Federation University Australia Council

Meeting 02/2026 | 27 May 2026

The Federation University Australia Council met on Wednesday 27 May 2026 at the Gippsland Campus. This communiqué provides a summary of the key decisions and strategic discussions from the meeting.

Strategic Discussions

Council addressed the most significant strategic priorities and challenges facing the University, focusing on sustainability, research performance, student experience and long-term planning.

Long-term financial outlook

Council was updated on the University's long-term financial outlook following the continued and material reduction in international student revenue as a result of visa restrictions in key source countries.

Council noted the resulting short-term financial pressures and longer-term structural challenges, despite growth in domestic enrolments, improved retention and progress under the University's Strategy 2040. Immediate priorities include maintaining expenditure discipline, deferring non-critical expenditure, expanding domestic, TAFE and pathway activity, strengthening onshore recruitment and progressing transnational education opportunities.

Council discussed the strategic recovery plan and the University's proactive engagement with the Victorian Government on available support.

Student growth and learner experience

Council noted a 9% increase in domestic enrolments and positive early indicators for student retention. Continued emphasis is being placed on early, data-informed support, student wellbeing, equity and belonging, and improvements to digital services.

In response to the significant reduction in international student numbers, the University is pursuing targeted recruitment, pathway and offshore opportunities while maintaining its focus on domestic growth.

Research and innovation

Council received the Research Strategy Performance Report 2026 noting the encouraging progress in higher degree by research enrolments, research quality and monitoring of strategic targets. 73% of publications were reported in top quartile journals, and Federation improved to the 101–200 band in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

Council discussed the proposed EDGE (Enablement, Development, Growth and Excellence) Program to support research development, partnerships and impact, together with opportunities to strengthen research translation, commercialisation and Indigenous research capability. Planning for a University-wide Research and Innovation Week in November 2026 was welcomed.

Transnational education

Council was updated on due diligence for potential transnational education partnerships, with an initial focus on opportunities in Indonesia. This work will inform a future business case for Council consideration.

Co-operative education

Council noted that all in-scope higher education courses have been transformed under the Co-op model and mapped against the new Co-op Quality Framework. Work is commencing to integrate higher education, research degrees and TAFE into a single framework, supported by an evaluation approach measuring student, employment and regional outcomes.

Key Decisions

University Instrument and Register of Delegations

Council approved the annual review of the university Instrument and Register of Delegations made pursuant to the Federation University Australia Act 2010 (Vic.), which empowers the Council to delegate certain powers to committees, officers, and staff members.

Modern Slavery Statement

Council approved the 2025 Modern Slavery Report for submission as the University's Modern Slavery Statement.

Academic governance

Council approved amendments to the Academic Board Charter to support representation across all academic governance bodies. Council also noted that the University's Course Review Schedule has achieved compliant status following a dedicated rectification program.

Academic Board Chair reappointment

Council approved the reappointment of the current officeholder for a third and final term from 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2028 as Chair of Academic Board and an official member of Council. The reappointment also includes continuance as a member of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and Governance and Strategy Committee.

Governance and Committee Matters

Council discussed a range of governance and strategic matters considered by its standing committees, including:

- Council noted strong results from the 2025 Council and committee performance evaluations, particularly for chair effectiveness, respectful culture, safe challenge, role clarity and transparent relationships with management. An external independent governance review will be undertaken in 2027.
- The Academic Board reported continued strong engagement in the staff professional development series focused on informing staff of their obligations against the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards).

- The Audit and Risk Management Committee reported that an internal audit of wage compliance identified one moderate finding which has since been rectified. Council also noted improved hazard and near-miss reporting and evidence of stronger safety practices.
- The Resources Committee reported on enterprise risk, controlled entity assurance, the Future Fed post-implementation review and progress against the transformation capital portfolio.
- Council noted implementation of the Expert Council on University Governance Principles and ongoing oversight of academic governance risk, artificial intelligence governance and international research security.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of Council will be held on Wednesday 19 August 2026 at the Federation Melbourne City Campus. Council's annual planning day will be held the day prior at the same campus on Tuesday 18 August 2026.

Further Information

For further information on Federation's governance, see Governance | Federation University or contact council@federation.edu.au.