

WESTERN SYDNEY

UNIVERSITY



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of meeting 2025/4 of the Board of Trustees of Western Sydney University, held at 9.00am, Friday 12 September 2025 in Boardroom 1, The Chancellery, Level 2, Barney Glover Building, Parramatta South campus and Zoom.

Present:

Members present in Boardroom 1

Professor Jennifer Westacott AC, Chair and Chancellor
Distinguished Professor George Williams AO, Vice-Chancellor and President
Professor Robert Mailhammer, Chair of Academic Senate
Ms Elizabeth Dibbs, Deputy Chancellor
Ms Kerry Stubbs, Deputy Chancellor
Ms Gabrielle Trainor AO, Pro-Chancellor
Dr Linda O'Brien AM, Pro-Chancellor
Dr Amanda Larkin
Ms Georgia Lee
Mr Simon Hickey
Mr Brendan Thomas
Mr Doug Taylor
Mr Leslie Cowles
Professor Alison Downham Moore
Miss Swetha Kumar – *arrived 9.10am*

Board member in attendance via Zoom

Mr Lee Pinder, Pro-Chancellor
Mr Bill Parasiris, Chief Operating Officer
Ms Lisa Hanlon

Apologies:

Professor Maryanne Dever, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Students

In Attendance:

Professor Deborah Sweeney, Provost
Professor Kevin Dunn, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Transformation
Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership
Professor Geoff Lee, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Western Sydney and External Engagement
Professor Ian Anderson, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Enterprise
Mr Mario Milanovic, Acting Chief Financial Officer
Mr Philip Maloney, General Counsel and University Secretary
Ms Stefanie Balogh, Executive Director, Strategic Communications
Ms Christine Sharpe, Executive Governance Officer (minutes)
Ms Elisa Cristallo, Administration Officer (meeting support)

In attendance for Item 2.2.3 Vice-Chancellor's Update:

Professor Brian Stout, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Students

Mr Don Wright, Executive Director, Enterprise

Professor Alphaia Possamai-Inesedy, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Success

In attendance for Item 2.2.4 Vice-Chancellor's Update:

Professor Brian Stout, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Students

Professor Cath Ellis, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Quality and Integrity
Mr Andrew Younis, Chief Marketing Officer

In attendance for Item 2.2.5 Vice-Chancellor's Update:

Ms Bianca Jordaan, Chief Information Officer

Mr Ben Wise, Chief Information and Security Officer

In attendance for Item 3.1:

Ms Julia Haremza, Director, Risk and Resilience

1. OPENING AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 Welcome

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

The Chair welcomed Ms Lisa Hanlon, newly elected Postgraduate Member and Mr Mario Milanovic, Acting Chief Financial Officer, to the meeting.

1.2 Acknowledgement of Country

Mr Leslie Cowles gave an Acknowledgement of Country.

1.3 Apologies

Apologies were noted from Professor Maryanne Dever, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Students.

1.4 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. No new declarations were noted.

1.5 Confirmation of Minutes

The Board requested the following amendments to the minutes:

- Item 2.1 – replace ‘Stuart Ayres’ with ‘Tim Ayres’.
- Item 2.2.1 – correct the typographical error to ‘pay confidence’ and change the title to ‘Pro Vice-Chancellor Ian Anderson’.
- Item 3.1 – replace ‘flaw’ with ‘floor’.
- Item 3.2 - include ‘student-led activities’ at the end of the first sentence in the third paragraph.

Resolution

That, subject to the amendments to items 2.1, 2.2.1, 3.1 and 3.2, the Board of Trustees approved the minutes and confidential minutes of its 4 June 2025 meeting.

[12/09/2025:1]

1.5.1 Confirmation of Circular Resolution Minutes

The Board resolved as follows:

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved the Circular Resolution minutes held between 4 August 2025 and 7 August 2025.

[12/09/2025:2]

1.6 Action Sheets from Previous Meetings

The Board noted the actions taken on the items listed.

1.7 Starring of Items and Arrangement of Business

The following items were identified for consideration in the meeting: 1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.3, 2.3.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5.

Resolution

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

[12/09/2025:3]

2. REPORTS

2.1 Chancellor's Report [Open Session Item]

[Miss Swetha Kumar arrived at 9.10am]

The Chancellor spoke to the following matters:

- *Senate Inquiry into University Governance* – The Board was advised that the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor made an appearance before the Senate Inquiry into University Governance. The University distinguished itself as the first institution where its Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor appeared jointly before the committee. The Board was advised that the University presented its governance processes to the Senate Committee, including detailed information about the work of the Board. The Chancellor indicated that the committee's inquiries addressed several aspects of the reset program, encompassing consultation processes, the University's commitment to its personnel, efforts to minimise staff reductions, financial matters, Board minutes publication, consultant utilisation, and Vice-Chancellor salary benchmarking. The Chancellor advised that the University's commitment to transparency proved beneficial, noting that the institution demonstrated clear evidence of planning for growth and establishing accountability measures. The Board received information that the Senate Committee recognised the University's challenging circumstances. In response to these challenges, the Chancellor acknowledged the substantial workload and pressure on staff and asked that a review of the psychosocial impact be undertaken.
- *Western 2030* – The Board was informed that the University continues to progress work on the strategy while the Western Reset initiative is underway, including the development of key projects such as the Centre for Nursing Excellence and the Centre for Innovation. The Board was advised that the University has received Ministerial approval for the North Parramatta development. The Board was advised that the University will again offer a Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting) program.

- *Transnational Education* – The Board was advised that the Vietnam campus has positive returns, and enrolments at the Surabaya campus are improving.
- *Solar Car* – The Western Sydney University's Solar Car team crossed the finish line placing preliminarily sixth in the world overall, and the number one Australian team in the world's most prestigious solar car challenge.

The Chancellor advised the Board that the University is still concerned about the external policy environment. The Board was advised that information on the Governance Review will be circulated to members to provide a sense of where it is up to and the opportunity for members to provide feedback.

The Board queried the timeframe for the establishment of the Centres of Excellence. The Chancellor advised that the aim is to have the centres established within the next 18 months, depending on funding. The Board was advised that it is hoped that the Centre for Innovation will be funded by the Government, and the Centre for Nursing Excellence will be funded through philanthropy, government funding and private health funds. The Chancellor advised that if the University can get the business cases right, these centres will be very attractive. It was agreed to provide the Board with more information on the Centres of Excellence at the December meeting.

2.1.1 ECUG Principles for UCC Executive Review [Open Session Item]

The Board noted the paper without discussion.

2.1.2 Social Licence Challenges in the University Sector [Open Session Item]

The Board spoke to the Social Licence Challenges in the University Sector paper noting that the negative talk in the sector flows through to international student attraction. The Board discussed how the University can pivot on all the positive stories of the University and project a positive image. The Board discussed that the University needs to move its language to what the future holds, noting that the Western 100 app and Product Review will assist with this. The Board was advised that the two new Centres of Excellence will attract students, and the branding must be about differentiation. It was agreed to discuss the University's social licence and the strengths and weaknesses at a future meeting.

The Board discussed Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the importance of the University being the first mover on change that drives interoperability. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee advised the Board that AI is listed in the University Risk Register as a medium risk however, the committee requested it to be elevated to high as it is so multifaceted. The Board discussed the importance of having a comprehensive AI framework by 2026. It was agreed to invite an external expert to discuss AI to a future meeting.

2.2 Vice-Chancellor's Updates [Closed Session Item]

2.2.1 Vice-Chancellor's Report [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

2.2.2 Pay Confidence Program Update [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

2.2.3 Western Sydney University and Microsoft Partnership [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

2.2.4 Product Strategy [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

2.2.5 Cyber Security Update [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

2.2.5a Cyber Security Strategy [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

2.3 Academic Senate Report [Open Session Item]

The Chair of the Academic Senate presented his report, highlighting:

- *External Review Implementation and Reset Update (attachment 4)* – Academic Senate agreed to move forward with three standing committees, including (a) Academic Coursework Programs Committee, (b) Research and Research Training Committee, and (c) Education Committee.
- *Student Retention* – Academic Senate was presented with a Retention Business Case. Academic Senate discussed that the proposed business case does not account for major unmitigated factors and mentioned other planned initiatives within the University that may be better equipped to address key drivers of retention.

The Board queried the reporting to the Board of Trustees and the development of appropriate research and academic quality metrics and benchmarks for consideration and approval by Academic Senate for recommendation to the Board of Trustees, as appropriate. The Board was advised that a dashboard is yet to be developed for Academic Senate's approval.

[The Director, Risk and Resilience joined the meeting at 12.30pm]

2.3.1 Academic Senate Charter [Open Session Item]

The Chair of Academic Senate spoke to the Academic Senate Charter paper advising the Board that following on from recommendations of the MinterEllison review of the Board and its sub-committees, the Academic Governance Policy was reviewed, and the new Academic Senate Charter drafted.

The Academic Charter enables Academic Senate to fulfil its responsibilities under the *Western Sydney University Act 1997 and Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*. It clarifies the role and functions of the Academic Senate into the four pillars identified and delegated to it by the Board, being:

1. monitoring academic standards, values and quality assurance;
2. accrediting and approving programs and subjects¹;
3. deciding academic policy and approving related procedures;
4. advising the Board and the Vice-Chancellor as appropriate

The Board was advised that the Academic Charter will replace the Academic Governance Policy.

Resolution

The Board of Trustees approved the Academic Charter as presented and retired the existing Academic Governance Policy.

[12/09/2025:5]

3. MATTERS FOR APPROVAL

3.1 University Risk Register [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.2 Separation of School of Engineering Design & Built Environment [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.3 Proposal to Change the Name of the School of Humanities and Communication Arts [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.4 Honorary Titles and Awards [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.5 Board and Committee Membership Matters [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.6 Macarthur Heights Development Project [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

3.7 Uses of the University Seal [Open Session Item]

The Board approved the recommendation without discussion.

Resolution:

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*.

[12/09/2025:13]

4. STANDARD REPORTS

4.1 Finance Update [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

4.2 People Report [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

4.3 Legal Risk Report–Privileged and Confidential [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

5. MATTERS FOR NOTING

5.1 NSW Auditor General's Report to Universities 2024 [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

6. BOARD COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY BODIES

6.1 Audit and Risk Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

6.2 Cyber and Information Technology Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

6.3 Finance and Investment Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

6.4 People and Culture Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

6.5 Remuneration and Nominations Committee [Closed Session Item]

This item was considered in closed session.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business noted.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 3 December 2025 at 1.00 pm in Boardroom 1, The Chancellery, Barney Glover Building, Level 2, Parramatta South campus.



Confirmed by:
(Chair)

16/12/2025

Date:
