

**THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
COUNCIL MINUTES**

The 496<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council was held, out of session, at **4.30pm (AEST) on Tuesday 19 August 2025** by Zoom videoconferencing.

**Members present**

1. Chancellor, the Hon Julie Bishop
2. Pro-Chancellor, Ms Alison Kitchen
3. Vice-Chancellor, Distinguished Professor Genevieve Bell
4. Ms Padma Raman PSM
5. Ms Tanya Hosch
6. The Hon Wayne Martin
7. Mr Andrew Metcalfe AO
8. Professor Juliana Ng
9. Professor Lyndall Strazdins
10. Ms Megan Easton
11. Ms Brenna Barker-Lamb
12. Mr Will Burfoot
13. Professor Tony Connolly

**Apologies**

1. Dr Larry Marshall
2. Mr Rob Whitfield AM

**Secretariat**

1. University Secretary, Mr Phillip Tweedie
2. Manager Corporate Governance & Policy, CGRO - Ms Leslie McDonald

## PART 1 – PROCEDURAL ITEMS

### 1 PROCEDURAL ITEMS

#### Announcements and Apologies

The Chancellor noted:

- Welcome to Mr. Wayne Martin and Mr. Andrew Metcalfe, joining their first meeting of Council as members.
- Mr. Larry Marshall and Mr. Rob Whitfield are an apology for the meeting.
- Mr. Francis Markham resigned from Council on 11 August 2025. The University Governance Office is taking steps to commence an election to fill this casual vacancy.

The Chancellor further noted:

- The purpose of the meeting was to consider a paper prepared by the COO regarding the ANU response to allegations about a workplace grievance complaint raised in the Senate hearing on 12 August 2025 and was the only agenda item;
- There had been further public testimony given at the Senate Inquiry and that the ANU had been given a right of reply by 8 September 2025;
- Due to the adverse reflections made against the Chancellor and other senior officers at the ANU, the Chair of the Senate Committee had also offered them personal right of reply protected by parliamentary privilege;
- Prior to the 12 August hearing, she had no knowledge of and had been given no notice of the workplace grievance complaint, nor of the allegations made at the hearing, but would recuse herself from this meeting.
- The Chancellor noted that as several members had raised concerns about developing a corporate plan and strategic overview, the Chancellor proposed to bring back to Council a number of options and in the meantime referred members to the fact that at the 14 June 2024 Council meeting it was resolved to adopt the Corporate Plan as the key strategic plan of the University, replacing the ANU 2025 Strategic Plan.
  - Members noted that their concerns were regards to future state and that the Corporate Plan, while outlining KPIs and the University's performance against them, is insufficient to guide change and set community expectations.

The Vice-Chancellor noted:

- There would be an announcement tomorrow (20 August) that there will be no further change proposals released this year and no further forced redundancies;
- The University will also open a new round of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme and confirmed that this has communicated to the Minister, relevant politicians, the Education Department, the NTEU and media outlets (under embargo until the announcement).

#### Disclosure of Material Personal Interest

- The Chancellor noted that as she had been named in the Senate Inquiry, the subject matter of this agenda, she would recuse from the meeting and suggested Ms Tanya Hosch preside as Chair, as the next longest serving member of Council, given the Pro-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor would also excuse themselves from the meeting;
- Both the Pro-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor excused;
- There were no other declarations by other members at this time.

There was a discussion about the fact that most Council members and some executive staff were witness to some or all the events referred to in the Senate hearing particularly a Council meeting on 14 February 2025 and noted that Ms Hosch was not in attendance that day.

*The Chancellor handed the chair to Ms. Hosch, and the Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor left the meeting at 4.47pm AEST.*

## PART 2 – KEY BUSINESS ITEM

### \*2 ANU RESPONSE TO MATTERS RAISED IN THE SENATE HEARING ON 12 AUGUST 2025

The Chair called on the Chief Operating Officer to report on the paper circulated. In discussion Mr Churchill noted, and Council discussed that:

- The University has been active in relation to its WHS obligations to ensure health and safety and had contacted the staff and students who appeared, were named or associated with the Senate Inquiry last week;
  - The allegations by Dr Allen against the Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor contained in her workplace grievance have now been brought into the public domain and it is proposed that the University consider appointing an external independent investigator to investigate those allegations;
  - The proposal is for a two-stage process; first a scoping stage managed by a steering group engaging with Dr Allen to reach an agreed scope to proceed to investigation stage;
  - He noted that the original complaint was unable to proceed to the investigation stage, and that the subjects of the complaint were never notified;
  - The University is required to make a range of responses to the Senate including questions on notice and the right of reply more broadly;
  - In relation to Dr Allen's testimony, he had sought advice from the Chief People Officer, the General Counsel, Professor Nixon and the Chancellor of another prominent University, on how to deal with it now it is public and the rights of privacy, confidentiality and protection of reputation are no longer available under the original complaint;
  - He had also spoken to the CEO of TEQSA on how to align our response with TEQSA's self-assurance process and was advised that the self-assurance exercise would look at general matters but not investigate specific allegations.
  - He has also spoken to Mr Andrew Metcalfe and the Provost about the composition of a proposed governance group.
  - A summary of the advice he had received was that it was important to:
    - manage conflicts and prevent involvement of conflicted parties;
    - obtain independent external legal advice on how to respond;
    - take a trauma informed approach and ensure all parties are safe and supported;
    - subject to the legal advice, consider an eminent person to do an independent investigation into the workplace grievance allegations and consider the impact of making public the terms of reference and findings (privacy concerns).
- [REDACTED]
- In discussion Council noted that it was still important for Council and senior management to ensure that allegations raised regarding cultural issues be addressed.

#### **Resolved:**

#### **That Council endorse:**

1. That the University's response to the workplace complaint should be developed by a group operating independently from the Council members who are potential witnesses to the events in question;
2. That this governance group should seek immediate external and independent legal advice to inform the University's response, and other expert advice as deemed necessary, before determining next steps;
3. That the group comprise Mr Andrew Metcalfe (as Chair), Professor Christine Nixon, Professor Rebekah Brown and Mr Jonathan Churchill;
4. That the group will develop a trauma informed communications strategy for all stakeholders, using appropriate legal and expert advice; and
5. That Council will be kept informed of progress of this investigation.

## PART 3 – OTHER BUSINESS

### 3 OTHER BUSINESS AND NEXT MEETING

The Chair opened discussion on the broader allegations around culture raised in the testimony to the Senate hearing, noting her own experience with reviews on culture which need a firm underpinning of trust to enable processes to be credible.

Council noted that further information is needed to enable the development of a plan of action and next steps to address allegations around the culture of Council and management. Council requested a flow chart of the current review processes and timelines underway, which the COO agreed to provide.

**Resolved:**

Council **noted** additional information will be provided to enable the development of a plan of action in relation to addressing allegations around the culture of Council and Management.

The meeting closed at 6.23pm

