Report from Monash University Council meeting 5/2026 held on 5 August 2026

Monash University Council met on 5 August 2026. Key matters considered included a mid-year update on the 2026 Implementation Plan, the annual State of Education report and annual Academic Board report, the University's strategic and financial outlook, development of the University's next strategic plan, research translation and commercialisation, the University's application to TEQSA for re-registration, and regulatory and governance developments.

Education, Students and Academic Quality

Council received the 2026 State of Education Report, which focused on student success, equity and opportunities for earlier and more targeted intervention to assist students struggling academically. Council noted strong overall student progression and retention data and considered outcomes for equity groups, particularly First Nations students.

The report identified early indicators of students experiencing academic difficulty, including low engagement with online learning materials and failure of a first assessment. Council discussed opportunities to strengthen early intervention, transition and mentoring, and to improve connections between students and existing academic support.

Council also received the Academic Board Annual Report. The report covered coursework and higher degree by research program development and review; student success, equity, practical support and student voice; academic quality and integrity; and emerging challenges for academic governance. Council noted work underway on assessment reform and the integration of artificial intelligence, academic and research integrity, and strengthened oversight of academic risk.

Council received a presentation from the Dean of the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture on the Faculty's performance and future priorities. The presentation covered education, research performance and partnerships, and opportunities for greater interdisciplinary engagement across the University. Discussion included housing research, the role of creativity and design in helping to meet societal challenges, and the integration of artificial intelligence into teaching and assessment.

Strategy, Research and Commercialisation

Council received an update on development of the University's next strategic plan. The University is undertaking broad consultation with staff, students and alumni through face-to-face sessions and online engagement activities. Council will oversee the development of the strategy through discussions at Council meetings and dedicated strategy sessions.

As part of this process, Council held an initial strategic discussion on the future of research translation and commercialisation at Monash. Council considered a proposed approach to enhance the University's commercialisation activities. Discussion included the required capabilities and cultural

changes, initial areas of focus and opportunities arising from research outside them, different approaches to managing commercial assets, and the scale and sources of investment required.

Council also received an update on the University's international network, including Monash University Malaysia, Monash University Indonesia, Monash Suzhou, the IITB-Monash Research Academy and Monash University Prato.

Financial Performance and Capital Investment

Council considered the monthly financial report. Monash University Australia's financial performance was tracking broadly as expected, although forecast revenue had reduced principally due to softer international postgraduate student load. Expenditure management had enabled the forecast operating margin to be maintained.

Council noted positive performance at Monash University Malaysia and updates in relation to operations at Monash University Indonesia. Council also noted that the University's credit position remained strong following a recent Moody's review.

The Finance Committee reported on the University's longer-term financial sustainability. Council noted that the outlook remained sensitive to international student numbers and that continued cost discipline would be required.

Council approved an investment case to fund construction of a cyclotron facility, having regard to the research and community benefits of the proposed facility and the University's capacity to accommodate the investment.

Council also approved a modest rebalancing of the University's strategic asset allocation. The University's long-term investment return objective and risk setting remain unchanged.

Regulatory and Governance Matters

Council considered amendments to the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards), regarding prevention of and response to racism, and general issues of university governance, which take effect from 1 January 2027. The University will undertake a gap analysis and develop an implementation plan, with Council and Academic Board oversight.

Council approved the University's draft Self-Assurance Report for its application to renew registration with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and authorised the Vice-Chancellor to approve the final application before submission.

Council also received updates on the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion and the University's alignment with recommendations from the Group of Eight Expert Advisory Committee on Combatting Antisemitism. Council noted continuing work across the University to strengthen its response to racism and unlawful discrimination and promote social cohesion.

The Governance and Nominations Committee reported on Council and committee composition, certain controlled entity governance matters, and election procedures. Council also considered lessons arising from governance issues elsewhere in the higher education sector, including the importance of a safe speak-up culture, effective governance oversight, management of conflicts of interest, and robust business cases for significant decisions.

Council approved revised Council and Academic Board election procedures and arrangements for the 2026 Council elections, and amendments to the *Monash University (Council) Regulations* in relation to external persons on campus.

Other Committee matters

Council received reports from the Risk & Audit Committee and the Estates & ESG Committee.

The Risk & Audit Committee reported on internal audit activities, quality assurance and compliance in relation to employment obligations, IT network security, major transformation projects, and operational risk. The Committee also reported progress on the University's major projects, including the Time and Attendance System, Student Management System Transformation and MAVERIC.

The Estates & ESG Committee reported on the Capital Development Plan, planning for the Clayton Campus Centre redevelopment, potential property acquisitions and longer-term planning for the Parkville campus, the Suburban Rail Loop, and development of a University-wide transportation and parking plan.

The next meeting of Council is scheduled for 14 October 2026.