THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MINUTES

The 498th meeting of the Council was held at **8.30am (AEST) on Friday 3 October 2025** in the Mills Room, Chancelry.

Members present

- 1. Chancellor, the Hon Julie Bishop
- 2. Pro-Chancellor, Ms Alison Kitchen
- 3. Interim Vice-Chancellor, Professor Rebekah Brown
- 4. Dr Larry Marshall
- 5. Ms Padma Raman PSM
- 6. Ms Tanya Hosch
- 7. The Hon Wayne Martin AC KC
- 8. Mr Andrew Metcalfe AO
- 9. Mr Rob Whitfield AM
- 10. Professor Juliana Ng
- 11. Professor Lyndall Strazdins
- 12. Ms Megan Easton
- 13. Ms Brenna Barker-Lamb
- 14. Mr Will Burfoot
- 15. Professor Tony Connolly

Apologies

There were no apologies.

In attendance

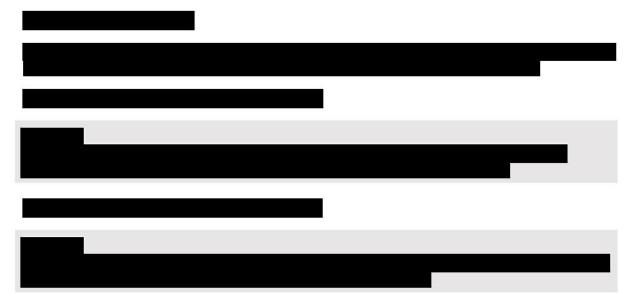
- 16. Chief Operating Officer (COO) Mr Jonathan Churchill
- 17. Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Mr Michael Lonergan
- 18. Ms Lynelle Briggs AO Observer and TEQSA investigator (until 12.50pm)

Secretariat

- 19. University Secretary, Mr Phillip Tweedie
- 20. Manager Corporate Governance & Policy, UGO Ms Leslie McDonald
- 21. Senior Administrator, UGO Ms Elizabeth Johnson

Observers (for Items 8, 14, 17)

- 22. Dr Marija Taflaga
- 23. Dr Jessie Moritz



Following the conclusion of its members only session, Council commenced the main section of the meeting following a short break.

1 PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Announcements and Apologies

- The Chancellor:
 - Welcomed Ms Lynelle Briggs, AO, to observe the meeting. Ms Briggs is the independent expert appointed by TEQSA to support their compliance exercise.
 - Thanked the Interim Vice-Chancellor, COO and CFO for organising briefings outside of Council meetings for internal members.
 - Noted that there are no apologies for this meeting, and that two members are joining online: Alison Kitchen and Andrew Metcalfe.
 - Noted that the 2025 ANUSA elections results have been finalised, and two new student members will join Council from 1 December 2025. Charley Ellwood (also ANUSA President) will join as the undergraduate member and Bruce Pan as the postgraduate member. Both will attend the November meeting of Council as observers.

Leave of Absence

There were no additional requests from members for any leave of absence.

Disclosure of Material Personal Interest

- The Chancellor noted that the register has been updated following the disclosures of the newly appointed Interim Vice-Chancellor. It has also been updated to reflect Tanya Hosch's appointment as a member of the National Library of Australia Council, and the Chancellor congratulated her on that appointment on behalf of Council.
- Council noted Rob Whitfield's disclosure that he is acquainted with Ms Kim Jackson, who has been nominated for an honorary degree at Item 19.

Arrangement of Agenda

- No further items were starred for discussion.
- The Chancellor noted that material within the reports from the Interim Vice-Chancellor, the Chief Operating Officer (including particularly Information Security) and the Chief Financial Officer are listed as confidential. She reminded Council that while information in the Committee Membership, Honorary Degree and Honorific Naming papers are not listed as confidential, members should refrain from discussing names outside of Council until arrangements are confirmed and announced.
- The Chancellor further noted that Items 15 and 16 the Corporate Plan and Annual Report (Assurance Plan) are unstarred. She called on the Interim Vice-Chancellor to give a brief update on plans and on the ANU Strategic Plan:

- The Interim Vice-Chancellor noted that the University's Strategic Plan expires in December 2025, and that work will start in November on planning for the next strategic plan process.
- Council noted that the strategic plan will form part of discussions at Council's February 2026 Planning Meeting.
- Ms Briggs will be given an opportunity to speak to Council following Matters Arising.
- Item 11 Nixon Taskforce Report and Item 12 ANU Renew will be discussed as part of Item 4 Interim VC's Report.
- Item 7 Safety & Wellbeing Report and Item 10 Vice-President (Advancement)'s Report will follow immediately following the Interim Vice-Chancellor's update.
- Item 9 Debt Issuance and Item 13 2026 Budget will be discussed immediately following Item 6 CFO's Report.
- ▶ Item 25 Other business will include a discussion regarding the investigation into the unauthorised leaking of confidential Council information. Relevant material has been provided on Convene.

Council approved that the unstarred items be dealt with as proposed in the agenda.

Minutes

- The following requests were made for amendments to the minutes of the meeting on 1 August 2025 which were agreed to by Council:
 - Item 1 Procedural Items (confidential session) Disclosure of Material Personal Interest – Point 2: "..... disclosed that their areas are indirectly impacted by change plans" to read "disclosed that their areas are affected to different degrees by the change plans".
 - Item 4 Vice-Chancellor's Report add a new Council discussion dot point:
 "...Council noted: the discussion on the need for a Strategic Plan".
 - The Notice of Motion to be referenced and attached to the minutes.
 - Item 14 ANUSA Constitutional Amendments ANUSA President presentation Point 1: "When ANUSA combined with the Postgraduate and Research Students' Association..." to read "When ANUSA took over the Postgraduate and Research Students' Association...".
- The Chancellor handed the Chair to Ms Tanya Hosch to discuss the minutes of the meeting of 19 August, which she chaired. The following requests were made for amendments to the minutes of the meeting on 19 August 2025:
 - Item 1 Procedural Items Announcements and Apologies A member requested that "no further forced redundancies" should specify "outside of the agreed change proposals". Council noted that the minutes reflect the discussion in the meeting and that this clarification was made subsequently to the meeting.
 - Similarly, in response to another query from a Council member, the scope of the Special Governance Committee, was initially limited to the grievance issues at the meeting on 19 August but was expanded to encompass the broader concerns raised at Senate Estimates in a decision after that meeting.
 - There were, therefore, no changes made to the minutes of the meeting on 19 August 2025.

Resolved: Council:

- Approved, with agreed amendments where relevant, the minutes of the Council meetings held on:
 - o 1 August 2025
 - 19 August 2025
 - o 10 September 2025
- Noted the out of session endorsement given by Council to the Special Governance Charter on 17 September.

2 MATTERS ARISING

The Chancellor noted:

- None are proposed for closure; and
- Matter 2, in relation to the Debt Issuance paper at Item 9, will remain open until the next meeting of Council when it should be formally closed.

Council noted the Matters Arising as updated.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION - MS LYNELLE BRIGGS AO

- The Chancellor introduced Ms Briggs and gave a synopsis of her background as a former Public Service Commissioner, Chief Executive of Medicare and Royal Commissioner.
- Ms Briggs made the following comments on her appointment and the work she will undertake, noting:
 - She has been engaged by TEQSA to look at governance standards at the University and will speak to key individuals in a focused review taking approximately 30 days which will look at governance rather than administration.
 - Her report will examine the University's finances and explore associated cultural issues.
 - Her presence at this meeting is part of her observation of ANU governance.
 - She will seek to gain a general perspective on the University's governance, culture and reputation and the impact they may have on performance.
- In discussion, Council noted:
 - Ms Briggs will attend Academic Board next week and is meeting with Deans collectively. She will also meet with the Governance Project group.

PART 2 - KEY BUSINESS ITEMS

3 CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

- The Chancellor provided an update on activities undertaken since the previous meeting including:
 - Correspondence with regulators, FOI requests, questions on notice, right of reply to the Senate Inquiry and preparation for attendance at Senate Estimates.
 - Meetings around the resignation of Vice-Chancellor Bell and negotiations for the Interim Vice-Chancellor's appointment, including meetings with the Deans and General Managers, the leadership group and individual members of the Vice-Chancellor's office.
 - Other meetings were held with ACT politicians, Ms Jillian Segal, Professor Nixon, the ANU Governance Project, representatives of the Professoriate and correspondence with the Hon Tony Burke MP.
 - Attendance at the Kambri Scholarship celebration event, noting that this is an example of ANU excellence, with a \$50m fund supporting 75 Kambri scholars at the University at any one time.
- > The Chancellor further noted:
 - The former Vice-Chancellor and her staff will be provided the same support as all other University employees.
- In discussion, Council noted:
 - The NTEU petition received on 12 September including discussions held by the Interim Vice-Chancellor with the NTEU.
 - The IVC indicated that the NTEU delegates expressed satisfaction that there would be no more involuntary redundancies.
 - The IVC further noted that the Deans were unanimous in wanting stability for the University.
 - The groundbreaking work in achieving the establishment of the Centre for Indigenous Economic Transformation by Peter Yu was acknowledged.
 - The ANUSA Motion and Special General Meeting held on 17 Septembers was noted.

Council noted the Chancellor's Report.

4 INTERIM VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

4A UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

11 NIXON TASKFORCE REPORT

12 RENEW ANU

- The Interim Vice-Chancellor spoke to Item 4, IVC Report, Item 4A University Executive and Management Framework, Item 11 Nixon Taskforce Report, and Item 12 Renew ANU noting:
 - The provisions of the Enterprise Agreement prevent pre-consultation of change, and the adverse impact this has had on the implementation of Renew ANU.
 - An outline of her background and experience, and what she brings to the role of Interim Vice-Chancellor.
 - The engagement she has undertaken with the University community and key stakeholders during her first two weeks in the role.
 - The ANU collective co-design exercise she has commenced, which is in design phase now, and should take around 9 to 12 months to fully implement. The roadmap will include foundational work on stability including the completion of Renew ANU; rebuilding trust with staff surveys, a focus on developing staff leadership skills and a new budget model which will incentivise growth and control expenditure; and finally a community-led codesign of the University future strategy with a focus on revenue (including international student revenue and marketing), academic excellence and improving reputation.
 - In relation to rankings, the IVC provided figures on the University's decline in rankings from No.19 in QS rankings in 2016 to No. 32 in 2026. She emphasised the importance of retaining talent for improving international student enrolments and noted that it may take up to six years, with the lag in ranking data, to show real improvements.
 - A management framework for the University Executive and management is being developed, with the current proposal being provided at Item 4A. Although this is not seeking the approval of Council, it is being provided for information and feedback.
 - The Nixon Review implementation is progressing well, with a full report provided at Item 11. The IVC gave an overview of the work undertaken by the Working Groups under the guidance of the Steering Group and indicated that the first progress review is due in January 2026, with the second in October 2026. Both will be reported to Council.

In discussion, Council noted:

- the draft proposed management framework, particularly the role of the CFO and CPO in the University Executive as 'may attend, as required'. Feedback provided was that it would be normal in most organisations for the CFO and perhaps the CPO to be part of the senior executive.
 - The inclusion of Research School Directors in the Management tier was also flagged. The IVC agreed to bring the structure back to Council for information as it develops.
- The resourcing issues being experienced in the Office of the IVC with the recent resignation of the Vice-Chancellor and resulting staff impacts. Council further noted that the IVC is working with the COO and CPO to address the issues and provide appropriate support to Professor Brown.

Resolved:

Council:

- 1. Noted the Interim Vice-Chancellor's report on Items 4, 4A, 11 and 12; and
- 2. Noted the draft proposed management framework, which will come back to Council for information as it develops.

The Chair of the Student Safety and Wellbeing Committee, Ms Catherine Fitzpatrick, the Director of Residential Experience, Director of University Experience and Senior Manager of Workplace Health and Safety joined the meeting for discussion of Items 7A, 7B.

7A SAFETY & WELLBEING REPORT TO COUNCIL: RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE - PORTFOLIO UPDATE

7B SAFETY & WELLBEING REPORT TO COUNCIL: ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO UPDATE

The Chair of the Safety & Wellbeing Committee, Director of Residential Experience, Director of University Experience and Senior Manager of Workplace Health and Safety spoke to the papers for Items 7A and 7B, outlining discussion at the Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

In discussion, the Council noted:

- That staff sentiment, including Pulse data, is reported to the Committee, which has discussed how assessing culture will help with strategy.
- WHS controls, in relation to the stop work order, provide support to both academic and professional staff.
- In relation to the significant difference in numbers of incidents in residences, that the size of the residence is a factor, as well as the makeup of student residents. Bruce and Wright Halls have more undergraduate students, but other Halls have more postgraduates with a different variety of incidents. A Student Critical Incident Procedure is in place to handle these matters.

Resolved:

Council:

- Noted the updates from the Academic Portfolio and from the Residential Experience Division; and
- Noted and endorsed the Work Health and Safety Performance summary for the period 1 January to 31 August 2025.

The Vice-President (Advancement) and the Chair of the Foundation Board joined the meeting for discussion of Item 10.

10 VICE-PRESIDENT (ADVANCEMENT)'S REPORT

- > The VP (Advancement) spoke to the paper provided in the pack
- Council thanked Mr Furman and Mr Olsson for their report and, in discussion, noted:
 - The University must prioritise the efficient use of funds and respect the wishes of donors in doing so.
 - The VP Advancement noted that work is underway with Finance & Business Services to address risks associated with the use of philanthropic funds and education is being provided to colleges.
 - Potential donor concerns given are being actively managed.
 - The VP Advancement indicated that there had been some positive signs, and that risks are perceived to be low. He indicated his confidence that trust can be retained.
 - The CFO confirmed improvements in usage and budget control, noting that some areas had been holding onto philanthropic funds and spending from their recurrent budgets instead.
 - Advancement is also discouraging highly bespoke gifts that create future, often impossible, obligations on the University.
 - There are currently two vacancies on the Foundation Board and members are asked to give any suggestions of potential candidates to Alex. Consideration should be given to the importance of cultural diversity when identifying suitable replacement members.

Council **noted** the update and performance reports provided.

The Chief Operating Officer was joined by the Chief Information Technology Officer and the Chief Information Security Officer for Item 5.

5 COO'S REPORT

- The Chief Operating Officer spoke to the paper provided
- In discussion, Council noted:
 - In relation to the Fair Work Ombudsman, the importance of ensuring underpayments were remediated as quickly as possible and that the University should ensure that it is confident that the risk of any future recurrence is minimised.



The Vice-Chancellor noted that Council had decided four years ago on the major long-term investment in the Digital Plan. This should be independently evaluated periodically, and, given the size of the investment, she gave an undertaking that the University would undertake a review and report back to Council.

Resolved:

Council:

- 1. Noted the COO's Report;
- 2. Noted the Information Security Update;
- 3. In relation to the Network Modernisation Program:
 - Approved the Network Modernisation Program (NMP) business case that funding of \$37.02 million is made available for the period 2025–2029 from the Digital Plan allocation;
 - **b. Noted** the increase in total ongoing cost of approximately \$2.6m p.a., which will be required progressively at the conclusion of each program initiative; and
 - c. Approved the accelerated implementation approach for the NMP, which is projected to reduce exposure by 21% within the expedited timeline and will be delivered within the current \$37.02 million budget envelope by advancing nominated expenditure to earlier years.
- 4. Noted the recent activities from the ANU Remediation program of work.

6 CFO'S REPORT

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- The Chief Financial Officer spoke to a presentation and the paper provided in the pack, noting:
 - Insurance renewal is on track, and a report will come to the next AFRC and Council in November.
 - The YTD financial results and Q3 forecast, which show the University is on track to meet the financial revenue target, although international student fees are slightly lower than budget.
 - In terms of expenses, salaries are forecast under budget, benefitting from the VSS scheme, although some areas remain over budget. Non-salary expenses are forecast to pick up slightly towards year end, although not as much as expected. This is also potentially an area of additional savings.

- The cash position is close to the start of the year, which is good news as we are not using cash reserves, helped by much lower CAPEX.
- Council thanked the CFO for his report and, in discussion, noted:
 - The CFO has prepared information for TEQSA on the University's finances and is working with ANAO on accounting principles.
 - The importance of coherence in decision making, factoring in risk in WHS with service reforms, revenue generation and financial controls. Decisions in one area need to consider all inter-related decision points.
 - Consideration needs to be given to the activities in areas not funded that should have been undertaken such as infrastructure. The CFO confirmed that analysis has not yet been carried out on the impact on research and growth activities. A close eye also needs to be kept on the salary figures, particularly in relation to projected VSS and attrition figures.
 - Discussion on attrition needs to reflect the actuality of what that means in the workplace and the flow on affects for morale and workload. The IVC agreed, noting that she is meeting with staff wherever she can to provide reassurance and encouragement to stay.

Council noted:

- 1. The report from the CFO;
- The University's August 2025 year-to-date financial results as compared to the 2025 Budget and Q3 2025 Forecast;
- That insurance renewal terms will be approved by the Interim Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the Chair of the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee and finalised prior to 31 October 2025; and
- 4. The 2024 HERDC return and the unmodified audit opinion issued by RSM.

The Chief Finance Officer was joining by the Director of the Investment Office, Ms Mary Fallon for Item 9.

9 DEBT ISSUANCE

The Chancellor noted that the resolutions for this item, if accepted, will be circulated via Convene at the meeting for member approval, as an immediate record of Council's decision to allow the Team to proceed with this process.



 A communication strategy should be in place for implementation following this transaction, to explain the background to the University community and stakeholders such as TEQSA and ANAO. The communication would include the benefits in reducing future interest costs of \$4.9m annually.

Resolved:

Council:

- approved the issuance of \$100 million in new Notes by ANU under its existing Medium-Term Note (MTN) program;
- approved the financial delegation to the Interim Vice-Chancellor (VC) to approve the transaction size of \$100 million plus associated costs upon the CFO and COO's endorsement:
- 3. **approved** the Interim VC as authorised signatory to execute relevant documentation for the transaction [including the Transaction Documents];
- 4. **approved** the financial delegation to the CFO to approve the price of the Notes issuance upon consultation and agreement with the Chair of the Investment Committee,
- 5. approved the payment of principal
- noted that, subject to Council approval of the above, evidence of Council approval will need to be provided to third parties to enable the transaction to proceed.

13 2026 BUDGET AND 2027 TO 2030 FORWARD ESTIMATES

- The CFO spoke to the report, noting:
 - 2025 budget principles and delivery targets, the forecast for the revised budget model has the University reaching a break-even operating result by the end of 2026 with strict expenditure controls in place and a greater focus on revenue raising. This includes some risks around lower student income into 2026, savings from VSS, IVR and attritions, plus further reductions in non-salary expenditure.
 - As part of the focus on growing revenue under the new model, the University has
 the capacity to increase international student numbers in 2026 where we have not
 been meeting our allocation. In addition, the University is seeking to increase
 domestic load.
- In discussion. Council noted:
 - That people who have changed their minds about taking a VSS, after a position has been disestablished, are put on a redeployment pool and nearly all have found other jobs at the institution. Most are professional staff. Assumptions made on the second round of the VSS are at around 70%.
 - Three of the University's Colleges are adjusting well due to underspend and have been adjusted back up to their budget to not penalise them for performing well. A further two Colleges are tracking on budget and only CASS is over budget.
 - With budgeting processes, there has traditionally been a lack equity of resources across areas of the University, affecting professional staff access to training and support. This should be a priority to ensure retention of key professional staff. The CFO acknowledged the issue and indicated that some work has been done on trying to introduce equity to non-salary costs, particularly because of professional staff realignment in areas such as Finance. The IVC also acknowledged the traditional focus on Colleges because of their revenue bases, but that portfolios and divisions also require attention in this regard.
 - The risks of lack of diversification in the international student market was discussed, with the IVC acknowledging that this is a problem across the whole sector nationally and internationally.
 - That the University needs to ensure it has enough flexibility for shoring up its cyber defences, as discussed in a previous item. The CFO indicated that he would take this on notice and come back on it. One of areas of underspend is on the Digital Plan, so will look at accelerating spend and what risk that offsets.

Resolved:

Council:

approved the financial target of a break-even operating result for 2026, excluding ANU
Digital Plan costs and other non-recurring adjustments and the assumptions used for the
2026 Preliminary Target (the base case); and

approved that the \$250m reduction in the recurring cost base by 1 January 2026, (comprising \$100m of salary and \$150m of non-salary reductions) is superceded.

Drs Taflaga & Moritz joined the meeting.

8 ACADEMIC BOARD REPORT

- The Chair of Academic Board spoke to the report, providing a summary of Academic Board issues, noting particularly:
 - The work being done on the Go8 definition of antisemitism including a meeting with Jillian Segal.
 - The decision taken by Academic Board regarding the Music Program in the School of Music which was the culmination of a process begun two years ago to consult, review and extensively benchmark the program and come up with a contemporary model.
 - The review process was not related to any change plan and Academic Board approved the new Program based on the curriculum following extensive discussion and on the endorsement of the Academic Quality Assurance
 - Work is currently underway to consider how the Board will manage academic risk, with a Working Group having been established.
- The Chancellor thanked Professor Connolly for his report.

Resolved:

Council **noted** the resolutions approved by Academic Board at Meeting 4/2025 held on 19 August 2025.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joan Leach, and Pro Vice-Chancellor (International & Future Students), Mr Scott Pearsall, and Chief Planning & Data Officer, Ms Richelle Hilton, joined the meeting for Item 14.

14 STUDENT ENROLMENT PROGRESS (2 OF 2)

> The Interim Vice-Chancellor spoke to the report, noting:



- We have had the largest ever ASA round with 5000 acceptances. These are early numbers but may be of enduring financial benefit over several years.
- Council thanked the IVC, Professor Leach, Mr Pearsall and Ms Hilton for their report.

Resolved:

Council **noted** the Student Load and Enrolment Performance Report.

17 COUNCIL SELF-ASSESSMENT UPDATE

- The University Secretary spoke to the report, noting:
 - Although not required by the Charter, that the Chancellor has requested that this review is conducted by an independent third party.
 - The University is seeking quotations from several providers with experience in conducting Council Reviews. This list was finalised in consultation with TEQSA through the Chancellor's Office.
 - Quotations will be reviewed by a panel, and a provider will be recommended to the Chancellor.
 - The provider will be expected to liaise as required with Ms Briggs.
- In discussion, Council noted:
 - The importance of ensuring that the review provides actionable recommendations in time to be discussed at the February planning day.

Council noted progress regarding the 2025 Council performance evaluation.

Drs Taflaga & Moritz departed the meeting.

18 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS & CHARTER UPDATES

The University Secretary gave a brief outline of the membership proposals and charter update as recommended in the paper.

Resolved:

Council:

- 1. approved the revision to the Safety and Wellbeing Committee Charter;
- 2. approved the revision to the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee Charter;
- approved the appointment of Ms Tess McClintock, Mr Seungbin Kang and Ms Saskia Newman to the Safety and Wellbeing Committee for 1-year terms commencing 1 November 2025 and concluding 30 November 2026; and
- approved the extension of Ms Catherine Fitzpatrick as Chair of the Safety and Wellbeing Committee until 31 December 2025.

19. HONORARY DEGREE NOMINATIONS & PROCEDURE UPDATE



20 HONORIFIC NAMING





15 CORPORATE PLAN 2026-29

Resolved:

Council noted the draft timeline for rolling and refreshing the Corporate Plan 2026-2029.

16 ANNUAL REPORT 2025 (ASSURANCE PLAN)

Resolved:

Council approved the 2025 Assurance Plan, and the 2025 Annual Report requirements.

21 SSAF PROCESS FOR 2026

Resolved:

Council noted the SSAF report.

22 RESEARCH GRANTS AND CONSULTANCIES REPORT

Resolved:

Council noted the Grants and Consultancies awarded between 11 July and 12 September 2025.

23 COUNCIL COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

Resolved:

Council noted the Council Committee Executive Summaries from the September 2025 meetings.

24 UNIVERSITY SEAL REPORT

Resolved:

Council noted the documents to which the University Seal has been affixed.

PART 6 - OTHER BUSINESS

25 OTHER BUSINESS



No further items were raised of other business.

Resolved:

Council considered any other business raised.

26 NEXT MEETING

Council noted that the next meeting will take place on Friday 28 November 2025.

The meeting closed at 3:40pm (AEST)

