

**THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
COUNCIL MINUTES**

The 499th meeting of the Council was held at **8.30am (AEST) on Friday 28 November 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 (iVC)
4. Ms Padma Raman PSM
5. Mr Andrew Metcalfe AO
6. Mr Rob Whitfield AM
7. Professor Juliana Ng
8. Professor Lyndall Strazdins
9. Ms Megan Easton
10. Ms Brenna Barker-Lamb
11. Mr Will Burfoot
12. Professor Alexander Mikheyev
13. Professor Tony Connolly

Apologies

14. Ms Tanya Hosch
15. Dr Larry Marshall
16. The Hon Wayne Martin AC KC

In attendance

17. Chief Operating Officer (COO) - Mr Jonathan Churchill
18. Chief Financial Officer (CFO) - Mr Michael Lonergan
19. Ms Mary Russell, CEO, TEQSA (for Item 3)
20. Mr Tabor Ackman, Regulatory Reform Lead, TEQSA (for Item 3)
21. Mr Guoqing (Bruce) Pan (Council member-elect)
22. Mr Charley Ellwood (Council member-elect)

Secretariat

23. University Secretary, Mr Phillip Tweedie
24. Manager Corporate Governance & Policy, UGO - Ms Leslie McDonald
25. Senior Administrator, UGO – Ms Elizabeth Johnson
26. UGO Intern – Mr Malachi Bayley

Observers

27. Mr Stephen Howell, Effective Governance (Council reviewer)

MEMBERS ONLY SESSION

Council held a member's only session at the beginning of the meeting to discuss two matters.

Resolved:

Council **noted** that arrangements will be made to livestream certain non-confidential items under Part 2 of the February 2026 Council meeting.

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

1 PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Announcements and Apologies

- The Chancellor:
 - Thanked the iVC, COO and CFO for organising briefings for internal members.
 - Thanked Will Burfoot, Charley Ellwood and the iVC for organising a briefing for incoming members of the ANUSA Executive.
 - Noted the invitation, following the meeting, for members to attend the Vice-Chancellor's and Chancellor's Awards Ceremony.
 - Noted apologies from Larry Marshall, Wayne Martin and Tanya Hosch for this meeting. Padma Raman has advised she will be arriving late.
 - Welcomed Professor Sasha Mikheyev to his first meeting of Council, having been elected by academic staff recently.
 - Welcomed Charley Ellwood and Bruce Pan to their first meeting of Council, although, as their terms don't start until 1 December, they will attend this meeting as observers.
 - Extended the thanks of Council to Will Burfoot and Brenna Barker-Lamb for their contributions and work throughout their terms on Council.
 - Introduced Stephen Howell, from Effective Governance, who is undertaking Council's 2025/6 self-assessment. The Chancellor noted that Mr Howell will collaborate with the ongoing TEQSA review.
 - Mr Howell noted what Council can expect from him in the coming weeks including interviews, surveys and desktop review of documentation.

Disclosure of Material Personal Interest

- The Chancellor noted that the register has been updated following disclosures from the incoming Council members, as well as to reflect Andrew Metcalfe's appointment as the new independent ACT Public Sector Standards Commissioner.

Arrangement of Agenda

- The Chancellor noted confidential items and cautioned that Council should treat the Committee Membership paper with care until the names are publicly confirmed.
- The Chancellor noted unstarred items. In addition, Council agreed to unstar Items 23 and 24 in the interests of time.
- The discussion of several items were re-arranged to facilitate external speakers.
- No other papers were raised for starring and discussion.
- Several Council members raised concerns about the number of late papers and the volume of material received in this cycle. The Secretariat agreed to work closely with Executive sponsors to ensure more concise papers are delivered to the deadline.

Resolved:

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

Minutes

Resolved: Council:

1. **Approved** the minutes of the Council meetings held on 3 October 2025.

2. **Noted** the out of session endorsement given by Council to the Chancellor's resolution of 22 October regarding the appointment of the interim Vice-Chancellor.

2 MATTERS ARISING

- The Chancellor noted the six outstanding matters arising:
 - Matter 2, an update will be provided by the CFO today in relation to the Medium-Term Note and this matter can be formally closed.
 - Matter 3 will remain open until Meeting 1 of 2026.
 - Matter 4 will remain open until the Council Planning Day in February 2026.
 - Matter 5, relating to ISO reporting will remain open, although there will be an update as part of the COO's Report at this meeting.
 - Matter 6, regarding Digital Plan Assurance was discussed at AFRC and an update was given by the iVC and Chair AFRC. An assurance activity is being planned for 2026. The matter will remain open until that is confirmed.

Resolved:

Council **noted** the Matters Arising and **approved** the closure of Matter 2 regarding the Medium-Term Note.

PART 2 – KEY BUSINESS ITEMS

3 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S RECRUITMENT

*Ms Kate Witenden (Chief People Officer), joined the meeting.
Dr Mary Russell and Mr Tabor Ackman joined the meeting.*

- The Chancellor introduced the item and welcomed Dr Mary Russell and Tabor Ackman from TEQSA.
 - The Interim Vice-Chancellor and observing members of the Executive and Secretariat were asked to briefly leave the meeting for the duration of discussion.
 - The two student Council members-elect were allowed to remain for the discussion as this will be a standing item during their term on Council.

The Interim Vice-Chancellor, COO and CFO left the meeting.

- The Chief People Officer was invited to speak and noted:
 - A proposed outline of what the Vice-Chancellor's recruitment would involve, informed by the 2024 exercise and industry best practice.
 - The sensitivities involved in this matter and the importance of confidentiality.
- Dr Russell was invited to speak and noted:
 - That TEQSA has requested that a formal recruitment process does not commence until the TEQSA compliance assessment is finalised. Although preliminary work can continue, for example consideration of selection criteria.
- In discussion, Council noted:
 - The appointment of a Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor is one of the most important functions of Council. Whilst the confidence of TEQSA as the regulator is important, the University must continue preparations for this recruitment.
 - The potential to use 360-degree reports as part of this process, in line with the APS Integrity Action Plan, where possible. It was noted that some candidates may be uncomfortable to participate without some assurance of anonymity at early stages.
 - That the University does require a contingency plan in case this recruitment is unsuccessful.
 - That the work of running the University cannot pause during this process.
 - The importance of retaining continuity if panel members' terms on Council expire during the recruitment search. Council agreed that panel membership should be independent of Council terms.
- Council thanked the Chief People Officer and requested a further update in February 2026.

The Chancellor departed the meeting at the request of the Pro-Chancellor who undertook the role of Chair under Part 27 of the Australian National University (Governance) Statute 2024.

- The Pro-Chancellor provided Council with an update on the process of appointing the next Chancellor of the University. Leading Council on the deliberations of this appointment is a responsibility of the Pro-Chancellor under University legislation. She noted:
 - While a more fulsome update will come to Council in February, the Pro-Chancellor wanted to update Council as the role of the Chancellor in the recruitment of the Vice-Chancellor is an important one.
 - To date, the Pro-Chancellor has sought advice from twelve universities regarding potential processes and lessons learnt.
- In discussion, Council considered how the process for identifying the next Chancellor could be expedited to allow them to have ownership of the Vice-Chancellor's recruitment. The Pro-Chancellor noted that all feedback from members on any potential process is welcomed and encouraged.
- Dr Russell noted several of TEQSA's expectations – that a selection panel should be created that is majority or fully independent of the University and that the role be advertised and handled through an external search firm.
 - Any panel recommendation should be considered on an *if-not-why-not* basis.
 - An alternating political appointment was cautioned against as it may limit trust from the community.

The University Secretary and Council Reviewer Mr Howell departed the room at the request of the Pro-Chancellor to allow for a member's only session with Dr Mary Russell.

The Pro-Chancellor departed the room at the suggestion of Mr Metcalfe. As no member was elected by the remaining Council members to Chair (as per Part 20 of the Australian National University (Governance) Statute 2024) the formal meeting adjourned at 10.41am.

All members including the Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor, Interim Vice-Chancellor, University Secretary and observers, except for Dr Russell and Mr Ackman who departed, rejoined the meeting at 11.09am and Council recommenced.

Resolved:

Council **noted** the update on the search and appointment process for the 14th Vice-Chancellor and President.

Council agreed to bring forward Item 9 to accommodate an external speaker.

9 SAFETY & WELLBEING REPORT

- The Chancellor welcomed Ms Fitzpatrick and took the opportunity to extend Council's thanks for her service and achievements as the Chair, initially, of the inaugural Student Safety and Wellbeing Committee, now the broader Safety and Wellbeing Committee.
- 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 Item 9, outlining discussion at the Safety and Wellbeing Committee and noting:
 - Ongoing work at the ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences regarding the recent cease work order and provisional improvement notice.
 - The Annual Report from the National Student Ombudsman, which was released showing that of over 1000 reports, 17 related to the ANU. However, it is too early to draw trends or patterns from this information.
 - The recent pilot programme on respectful dialogue and lessons learnt.
- In discussion, the Council noted:
 - The update on the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence and discussed the Committee's role in reviewing the University's proposed Response Plan.
 - It was noted that the Response Plan would need to be submitted to the Department of Education in early January and a small Council working

group will be established to ensure appropriate approvals can be granted in time.

- Ms Fitzpatrick thanked the Council and encouraged the Council and Committee continue its important work.

Resolved:

Council:

1. **Noted** the updates from the Academic Portfolio and from the Residential Experience Division; and
2. **Noted and endorsed** the Work Health and Safety Performance summary for the period 1 January to 30 September 2025.
3. **Delegated** its authority to approve the University's Response Plan to a working group comprising the Chancellor, Professor Strazdins, Mr. Ellwood and Ms Raman.

4 CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

- Prior to the discussion of the Chancellor's report, the Chancellor discussed the procedural questions raised during the discussions of Item 3.
 - The Chancellor will seek advice from the General Counsel on the status of the meeting following the departure of the Pro-Chancellor. However, as no Chair was elected, it is likely that Council would be considered to have adjourned during that period.
- The Chancellor provided an update on activities undertaken since the previous meeting and a broad overview of 2025 including:
 - Significant activities tied to governance reviews and inquiries as well as media responses and Senate Estimates. The University received approximately 300 questions on notice following the latter.
 - The Chancellor thanked University staff who have been tasked with responding to these questions and the workload it has created.
 - Council noted that the compliance workload will likely be at a new baseline, if not actively increase, so we should ensure it is appropriately resourced. The cost should also be made publicly available.
 - The status of the Chancellor's Right of Reply to the allegations made under privilege at the Senate hearing on 12 August 2025, which has been suppressed by the Senate. This was intended to be raised at Senate Estimates on the 4 December but the University has not been called to appear.
 - The University Chancellors' Council recommended submission of VC remuneration to the Remuneration Tribunal; a practice already undertaken by the ANU.
 - Communications with the Remunerations Tribunal regarding the interim Vice-Chancellor's salary package.
 - Attendance at the University Chancellors' Council in Perth. The UCC Communique has been provided to members via Convene.
- The Pro-Chancellor thanked the Chancellor on behalf of Council for the work undertaken.

Resolved:

Council **noted** the Chancellor's Report.

5 INTERIM VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

- The Interim Vice-Chancellor presented her report noting:
 - Several recent senior staff updates including in relation to the Vice-President (Advancement), Chair of Academic Board and Dean of the College of Systems and Society.
 - That amendments need to be made to the ANU Self-Assurance Report provided to TEQSA in August. Feedback and clarifications are being sought from the University Executive ahead of resubmission to Council in February.
 - An indicative Strategy Development Process for the next Strategic Plan framed around four key questions about our environment, identity, focus and results.

- In discussion, Council discussed:

- How it can best support the interim Vice-Chancellor through the 2026 Strategic Planning Process and the potential for additional Council meetings in 2026 to support this work.
- The importance of clarity regarding the Self-Assurance Report and what is required to be amended.

Resolved:

Council **noted** the report from the interim Vice-Chancellor.

7 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

- The Chief Financial Officer spoke to a presentation and the paper provided in the pack, noting:
 - The University's YTD results and full year forecast.
 - Progress on reviewing the SRI policy negative screens.
 - S&P Global Ratings reaffirmation of an AA+ / stable credit rating for the University.

[REDACTED]

- The completed sale of the Weston Creek land parcel under the delegation that Council provided to the interim Vice-Chancellor.
- [REDACTED]

- Council thanked the CFO for his report and, in discussion, noted:
 - [REDACTED]

Resolved:

Council **noted**:

1. The report from the CFO; and
2. The University's September 2025 year-to-date financial results as compared to the 2025 Budget and Q3 2025 Forecast.

8 ANU DRAFT BUDGET 2026 AND FORWARD ESTIMATES

- The Chief Financial Officer spoke to a presentation and the paper provided in the pack, noting:
 - That the goal for 2026 is a break even or small deficit and that 2025, despite the immense work done, represents a transitional year.
 - Key risks across revenue (enrolments and continuing students) and expenses (VSS uptake, cost control sustainability.)
 - Commencing work with the interim Vice-Chancellor to develop a new budget model for the University, in discussion with University Executive.
- Council thanked the CFO for his report and, in discussion, noted:
 - The key points in the CFO's report including the likely 2025 results and ongoing work to control costs.
 - The importance of Council having oversight of the University's progress towards achieving its NOSC targets.
 - That the opportunity to discuss revenue generation will provide some optimism for the community.

[REDACTED]

- That the University should work to ensure the 2027 Budget is finalised before the calendar year commences to allow staff to plan.

Resolved:

Council:

1. **Noted** the current draft 2026 Budget and 2027-2030 Forward Estimate as presented;
2. **Endorsed** that the final draft of the Budget for 2026 and the Forward Estimate for 2027-2030 will be presented to the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee in January 2026, including financial modelling on:
 - a. Revenue growth framework and refine cost allocation methodologies, and

- b. Sensitivity analysis on cost control measures and additional cost support for the Colleges and Portfolios.
- 3. **Referred** the matter of revenue generation to the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee for a deeper discussion.

10 **ACADEMIC BOARD REPORT**

- The Chair of Academic Board requested that the paper be taken as read, and noted that Academic Board 5/2025 was attended by Ms Lynelle Briggs on behalf of TEQSA.
 - Following discussion by Council, Professor Connolly noted that the numbers within the Discipline Report were not a cause for concern.
- The Chancellor thanked Professor Connolly for his report and his contributions to Academic Board and Council noting that his term will be ending in early 2026.

Resolved:

Council **noted** the resolutions approved by Academic Board at Meeting 5/2025 held on 7 October 2025.

PART 3 – STRATEGIC ISSUES/DISCUSSIONS

The Chief Planning & Data Officer, Ms Richelle Hilton, joined the meeting for Item 11.

11 **ANU CORPORATE PLAN Q3 UPDATE**

- The Chief Planning & Data Officer spoke to the report, noting:
 - The University's progress against the KPIs and success measures.
 - The planned remediation actions identified for any KPIs or success measures flagged as "At risk" based on their Q3 results.
- Council thanked Ms Hilton for her report and noted:
 - That the performance report represents a significant improvement on what Council historically saw, even a few years ago.
 - The need for Ms Hilton and Professor Strazdins to continue discussions around how to incorporate the Mental Health Strategy objectives into this tracking.
 - Council further noted that the Corporate Plan's components are defined within the PGPA and the University needs to ensure that KPIs and success measures do not become blurred in this matter.

Resolved:

Council **noted** the Q3 performance report against the 2025-28 Corporate Plan.

13 **RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN UPDATE REPORT**

Resolved:

Council **noted** the 2025 RAP Impact Survey and the Indigenous Strategy Working Group's work to date.

The Chief Campus Environment Officer and Associate Director, Environmental Sustainability, joined the meeting for Item 14.

14 **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2026-30**

- The Chief Campus Environment Officer and Associate Director, Environmental Sustainability, spoke to the report, noting:
 - That the University has developed significant maturity since the last sustainability plan, especially in data reliability. The University can now be more confident in the targets it has set.
 - This plan represents a balance between being ambitious whilst being achievable. Our community will always push us to go further as this is a matter of extreme importance to many.

- We are in a good position now with strong structures and a delivery plan.
- Council thanked Mr Matthew and Ms de Castella for their report and noted the clear improvements seen in the quality of this plan. Council expressed their thanks for the work undertaken by them, their teams and the wider community.

Resolved:

Council **endorsed** the Environmental Sustainability Plan 2026-30.

15 2026 INTERNAL AUDIT WORK PLAN AND UTILISATION

- The Chair of the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee spoke to the paper, noting:
 - That with the recruitment of a Chief Risk Officer the University is building increased capability across the internal audit program.
 - That the Chief Risk Officer will attend Council to provide updates at various points in 2026.
 - The IAWP was informed by matters of strategic risk to the University and following a robust discussion at the last meeting of AFRC.

Resolved:

Council **approved** the 2026 Internal Audit Work Plan and the Internal Audit Charter

PART 4 – OTHER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

17 GOVERNANCE CONFORMANCE UPDATE

- The Chancellor outlined the various governance updates contained in the paper that were likely to arise in 2026 and noted:
 - The importance of ensuring the University puts in place structures to allow us to evolve our governance practices throughout 2026.
 - This is an excellent opportunity to ensure that the University benefits from community and expert input. It is important that the national university models best practice.
- In response to a request from the Chancellor for feedback on the proposal for a Council Governance Working Group to be established in early 2026 to evolve practice, Council supported the idea for further discussion at the 2026 Planning Day.
- The University Secretary noted that whilst the Secretariat will ensure that the Council continues to meet its legislative requirements, this is an excellent opportunity to seek improvements to how Council functions.
 - The Pro-Chancellor echoed this noting that the additions to the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee membership proposed at Item 24 would bring exceptional knowledge to this task.

Resolved:

Council:

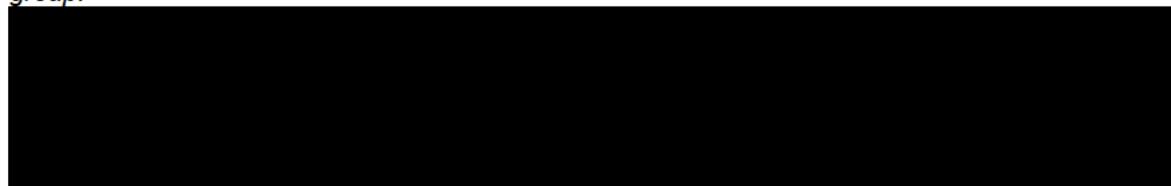
1. **Noted** potential updates to the Governance Conformance Process that may be implemented in 2026.

18 ANU GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PLAN 2026

Resolved:

Council **noted** the working draft of the ANU Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan.

N.B. Under Item 9, Council delegated approval of the Response Plan to a small working group.



20 ANU MEDICAL CENTRE – PROGRESS UPDATE

Resolved:

Council **noted** the current status of the medical centre and ongoing operational risks and mitigations.

21 PROJECT STATUS REPORTS

Resolved:

Council **noted** the project status reports.

22 CHANGE TO THE PRESENTATION OF THE ANU TESTAMUR

Resolved:

Council **approved:**

1. The change to the presentation of the ANU testamur, to be consistent with current ANU approved branding for the University crest and official font; and
2. That the approval authority for future changes to the presentation of the ANU testamur that are in line with the ANU approved branding, be revised to the Vice-Chancellor.

23 HONORARY DEGREE POLICY & NAMING RECOGNITION POLICY

- The University Secretary spoke to the paper noting:
 - The proposal is to change references to “rare or exceptional” to rare and exceptional to reduce the risk of any honorary degree or honorific naming resulting in reputational harm to the University.
- In discussion, the Council noted:
 - That this appeared to be a sensible and conservative approach.
 - The University’s approach to honorific naming and mitigations including due diligence ahead of any nominations.

Resolved:

Council **approved** the proposed changes to the Honorary Degrees Policy and the Naming Recognition Policy, which have been endorsed by the Honorary Committee.

24 COMMITTEE & BOARD MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Resolved:

Council:

1. **noted** the appointments of **Mr Bruce Pan** to the Honorary Committee and **Mr Charley Ellwood** to the ANU Foundation Board for 1-year terms commencing on 1 December 2025 and concluding 30 November 2026; and
2. **approved** the appointment of **Mr. Lembit Suur** and **Ms Nancy Collins** to the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee for a term of 3 years commencing on 1 December 2025 and concluding 30 November 2028.

PART 5 – OTHER MATTERS FOR NOTING

25 PRIVACY ANNUAL REPORT

Resolved:

Council **noted** the Privacy Report for 2025.

26 PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES – ANNUAL REPORT

Resolved:

Council **noted** the Public Interest Disclosure Report 2024/25

27 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – ANNUAL REPORT

Resolved:

Council **noted** the Freedom of Information Report for 2025.

28 DELEGATED EXPENDITURE >\$10M (2 OF 2)

Resolved:

Council **noted** occurrences of expenditure over \$10 million authorised by the Vice-Chancellor during the period June 2025 – November 2025.

29 2026 POLICY REPORT

Resolved:

That the Council **noted** the 2025 Policy Report.

30 RESEARCH GRANTS REPORT

Resolved:

Council **noted** the Grants and Consultancies awarded between 12 September and 7 November 2025.

31 COUNCIL COMMITTEES – EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

Resolved:

Council **noted** the Council Committee Executive Summaries from the November 2025 meetings.

32 UNIVERSITY SEAL REPORT

Resolved:

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

33 COUNCIL FORWARD AGENDA 2026

- The University Secretary spoke to the paper noting that:
 - The Forward Agenda is intended to be a live document, open to feedback and subject to change as a result of changed legislative requirements and matters arising.
 - It is intended to ensure that, at a minimum, Council can expect to acquit its governance responsibilities for 2026.

Resolved:

Council:

1. **Approved** the proposed forward agenda plan for 2026;
2. **Noted** discussion on items to be addressed at the Council Retreat in February 2026; and
3. **Endorsed** the expected acquittal of its governance responsibilities for 2026.

PART 6 – OTHER BUSINESS

34 OTHER BUSINESS

- No further items were raised of other business.

Resolved:

Council **considered** any other business raised.

35 NEXT MEETING

Council **noted** that the next meeting will be the Council Planning Day. However, as it may potentially clash with the announced dates for Senate Estimates, an updated date will be arranged by the Secretariat.

The meeting closed at 2.39 pm (AEDT)

The Hon Julie Bishop
Chancellor
The Australian National University

Date