WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees Communique

Board of Trustees Strategy Day – 4 June 2026

The Board of Trustees held its annual Strategy Day on 4 June 2026. The highly interactive program was designed to encourage engagement through panel discussions, table-based breakout sessions and strategic conversations. Key themes explored throughout the day included student-defined success, risk navigation, employability, modular teaching, personalisation, research and innovation, and the enabling strategies required to support the University's long-term objectives.

The day commenced with a panel on **Student-Defined Success**, led by the Chancellor, Professor Jennifer Westacott AC with the Postgraduate and Undergraduate Board members, Lisa Hanlon and Pooja Zinzuwadia, and student representative, Liam Drebber, to explore what success means from a student perspective. The discussion emphasised the importance of a personalised student experience, underpinned by a student-centric approach that is relevant and accessible. The panellists also highlighted the importance of building AI capability for students and staff to equip them with the necessary skills and training.

The second session, **Navigating Uncertainty: A Risk Discussion**, was facilitated by Chief Audit and Risk Officer, Elisabeth Burn and Vice-Chancellor, Distinguished Professor George Williams AO. This interactive session encouraged participants to consider the University's biggest risks. Discussions highlighted the need for agility, resilience, and informed decision-making in an increasingly complex and uncertain environment.

A panel led by the Chancellor, alongside the Provost, Professor Deborah Sweeney, then Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Students, Professor Maryanne Dever, and Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching, Professor Brian Stout discussed **Employability, Modular Teaching and Personalisation**. The panel explored how a personalised student experience can improve student progression and success. The panel also discussed how new teaching methodologies can increase student capabilities, improve employability outcomes and better align learning with industry needs.

During the **Research and Innovation Impact** panel, Board member Martin Bowles AO PSM led a discussion with Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation, Professor Ian Anderson, Executive Director, Enterprise, Don Wright, and the WSU 2025 Researcher of the Year and Academic staff Board member, Professor Alison Downham Moore. The session focused on the importance of increasing research collaboration across disciplines, industry connected research and how to balance research participation with high performance research outcomes.

The final session on **Enabling Strategies**, led by Deputy Chancellor Gabrielle Trainor AO, brought together leaders in data, property, and people functions including Dr Omer Yezdani, Marion Jones, and Troy Cardoso-Vigors. This discussion focused on the importance of AI leadership as a key priority, to equip students with future-ready skills and to support staff in delivering efficient services.

In summary, the Board strengthened its commitment to the University's strategy, WESTERN 2030, agreeing on several big shifts:

- Greater personalisation to drive student success
- Embracing a student-first approach and commitment to give students the skills they need to thrive in a changing world, including AI leadership
- Examining and testing innovative means of teaching and learning driven by the student voice
- Continuing investment in our teams, both professional and academic, to ensure the University is a magnet for the best people
- Driving greater differentiation through areas such as our products and offerings to position Western as market leaders
- Expanding global growth, and
- Ensuring financial independence.

Board of Trustees meeting – 5 June 2026

This communique covers some of the non-confidential matters considered by the Western Sydney University Board of Trustees at its meeting on 5 June 2026. It is not a complete record of all decisions taken at the meeting, nor does it include the full details of all discussions. Inquiries and requests for further information can be directed to the General Counsel and University Secretary at governancemeetings@westernsydney.edu.au

The minutes of the previous Board meeting held on 9 April 2026 were confirmed

Main items considered by the board:

Chancellor's Report

The Chancellor spoke to a number of matters including attendance at the Daily Telegraph's future Western Sydney Event, the ANZAC Day Dawn Service on the Hawkesbury Campus, the NSW VCC Chancellor's and Vice-Chancellor's meeting, the VITEX Pharmaceuticals site visit and the Delegation of Universities in Jakarta.

The Chancellor advised that she has been appointed to the Antisemitism Education Taskforce, chaired by David Gonski AC. The Chancellor also noted her appointment to a small working group reporting to Minister Jason Clare, tasked with advising the Government on the establishment of TEQSA and the TEC, including its proposed role and functions.

The Chancellor spoke to the following:

- Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, which named us as one of the universities that did the right thing; and
- Upcoming graduation ceremonies, noting that several Honorary Awards will be presented.

Vice-Chancellor's Report

The Vice-Chancellor provided the Board with several updates on key University matters. In relation to regulatory matters, the Vice-Chancellor briefed the Board on current developments, including matters associated with ATEC and the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry.

The Vice-Chancellor also updated the Board on student retention, advising that this remains a key strategic focus for the University. The Board was provided with an update on student load and an overview of domestic and international students enrolments and current trends across the sector.

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Board of several significant University activities and events. These included the opening of the Lang Walker Medical Research Building in April, recent campus visits, participation in the Patch Run at the NSW Policy Academy in Goulburn, and the annual Indigenous Students versus Staff Soccer Match.

Chair of Academic Senate Report

The Board noted the report from the Chair of Academic Senate on matters considered at its May meeting, including an update on quality monitoring, new program development, and academic workload allocation.

Board Committee Recommendations

The Board of Trustees considered reports from the Audit and Risk Committee, Cyber and Information Technology Committee, Finance and Investment Committee and People and Culture Committee.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Board discussed and noted the report from the Audit and Risk Committee on the meeting held on 14 May 2026 and one matter recommended to the Board for approval.

A revised *Risk Management Policy* was submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee at its May Meeting following the completion of the consultation process. The Committee reviewed and endorsed the policy for approval. The Board of Trustees approved the revised *Risk Management Policy*.

Summary of Approvals

Repeal of Student Misconduct Rule

The Board of Trustees considered and approved the Repeal of the Student Misconduct Rule, with effect from 5 June 2026. The Rule has been replaced with the:

- Student Misconduct Policy,
- Student Misconduct Procedure and
- Inappropriate Behaviour Guidelines.

2025 Modern Slavery Statement

The Board of Trustees approved the 2025 Modern Slavery Statement, an annual public report that outlines how an organisation identifies, assesses, and addresses modern slavery risks in its operations and supply chains.

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Honorary Titles and Awards Conferral

The Boad of Trustees conferred four Emeritus Professor titles, seven Doctor of Letters *(honoris causa),* two Honorary Fellow titles, and two Community Fellow titles.

Items for Noting

The Board of Trustees receives regular reports for noting, which provide an overview of significant activities and developments that have occurred across the University between Board meetings. These reports ensure the Board remains informed of key operational, strategic and governance matters arising during the reporting period.

Fireside Chat

The Board regularly invites internal or external guest speakers to attend Board meetings and participate in informal discussions on a range of topics relevant to the Board. These sessions provide members with the opportunity to gain insights into emerging issues, industry developments, organisational priorities, and areas of strategic importance.

At the June meeting, two Fireside Chats were held during the meeting, one with Melinda Cilento, CEO of the Committee for Economic Development in Australia on University Governance, and the second with Dr Nicolene Murdoch, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Global Partnerships and Transnational Education on Transnational Education (TNE).

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for 3 September 2026.

Philip Maloney
General Counsel and University Secretary