

# Griffith University Council News

## Report of Outcomes – 6/2025 (3 December)

*Council News is a high-level summary of outcomes from the most recent ordinary Council meeting, excluding confidential, sensitive and legally privileged items.*

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| <b>Meeting details</b>   | Date: 3 December 2025<br>Time: 2.00pm to 6.00pm<br>Location: Council Chambers (Room 2.02) in Leneen Forde Chancellery Building (G34), Gold Coast campus<br>Mode: Hybrid, majority in person and some online via Microsoft Teams.  |
| <b>About the Council</b> | Council has overall responsibility to provide leadership, good governance and oversight of the University. Council approves the University’s strategic direction, monitors the University’s progress, and approves the University’s budget, policies and delegations of authority.<br><br><a href="https://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/corporate-governance/university-council">https://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/corporate-governance/university-council</a> |

### Vice Chancellor’s Report

The Vice Chancellor highlighted the following achievements and events:

- The State government had agreed to Griffith’s exit from the Mt Gravatt campus, with the resignation of the lease to be finalised before the end of the year, and no extension past 2026. They had also committed funding to keep the pool open for another year and Tennis Queensland had entered into an agreement to run the courts—a very good outcome for the University and surrounding communities.
- Excellent outcomes had been achieved in the prestigious Shanghai Ranking’s Global Ranking of Academic Subjects 2025, with Griffith ranked number 3 in the world and number 1 in Australia for Nursing and Midwifery, and number 6 in the world and number 1 in Australia for Hospitality and Tourism Management. Law, Marine & Ocean Engineering and Remote Sensing were ranked number 2 in Australia, while Political Science, Artificial Intelligence, Electrical Engineering, Economics were ranked number 1 in Queensland.
- The Griffith Master of Business Administration (MBA) was ranked number 1 in the Corporate Knights’ 2025 Better World MBA ranking for the sixth consecutive year.
- A team of Griffith Business School students were crowned the Global Champions of the 2025 McGill International Portfolio Challenge (MIPC), competing against teams from the world’s leading universities in Montreal, Canada.

- Griffith academic Dr Robyn Cameron had been awarded the 2025 Gold Coast Woman of the Year for her voluntary work in breast cancer fundraising.
- Griffith researchers were awarded 13 Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery grants, placing Griffith 10th in Australia, and two ARC Linkage project grants were awarded with a total value of more than \$10m.
- The federal government had allocated \$1m in funding to deliver an additional 54 places in 2026 for the EmpowerED program, and 10 additional places in the medical program (for regional places).
- Recent events including the Return to Campus 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration at Nathan attended by over 1,000 people, the Griffith Staff Excellence Awards, and the Blues Awards had all been very successful and celebrated excellence across the Griffith community.
- The Vice Chancellor had travelled to China in her role as Chair of Universities Australia (UA) and noted China's progress and advancement in research and development, and industry engagement with universities. The Vice Chancellor delivered the major presentation at the China Annual Conference and Expo for International Education (CACIE) plenary session, which was good profiling for Griffith.
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) results had been released, and the report would come to Council via the People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee for noting.

The Vice Chancellor then provided an update on other issues:

- After further change consultation, which ended on 17 November, the University had decided not to close its childcare centres for several months. A new values-aligned provider, One Tree, would take over operations, and impacted staff would receive a one-off ex gratia payment during the transition. Due to employment regulations, One Tree was seeking a s.318 order to allow immediate staff transfer from Griffith to One Tree; if not granted, the university would reconsider the change process.
- The federal government had introduced the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) Bill to parliament on 26 November. The Vice Chancellor had attended a roundtable to provide input into the legislation prior to its introduction to parliament. Considerable work was required to improve the independence of the Commission, expertise and resources to carry out the role, ensuring sufficient autonomy for universities and recognising the role of Councils under State laws.
- Minister Clare had announced during his address at the TEQSA Conference that a report from the Race Discrimination Commissioner on racism in Australian universities would likely be released in January 2026. The report followed a survey of more than 76,000 students and staff, with the Minister indicating it had revealed significant issues within Australian universities. In addition, Emeritus Professor Greg Craven had been appointed by Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism to assess how Australian universities were responding to antisemitism. .

Vice President (Advancement), Mr Marcus Ward, delivered an update on the Griffith Campaign, noting that both the targets—raising \$125 million and achieving 100,000 unique alumni engagements—had been met and exceeded. Mr Ward thanked Council and all contributors for their support, and noted key achievements of the Campaign had been the direction of funds toward impactful research projects and support for students in need through the Brighter Future scholarships. Staff giving participation reached 16.5%, positioning Griffith among the highest nationwide. The team would return to Council in 2026 to build upon and extend the Campaign.

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

## Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report

The Chief Operating Officer delivered the *Q3 2025 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report*, which was based on data from July – September 2025. The following matters were highlighted:

- The lost time injury frequency rate (LTIFR) had remained low and as a result, work cover claims were down year on year. Psychosocial injury also remained low, aligned to the low psychosocial risk rating for overall legal compliance and exposure. No lost time injuries (LTIs) were reported in November and December at the time of the meeting.
- The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) had conducted an annual regulated audit through the University's biosecurity facilities in October and there were no nonconformance items.
- ServiceNow continued to work with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team to transition from the GSafe system to ServiceNow. This transition continued to impact the capacity of the team, resulting in fewer Line 2 assurance audits compared with last year.

Council **noted** the *Q3 2025 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report*.

## National Code Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan

The Provost presented the *Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan* (GBV Plan), noting its alignment with the new National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence 2025. Compliance for Table A providers, including Griffith University, would begin on 1 January 2026, and required preparation, implementation, and publication of a GBV Plan endorsed by the governing body to be submitted by 16 January 2026. Developing the GBV Plan faced challenges due to tight deadlines and extensive consultation requirements; full engagement with diverse groups was not feasible. The Department of Education advised that any incomplete consultation should be documented as an action item, and plans would be reviewed in early 2026, after which further consultation and revisions would occur.

Noting the timeframe for submission of the GBV Plan, the Chancellor recommended that Council delegate authority to the Vice Chancellor and the Provost for any minor amendments required following the meeting prior to submission.

Council **resolved to approve:**

- Griffith University's Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan 2026–2030 and accompanying Outcomes Framework
- submission of the approved plan to the Department of Education by 16 January 2026.

Council **delegated authority** to the Vice Chancellor and Provost to make any required minor amendments to the GBV Plan ahead of submission, given the constrained timeframes.

Council **noted** that the University is required to report to Council on the Outcomes Framework biannually in accordance with the National Code.

## Online Strategy Update

*The Dean (Online Strategy) Professor Mark Brimble joined the meeting for this item.*

The Dean (Online Strategy) Professor Mark Brimble provided an update on Griffith University's Online Strategy, which forms a key component of the University's Strategic Plan to broaden student access and boost revenue through the delivery of 25 on-demand programs over five years. Led by the Online Strategy Unit in collaboration with Academic Groups, the rollout commences with eight programs launching in 2026 following a successful pilot in 2025. The model features flexible, coursework-based learning supported 24/7 by artificial intelligence (AI), with escalation to staff as needed, and includes immersive environments and dashboards for progress tracking and tailored support. Early indications show strong market engagement, with 211 applications and 47 enrolments already received for the first blocks in 2026, and a continuous enrolment model enabling students to commence at any time. Rigorous frameworks are in place to ensure assessment integrity and platform usability, and the strategy positions Griffith competitively in the online education sector, targeting students who cannot access traditional study modes. The approach is expected to enhance both online and campus-based experiences, with ongoing improvements informed by student progression and feedback.

Council **noted** the update on the Griffith asynchronous degree strategy.

## **University Budget 2026-2028**

*The Chief Financial Officer Mr Alister Whitta joined the meeting for this item.*

The Chief Financial Officer presented the *University 2026-2028 Budget*. Council noted that the university's path to financial sustainability by 2028 was premised on student load and income growth whilst maintaining relatively flat cost growth. Early indicators for 2026 were positive with a stronger step off point than expected and lower risk than the university had seen in recent prior years. The new N82 building at Nathan campus that the university could no longer afford to build, had not been included in the future capital budget equation and costs associated with its development would need to be expensed if the Council confirmed the decision not to proceed. Revenue projections for 2026 appeared positive for both domestic and international enrolments, relying on student contributions as a key assumption. Despite this, government-imposed caps were expected to restrict growth. Although international acceptances had risen by 6%, the government had also increased its rate of visa rejections.

On the recommendation of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee, the Council **resolved to approve** the 2026-28 Griffith Budget and the 2026-30 Capital Management Plan.

## **Capital Infrastructure Program: Major Projects Update**

### **GRIDD – Sale and Lease Back**

On the recommendation of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee, the Council **resolved to approve** entering into an exclusive dealing arrangement with the preferred bidder for the sale of the GRIDD buildings (N27 and N75) via a Heads of Agreement.

### **CBD Campus – Main Works Contract and Delegation**

On the recommendation of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee, Council **resolved to approve:**

- an increase in the project budget from \$230m up to \$245m
- a further \$32m strategic contingency, beyond the contingency provided within the project budget
- delegation to the Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer acting in agreement to execute a main works contract, provided the agreed lump sum price does not cause the overall project budget to

exceed \$245m and the main works contract terms are no less favourable than those currently agreed and as outlined in the HWLE letter of assurance

- the following delegations:
  - The Project Control Group (PCG) to authorise any material project design changes.
  - With endorsement of the Project Superintendent, project contingency (i.e. contingency provided within the approved budget envelope of \$245m) release can be approved by Director, Major Projects and Planning, Chief Operating Officer, and Vice Chancellor within standard financial delegations relating to capital expenditure.
  - Special contingency release requires approval by the Chancellor, Chair Finance and Infrastructure Committee, Vice Chancellor, and Chief Operating Officer.

### **Capital Infrastructure Program**

The Chief Operating Officer presented the *Strategic Infrastructure Program Update*, and the following major projects were highlighted:

- *N13 Demolition* – Latent condition issues with the demotion of N13 were still being worked through, with demolition expected to be complete in early 2026. Work on make good of the site would then commence, and it was noted that Council had approved a request for a budget increase at the October meeting.
- *Science Enabling Works (SEW)* – the Science Enabling Works (SEW) had involved extensive refurbishment of two old buildings on Nathan campus. Remediation of latent conditions was still being worked through, which was largely a result of the poor build quality of the original buildings. Works would be finished in 2026 and would deliver contemporary spaces for Griffith Sciences.
- *HATRIC* – The university had moved to a preferred contractor for HATRIC on the Gold Coast and was working hard on value management to determine a sensible budget resolution. There was a need to deliver the intended outcome given government funding, but the university would need to seek an extension from the government on delivery as no contractor was able to meet the current timeframe. Early indications from government were positive.
- *Student Accommodation Gold Coast Campus* - - Construction of the new student accommodation at the Gold Coast was well advanced, looking great and likely to be open for the second semester of 2026.

Council **noted** the status update on the Strategic Infrastructure Program.

## **Gap Analysis – Final Report and Principles: Expert Council on University Governance**

The Chancellor spoke to the submission titled *Gap Analysis – Final Report and Principles: Expert Council on University Governance*. He provided an overview of the recent report released by the Expert Council on University Governance which included eight Governance Principles designed to provide a framework that would require universities to publicly report on their adoption and implementation (using an “if not, why not” approach). The Expert Council had recommended that the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) monitor compliance with the principles, with the possibility of them being embedded in the Higher Education Standards Framework in the future. A comprehensive gap analysis of the university’s

alignment with the Governance Principles had been undertaken, with an overall assessment finding that the university was mostly compliant and had robust governance practices.

Council **endorsed** the findings of the gap analysis to consider the University's compliance with the *Expert Council on University Governance Final Report and Principles*, and the recommended approach and action plan for addressing gaps and strengthening existing governance documents, which would be undertaken in a staged way as time and resources permit.

## Reports from Committees

Council **received** reports from the following committees:

- *Academic Committee*  
Council **noted** a verbal report from the Chair, the executive summary and draft minutes of the 5/2025 (November) meeting.
- *Audit and Risk Committee*  
Council **noted** a verbal report from the Chair for the 4/2025 (November) meeting and **noted** the minutes of the 3/2025 (August) meeting and the 2/2025 (May) meeting, and the 1/2025 (September) Flying Minute.
- *Finance and Infrastructure Committee*  
Council **noted** agenda of the 5/2025 (November) meeting and **received** a verbal report from the Chair and **noted** the approved minutes of the 4/2025 (September) meeting and the 3/2025 (July) meeting.
- *People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee*  
Council **received** a verbal report from the Chair and **noted** the draft minutes of the 4/2025 (17 November) meeting and the approved minutes of the 3/2025 (15 Sept) meeting and the Flying Minute 1/2025 (June).
- Griffith Elders and First Peoples Knowledge Holders Advisory Board  
Council **received** a verbal report from the Chair and **noted** the draft minutes of the 3/2025 (August) meeting and the approved minutes of the 2/2025 (June) meeting.

## Items for noting

Council **noted** the following:

- *Final TEQSA Provider Risk Assessment* and TEQSA's 2024 final risk assessment of Griffith as having a low overall risk to students and a moderate overall risk to financial position
- *50th Anniversary Wrap Up Report*
- *Annual Compliance Report for 2025*
- *2025 Annual Report of the Organisational Reviews Unit*
- *Independent Council Corporate Governance Review Report - Implementation Plan Status Update (December 2025)* (2025/0001125).

## Items for formal approval

Council **resolved to approve** the following items.

- *Academic Committee Constitution (2025/0001027)* effective from 1 January 2026
- *Academic Committee Annual Report (2025/0001025)*
- *Academic Committee Workplan (2025/0001022)*
- *Audit and Risk Committee Constitution (2025/0001108)*
- *Finance and Infrastructure Committee Constitution (2025/0001105)*
- *People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee Constitution (2025/0001110)*
- Griffith University Elders and First Peoples Knowledge Holders Advisory Board Annual Report
- *Delegations Register (Schedule A) (2025/0001109)* effective from 3 December 2025, with the next major review to be undertaken in 2027 and **noted** that any changes to the Delegations Register (Schedules B to F) approved by the Vice Chancellor would be captured in the Annual Delegations Report to Council in February 2026
- *Research and Innovation Plan 2025-2030*
- 'Griffith Outcomes' including the update to the student experience measures and the completion measure for Indigenous Students
- *School of Medicine and Dentistry Review Report (2025/0001017) and Implementation Plan (2025/0001018)*
- *School of Pharmacy and Medical Sciences Review Report (2025/0001076) and Implementation Plan (2025/0001077)*
- *2026 Council Work Plan (2025/0001126)*, noting that it may be amended throughout the year with the agreement of the Chancellor.

## Appointments

Council **resolved to approve** the appointment of the following candidates as independent members of the Audit and Risk Committee for three year terms:

- Professor John Dewar AO  
Term: 01/01/2026 to 31/12/2028
- The Hon Justice Anthe Philippides SC  
Term: 01/01/2026 to 31/12/2028
- Ms Linda Apelt  
Term: 01/01/2026 to 31/12/2028.

Council **resolved to approve** the appointment of the following candidate as an external member of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee for a three year term:

- Mr Chris Eigeland  
Term: 01/01/2026 to 31/12/2028.

## Honorary Awards and Titles

Council **resolved to approve** that the award of Doctor of the University be offered to:

- Mrs Sheree Young for distinguished service to Australian business and the health and wellness industry through leadership, innovation, and community impact.
- Mr John Fogarty for exceptional contributions in combating financial crime in the financial services sector, leadership in industry-wide collaboration and commitment toward building financial crime capability and career pathways for the betterment of people and communities.

Council **conferred the title of Professor Emeritus** on:

- Professor David Ellwood from 3 December 2025, in recognition of and after a distinguished academic and clinical career in Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Maternal-Fetal Medicine.

## Policy changes approved

Council **resolved to approve** the following policy document changes to be effective from the date of approval on 3 December 2025.

| Policy Document Title  | New review date |
|--|-----------------|
| Election of Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor Procedure (2025/0001046)  | 2028            |
| Delegations Policy (2025/0001102)  | 2027            |
| Legislative Compliance Policy (2025/0001115)   | 2028            |
| Committee Operations Procedure (2025/0001101) [formerly called the Council Committees (Standing Orders) Procedure] | 2028            |
| Professor Emeritus Policy (2025/0001123)   | 2028            |

## Items for information

Council **noted** the following items:

- 2025 Council Work Plan and Council Resources
- 2026 Council and Key Committee Meeting Dates
- 2027 Council and Key Committee Meeting Dates

**[December 2025]**