

Message from the Chancellor and Council Bulletin December 2025

Dear colleagues,

Council members recently participated in a joint session with Academic Board members, facilitated by Academic Board Chair Professor Alexander Kist. The session enabled members of Board and Council to discuss key activities and achievements for 2025, as well as future challenges and opportunities across corporate and academic governance. Feedback from those in attendance was very positive, and there are plans underway for further sessions to be held in 2026.

The final meeting of Council for this year was held on 8 December, with two key agenda items: the approval of the 2026 Annual Financial Plan and Budget for the University; and the approval of the Statement of Strategic Ambition and UniSQ Strategic Plan 2026-2030. Other key areas of discussion included the UniSQ Prevention and Response Plan relating to the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence, and the Education Strategy update which was presented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education) Professor Glen Coleman.

2025 has been a year of significant challenges for the University, and the higher education sector more broadly, with the Australian Universities Accord reforms causing uncertainty about funding models, and ongoing issues relating to student visa processing and cost-of-living and economic pressures continuing to impact international and domestic student markets. Through the Shaping our Future program of work, the UniSQ organisational structure has undergone a transformation, which will take effect from 2 January. I believe that the transition to this necessarily smaller and tighter structure, along with the operationalisation of our new Strategic Plan, and the commencement of our new Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Mazerrole in March 2026, will enable UniSQ to balance financial imperatives with our strategic ambitions.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the very best for the Festive Season. I hope each of you has the opportunity to take a break, spend time with loved ones, and reflect on your personal and shared achievements. I look forward to continuing to lead Council as we work with the Vice-Chancellor's Executive to bring the goals of the University to fruition in 2026 and beyond.

Kind regards

John

Dr John McVeigh
Chancellor

Council Meeting Summary

The final University of Southern Queensland Council meeting of 2025 was held on Monday 8 December at UniSQ Toowoomba campus. Current Council member information is available on the [University of Southern Queensland Council](#) webpage.

Strategic Presentations and Reports

- **2026 Annual Financial Plan and Budget**

Vice-Chancellor Professor Karen Nelson and the Chief Operating and Chief Financial Officer Cliff Kaye presented the 2026 Annual Financial Plan and Budget for Council consideration and approval.

- **Education Strategy**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education) Professor Glen Coleman presented an update on the current [Education Plan 2022–2025](#) and highlighted key considerations for shaping the development of the University's strategies relating to program portfolio, learning and teaching, and the overall student experience.

- **Statement of Strategic Ambition and UniSQ Strategic Plan 2026-2030**

Vice-Chancellor Professor Karen Nelson and the Director (Planning) Julianna Dawidowicz presented the Statement of Strategic Ambition and UniSQ Strategic Plan 2026-2030 for Council consideration and approval.

Reports to Council

The following reports were received at the 8 December 2025 Council meeting:

- **Chancellor's Report**

Chancellor Dr John McVeigh presented an update on events and meetings attended since the last meeting of Council in October 2025.

- **Vice-Chancellor's Report**

Vice-Chancellor Professor Karen Nelson presented an overview of activities, achievements, and matters arising for the period ending 24 November 2025. The Vice-Chancellor's Report informs Council on the development, overall operations and attainments of the University as required under the UniSQ Governance Charter.

- **Academic Board Report**

Academic Board Chair Professor Alexander Kist presented the Academic Board Report to Council. Items received included:

- Academic Board Report 11 November 2025
- Academic Board Meeting Minutes 11 November 2025

- **Finance and Facilities Committee Report**

Finance and Facilities Committee Chair Amanda Kenafake presented the Finance and Facilities Report to Council. Items received included:

- Unconfirmed Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting Minutes 13 November 2025
- Financial Report to 30 September 2025 including the Quarter 3 Review
- Union Institute of Language – Springfield Campus Pty Ltd Quarter 3 Report

- **Audit and Risk Committee Report**

Audit and Risk Committee Chair Brett Delaney presented the Audit and Risk Committee Report to Council. Items received included:

- Unconfirmed Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Minutes 13 November 2025
- Risk Management Report and Material Risk Report for the period to 13 October 2025
- Cybersecurity Quarter 3 Report

- **Chancellor's Committee Report**

Chancellor's Committee Chair and Chancellor Dr John McVeigh presented the Chancellor's Committee Report to Council. Items received included:

- Unconfirmed Chancellor's Committee Meeting Minutes 13 November 2025
- 2025 Attestation Statement – Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

- **National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence and the UniSQ Prevention and Response Plan**

The Vice Chancellor Professor Karen Nelson and the Chief People Officer Linda Murphy presented the updated UniSQ Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan, to align with the recommended template in response to the new National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence. Council endorsed the Prevention and Response Plan for submission to the Department of Education in January 2026.

- **Statement of Compliance with University Chancellors Council Code of Governance Principles and Practice for Australia's Public Universities**

The Chancellor Dr John McVeigh and the University Secretary Julie Shinnars presented six recommendations to Council to consider, aimed at enhancing oversight and accountability, and compliance with the UCC Code.

Council Resolutions

Council resolved to approve the following items at the 8 December 2025 meeting:

- 2026 Annual Financial Plan and Budget
- Statement of Strategic Ambition and UniSQ Strategic Plan 2026-2030
- Recommendations and the draft Statement of Compliance with University Chancellors Council Code of Governance Principles and Practice for Australia's Public Universities

Council Meeting Information

The 2026 University Meeting Schedule is available on the [Council and Committee Terms of Reference](#) webpage. Guidelines for the Conduct of Council and Committee Meetings require agenda papers to be distributed at least seven days prior to the meeting. The standing orders of Council permit the tabling of papers only in exceptional circumstances. Approved briefing documents must be submitted by close of business on the date the agenda closes to the [Executive Officer \(Council\)](#).

The University of Southern Queensland acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands and waterways where the University is located. Further, we acknowledge the cultural diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



