

Griffith University Council News

Report of Meeting Outcomes – 2/2026 (27 April)

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: 27 April 2026, 2.00pm

Location: Council Chambers (Room 2.02) Leneen Forde Chancellery Building (G34), Gold Coast 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 April meeting was **student experience and learning and teaching**, with reflections on student retention and progression, and assurance of learning in light of generative AI.*

*In the context of this discussion, Council was asked to consider and provide feedback on the draft *Education and Student Experience Plan 2026-2030*.*

Report on Learning and Student Experience

Council receives an annual report on learning and teaching and the student experience, and regular reporting through the Vice Chancellor's Report, which is a standing item.

The Dean, Student Experience and Employability, Professor Caroline Rueckert and the Dean, Program and Assessment Integrity Professor Julie Robert joined the meeting for this item.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education) presented the *Learning and Teaching Annual Report: Response Plan to Address Retention and Student Experience Outcomes*, highlighting retention and progression as key measures of student success. While domestic undergraduate retention remained under sustained sector-wide pressure, Griffith had improved from 70.4% in 2022 to 77.3% in 2024 before declining to 75.5% in

2025, prompting a broad response across teaching and student support systems. A dip in progression from T2 2025 to T1 2026 was also being investigated. In response, the University was working with academic leaders on retention strategies, including benchmarking, the *High Impact Courses Project*, support for academic preparedness, and measures to address the complex life circumstances affecting students. Policy changes to reduce assessment load had also been introduced, supported by audits, staff training and student feedback to monitor impact.

Griffith's 2025 Student Experience Survey (SES) results were also discussed. Overall student satisfaction declined to 76.9%, down 2.5% from 2024. Student feedback highlighted the importance of high-quality, consistent teaching, practical work-integrated learning, clear assessment expectations and feedback, and a strong sense of connection and belonging. A targeted, data-informed SES Response Plan had been developed at program and discipline level. System improvements would provide faster access to data and support more timely action. High-performing courses were being reviewed for practices that could be applied more broadly, while lower-performing courses were being examined to identify what should be avoided.

The Dean, Student Experience and Employability provided an overview of the 2025 Student Experience Survey Response Report, which focused on four priority areas:

1. *Enhancing Learning and Teaching Quality*
2. *Improving Outcomes for Equity Cohorts*
3. *Strengthening Graduate Employability*
4. *Improving the Student Experience Journey.*

There had already been evidence of positive gains through pilot programs, with three approaches shown to make the biggest difference to student experience:

1. taking a whole of program approach
2. shifting Griffith's culture to one of partnership and co-design
3. uplifting the data and its availability to identify problems worth solving and to respond more quickly.

Council discussed the University-wide strategic priorities and actions outlined in the Student Experience Survey Response Plan. Discussion focused on linking retention investment more closely to outcomes, with progression data informing course reform and analysis of attrition, and on the need to attract, retain and support quality teachers in the context of workload pressures and broader sector challenges. Members also considered the potential of a real-time retention dashboard to identify risk earlier and enable faster intervention. The Plan was supported, while noting it would require additional resources, which should be considered carefully, and work planned and prioritised accordingly. The benefits of the Plan were recognised, with an emphasis on reducing siloing by sharing effective practice more broadly, strengthening communication about new tools, resources and upskilling, and continuing to build teaching capability through benchmarking, course review and leadership preparation.

On the recommendation of the Academic Committee, Council **noted** the outcomes of the 2025 Student Experience Survey and current retention figures.

Education and Student Experience Plan

Council approves the University's strategic plan—Creating a brighter future for all: Griffith's Strategy 2025-2030—and its key supporting plans. The Education and Student Experience Plan 2026-2030 is one of the

key supporting plans, and translates the University's strategic priorities into a coherent, institution-wide approach to education, access, student success and graduate impact.

The Dean, Student Experience and Employability, Professor Caroline Rueckert and the Dean, Program and Assessment Integrity Professor Julie Robert joined the meeting for this item.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education) provided an overview of the draft Education and Student Experience Plan 2026-2030 (the Plan). The Plan had been developed to provide a focused response to a changed environment, with an emphasis on coherence across the student life cycle. It proposed a distinctive Griffith education, with the point of difference being 'to make it matter' – connecting education to purpose and values. The Plan would take strategy into action, through five strategic student initiatives to support quality learning and teaching, purpose-driven career readiness, student wellbeing and success, pathways to Griffith, and quality online education.

Council members provided feedback on the draft Plan, noting its overall strength while emphasising the need to carefully consider the scale of investment and resourcing required in the context of current constraints and workload pressures. Discussion also highlighted the strategic importance of rolling out purpose-driven work-integrated learning across programs, supported by enabling structures, policies and processes to strengthen industry engagement and deliver a clearer point of difference for Griffith over time, including through tailored models for international students and other cohorts. Members further emphasised the need for the Plan to give appropriate attention to the significance of AI for students, learning and teaching, and to more clearly express Griffith's distinctive identity through its commitment to social justice, the Sustainable Development Goals and planetary health as a cross-cutting theme across all programs.

On the recommendation of the Academic Committee, Council **endorsed** the draft Education and Student Experience Plan, noting that it would be finalised and returned to Council for final approval in June.

Report on Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity

The Dean, Program and Assessment Integrity joined the meeting for this item.

The Dean, Program and Assessment Integrity outlined the University's program-based approach to assuring learning in the context of generative AI. The strategy focuses on securing high-value assessment tasks in core or mandated 'gateway' courses to ensure confidence in student achievement of program learning outcomes. Council noted that implementation would require a significant shift from course-level to program-level design, sustained effort to keep pace with rapidly changing technology, and careful balancing of digital and analogue assessment to maintain integrity while preparing students for an AI-enabled world and supporting Griffith's growing online cohorts. Progress towards the target of 50% of programs being assured as having secure assessment by the start of T2, 2026 was tracking well at 31% at the time of the meeting.

Council discussed the shift to a program-based approach to assurance of learning in response to generative AI, supported by leadership teams and technology. Members considered Griffith's phased approach to AI detection in assessment, which distinguishes between accidental and serious misuse and is reinforced through assessment design that requires students to demonstrate skills directly. As widespread AI use makes authorship harder to verify, Griffith's experience responding to contract cheating will help inform future approaches across all assessment, including higher degrees by research. Discussion also highlighted the pace of AI adoption across the sector, the role of the new AI Strategy Group in coordinating institution-wide activity, and the value of further updates to Council. Members considered whether additional resources could accelerate progress, while noting confidence in current targets and timeframes and the potential role

of capstone courses in the model. The Chancellor acknowledged work underway and emphasised the ongoing need for urgency, leadership and prioritisation in relation to AI and foundational assurance.

On the recommendation of the Academic Committee, Council **noted** the report and the progress toward identified objectives and additional considerations required.

Purpose, Strategy and Performance

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 Chancellor commenced the item by formally recording the Council's congratulations to the Vice Chancellor on her recent appointment as the next Vice Chancellor of the University of Melbourne. He acknowledged the Vice Chancellor's outstanding leadership of Griffith and noted that there would be many formal acknowledgements to come before the conclusion of her tenure at the end of August. The Vice Chancellor thanked the Chancellor and Council, noting that her time at Griffith had been wonderful and that her new appointment was bittersweet.

The Vice Chancellor provided an update on:

- *Student load, as at Trimester 1 (T1) census:* the University was ahead of budget, driven by stronger-than-forecast domestic enrolments, although low socio-economic status (SES) students remained cautious amid economic pressures. International and continuing student numbers were weaker, reflecting sector-wide challenges in growth and retention amid global financial and geopolitical uncertainty. Under the new Managed Growth Funding System, Griffith was adjusting its approach as it neared its cap, raising challenges for Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) allocation and the mix of continuing students. Demand-driven, needs-based funding would provide additional support for underrepresented students, but would also require further resourcing.
- *Griffith's CSP allocation cap:* From 2027 universities would have mission based compacts negotiated with the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC). For 2026, Griffith had received the highest increase in places. It was noted that caps applied to commencing not continuing load (although there was an overall limit as well). Increasing international load remained the biggest opportunity as the University had not reached its cap.
- *Government and policy changes:*
 - Immigration concerns continued, with UA working with all sides to try to support sensible policy making.
 - The Federal Government had announced Australia's plan to join Horizon Europe which would give Australia access to significant research opportunities with like-minded democracies.
 - The Government had released the final report following the Strategic Examination of Research and Development independent review, which charts a long-term reform map for Australia's research and development. There had been limited response to the report, but it was expected that it would be addressed modestly in the upcoming Budget.
 - There was strong Government focus on the university sector responding collectively to racism, with support for the direction being taken by many institutions.

- Continued pressure for savings across government was creating a challenging environment in which to advocate for additional university funding.
- There was a risk that prolonged impacts of the Middle East conflict may lead to further migration restrictions to prioritise domestic resource allocation.
- *Middle East conflict Crisis Management Team (CMT)*: A CMT had been established, which continued to respond to a cluster of issues. Strategies were in place to support students and staff, including with cost of living increases, and the staff pay increase had been brought forward. Steps were being taken to secure supplies and to limit the impact on capital projects.
- *Tourism Confucius Institute (TCI)*: The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade had accepted the University's proposal of the planned closure of the TCI on 16 December 2026.
- *Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) Bill*: The Bill had passed and would come into effect by 1 July 2026. Proposed changes to strengthen the ATEC's independence had been accepted, and five commissioners would soon be announced.
- *Key achievements and events since the last report*:
 - Griffith had elevated its 2026 QS World University Rankings by Subject across a broad range of subjects including Nursing up three places to 30th overall, Music ranked for the first time and placed in the 26-50 band, and Sports, Environmental Sciences and Performing Arts all moving up a band.
 - The Brighter Futures campaign achievements were announced 31 March. Griffith raised \$125 million in philanthropic contributions, engaged with 110,000 alumni and was the first non-Group of Eight (Go8) university to close a campaign.
 - Griffith hosted an event to acknowledge the Abedians, who had given 665 scholarships over ten years, with scholarship recipients in attendance to reflect on the impact of the scholarships.
 - Brighter Future Scholarships morning teas were held with staff donors and student recipients, and it was noted that last year, Griffith had raised over \$1m in scholarships for the first time.
 - Fourteen Griffith students had received New Colombo Plan (NCP) scholarships. Griffith remained one of the most successful universities in the NCP scheme, represented by outstanding students, with more from regional and low SES backgrounds compared to other universities.

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

- The pending appointment of the ATEC Commissioners and their role in the negotiation of the mission based compacts, noting Griffith would have likely finalised negotiations before the outgoing Vice Chancellor's departure.
- International student load and ongoing sector-wide issues including slowed visa processing, noting Australian university international commencements were down 15% nationally.
- Strategies in place to support all students, as well as high-performing students and those from equity cohorts, which would be addressed in the student experience and retention strategy items.
- Strong results in several of the University's strategic key performance indicators, notably research performance and financial sustainability.

- The need to address student retention as an opportunity to both support student success and financial sustainability, noting challenges for specific student cohorts given growing economic and global uncertainty.
- Commercialisation and the potential of a strategic investment fund for proof of concept, and the importance of both partnerships and philanthropic support for research, noting that a major bids team was building narratives where possible to pitch research.
- The challenges of planning in the current context given continued volatility and uncertainty, and the ongoing need for the University to pull all of the strategic levers all of the time.

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

Annual Update on Industry Engagement

Council receives an annual report on industry engagement activities, with other reporting provided as required.

The Vice President (Industry and External Engagement) presented an overview of the portfolio's work to strengthen partnerships, foster collaboration and advance Griffith's values. The update highlighted strong momentum in partnership development, with the portfolio surpassing its 2024–2025 revenue target of \$30 million through new and expanded collaborations, supported by the introduction of a top-tier partnership model to strengthen governance and management. Emphasis was also placed on equipping staff to sustain trusted partnerships and on seeking open feedback from partners, while recognising the important role Council members had played in supporting relationship development and securing key partnerships, including the Australian Olympic Committee partnership.

The report also outlined how deeper technology integration was enabling new and strengthened partnerships across corporate education, including in cybersecurity and financial crime, commercialisation accelerators, student experience and employability, and biomedicine and health technology. Partnerships supporting decarbonisation and climate change were also highlighted, including work with the Quantum Decarbonisation Alliance, CSIRO and Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary.

Additional areas of focus aligned with the Strategic Plan included further development of business-to-business corporate education, continued progress toward the next stage of the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct, and establishment of a university-wide Entrepreneurship Centre with an initial focus on Griffith students.

Council **noted** the report on the achievements and current areas of strategic focus for the Industry and External Engagement portfolio.

Annual Advancement Report and Philanthropic Review Report

Council receives an annual report on advancement and campaign activities, with other reporting provided as required.

The Vice President (Advancement) presented an update on the *Brighter Future for All Campaign*, which has raised \$125 million and engaged 110,000 alumni, making it the largest philanthropic initiative in Griffith's history. The Campaign has established a sector-leading benchmark in university philanthropy, exceeding many Group of Eight institutions and pioneering a combined focus on fundraising and alumni engagement. It was noted that most alumni interactions had been digital, offering useful insight into future engagement approaches.

More Partnership has been engaged to undertake a multi-year philanthropic review to assess donor perceptions, Advancement's effectiveness and future opportunities. Early findings were strongly positive, and the review confirmed the strong growth in Griffith's philanthropic performance over the past five years, with the University now exceeding sector benchmarks in four of five Philanthropic University Matrix measures.

Following the commencement of a new Vice Chancellor, Advancement will return to Council with recommendations that are expected to include extending the *Brighter Futures Campaign* to 2030 with a new philanthropic target, strengthening alumni engagement through the CRM, and increasing investment in technology and people. Council discussion also considered potential donor fatigue, the need to avoid over-reliance on the Vice Chancellor, opportunities to promote Griffith's research more effectively, expansion of bequest fundraising, clarification of the rationale for the proposed target and resourcing, strengthening Council's role in fundraising through new connections, and exploration of a broader model of philanthropic leadership and ambassadorship.

Council **noted** the Advancement and Campaign outcomes detailed in the 2025 Advancement Annual Report.

Risk Management

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report

The Chief Operating Officer delivered the *Q1 2026 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report*, which was based on data from January – February 2026. The following matters were highlighted and discussed:

- Services@Griffith, the new health and safety reporting system in ServiceNow, replaced GSafe in February 2026. While ServiceNow was established as an enterprise service system, it was still developing for health and safety reporting, with identified gaps and issues being addressed. The team continued to prioritise safety and effective risk management throughout the transition.
- A verbal update was provided for two incidents which occurred after the written report was circulated: with one in the process of remediation and the other being investigated. The Audit and Risk Committee would receive updates at future meetings.

Council discussed the need for safety leadership training and were advised that the Health, Safety and Wellbeing committees were developing the training to be delivered as a half day training session in Q4, 2026.

Council **noted** the *Q1 2026 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report*.

Digital and Physical Infrastructure

Strategic Infrastructure Program: Major Projects Update

The Chief Operating Officer presented the *Strategic Infrastructure Program Update*, and the following milestones approaching within the next month were highlighted:

- Completion of the Treasury Building demolition works.
- Finalisation of pricing for HATRIC.
- Commencement of the remediation program for the Salesforce system.

Council discussed the risks to the CBD campus strategy with the new Managed Growth model, but Council was advised that the targets were modest and focused on international students, which were well below the cap. There was an opportunity to outperform. Projections had been given to ATEC and had included the CBD numbers. Contingency planning for learning and teaching delivery was in place if the Treasury Building refurbishment did not reach completion for T1 2027 commencement. It was noted that while the delivery timeframe was tight that the project was tracking well.

On the recommendation of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee, Council **noted** the status update on the Strategic Infrastructure Program.

CBD Campus – Treasury Building Naming

On the recommendation of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee, the Council **noted** the official building name, 'Treasury Building', for Griffith University University's Brisbane City (CBD) location.

Quality Assurance

Annual Report from the Office of the Student Ombudsman

On the recommendation of the Academic Committee, the Council **noted** the Annual Report from the Office of the Student Ombudsman.

Organisational Review: School of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences Review Report and Implementation Plan

On the recommendation of the Academic Committee, the Council **resolved to approve** the:

- School of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences (HLSS) Review Report (2026/0000406)
- Implementation Plan (2026/0000407).

Annual Report on Qualifications Awarded

On the recommendation of the Academic Committee, the Council **noted** the report and the process by which qualifications are awarded, including the controls and monitoring in place to ensure legitimate conferral.

Governance Matters

Chancellor Election

Council is responsible for the election of the Chancellor, in accordance with section 30 of the Griffith University Act 1998.

The Deputy Chancellor chaired the item and advised that the Chancellor's term would conclude on 30 September 2026. On the recommendation of the People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee, Council was asked to re-elect the incumbent, the Hon Andrew Fraser, for a second four-year term. In making its recommendation, the Committee noted the need for continuity of leadership, the Chancellor's performance, achievements, skills, institutional knowledge and experience, and his satisfaction of the requirements set out in the relevant procedure and under the *Griffith University Act 1998* (Qld).

On the recommendation of the People, Nomination and Remuneration Committee, the Council unanimously **elected** the incumbent Chancellor, the Honourable Andrew Fraser, as the Chancellor of Griffith University for a second term of four years from 1 October 2026 up to and including 30 September 2030, in accordance with the Griffith University Act 1998 [s30] and the Election of Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor Procedure and **agreed**, in accordance with the section 23(3) of the Griffith University Act 1998, that the 12 year appointment restriction set out in section 23(2) not apply.

Recruitment and Succession Planning

Council is responsible for the appointment of the Vice Chancellor, in accordance with section 32 of the Griffith University Act 1998.

As authorised by Council, the People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee had engaged the global executive search firm Odgers to support the recruitment of a new Vice Chancellor. Council discussed the proposed process and timeline, and the draft position description for the Vice Chancellor, as circulated ahead of the meeting.

On the recommendation of the People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee, Council **resolved to approve** the job specifications for the new Vice Chancellor as detailed in the position description document, including the amendments agreed before and during the meeting.

Council and Committee Member Appointments

Council is responsible for the appointment of additional members of Council, in accordance with section 16 of the Griffith University Act 1998.

On the recommendation of the People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee, Council **resolved to approve** the reappointment of Mr Andrew Hawkins for a second term as:

- an additional member of the Griffith University Council in accordance with the Act [s16, 20 and 22] for a second term of 3 years from 1 July 2026 up to and including 30 June 2029
- a member of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee in accordance with the constitution for a term aligned to his Council member term, noting that it was conditional on his reappointment to the Council.

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:

- *Academic Committee*
The Provost and Chair of the Academic Committee advised that the substantive items from the 1/2026 Academic Committee meeting had been covered in the agenda. Council **noted** the 1/2026 executive summary and drafted minutes.
- *Finance and Infrastructure Committee*

The Pro Chancellor and Chair of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee provided a brief verbal report on the 1/2026 (30 March) meeting, and Council **noted** the draft 1/2026 minutes, and the approved 5/2025 minutes, and Flying Minutes 1/2025 (Nov), 1/2026 (Feb) and 2/2026 (Mar).

- *People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee*

The Pro Chancellor and Chair of the People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee provided a brief verbal report on the items discussed at the 1/2026 (30 March) meeting and Council **noted** the draft redacted 1/2026 minutes, the approved 4/2025 minutes, and 2/2025 Flying Minute.

On the recommendation of the People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee, Council **resolved to approve** the 2025 People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee Annual Report.

Annual Governance Compliance Report

The Annual Governance Compliance Report is a summary of how Council fulfils its roles and responsibilities and operates in accordance with best practice standards for university governance and in compliance with core regulatory requirements. The review of these documents occurs annually to ensure consistency between the documents and continued alignment with relevant legislation and other University governance documents.

Council **noted** the Annual Governance Compliance Report.

Delegations of Authority

Council **resolved to approve** the amendments to the [Delegations Register](#) (Schedules A and D) (2026/0001018) consequential of the new Special Payments Policy which includes granting the People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee an oversight role in relation to special payments, to take effect 27 April 2026.

Council **noted** the new published Special Payments Policy (2026/0001008), and aligned amendments to the People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee Constitution (2026/0001017) to reflect the Committee's role in relation to special payments.

Amended Committee Constitution

Council **resolved to approve** the amended [People, Nominations and Remuneration Committee constitution](#) (2026/0001017).

Policy Changes

On the recommendation of the Vice Chancellor, council **resolved to approve** the amended [Naming Policy](#) (2026/0001036) with a new review date of 2029.

Other Matters

Honorary Awards and Titles

Council **conferred the title of Professor Emeritus** on Professor Janet Ransley from April 27, 2026 after a distinguished career at Griffith University for 35 years and having led the discipline of Criminology as the Head of School and Director of the Griffith Criminology Institute.

Items for noting and information

Council noted the following items:

- Declarations of Interest Register
- Action items from previous meeting
- 2026 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.

[April 2026]