

What happened @ Academic Board

5 August 2026

1. WELCOME AND FORMAL BUSINESS

WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Academic Board met for its fourth meeting of 2026 in a hybrid format.

The Acting Chair acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which members were meeting and paid respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

The Board welcomed reports from representatives across the Institute and continued discussions on academic quality, student experience, research governance and strategic growth.

2. KEY DECISIONS/ACTIONS BY THE ACADEMIC BOARD

Annual Course Reviews Endorsed

The Board endorsed the 2026 Annual Course Review Reports and Unit Evaluation Summary, commending course teams for their commitment to quality assurance, continuous improvement and positive student outcomes across all programs.

Research Policy and Procedure

The Board reviewed proposed Research Policy and Research Procedure documents and requested further revisions before approval. Areas identified for clarification included:

- Research governance arrangements
- Incorporation of lived experience perspectives
- Research data ownership and partnerships
- Appropriate use and disclosure of AI in research
- Alignment with broader governance and data management frameworks

The revised documents will return to a future meeting for consideration.

Student Feedback and Communication

The Board reaffirmed the importance of students being able to provide feedback and lodge complaints without fear of adverse consequences.

Course teams will consider additional mechanisms to strengthen communication with students regarding actions taken in response to evaluations, feedback and complaints.

3. COURSE QUALITY, STUDENT OUTCOMES AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Annual Course Review Highlights

Academic Board reviewed reports from all Higher Education programs.

Positive outcomes included:

- Continued strong student satisfaction across multiple programs
- Growth in enrolments across several psychology programs
- Positive graduate outcomes and course performance indicators
- Ongoing curriculum enhancement and quality improvement initiatives
- Strong student engagement outcomes above national benchmarks

Areas of Focus

The Board discussed:

- Student engagement in online learning environments
- Admissions processes and student success indicators
- Placement and supervision capacity as enrolments grow
- Research methods teaching and assessment approaches
- Maintaining Cairnmillar's strong culture of student engagement and support

PhD Program Reporting

Future annual course reviews for doctoral programs will include enhanced reporting on:

- Candidate progression
- Milestone attainment
- Candidature status
- Expected completion dates

to strengthen oversight of Higher Degree Research programs.

4. STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND FEEDBACK

Positive Feedback from Students

Student representatives reported:

- Strong support for the Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT) initiative
- Appreciation of internationally recognised EFT certification pathways
- Recognition that previous student concerns have been acknowledged and reflected in course improvements
- Positive responses to enhancements within Assessment Processes and Treatment Planning units

Key Issues Raised

Students identified:

- A desire for clearer communication about actions arising from feedback
- Concerns regarding consistency of marking when multiple assessors are involved
- Anxiety around progression decisions following student complaints

Board Response

The Board reaffirmed that:

- Student feedback is valued and encouraged
- Complaints and feedback are important quality assurance mechanisms
- Students should be able to raise concerns without fear of negative consequences

Further work will focus on strengthening feedback loops and transparency around improvement initiatives.

5. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER REPRESENTATION

Work continues to progress Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation and engagement within governance structures, including:

- Ongoing consultation regarding appointment of an Academic Board representative
- Continued review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander terminology across Institute documentation
- Development of guidance to support respectful and consistent terminology
- Integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into governance and decision-making processes

The Board noted ongoing progress and looks forward to further recommendations at future meetings.

6. RESEARCH, GOVERNANCE AND INNOVATION

Research Performance

The Board received an update on research activity across the Institute, including:

- 24 publications accepted or published during 2026 to date
- Research output tracking at levels comparable to the previous year
- Average publication impact factor exceeding 3.4
- Multiple external grant applications submitted
- Continued investment in internal research support programs

Research Governance

Significant work continues to strengthen:

- Research systems and infrastructure
- Ethics and compliance frameworks
- Research management processes
- Governance and quality assurance arrangements

The Board acknowledged the continued growth and development of the Institute's research profile.

7. REPORT FROM THE DEAN

Accreditation and Strategic Developments

Key updates included:

- A successful APAC accreditation visit with positive preliminary feedback
- Progress of the University's College application, which remains under consideration
- Ongoing monitoring of psychology training pathway reform proposals
- Continued advocacy regarding Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) and placement funding arrangements

Leadership Transition

The Dean advised of her intention to step down from the role later in 2026.

Academic Board formally acknowledged and commended the Dean's significant contribution to:

- Academic leadership
- Accreditation activities
- Course development
- Institutional growth

and expressed its appreciation for her service to Cairnmillar.

8. VET AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Highlights included:

- Growth in Diploma of Counselling enrolments to 37 students
- Continued strong demand for short courses and professional development offerings
- Positive recruitment and business development outcomes
- Planning to support continued portfolio growth

The Board acknowledged the strong performance of the VET and Professional Development portfolio and congratulated the team on its achievements.

9. REPORT FROM STUDENT SERVICES

Student Services reported:

- Strong growth in applications for 2027
- Increased applications progressing through assessment stages
- Greater efficiency in admissions processing through collaboration between Faculty and Student Services
- Earlier progression of applications to interview and offer stages than in previous recruitment cycles

The Board acknowledged the work of Student Services and Faculty teams and congratulated them on the positive recruitment outcomes achieved to date.

10. LIVED EXPERIENCE AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

The Board welcomed reporting from Lived Experience and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and discussed:

- The value of lived experience perspectives in governance and policy development
- The importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in institutional decision-making
- Opportunities to further embed these perspectives across research, curriculum development, quality assurance and student experience initiatives

The Board acknowledged that representative reporting strengthens engagement and supports Cairnmillar's commitment to inclusive governance.

MEETINGS IN 2026

- Wednesday 11 February (Online)
- Wednesday 8 April (Onsite)
- Wednesday 10 June (Online)
- Wednesday 5 August (Onsite)
- Wednesday 7 October (Onsite)
- Wednesday 25 November (Onsite)