

# WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of meeting 2023/4 of the Board of Trustees of Western Sydney University, held at 8.30am on Thursday 3 August 2023 in Boardroom 1, The Chancellery, Building EB, Parramatta South campus and Zoom.

### Present:

#### Members present in Boardroom 1

Professor Jennifer Westacott AO (Chair and Chancellor)  
Professor Barney Glover AO (Vice-Chancellor and President)  
Professor Robert Mailhammer (Chair of Academic Senate)  
Ms Elizabeth Dibbs (Deputy Chancellor)  
Dr Linda O'Brien AM (Pro-Chancellor)  
Mr Joseph Carrozzi AM  
Ms Georgia Lee  
Dr Amanda Larkin (*arrived at 9.03am*)  
Ms Payal Shah (*arrived at 8.36am*)  
Dr Fiona Pacey  
Associate Professor Jennifer Mensch

#### Member present by Zoom

Mr Lee Pinder (Pro-Chancellor)  
Ms Holly Kramer (Pro-Chancellor)  
Mr James Christian PSM  
Ms Natalia Centellas (née Vukolova)

### Apologies:

Ms Kerry Stubbs (Deputy Chancellor)  
Mr Simon Hickey  
Mr Bayan Sohailee

### In Attendance:

Professor Clare Pollock (Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost)  
Mr Peter Pickering (Senior Vice-President)  
Mr Angelo Kourtis (Vice-President, People and Advancement)  
Professor Simon Barrie (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic)  
Professor Deborah Sweeney (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and International)  
Professor Michelle Trudgett (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership)  
Mr Bill Parasiris (Vice-President, Infrastructure and Commercial)  
Mr Darren Greentree (Vice-President, Finance and Chief Financial Officer)  
Ms Jane Hutchison (University Secretary)  
Ms Sophie Buck (Director, Office of Governance Services)  
Ms Christine Sharpe (Executive Governance Officer)  
Ms Teneille Rousianos (Administration Officer) [meeting support]  
Ms Nicole Bannerman (General Counsel) (Observer)

## **1. OPENING AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

### **1.1 Welcome**

The Chair declared the meeting open, confirmed a quorum was present, and welcomed members and observers.

### **1.2 Apologies**

Apologies were noted from Ms Kerry Stubbs, Mr Simon Hickey and Mr Bayan Sohailee.

### **1.3 Declarations of Material Interests**

The Chair invited Board members to declare any new material interests in relation to matters on the agenda or their role on the Board more generally. Mr Joseph Carrozzi noted his previously declared role as Chair of HealthCo Healthcare and Wellness REIT (ASX: HCW) and advised he has become aware that HealthCo has lodged or will lodge an EOI or similar in relation to the University's Liverpool Health and Education Research Hub project.

### **1.4 Confirmation of Minutes**

The Board resolved as follows:

#### *Resolution*

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**The Board of Trustees approved the minutes and confidential minutes of its 13 June 2023 meeting.**

**[3/08/2023:1]**

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### **1.5 Action Sheets from Previous Meetings**

The Board noted the actions taken on items listed.

### **1.6 Starring of Items**

#### *Resolution*

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**The Board of Trustees resolved to approve all unstarred items as having been considered and noted, and their respective recommendations as adopted.**

**[3/08/2023:2]**

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### **1.9 Arrangement of Business**

The following items were identified for consideration in closed session: 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4.

## **2. REPORTS**

### **2.1 Chancellor's Report [Open Session Item]**

The Chancellor spoke to her report, noting the following:

- *International engagement:*
  - *Canada trip:* The Chancellor was a keynote speaker at the 8th Australia-Canada Economic Leadership Forum, which had the theme of 'Sustainability, Recovery and Growth post-pandemic'. Her speech, and that of the Prime Minister of

Canada, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, will be circulated to the Board members, for information.

- *United States trip:* The Chancellor attended the Global Business Alliance meeting in Washington, which included discussions with Ambassador Rudd on the US' reindustrialisation of their economy.

*[Ms Payal Shah joined the meeting at 8.36am]*

- *University activities:*
  - *Giving Day* – The Chancellor encouraged Board members to participate in Giving Day on 6 September 2023.
  - *Foundation Forum* – The Chancellor spoke to the success of the recently held Foundation Forum.
- *Sector and related matters* – The Business Council of Australia (BCA) will submit its response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim report and will shortly launch its 10-year policy agenda, which will outline an ambitious set of reforms.

The Board discussed the potential opportunities afforded by AUKUS Pillar Two and how the University can optimise this deeper collaboration with the United States in our region. The Chancellor advised that the BCA has a workshop with AUKUS and recommended that a member of the Board attend the workshop. It was agreed that a deep-dive will be held to better understand the big transformation project and the expenditure patterns under AUKUS that are likely to represent opportunities for the University.

### **2.1.1 Board and Committee Strategy Day Report [Open Session Item]**

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the Board and Committee Strategy Day report and advised the Board that the resolution summarises the major outcomes of the day. This primarily focuses on personalisation, institutional agility, developing research capabilities and frontier technologies. The Board were advised that the Vice-President, People and Advancement is working on the personalisation theme, and that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and International is exploring frontier technologies.

The University has commenced a mid-cycle review of the Strategic Plan *Sustaining Success 2021-2026*. Feedback provided during the Board Strategy Day in June has been taken into consideration. A revised version of the Strategy will be presented at the upcoming October Board meeting with a final draft to be presented to the Board for consideration in December and final sign-off scheduled for February 2024. The Vice-Chancellor noted that the Regional Masterplan has been renamed 'Western 2035', and that the Vice-President, Infrastructure and Commercial is leading this 10-year project, with a draft to be available at the next Board meeting.

*[Ms Amanda Larkin arrived at 9.03am]*

The Board requested further information on how the University is responding to external factors without introducing new components to the Strategic Plan. The Vice-Chancellor clarified that while a new enabler that concentrates on industry partnerships has been introduced, the primary objective of the mid-cycle review is to refocus the current plan instead of introducing new elements.

### **Resolution**

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#### **The Board of Trustees:**

- 1. acknowledges that for the 10-year horizon to 2033, the University will focus on:**
  - a) impact, particularly through personalisation, institutional agility, developing research capability in frontier industries, leading the sector**

- through industry inspired credentials and embracing the ‘one university’ concept;
- b) developing a reputation locally, nationally and internationally for our teaching, research and community impact in Western Sydney, nationally and internationally;
  - c) driving deeper engagement with community for mutual benefit;
  - d) being seen as the key partner for industry and government in the transformation of Western Sydney;
  - e) building a stronger financial position, based on an innovative, more self-sustaining and more resilient business model;
  - f) continuing to ensure the culture of the institution closely aligns with the University’s values;
  - g) being increasingly recognised as a global leader in the delivery of flexible industry-focussed micro-credentials;
  - h) continuing to develop our global reach to bring the best of the University to the growing Asian region and to bring the best talent to Western Sydney; and
  - i) expansive statements of our decadal ambitions in key areas of research, teaching and engagement.
2. endorses the finalisation of the Regional Master Plan, to become a more expansive ‘*Western 2035*’ strategy, with the plan to be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval at its October 2023 meeting;
  3. notes that the Transformation Program will be revised to focus on:
    - a) an expanded focus on Digital Acceleration (DX) and the Engaged Teaching Project: Improving the Student Experience (ETP);
    - b) commence development of a major expansion of the University’s capacity to create and deliver flexible, modular, stackable new forms of credential through engagement with business and industry;
    - c) expand the Transnational Education (TNE) program to incorporate a decadal commitment to off shore campus developments and extensions in Vietnam, Indonesia and India; and
    - d) the continued delivery on Post-graduate curriculum transformation (PGx), Destination College (DC), and Innovation Futures (IF); and a revised Transformation Program will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval at its December 2023 meeting; and
  4. endorses the Vice-Chancellor to undertake, with appropriate consultation of the University community, a mid-term review of the University’s strategic plan - Sustaining Success 2021-2026 - and present a draft updated strategic plan (2023 – 2026) to be considered by the Board at its December 2023 meeting.

[3/08/2023:3]

## 2.2 Vice-Chancellor’s Report [Open Session Item]

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the following items in his report:

- *Australian Universities Accord* – Hon. Minister Jason Clare released the Australian Universities Accord Interim report at the National Press Club on 19 July 2023. The report has five recommendations and 70 directions for reform. The interim report contains directions for potential reform across all Terms of Reference, and focuses on equity, addressing student poverty, scaffolding of learning and skills shortages across Australia, microcredentials and VET reform, funding of research and enhancing industry collaboration. The report is currently accepting submissions for six weeks and the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost will manage the University’s response.

The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost spoke to the immediate recommendations, including cancellation of the Low Completion Rate (LCR) rule which

has had a significant impact on the University's load, and the focus on improved university governance.

- *Foundation Forum* – The first event in the new format was held last week to engage with donors and provide an opportunity to look at the next decade of funding and philanthropy. The Vice-Chancellor advised the Board that he announced the Medich Foundation gift to the Indigenous Centre of Excellence at the Foundation Forum.
- *Fairfield*– The University's intention to establish a presence in Fairfield will be announced with the Minister for Education, the Hon Jason Clare, and Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon Chris Bowen on 5 August. The University has initiated site procurement and planning. The presence at Fairfield aligns with recommendation 1 of the Universities Australia Accord Interim report.
- *Ministerial changes* – The Vice-Chancellor spoke to the recent NSW ministerial changes, noting that in the interim, Deputy Premier Prue Car will take on the Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education portfolio.
- *Rankings* – The University has again improved its position in key rankings, now ranking no. 33 in this year's THE Young University Rankings, and 375<sup>th</sup> in the world in the 2023-2024 QS World University Rankings, which is an improvement of over 125 places.
- *University Response to parliamentary response to AI* – The University's program of work on generative AI continues to educate and upskill Western staff and students on the opportunities for work efficiencies and the building of future graduate capabilities.
- *National Redress Scheme* – The University officially commenced its participation in the National Redress Scheme, acknowledging that it is the custodian of assets that have a deep and troubled history. The University is working with survivors of abuse from the former St Vincent's Boys' home at Westmead to establish a suitable form of acknowledgement. Extensive consultation is underway, with an update to be provided to the Board at a future meeting.
- *Transnational Education (TNE)* – The University continues to progress the implementation of its transformation education (TNE) strategy, with a current focus on the establishment of the University's Surabaya campus, exploration of campus opportunities in India, including a joint campus operation with IRU partners, and the planned expansion of the Vietnam campus.
- *Walkley Award, Pascall Prize for Arts Criticism* – Dr Catriona Menzies-Pike, Writing and Society Research Centre, was announced as the winner of the prestigious Pascall Prize for Arts Criticism.
- *First Peoples Walk* – The First Peoples Walk at the Kingswood campus, was officially opened on 6 July 2023. The *Indigenous Futures Decadal Strategy*, an important blueprint for Indigenous growth and development was launched at this event.
- *Cyber Security Update* – In response to addressing the capability gaps within the University's network and systems, resources have been allocated to accelerate both the University's Identity Management and Access Control capabilities, including deployment of Multi-Factor Authentication for students, and Network Traffic Analysis capability.
- *General Staffing Matters* – Shortlisting for the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education is complete and formal interviews are scheduled for August and recruitment for the position of Dean, School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment has commenced. The Board was advised that Professor Anna Cody, Dean of the School of Law, will be leaving the University to take up a new appointment as Australia's next Sex Discrimination Commissioner.

The Chancellor welcomed Ms Payal Shah as the Postgraduate Student representative of the Board of Trustees.

### **2.3 Academic Senate Report [Open Session Item]**

The Chair of Academic Senate spoke to the report, noting:

- *Vice-Chancellor's/Chair of Academic Senate Forum* – The forum, scheduled for 5 August, will discuss the Australian Universities Accord Interim report and the implications for the University.
- *2022 Survey Results of Senate and its Standing Committees* – Survey results identified that more can be done in the areas of communication, onboarding, and induction.
- *Engagement with Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards and Senates (COCABS)* – The last meeting of the Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards and Senates focused on developing a formal organisational structure for the National Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards and Senates (OzCABS) as well as OzCABS's submission to the Accord Panel's Interim Report.
- *Quality Assurance processes* – The Chair of Senate continues to work closely with management to resolve reporting capabilities.

## **3. SIGNIFICANT MATTERS FOR DELIBERATION OR APPROVAL**

### **3.1 The Indigenous Voice to Parliament [Open Session Item]**

The Chancellor introduced the paper on the Indigenous Voice to Parliament, expressing her support for the Voice to Parliament and support for constitutional recognition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. The Chancellor noted that, despite the complexity of the issue, the making (or not) of a statement was not to provide a precedent for future issues which should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Deputy Chancellor Dibbs provided an overview of discussions at the Board Executive Committee meeting, noting that the Committee spoke at length about the benefits and challenges of a public statement by the Board in support of the 'Yes' campaign. There were mixed views expressed at that meeting, including the importance of championing for a safe space and freedom of speech. The Board Executive Committee acknowledged the challenges of any course of action taken by the Board.

The Vice-Chancellor advised the Board that the NTEU has reached out wanting to show their support for the 'Yes' campaign. The Board was advised that a second staff webinar has been scheduled in the coming weeks.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership, thanked the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor for their leadership in support of the 'Yes' campaign. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership, spoke to the importance of providing support to ensure that people are not marginalised as the referendum debate unfolds. The psychological impact on the University's Indigenous staff is significant.

Each Board member spoke to the item. There was a strong consensus of members to issue a statement of support for the Indigenous Voice to Parliament from the Western Sydney University Board of Trustees, which would also acknowledge the differing views within the University community, reaffirm the University's support for freedom of speech, its commitment to equity and the advancement of Indigenous people, and note the University's continued support of its community as the referendum debate continues. It was agreed that a statement of support be drafted and circulated to Board members for approval prior to releasing the statement to the University's students, staff, and the public.

The Chancellor thanked Board members for their honesty, integrity and respectfulness in discussing the issue.

**The Board of Trustees resolved that:**

- 1. it supports the change to the Constitution to enshrine an Indigenous Voice to Parliament;**
- 2. it reaffirms that the University must be a safe place for differences of opinion and it acknowledges the diverse views held on this matter, including within the University community, and respects the opinions of all individuals;**
- 3. it reaffirms the University's support of the *Model Code for Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers* (as proposed by the Hon. Robert French AC);**
- 4. it reaffirms its commitment to equity and the advancement of Indigenous people;**
- 5. the University will continue to support its own community as this important national debate unfolds; and**
- 6. a subcommittee will be formed to draft a statement of support on behalf of the Board of Trustees. The subgroup will comprise the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership), and Deputy Chancellor Liz Dibbs.**

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**[3/08/2023:4]**

### **3.2 Update on TEQSA Contract Cheating Matters and Revocation of Award [Closed Session Item]**

This item was considered in closed session.

### **3.3 Sustaining Success 2021-2026: In-Depth Analysis and Reporting - Transformation [Open Session Item]**

The Board noted the Sustaining Success 2021-2026: In-Depth Analysis Report – Transformation.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Enterprise and International spoke to Measure 6 *Improve our research quality and impact*, noting that the measure uses the University's ratings in the national research assessment "Excellence in Research Australia" (ERA) and "Engagement and Impact Assessment" (E&I). However, these assessments have been put on hold by the government and a replacement internal research assessment measure is currently being considered. There is an indication from the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report and Australian Research Council (ARC) Review, that new measures may be adopted. The Board was advised that until these are in place, an interim assessment measure will be developed.

The Vice-President, People and Advancement spoke to Measure 7 *Increase the retention of our domestic and international students and the quality and employability of our graduates*, noting that while performance is tracking below the full-term target, the University is focused on improving the outcome through a number of initiatives.

The Vice-President, People and Advancement also spoke to employability, noting that while this measure is tracking behind, the University has a number of focused programs to improve the employability of students.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, spoke to Measure 10 *Expand the proportion of curricula and microcredentials that are co-created with industry and community partners*, noting that courses are developed using the expertise of industry and community partners.

### **3.4 Western Growth Update [Closed Session Item]**

This item was considered in closed session.

### **3.5 Hawkesbury Contamination Risk [Closed Session Item]**

This item was considered in closed session.

## **4. BOARD COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY BODIES**

### **4.1 Audit and Risk Committee [Closed Session Item]**

This item was considered in closed session.

### **4.2 Board Executive Committee [Closed Session Item]**

This item was considered in closed session.

### **4.3 Finance and Investment Committee [Closed Session Item]**

This item was considered in closed session.

### **4.4 University Infrastructure Committee [Closed Session Item]**

This item was considered in closed session.

## **5. OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR NOTING**

### **5.1 Uses of the University Seal [Open Session Item]**

#### *Resolution*

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**The Board of Trustees approved the affixing of the University Seal to those documents listed in the attached report, pursuant to the Western Sydney University (University Seal and Authentication) Rule 2021.**

**[3/08/2023:9]**

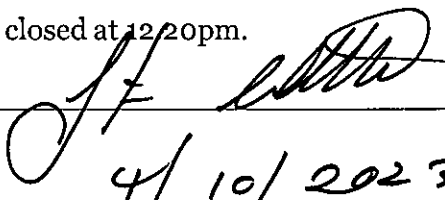
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## **6. NEXT MEETING AND CLOSURE**

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 4 October 2023 at 8.30am in Boardroom 1, The Chancellery, Building EB, Level 2, Parramatta South campus.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.20pm.

Confirmed by:  
(Chair)

  
4/10/2023

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