

UTS Council meeting report

13 August 2025

This report covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by UTS Council at its 13 August 2025 meeting.

**The Report structure replicates the flow of the agenda.*

Strategic items of business

Organisational Sustainability Initiative (OSI)

The Vice-Chancellor provided Council with an update on the OSI program. This included: an update on the Fair Work Commission hearing; the temporary suspension of intakes into some courses; and advice on expectations as to when the Academic Change Proposal would be released for consultation. The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the concern and uncertainty the delay in the release of the Academic Change Proposal had caused across the University's community noting that the University had intended to release the Proposal for consultation at the start of July prior to the dispute initiated by the NTEU.

People Strategy and Priorities Update – Staff Impact of OSI

The Director, People Unit updated Council on the immediate priorities of the Unit. The workforce strategic priority remains supporting the workforce through major change. Key people risks including staff engagement and psychosocial harm are being actively identified, managed and monitored. Psychosocial risk assessments are being progressively developed and controls implemented ahead of the release of change proposals. In line with the potential distress staff may experience during change, controls have focused on information, training and resources, as well as additional support of qualified clinicians. Improvements are being made to related workforce trend reporting (e.g. sick leave, attrition) within the current system constraints.

Social Licence in the University Sector

The Chancellor provided background to the work being undertaken by the University Chancellors Council (UCC) and Universities Australia (UA) in response to the rising public expectations in relation to the public purpose of Australian universities. Issues that have arisen that brought into question the social licence of universities have included matters relating to gender-based violence, underpayment of staff, foreign interference, vice-chancellors' remuneration, academic freedom and freedom of speech and student experience.

As a result, the UCC and UA co-convened a Social Licence Steering Committee (SLSC) to respond to rising public expectations in relation to the public purpose of Australian

universities. The SLSC hopes to create a national plan for Australian Universities to address public perception.

Operations and performance

Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor provides a report to each Council meeting containing updates on key developments and events that have occurred since Council's last meeting. Updates include; the implementation progress of the UTS Strategy, State and Federal Government issues, updates regarding the university sector and internal matters, particularly achievements and awards.

The Vice-Chancellor provided Council with a summary of UTS performance in relation to international student admissions in 2025 against the notional caps that the Federal Government had sought to introduce in 2024. UTS is on track to meet its 2025 international student load targets.

The Vice-Chancellor also advised Council that the Australian Human Rights Commission is about to conduct a survey in relation to racism at universities. In 2026 there will be a follow-up survey in relation to safety on university campuses.

UTS Annual Plan 2025 Mid-Year Report

Council discussed the YTD results in the Annual Plan. The areas of delay and the reasons underlying those delays were discussed. The Strategic Risks and additional Operating risks were also discussed, and Council noted these will be considered by Council's Audit and Risk Committee.

Reports from committees

Council has a number of committees, whose membership have particular expertise, to provide assistance and advice to Council on matters for Council consideration. These committees report back to Council.

Report from Finance Committee

The Finance Committee advises Council on matters relating to the distribution and supervision of university finances, and acts on behalf of Council in areas of delegated authority.

The Chair, Finance Committee, highlighted that the University's financial performance is tracking very closely to budget. Council noted there has been good cost control and discipline across the organisation. Despite the improvement against the budget, the current position remains unsustainable for UTS's future financial requirements. Council also discussed the uncertainties in external factors impacting the budget and performance.

Council approved changes to the Treasury and Investments Policy.

Report from Governance Committee

The primary responsibility of the Governance Committee is to assist Council in regards to policy, general governance specified risk matters.

Council considered and approved the recission of the Offshore Activities Policy and the subsequent approval of the Vice-Chancellor as the new approval authority for the newly developed Offshore Activities Policy and the classification of the Offshore Activities Policy as an operations policy under the Policy Framework.

The UTS Student Association (UTSSA) Constitution minor changes were also discussed and approved by Council.

Report from Academic Board

Council noted the Report from Academic Board, including; the Vice-Chancellor's update on matters regarding the interim Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC); the Report from the Special Envoy on Anti-Semitism; the Report from Student members of Academic Board; and a report on curriculum transformation which is a workstream within the Sustainable Teaching and Learning Program. The following were also noted:

- Academic Board resolved to approve two new courses for accreditation: the Bachelor of Fashion Business (Faculty of Design and Society) and the Graduate Diploma in Migrant Law and Practice (Faculty of Law).
- Academic Board also approved amendments to the Research Policy which will provide increased clarity on ethical obligations to research partners and collaborators, among other amendments relating to definitions, currency and the removal of procedural statements from the Research Policy that are already covered in the related Procedures.

Report from infrastructure Committee

The Infrastructure Committee provides advice to Council on physical infrastructure, information technology infrastructure and precinct matters in the context of the UTS 2030 strategy, the budget and the Finance Plan.

Council discussed the Data Network Refresh and associated business case. A seven-year, \$44M operating investment was approved, allowing UTS to modernise its ageing data network infrastructure, which faces growing cybersecurity and operational risks.

Items for approval

- None at this meeting
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Items for noting

Council is provided papers for noting and include activity that has occurred between Council meetings.

- Chancellor's Report
- Use of Power of Attorney, University Seal and Executive Action

Items of General Business

Presentation: UTS Startups

Mr Murray Hurps (Director, Entrepreneurship) joined Council to discuss UTS Startups. Council was given an overview of the Australian Startup sector and its growth over the years as well as the devastating impact as a result of the COVID Pandemic on activity in this community. The specific growth in UTS Startups, space utilization and outreach were discussed.

Following the presentation and after the conclusion of the Council meeting, members were invited to tour UTS Startups in the refurbished spaces in Building 3.

Other reports

- Health Safety and Wellbeing Standing Report
- Report from Remuneration Committee