# CQUniversity Council Report

The Council of Central Queensland University is the University's governing body. Council's functions, powers, and membership are prescribed in the *Central Queensland University Act 1998* (Qld). Council is responsible for appointing and overseeing the Vice-Chancellor and President, setting the University's strategic direction, adopting its budget and approving its operational plan.

Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which it gathers. Council pays their respects to the First Nations people and their Elders, past, present, and emerging, honouring their wisdom, leadership and the cultural traditions they uphold.

## Report from the Meeting held 26 August 2026

### VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Council noted the Vice-Chancellor's report, which included updates on the Rockhampton Consolidation Project, the now operational Mackay Electric Vehicle and Energy Training Centre at the Mackay Ooralea campus, and the University being award $4m through the Government's Structural Adjustment Fund to support the harmonisation of VET and Higher Education activities and structural and curriculum adjustments associated with future change initiatives.

The University's meeting with the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) on 18 August was very successful. ATEC recognised and praised the University's strong regional focus, the significant contribution to equity students, the unique dual-sector model, and the Reconciliation Action Plan and work with First Nations communities. Following negotiations, 450 additional Commonwealth-supported places have now been committed. ATEC also indicated that further additional places may be received once discussions with other universities conclude.

The Commonwealth Prac Placement scheme has been expanded from nursing, midwifery and social work to an additional 10 disciplines, including psychology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, paramedicine, and radiography. These payments are especially important for regional students who often incur additional travel, accommodation, and employment-related costs while undertaking placements.

The University successfully developed systems and processes to administer the Commonwealth Prac Placement payments when the scheme was first introduced, and the project involved strong collaboration across various areas including Scholarships, Work Integrated Learning, Finance, and Digital Services. CQUniversity was among the first universities ready to deliver the scheme and report back to government. As a result, the project was nominated as a finalist in two categories of the 2026 Australian Computer Society Queensland Tech Awards, with the winners to be announced on 10 September.

### FINANCE MATTERS

The Financial Sustainability Strategic Response (FSSR) was discussed. The FSSR was developed in response to the significant decline in international student revenue. The strategy was based on extensive financial analysis, market intelligence, risk assessment and sector benchmarking, and was intended to provide a credible and evidence-based pathway to restoring the University's long-term financial sustainability. Council endorsed the overall strategic direction, noting that a number of individual initiatives would be subject to consultation and formal change management processes before implementation.

Council discussed the Financial Management Report for the month ended 31 July 2026 and noted the Financial Management Presentation for the month ended 30 June 2026.

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## ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Council approved the Academic Board Terms of Reference which underwent a cyclic review. The revisions included ensuring alignment with the University's Transnational Education framework, documenting delegated authorities, improvements to the membership structure, and general improvements to ensure the Terms of Reference remain current and fit for purpose.

Council discussed the Academic Integrity Breach Report for Term 3 2025 which monitors trends in academic integrity breaches and identifies emerging issues across the institution. Term 3 differs from Terms 1 and 2 because it typically has a lower student load, includes a greater proportion of online delivery, and often contains repeat or intensive units. The report showed an approximately 50% decrease in the total number of academic integrity breach cases compared with Term 3, 2024. This was viewed as a positive trend, however, the unusually high number of cases in 2024 may have been influenced by the rapid emergence and adoption of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools by students, for which universities had to develop processes to identify and manage AI-related misconduct. The decline in cases could also be attributed to improvements made over the past year, including enhanced guidance materials and learning resources, clearer expectations regarding the acceptable use of AI and academic practices, and improved guidance for staff on identifying, reporting and managing breaches.

Council noted the ASQA, CRICOS and TEQSA Regulatory Update for May and June 2026.

Council received a professional development session on VET Sector Reform and its implications for the University. The presentation outlined the reform context as a once-in-a-generation transformation of the sector, the five concurrent reforms currently underway, changes to VET qualifications, the University's current position, the strategic opportunities arising from the reforms, and the proposed next steps.

## AUDIT AND RISK MATTERS

Council discussed the updated Occupational Health and Safety Report for April to June 2026. The University's psychosocial risk assessment is continuing and significant data from across the University is currently being gathered and analysed to inform the assessment.

Council discussed the Wage Integrity Project which reached a significant milestone on 2 July, when the University provided a formal undertaking to the Fair Work Ombudsman, outlining admissions, commitments and actions the University has agreed to undertake.

Council noted the Material Contract Performance Register and the Regional Universities Network Benchmarking Report undertaken for the year ended 31 December 2025.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PROJECTS MATTERS

Council discussed the Code of Conduct which underwent a review triggered by the changing external expectations and regulatory considerations for universities. Consultation has been positive so far, including strong support from the Joint Consultative Committee, with feedback to date largely limited to minor refinements and clarification of AI-related wording. The final revised Code of Conduct will be returned to Council for approval following completion of the consultation process.

Council discussed the Capital Projects Overview Report for June 2026. The report provided an overview of the University's extensive portfolio of current capital projects and highlighted the significant number and scale of projects currently underway, the challenging construction and infrastructure environment, and the pressures affecting projects.

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Council considered and approved membership appointments for Academic Board, the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee, the Ceremonial and Honorary Awards Committee, the Chancellor's Committee, and the Strategic Planning and Projects Committee.

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Council accepted the final update against the Council Action Plan addressing the Council-specific recommendations from the 2024 External Review of Corporate and Academic Governance, noting all Council actions have been completed. The next external governance review is expected to occur in 2029, reflecting the revised Higher Education Standards Framework requirements for external reviews every five years rather than every seven years.

Council discussed the Six-Monthly Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Outcomes Framework Report. This is the University's first six-monthly report against the GBV Outcomes Framework and established a baseline against which future progress and outcomes will be measured. Considerable reform has been implemented in a relatively short period, including operationalisation of the Safer Communities Unit three-stream operating model, launch of a low-barrier disclosure pathway for staff and students, rollout of RESPECT at CQU training for staff and students, strengthening prevention and response measures within student accommodation, policy reform, and initial integration of reporting systems and common data definitions.

Council discussed the Official Complaints Report for January to June 2026 and noted the summary of the changes to Standard 6: Governance and Accountability in the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

## STUDENT MATTERS

The focus item for the meeting was the Retention Equity Program. Council received an update on the significant progress achieved since the program's commencement, the importance of the program in supporting student success, equity outcomes, retention and institutional sustainability, as well as the increasing regulatory and funding focus on student progression and completion. The presentation noted improvements in the coordination, governance and measurement of retention initiatives, positive outcomes arising from targeted interventions, particularly for international students, and the 2026 focus on embedding, evaluating and scaling initiatives, strengthening VET and Higher Education pathways, and enhancing student transition and engagement activities.

**Disclaimer**

This report is intended to communicate key outcomes from the meeting. This is not an official record of the meeting. This report does not cover matters where confidentiality is required for legal or commercial reasons.

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