clear expectations
- Publish the results

Incentivise and celebrate service



Moving forward

Besides what we have covered, we recommend

- Continued community consultation;
- Transparency by default;
- Governance project;

