

Griffith University Council News

Report of Meeting Outcomes – 1/2026 (20 February)

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

Meeting details

Date and time: 20 February 2026, 2.00pm

Location: Council Chambers (Room 2.02) Bray Centre (N54), Nathan campus

Mode: Hybrid, majority in person and some online via Microsoft Teams.

Council's Role

Griffith University Council (Council) is the University's governing body as established by the *Griffith University Act 1998* (Qld).

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.

University's Purpose

Griffith University is a statutory body established by the *Griffith University Act 1998* (Qld) with a public purpose to create a brighter future for all through high-quality education and research which transforms lives and adds to knowledge, discovery and understanding.

Strategic Focus

The strategic focus for the February meeting centred around reflections on 2025 performance, and positioning at the start of 2026 to ensure ongoing sustainability, quality delivery and a healthy culture.

This foregrounded the strategic focus for the upcoming meeting in April, which would be student experience and education.

Vice Chancellor's Report

The Vice Chancellor's Report provides a high-level overview of the University's performance across research and innovation, learning and teaching, and operations. Achievements, progress, risks and challenges are highlighted across major portfolio areas.

The Vice Chancellor highlighted the following achievements and events:

- The University's delivery of approximately 442,000 community hours in 2025, making a significant contribution to the Strategic Plan commitment for the University to deliver 1.5 million hours of low or no cost services to the community over the life of the strategy. While the majority had been delivered

through the health clinics, services covered were diverse and had included support for regional tourism, First Nations business, education programs and creative projects.

- The Times Higher Education (THE) 2026 subject rankings had been released and Griffith's rankings had either improved or remained stable, with strong outcomes for Business and Economics, Social Sciences and Law. The drop in ranking for Education and Psychology was being assessed.
- Griffith researchers working on the development of a possible treatment for sepsis had progressed to phase 3 clinical trials, delivering research impact with the potential to save millions of lives worldwide given no specific anti-sepsis therapy is currently available.
- Research published in Nature by former Council member and Griffith researcher Professor Maxime Aubert and his team of researchers titled 'Rock art from at least 67,800 years ago in Sulawesi' had received outstanding media coverage, with cumulative potential reach of over 150 million and which would have cost \$35m had the University paid for it.
- 'My Career Universe', a Griffith-developed free, interactive career exploration tool designed to support meaningful, student-centred career conversations with Australian secondary school students, had been launched.
- The Waitangi Day at Twilight celebration, which was attended by approximately 9-10,000 local community members and stakeholders, and numerous parliamentarians including the Federal Treasurer and Member for Rankin the Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP.
- The annual University Senior Leaders Conference, which was based on the theme 'enhancing individual and team performance'. Highlights included a keynote by Professor David Lloyd (Vice Chancellor of South Australia and co-Vice Chancellor of Adelaide University), a student panel, and a session chaired by the Chancellor titled 'Unlocking Potential and Driving High Performance'.

The Vice Chancellor spoke to a presentation about the student load forecast, noting that commencing load was looking positive, particularly for domestic students, with domestic undergraduate up by approximately 11% and postgraduate demand up by 4%, but lagging in offer processing. The admission team were working to catch up on assessments to ensure strong conversion of applications to enrolments. International commencing load had also improved, with acceptances up 15% year on year, following an incredible effort by the Griffith International team. Visa approvals had slightly improved, and the visa application pipeline remained strong, but recent Government changes for South Asia had increased uncertainty of visa outcomes for students from India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka, which accounted for 40% of Griffith's unconditional acceptances.

The Vice Chancellor provided an update on other key issues:

- Student satisfaction results would be addressed in a detailed paper scheduled for discussion at the April Council meeting. Together with this paper, the new Education and Student Experience Plan (to replace the Academic Plan) would be presented for Council approval, and featured student experience as a significant focus.
- Enterprise bargaining had commenced, and the NTEU and the University had both issued a log of claims.
- The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) released the Respect at Uni report based on findings from the Racism@Uni Study commissioned by the Australian Government in 2024. The report found substantial experiences of racism at all Australian universities and included a significant number of recommendations. Universities Australia was working to focus how these

recommendations were to be addressed by universities and looking to avoid an overly regulatory response. Griffith had commenced work to address antiracism, but acknowledged there was still work to be done. An antiracism group had been established, work on Indigenous Flourishing had commenced, and training to support respectful classroom conversations had been delivered. The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education) Professor Shaun Ewen was acknowledged for his leadership. More specifically on antisemitism, actions taken were noted in the Vice Chancellor's Report. The University was also preparing to submit a report card to Greg Craven as requested by the Special Envoy.

- As previously indicated, the University would continue as planned to wind up the Confucius Institute at the end of the year.
- The Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) Bill 2025 was passing through parliament and had passed the House of Representatives without amendment. It was hoped that the set of requested amendments, which were consistent across Universities Australia and the NTEU, would be accepted.
- The deal for sale of GRIDD buildings (N27/75) had been terminated due to onerous conditions. The University had requested that the underbidders submit an updated offer by the end of February.

Council discussed some of the following matters in response to the Vice Chancellor's report.

- The University's plans to respond to the decline in student experience, given its importance, were considered. Potential correlations between student experience and staff workload because of budget measures and the ongoing need to ensure financial sustainability, were raised. Programs of work currently underway to address student satisfaction, retention, and staff workload were noted, which would be addressed at the April meeting in a detailed scheduled report, together with the new Student Experience and Education Plan, which would be brought to Council for approval.
- The Australian university sector's response to antisemitism and the importance of the Royal Commission were highlighted. The need to acknowledge the experiences of Jewish staff and students was recognised, as was the need to acknowledge the rights of those debating important issues. The fundamental issue was around the determination of what constituted hate speech.

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

Financial Sustainability

2025 Annual Financial Statements

The annual financial statements represent the audited general purpose financial statements of Griffith University. They were prepared on an accrual basis, except for the Statement of Cash Flows, which is prepared on a cash basis, and comply with Australian Accounting Standards and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.

Griffith University applies Tier 1 reporting requirements.

Additionally, the statements were prepared in accordance with the following statutory requirements:

- *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth) (Financial Statement Guidelines)*
- *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019 (Qld)*
- *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth).*

The Chief Financial Officer joined the meeting for this item.

The Chair, Audit and Risk Committee provided an overview of the formal review of the financial statements at the 1/2026 Audit and Risk Committee meeting on Wednesday 18 February 2026, and thanked Council members who had attended. The robust process involved in the preparation and review of the financial statements was noted, which had included numerous meetings with management to refine and improve reporting. The rigour behind the numbers recorded in the statements was outlined in the Certification Statement from the Chief Financial Officer to the Vice Chancellor, with an assessment that the University's financial internal controls had operated efficiently, effectively and economically. Members were advised of work completed to uplift the quality of the statement, to ensure it provided a clearer line of sight between key financial statement balances, control effectiveness and assurance activities. It was noted that the Audit and Risk Committee had identified opportunities for further enhancement and noted management's intention to continue maturing the assurance framework.

As indicated in the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) closing report for the financial year ended 31 December 2025, the QAO had advised that it expected to issue an unmodified audit opinion on the University's 2025 financial statements subject to completion of its audit

The Audit and Risk Committee had considered that the University's financial statements were in a form appropriate for approval.

On the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, the Council **resolved to approve** the 2025 Financial Statements.

Performance and Quality

Griffith University 2025 Annual Report

As a statutory body, Griffith University is required by the Queensland Government to submit an annual report each year in accordance with the Annual Report Requirements for Queensland Government Agencies.

Council **resolved to approve** the Griffith University Annual Report 2025 for submission to the Department of Education by 25 February 2026 for final review and for review by the Queensland Audit Office before tabling in Parliament by Tuesday 31 March 2026.

University Strategic KPI 2025 Performance

Council approves University level key performance indicators (KPIs) each year. Performance against these KPIs is monitored throughout the year and comprehensively reported biannually.

Council **resolved to approve** the report on the University's performance against the 2025 University KPIs.

Vice Chancellor's 2025 Performance

Council approves the Vice Chancellor's key performance indicators (KPIs) each year. Performance against these KPIs is monitored throughout the year and comprehensively reported biannually.

Council **resolved to approve** the report on the Vice Chancellor's performance against the 2025 Vice Chancellor KPIs.

Risk Management

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report

The Chief Operating Officer delivered the *Q4 2025 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report*, which was based on data from October – December 2025. The following matters were highlighted and discussed:

- Lost time injury frequency rate (LTIFR) was tracking well and had decreased from 1.62 in Q4 2024 to 1.24 Q4 2025, with both quarters below the sector benchmark of 2.5.
- Incident investigations (IMTs) decreased from Quarter 4 2024 (6 IMTs) to Quarter 4 2025 (2 IMTs) and regulatory notifiable incidents decreased from Quarter 4 2024 (6) to Quarter 4 2025 (4). Overall, the number of incident investigations (IMT) conducted in 2025 (20) decreased from 23 in 2024.
- Four lead indicators were marked as red/decreasing, with two being monitored (hazard reporting and EAP utilisation) and two for action (line 2 assurance activities and safety leadership training). Safety leadership training was being addressed through the Health and Safety Committees, with each committee developing their own safety leadership training plans. Tier 1 and tier 2 safety leaders would come together for a half day at the Logan campus with built-in safety training on the agenda.
- The transition of the new health and safety system from GSafe to ServiceNow was complete and live. The time and resourcing it had required was noted.
- The *Australian Universities Census on Staff Wellbeing* led by ARC Laureate Professor Maureen Dollard that ranked 36 of Australia's 42 universities against national psychosocial safety climate benchmarks had been released. The results had pointed to increasing levels of high and very high psychosocial risk in universities, though there were some limitations on the data and it did not provide a definitive assessment of psychosocial risk at Griffith. While psychosocial risk was closely monitored at Griffith, the last holistic assessment was undertaken in 2024 and so a reassessment of the University's risk profile would be undertaken.
- Lessons learned from recent high potential incidents were noted.

Council **noted** the *Q4 2025 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report*.

Digital and Physical Infrastructure

Capital Infrastructure Program: Major Projects Update

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

- *CBD Campus* – The main works contract for the refurbishment of the Treasury Building had been finalised and preparation for the main works had commenced. The ground floor had been fully stripped and full height courtyard scaffold constructed to facilitate demolition of services and eventual installation of the skylight and ceiling/services replacement. Heavy demolition was expected to commence by mid-March, following which refit could commence. The program remained on track.
- *Nathan Campus Johnson Path and N13 site* – The Johnson Path had reopened in time for Orientation Week. Demolition of N13 was complete, and Lendlease were finalising some patching

work with an aim to be off the site in April to make way for the make good contractors to bump in by May 2026.

- *Nathan Campus N56 Refurbishment* – Refurbishment of N56 was complete, and the project had gone smoothly, with the building ready to house psychology clinics and teaching relocated from the Mt Gravatt campus.
- *Exit from Mt Gravatt Campus* – Transition of academic activity to Nathan was complete and focus was now turning to plans for full exit of the site in December 2026. The University was advised that investigations around the long-term use of the site were being dealt with by the Department of Natural Resources, and they were out in the market seeking expressions of interest.
- *Science Enabling Works (SEW)* – The project was progressing beyond asbestos removal and power remediation to actual works. The generator had worked smoothly for backing up the buildings, which had included the Data Centre. Buildings would be back online in 2026 with a forecast practical completion of September 2026.

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

N13 Building Site and Circuit Redevelopment Concept Proposal

An overview of the plan to make good the N13 demolition site, which included a proposal to redevelop the circuit at the Nathan campus was presented to Council. The Concept Design proposed redevelopment of the N13 demolition site into a central grassed lawn surrounded by native landscaping for students and staff to use for informal gathering and social space, including a sandstone amphitheatre. Making use of the flattest space on the campus, The Circuit redevelopment was set to transform the old busway road into an activated campus entry. The walkway was to be widened into a main mall to connect community from the key arrival point of the Sir Samuel Griffith building through to Johnson Path. The space would include a mixed-use court, pickle ball courts, and fixed table-tennis tables for community use, with seating planned to wrap around the courts, shaded by existing trees. A new ceremonial lawn would replace the road in the middle of The Circuit. To enable the repurposing of the space for pedestrians the temporary relocation of buses to the Ring Road would be made permanent. It was confirmed that there had not been any traffic management issues to date with the buses using the Ring Road.

The proposed site and amenities would help bring a sense of community and activation to the Nathan campus, providing student experience opportunities and bringing students and community to the campus.

The intention would be to complete the project in stages, commencing with the N13 site, and with an intention to have it completed by orientation week, 2027.

The Environmental Sustainability Committee had been consulted, and the Griffith University Elders and First Peoples Knowledge Holders Advisory Board would be consulted to ensure connection with place was included in the design.

Council **resolved to approve** the:

- concept landscape design for the N13 site “make good” and The Circuit redevelopment-Brisbane South (Nathan) campus
- progression to detailed design, stakeholder refinement and procurement/market engagement.

Council **noted** the proposed funding sources and that any material changes to scope, cost of funding requirements would be returned to Council through the appropriate governance pathway.

Governance Matters

Reports from Committees

Council has established committees to assist it in connection with specific responsibilities, advising and reporting to the Council and making any necessary recommendations. Each Committee has a constitution which sets out the Committee's functions, composition and delegated authority.

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

- *Audit and Risk Committee*
Council **noted** the 2025 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report, which provided a comprehensive overview of the work of the committee in 2025 aligned to its function, as set out in its constitution.
- *Finance and Infrastructure Committee*
Council **noted** the 2025 Finance and Infrastructure Committee Annual Report, which provided a comprehensive overview of the work of the committee in 2025 aligned to its function, as set out in its constitution.

2025 Annual Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Attestation

The annual freedom of speech and academic freedom attestation statement responds to the Government expectation that each University complete an annual attestation statement, and is intended to attest that the University Council is satisfied that the University has a policy that upholds freedom of speech and academic freedom as paramount values, as required under the Model Code; maintains an institutional environment in which freedom of speech and academic freedom are upheld and protected; and addresses questions in relation to the management of freedom of speech and academic freedom issues promptly, actively and in good faith.

In addition, the updated *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*, which came into effect from 1 July 2021, included updated standard 6.1.4, which requires higher education providers' governing bodies to take steps to develop and maintain an institutional environment in which freedom of speech and academic freedom are upheld and protected.

Council **resolved to approve** the [Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Attestation Statement](#) for Griffith for 2025.

Review of Council Charter and Council Handbook

The Council Handbook and Council Charter are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain current and fit-for-purpose. The review of these documents occurs concurrently to ensure consistency between the documents and continued alignment with relevant legislation and other University governance documents.

Council **resolved to approve** the amended [Council Charter](#) and the amended [Council Handbook](#).

Delegation of authority and amended committee constitution

Council **resolved to delegate authority** to the Vice Chancellor to appoint senior executive staff reporting directly to the Vice Chancellor, as reflected in amendments to Schedule A of the [Delegations Register](#).

Council **resolved to approve** amendments to the [People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee constitution](#) section 3.9 to reflect that the Committee will 'advise the Vice Chancellor on terms and conditions

of appointment of senior executive staff including the Provost, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Vice Presidents, Pro Vice Chancellors, and the Chief Operating Officer (known collectively as the Executive Group)'.

Other Matters

Honorary Awards and Titles

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

- Professor Robert Love from the 1/2026 meeting of University Council, 20 February 2026, in recognition of and after a distinguished academic and clinical career in Dentistry.
- Professor Mark R Forwood from the 1/2026 meeting of University Council, 20 February 2026, in recognition of and after a distinguished career in the fields of Anatomy and Medical Science.
- Professor Mark Finnane from the 1/2026 meeting of University Council, 20 February 2026, in recognition of and after a distinguished academic career as an internationally renowned scholar in the disciplines of Australian and Irish histories of criminal justice, policing, punishment, and criminal law.

Items for noting and information

Council **noted** the following items:

- Declarations of Interest Register
- Action items from previous meeting
- 2025 Council Work Plan and Council Resources
- 2026 Council and Key Committee Meeting Dates
- 2027 Council and Key Committee Meeting Dates

Disclaimer

This report is intended to communicate key outcomes from the most recent Council meeting, not to be an official record of the meeting. It does not cover all matters discussed or the full detail of decisions or discussions, as there are sometimes legal and commercial reasons for maintaining confidentiality.

Further information

The [Council Charter](#) sets out the role, responsibilities, structures and processes of the Griffith University Council (the Council) and its members. The [Council Handbook](#) is designed to support Council members in fulfilling their duties and to complement the induction process for new Council members. It includes the Council Meetings Procedure, which sets out protocols for the University Council.

The [Griffith University Governance Framework](#) outlines the structure of governance at Griffith University, including the core functions, responsibilities and membership of the University's key governance bodies, and their relationship to each other.

Information about the [Council](#), [Council members](#) and the [Council meeting schedule](#) is available on the Griffith University website.

[February 2026]