**Minutes of Senate held on 28 April 2026**
**At 4:30pm in the Senate Room, Level 5**
**Brian Wilson Chancellery**

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

**Index**



**Attendance:**

Present: Mr P N Varghese AO (Chancellor), Ms T Dwyer AM (Deputy Chancellor), Professor D Terry AC (Vice-Chancellor and President), Ms J Alroe, Ms S Atkinson AO, Ms C Chalmers, Ms R Cronin, Emeritus Professor C Dickenson AM, Dr L Duffield, Dr R Haddrick, Professor G Hainge, HHJ N Jarro, Mr R Jones, Professor L Kavanagh, Mr R Liu, Professor K Lyons, The Hon A Palaszczuk AC, Mr J Titman, Mr I Walker, Dr D Willox, and Mr E Yun.

**Apologies:** Ms A Cross AM

**UQ In Attendance:**

Present: Provost, Professor M Blows; Chief Operating Officer, Mr A Flannery; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Professor S Harrison; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement), Professor B Fredericks; Vice-President (Advancement & Community Engagement), Ms J Karlson; Chief Financial Officer, Ms G Jukes; Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President, Ms J Connah; Chief Marketing and Communication Officer, Ms K Robinson; General Counsel, Ms C Seeto; Director, Governance and Risk, Ms J Spanjaard; and Ms A Roser, UQ Union President.

Secretary: Ms J Saunders.

**1. Acknowledgement of Country**

On behalf of the Senate, the Chancellor acknowledged the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which the meeting took place, and paid respects to their ancestors and their descendants who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country.

**2. Welcome and apologies**

The Chancellor welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies from Ms A Cross and Mr R Lee. The Chancellor also welcomed Ms Janey Saunders, Director, Office of the Provost, who is attending Senate as Secretary while Ms Sarah Spencer is on parental leave.

**3. Approval of items *en bloc***

Having provided members with an opportunity to star additional agenda items, and no further items being requested for separate consideration, it was resolved that Senate **approve or note** en bloc all items that were not starred.

**4. Declaration of interests**

Members' declarations of interests for April 2026 were circulated with the agenda and **noted**. The Chancellor invited members to advise of any changes or conflicts relevant to the agenda.

Members **noted** that Dr Ryan Haddrick has been appointed as an Acting Judge of the District Court of Queensland (1 April 2026 – 31 July 2026), Emeritus Professor Carol Dickenson was currently consulting in Higher Education, and The Hon A Palaszczuk AC had been awarded life membership of the Australian Labor Party (ALP).

**5. Confirmation of minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2026, having been circulated, were **confirmed** with minor amendments including:

- removal of the name of Mr J Titman (who was an apology) from the list of members in attendance, and
- noting a comment raised in relation to the People and Culture Committee having a requirement to have expertise in student and staff safety and wellbeing.

In relation to the second point, it was agreed subsequent to the 26 February meeting that this expertise would be reflected on the skills matrix for Senate, rather than specified in the ToR for the People and Culture Committee.

**6. Matters arising from previous Senate meeting**

There were no new matters arising from the previous Senate meeting.

**7. Update from the Chancellor**

The Chancellor provided an update to Senate on matters of relevance to the University and the broader higher education sector. He reported on ongoing discussions between the University Chancellors Council (UCC) and Universities Australia (UA) on the establishment of UA as the single comprehensive peak body for Australian universities with representation by Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors.

The Chancellor also noted broader discussions across the sector regarding the evolving policy environment, including questions around institutional autonomy, the expanding reach of regulation and the extent of government influence, particularly in the context of international student policy settings and expectations around best practice in managing international student cohorts.

The Chancellor also provided an update on sector engagement in relation to antisemitism in universities, including his involvement in the Go8 Expert Advisory Committee on Combatting Antisemitism (EACCA) chaired by Dr Alan Finkel AC. It was noted that the

Committee is finalising its report, which is expected to address areas such as the handling of complaints, education and training for staff and students, the role of social media, and approaches to ensuring balanced and respectful academic discourse across diverse perspectives.

## 8. Vice-Chancellor and President's Report

The Vice-Chancellor's written report and dashboard were **noted.**

The Vice-Chancellor provided the following updates:

- Strong outcomes in national teaching awards were highlighted, along with significant progress in international research collaborations, including Australia's decision to progress associate membership of Horizon Europe, the European Union's flagship research and innovation program.
- Members were also informed of the appointment of Professor Neville Plint to lead the Critical Metals for Critical Industries (CMCI) Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), which has been awarded funding to drive the development and commercialisation of new critical minerals refining technologies.
- The Vice-Chancellor informed Senate of progress on the restoration of Mayne Hall, which will return to use as a graduation venue, with end-of-year ceremonies planned, subject to potential supply-chain impacts on timing. The restoration is being supported by a bequest from Mr Joseph (Joe) Saragossi and his wife Mrs Pearle Saragossi, through their company James Glass & Aluminium.
- The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the passing of Dr David Malouf AO, who was a UQ alumnus and former staff member, and one of Australia's most distinguished writers. Many of his early novels and poetry collections were published by UQ Press, including Johnno, his semi-autobiographical debut novel set in Brisbane. Dr Malouf was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University and was the inaugural recipient of the UQ Alumnus of the Year Award.
- Senate was also informed of the passing of Ms Jenny Gill, a highly respected colleague who served the University for over 30 years in a range of professional roles, including significant contributions to the University's planning and strategy capability, the development of UQ's student load forecasting model, and senior roles within the Planning and Business Intelligence unit.

In addition, the Vice-Chancellor provided an update on the University's financial position, as discussed at the special meeting of Finance Committee on 21 April 2026. While domestic (CSP) demand remains strong, the Q1 2026 forecast indicates a reduction in postgraduate coursework revenue due to a decline in international enrolments.

The Chair of the Finance Committee noted that as the Committee's first meeting for the year had taken place prior to the Semester 1 census date, a subsequent extraordinary meeting had been held to consider updated data, reassess the revenue position, and ensure that the Committee and Senate were appropriately informed.

In response to concerns raised by several Senate members, the Vice Chancellor provided a detailed briefing on the University's decision not to proceed with publication of Bila, a work by Jazz Money, a Wiradjuri author, following public statements made by the illustrator of the book. The decision had been carefully considered, and it was ultimately determined that proceeding with publication would not be appropriate in light of the illustrator's public statements, which were clearly antisemitic and therefore not aligned with the University's policies and values, including its adopted antisemitism definition.

The Vice Chancellor outlined the sequence of events, the basis for the decision taken by UQ, and the considerations informing that decision, including reputational risk, staff and community safety, and the University's values and obligations.

Members discussed the sensitivity and complexity of the matter, and the strength of views expressed across the University community and beyond, including a number of notable authors. A range of issues were raised, including the impact of the decision on the author; the University's commitment to freedom of speech; the role of UQ Press as a University owned entity; the transparency of decision-making processes; engagement with Indigenous stakeholders; and the broader implications for publishing, governance and institutional risk management.

The Chancellor noted that, while he fully supported the decision, it was important to note that it was squarely within the decision-making powers delegated to the Vice Chancellor by Senate. To intervene in this decision would be to ignore the dividing line between governance and management, irrespective of whether the decision was opposed by one or more Senate members.

The Vice Chancellor acknowledged that the decision-making process had been challenging for all involved and noted that the University had offered to work with the author on alternative options for publication. It was further acknowledged that, in matters of this nature, there would understandably be a range of views regarding process, consultation and governance, and recognised the importance of reflecting on these perspectives, including the view of the DVC Indigenous Engagement about gaps in the consultation process.

## Strategic Matters

### 9. KPI's for UQ Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029

The Vice-Chancellor presented the proposed suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets for the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan, noting that the KPIs were designed to measure progress against the Plan's objectives over the four-year period and would be reported regularly through the Senate scorecard and an annual performance report.

Senate **approved** the 2026-2029 KPIs and targets, which aim to measure the success of The University of Queensland 2026–2029 Strategic Plan.

### 10. Overview of 2026 Pulse Survey Outcomes

The Vice-Chancellor presented the outcomes of the 2026 Pulse Survey, which had a 69% completion rate, building on the positive engagement seen in 2025 with a completion rate of 67%. Overall, results showed an increase in or consistency in favourability across the majority (29) of survey questions with minor decreases shown in 4 questions. Improvements were highlighted in areas relating to reconciliation, accountability for unacceptable behaviours, and staff willingness to recommend UQ as a great place to work. Staff understanding of how their work connects to UQ's strategic goals continues to be a clear strength.

Analysis of the qualitative feedback reflected ongoing cultural improvement from the 2025 survey. While core descriptors such as supportive, collaborative, challenging, and busy remain prominent, 2026 showed a stronger emphasis on positive, values-based language, with a constructive focus on collegiality, shared values, and support.

The Vice-Chancellor indicated that the next steps would focus on unit-level discussions and action planning through April and June, supported by HR and central teams. The outcomes would also be shared at the June All Staff Forum.

Senate **noted** the 2026 Pulse Survey Outcomes.

## Academic Matters

### 11. Update from the Academic Board President

The President of the Academic Board referred to her written report and provided an update on recent Academic Board activity, including academic risk oversight, curriculum initiatives, and governance matters. It was noted that the Board had been giving increased attention to academic risk oversight, including contributions to the University's response to TEQSA regarding proposed updates to its Regulatory Risk Framework.

The President noted that Academic Board would continue to ensure alignment with TEQSA expectations under the Higher Education Standards Framework.

The President also highlighted progress in academic initiatives, including the development and implementation of the University's Indigenisation of the Curriculum guide.

Senate **noted** the Update from the Academic Board President.

**12. Extension of Term of Academic Board President to 2027**

Professor Kavanagh withdrew from the meeting for this item.

Senate considered the submission regarding the extension of the Academic Board President's term. It was noted that the request had been made in accordance with the Academic Board Policy and was subject to ratification by the Academic Board. The proposed appointment was to be made in accordance with the requirements of section 35A of the University of Queensland Act 1998 (Qld).

Senate **approved** the appointment of Professor Lydia Kavanagh as President of the Academic Board for the period 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2027 and **noted** the 2026 election timetable.

**13. Academic Board Report**

The report of the Academic Board was **noted**.

<u>**Financial and Operational Matters**</u>

**14. Amendment to UQ Holdings Constitution and Appointment of Chair**

Senate considered a submission regarding proposed amendments to the Constitution of UQ Holdings Pty Ltd and the re-appointment of the Chair. It was noted that UQ Holdings provides governance oversight of the University's controlled entities.

The Chair of the Finance Committee noted that the Committee had considered the matters at its meeting on 23 March 2026 and recommended approval. The proposed amendments to the Constitution included revisions to clause 3.8 to reflect current practice, whereby Senate appoints the Chair of the Board, and a minor amendment to clause 8.1 to provide that remuneration for UQ Holdings directors be determined by the Vice-Chancellor (or delegate), noting that any UQ staff members who are also Directors of UQH or any of the controlled entities are not remunerated for their director duties.

Senate also considered the proposed re-appointment of Mr Robert Jones as a Director and Chair of UQ Holdings for a further three-year term, noting his leadership and contribution to the effective governance of UQ Holdings over his previous terms.

In accordance with conflict of interest requirements, Mr Robert Jones withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of his re-appointment.

Members were supportive of the constitution amendments and the reappointment of the Chair. The UQ Holdings Board Charter specified that appointments would not usually exceed three terms. It was observed that, as the proposed re-appointment would represent a third term as Chair, succession planning should be considered, and would be progressed through the appropriate governance channels.

During discussion, a member sought additional detail about the management of potential conflicts of interest for wholly owned subsidiaries. It was noted that appropriate conflict management processes had been followed in this instance, including prior consideration by the Governance Committee, however the General Counsel agreed to review arrangements and report back.

Following consideration, it was resolved that Senate:

**approve** the special resolution amending the Constitution of UQ Holdings Pty Ltd;

**approve** the re-appointment of Mr Robert Jones as a Director and Chair of UQ Holdings Pty Ltd for a further three-year term; and

**authorise** the Senate Secretary to execute the special resolution and provide it to the Company Secretary of UQ Holdings.

**15. 2025 Health, Safety and Wellness Annual Report; and Health, Safety and Wellness Goals**

The Director, Health, Safety and Wellness Division presented the 2025 Health, Safety and Wellness Annual Report and KPI Performance Report, noting that the reports support Senate's due-diligence obligations under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) and performance against the University's Health, Safety and Wellness Strategy 2022–2026.

The Chancellor emphasised Senate's obligations in relation to oversight of health, safety and wellness, noting the importance of these reports in demonstrating the University's compliance with statutory duties and the effectiveness of its safety framework.

In discussion, members raised a number of matters relating to performance trends and reporting. In response to a question regarding overdue actions, the Chief Operating Officer advised that for the majority of these items, the underlying risks were assessed as low, however undertook to enhance future reporting to provide clearer visibility of risk levels associated with outstanding actions.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that delays in addressing certain compliance issues, including pressure vessel remediation, were due to the work proving more complex than anticipated but were now progressing to resolution.

In response to a question regarding a reduction in reported corrective actions and hazard reporting, the Chief Operating Officer advised that increased inspection activity had led to earlier identification and resolution of issues, thereby reducing formal reporting. He however undertook to review the data to ensure that this trend did not reflect unintended barriers to reporting.

Members discussed the development of additional performance metrics, noting the importance of measures such as lost time injury frequency rates and workdays lost to support oversight of health and safety outcomes.

Emerging risks were also discussed, including the governance of new and evolving technologies used in research environments, such as drones. Senate was advised that oversight arrangements were in place, including specialist expertise, and that risk management frameworks were being reviewed to ensure appropriate controls.

Senate **noted** the 2025 Health, Safety and Wellness Annual and KPI Performance Reports

**16. Updates to Health, Safety and Wellness Policy**

Senate considered proposed amendments to the Health, Safety and Wellness Policy. These were outcomes of a regular review and benchmarking exercise against sector best practice.

It was noted that the review, informed by external benchmarking and internal consultation, confirmed that the Policy remained contemporary and aligned with legislative requirements and sector expectations. The proposed amendments were primarily minor in nature and included updates to reflect current organisational structures, clarification of roles and reporting responsibilities, and the inclusion of additional references to governance arrangements supporting health, safety and wellness across the University.

Senate noted that the amendments had been considered and endorsed by the Risk and Audit Committee and the Governance Committee, and that no substantive changes to the overall policy framework were required.

Senate **approved** the amendments to the Health, Safety and Wellness Policy.

**<u>Governance Matters</u>**

**17. Report of Honorary Awards Committee**

Senate considered the report of the Honorary Awards Committee, noting that the Committee had undertaken due diligence on all proposed nominees and that nominations had been endorsed through the appropriate University processes, including consideration by the University Senior Executive Team.

It was noted that the University's Honorary Awards framework is intended to recognise individuals who have made exceptional contributions to their fields, to the University, or to the wider community, and that the Committee seeks to ensure that nominations reflect these criteria while also supporting diversity of representation. Members discussed the importance of maintaining visibility of nomination data, including diversity and disciplinary representation, to inform future consideration of nominations.

It was resolved that Senate **approve** the conferral of six Honorary Doctorates and one UQ R.H. Roe Award, with conferrals to occur from July 2026 onward.

**18. Update on Senate External Review 2026**

An update was provided on the progress of the 2026 External Review of Senate, including the appointment of the external reviewer and member participation in surveys and interviews.

The update was **noted**.

**<u>Senate Committee Reports</u>**

**19. Advancement and Community Engagement**

The report of the Advancement and Community Engagement Committee was **noted**.

**20. Campus Infrastructure**

The report of the Campus Infrastructure Committee was **noted**.

**21. Finance**

The reports of the Finance Committee (including meetings of 23 March and 21 April 2026) were **noted**.

The Vice-Chancellor and Chair of Finance Committee addressed this item through the Vice-Chancellor's report, in item 8 of the minutes.

**<u>Other Matters for Noting</u>**

The following items were noted:

**22. TEQSA Attestation Statement: Compliance with Workplace Obligations**

The TEQSA Attestation Statement was **noted**.

**23. Senate Annual Calendar 2026**

The Senate Annual Calendar 2026 was **noted**.

**24. 2026 Senate and Senate Committee Meeting Dates**

The 2026 Senate and Senate Committee Meeting Dates were **noted**.

**25. UQ Significant Litigation Report**

There were no matters to report.

**Any Other Business**

Members were reminded to complete any outstanding declarations.

Members were reminded to complete their surveys for the external review.

Members were informed that there would be an upcoming visit to Gatton Campus associated with the Campus Infrastructure Committee and any members interested in joining the visit were advised to contact the Chief Operating Officer for details.

The next Senate meeting will be held on Tuesday, 9 June 2026.

The meeting closed at 7.00pm.