



Professor Genevieve Bell
Vice Chancellor and President
Australian National University

By email: VC@anu.edu.au

Dear Professor Bell,

Notice of Compliance Assessment: Australian National University (our reference: CA0452)

I am writing to notify the Australian National University (ANU) that the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) has commenced a compliance assessment under section 59 of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act).

TEQSA has made this decision because it continues to be concerned about potential risks to ANU's compliance with its obligations under the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* (HES Framework).

Appendix A sets out the particular standards with which there is a potential risk to compliance.

I recognise Mr Kelly had written to you regarding a request to meet and discuss specific concerns about ANU's Nixon Review, ANU's work to reduce staffing costs by \$100 million and ANU's school of cybernetics. In light of this letter, I am willing to meet and discuss our broader range of concerns with you and our intended next steps.

Overall concerns

Further information has been considered which suggests there are the broader potential risks to compliance that require assessment by TEQSA. These potential risks to compliance go to ANU's governance and include:

- The culture of ANU's Council and Executive Leadership
- The ANU Council's oversight of ANU's financial position

The culture of ANU's Council and Executive Leadership

Several issues have been identified that give rise to concerns about cultural issues within ANU's Council and Executive Leadership, including:

- Concerns raised via media and Senator Pocock of staff being afraid to voice concerns about decisions by ANU's senior leadership (see [AFR Article 1](#) and [AFR Article 2](#))
- Concerns about ANU's management of change under its Renew ANU program leading to staff sending an open letter to ANU disputing its basis for further staff cuts and claims of a lack of transparency
- Concerns about the internal culture of the ANU Council and leadership, for example, but not limited to, media reporting disputes about whether ANU Council members understood Professor Bell held a paid role with Intel whilst Vice Chancellor
- Findings from the recent review by Professor Nixon that under the ANU Council's oversight the following issues arose: inflexible work practices, unfair workloads, bullying, discrimination and lack of effective systems and accountability to address these issues.

ANU Council's oversight of ANU's financial position

There are concerns about the ANU Council's oversight of ANU's financial position. This is because whilst steps are being taken to address ANU's current financial position, it was under the ANU Council's oversight that ANU reached a position that now requires it to reduce recurring expenditure by \$250 million. It is unclear if the ANU Council has identified and addressed potential risks that led to this financial position and whether these potential risks persist.

Request for information

I request ANU provide TEQSA with a Self-Assurance Report. This report should:

- be no longer than 10 pages
- demonstrate how ANU is assuring itself and its Council that it continues to meet the Threshold Standards outlined in Appendix A, specifically in reference to the concerns identified in this letter
- be accompanied by an index, listing the supporting evidence which can be provided to TEQSA on request.

The self-assurance report is an important opportunity for ANU to demonstrate the effectiveness of its self-assurance mechanisms. It should demonstrate how ANU monitors, manages and mitigates institutional risks with regard to the concerns identified in this letter.

A request (REQ08758) will be created in the TEQSA Provider Portal for ANU to submit its response. Please provide ANU's response **by 12 August 2025**.

If you are unable to respond to this request within the specified timeframe, or have any questions about this request, please contact Clare Moseley, Senior Compliance Manager at clare.moseley@teqsa.gov.au.

Next steps

Through a compliance assessment TEQSA intends to assess ANU's incident-specific and systemic responses to these areas of concern.

I ask that you share this letter with ANU's Council in the expectation that it will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of TEQSA's compliance assessment.

Cost recovery

Since 1 January 2023 TEQSA has been required to fully recover costs for most regulatory activities in accordance with the [Australian Government Charging Framework and Cost Recovery Guidelines \(AGCRG\)](#). TEQSA's [Cost Recovery Implementation Statement](#) provides key information on how TEQSA calculates and implements charges for specific regulatory activity.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Mary Russell
Chief Executive Officer
30 June 2025

Appendix A: Relevant Threshold Standards

TEQSA's compliance assessment will consider ANU's compliance with its obligations under the HES Framework, with a focus on the following:

- **Standard 6.1.2a** members of the governing body are fit and proper persons.
- **Standard 6.1.3a** the governing body attends to governance functions and processes diligently and effectively, including... obtaining and using such information and advice, including independent advice and academic advice, as is necessary for informed and competent decision making and direction setting.
- **Standard 6.1.3e** the governing body attends to governance functions and processes diligently and effectively, including... maintaining a true record of the business of the governing body.
- **Standard 6.1.4** the governing body takes steps to develop and maintain an institutional environment in which freedom of speech and academic freedom are upheld and protected students and staff are treated equitably, the wellbeing of students and staff is fostered.
- **Standard 6.2.1a** - the governing body and the entity comply with the requirements of the legislation under which the provider is established, recognised or incorporated, any other legislative requirements and the entity's constitution or equivalent.
- **Standard 6.2.1d** the financial position, financial performance and cash flows of the entity are monitored regularly and understood, financial reporting is materially accurate, financial management meets Australian accounting standards, effective financial safeguards and controls are operating and financial statements are audited independently by a qualified auditor against Australian accounting and auditing standards
- **Standard 6.2.1e** risks to higher education operations have been identified and material risks are being managed and mitigated effectively
- **Standard 6.2.1j** the occurrence and nature of formal complaints... are monitored and action is taken to address underlying causes.

Based on the concerns detailed in this letter, TEQSA is concerned ANU's Council may not have fulfilled its obligation to exercise competent governance oversight of and be accountable for all ANU's operations.

The above scope is based on evidence available to TEQSA and on concerns brought to TEQSA's attention and may change subject to any further issues that may arise following the commencement of this compliance assessment.