Federation University Australia Council

Meeting 03/2026 | 19 August 2026

The Federation University Australia Council met on Wednesday 19 August 2026 at the Federation Melbourne City 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.

Financial Position and Sustainability

Council considered the University's financial position and ongoing engagement with the Victorian Government regarding available support and longer-term recovery options. Council noted that declining international revenue continues to affect financial performance and that the University remains focused on securing a sustainable way forward.

The discussion focused on the University's recovery planning and the importance of rebuilding and diversifying international revenue. Council approved the Quarter 2 2026 Financial Performance Report and noted that the 2026 and 2027 financial objectives would be reviewed through the budget process.

Domestic Growth and Student Pathways

Council noted continued strong domestic student demand and growth in pathways from TAFE to higher education, particularly in nursing, health and education. The University continues to support this growth while seeking additional Commonwealth-supported places.

Council also discussed an emerging collaboration with the University of Melbourne to explore undergraduate-to-postgraduate education pathways.

International Partnerships and Transnational Education

Council discussed the importance of transnational education to the University's future sustainability and international engagement. The Chancellor reported on a recent delegation to China, which strengthened relationships with longstanding partner universities and identified opportunities in pathways, student mobility, academic exchange and research collaboration.

Council also considered the need to maintain strong academic oversight and remain attentive to regulatory and security requirements in all international partnerships.

Strategic Plan Progress

Council considered the first half-year report against the University's Strategic Plan and supporting sub-strategies. Four of the six strategic drivers were reported as on track, supported by strong domestic enrolment results. Challenges remain in international student recruitment and progress towards ambitious domestic growth targets.

Council noted that Co-operative Education has moved into business-as-usual delivery within the institutes and discussed the need for clearer measures of research performance and impact in future reports.

Respect@Fed

Council discussed the proposed Respect@Fed operational committee, which will coordinate the University's response to antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, discrimination and gender-based violence. The committee will support integrated oversight of cultural change, regulatory obligations and the University's commitment to a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.

Key Decisions

Proposal to establish an Indonesia Branch Campus

Following extensive legal, financial, governance, regulatory and operational due diligence, Council approved a proposal to establish a Federation University branch campus in Jakarta, subject to required Indonesian government approvals.

The proposal builds on a long-standing partnership and would initially focus on business and information technology programs, with scope to expand. Federation will retain responsibility for curriculum, academic quality, governance and institutional oversight.

Honorary Doctorate

Council approved the submitted nomination for admission to the degree of Doctor of the University *honoris causa* with the nominee being recognised for their internationally significant contribution to public health, ageing, chronic disease management and cancer research, as well as their long-standing collaboration with Federation University researchers and commitment to rural, regional and underserved communities.

Council Membership

Council approved the reappointment of Ms Michelle Nightingale for a third term from 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2029. Her reappointment includes membership of Council, the Governance and Strategy Committee and the Senior Appointments and Remuneration Committee, and service as Chair of the Resources Committee.

Governance and Committee Matters

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

- an independent assessment of Academic Board governance improvements; strengthened student misconduct reporting and completion of the Course Review Schedule rectification program;
- new higher education governance expectations relating to racism and discrimination, good governance, risk and compliance;
- progress in information technology cybersecurity risk management;
- Federation TAFE's delivery of education programs in Victorian men's prisons, including support for First Peoples learners and potential future research opportunities;
- the growing breadth of regulatory obligations and Council's role in assuring compliance.

Council also welcomed Mr Duncan Brown to his first meeting and thanked outgoing member Mr Doug Robinson for three years of service to Council and its committees.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of Council will be held on Wednesday 14 October 2026 at the Berwick Campus.

Further Information

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