

**Education and Employment Legislation Committee
Inquiry on the quality of governance at Australian higher education providers**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian National University

Question No. GIQ 25-012

Senator Dolega on 12 August 2025, Proof Hansard pages 37-38.

Redundancies and terminations

Question

Senator DOLEGA: Could you provide the committee with a full list of the voluntary redundancies and terminations that have been made as the result of the Renew ANU program?

Mr Lonergan: I don't have that here. I'm not sure if there are any privacy issues, but we can certainly give you numbers. If we're able to disclose names, then we'll comply with that.

Senator DOLEGA: It's clear that the cuts will impact the delivery of courses. We've heard about some of that today. Can you outline how these cuts have affected the now disbanded College of Health and Medicine?

Mr Lonergan: I'll take a quick step back to get the vernacular right. Last year the university had seven colleges. There is a series of schools that sit underneath the college. You can almost think of the college as the head office. The schools were delivering the research and teaching programs. There was no impact to those schools. I don't want to discount things like cultural issues—you were part of a college and now you're moving. In terms of the delivery of those particular schools, they were moved from what was the College of Health and Medicine and distributed into other colleges, and then there was some renaming of colleges. There was no loss of courses and no impact to research. I appreciate that for some staff there would have been a loss of identity. That may have rippled into the impact on those staff members. But, in terms of that change, it was not a change directed at cutting courses or research.

Senator DOLEGA: I've got a similar question in relation to the College of Arts and Social Sciences. Is the answer similar to the one you just described to me?

Mr Lonergan: At the moment there is a change plan that's out for consultation with the community on the College of Arts and Social Sciences. That's where the School of Music sits. That's part of a change plan that's out for discussion with the community at the moment.

Senator DOLEGA: Can you give a little bit of information on how the cuts have impacted the Research and Innovation Portfolio?

Mr Lonergan: I think you may be referring to the Research and Innovation Portfolio that sits under the Office of the Provost. As I said a moment ago, all areas had to contribute to some savings. Everyone was given a budget reduction from where they started the 2024 year. That area did implement a change plan at the end of last year where there were some changes. We'd be happy to share the final implementation plan. There were some job losses. I think the number is 30 or so, off the top of my head. I appreciate that we need to make sure we give accurate numbers. I'm happy to come back to you with the exact number of job losses that emanated from there.

Answer

Redundancies as a result of the Renew ANU program is as below:

As at 11 August 2025	#
Voluntary Separation Scheme (VSS) Deeds accepted	165
VSS Staff departed as at 11 August 2025	151
Other redundancies (including early termination for fixed term staff)	83

The ANU College of Health and Medicine change plan impacted staff at the College level structure. No programs were being disbanded as a result of this process (although some programs have been relocated to different Colleges). Further information is available at the [Implementation Plan - ANU College of Health and Medicine - November 2024](#).

The Dean of the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences has confirmed that the College will retain all of its current disciplines - none would be disestablished as part of this proposed change.

Students already enrolled in courses will be able to complete them in accordance with TEQSA requirements.

As per Mr Lonergan's oral evidence to the Committee, the Research and Innovation Portfolio also needed to contribute to savings. There were positions confirmed as disestablished subsequent to their 2024 change proposal. Please see link for the final implementation plan - [link](#).

The accurate numbers for **occupied** positions disestablished as a result of the 2024 change management plan was **27**, with a lesser number of **19 staff departing the University** due to staff having underlying substantive positions to transfer to, the establishment of new positions in the plan, other internal opportunities and the redeployment processes to retain staff where possible, following being declared surplus.

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Australian National University

Question No. GIQ 25-013

Senator Smith on 12 August 2025, Proof Hansard pages 38-39.

Campus environment

Question

Mr Churchill: From time to time, in our timetabling system the enrolments in classes are higher than is predicted, and we have to reschedule teaching into venues that are more suited for their size. Certainly, I have no reports of systemic problems with students and space.

CHAIR: You've heard it today. Does that alarm you?

Mr Churchill: If it is a widespread phenomenon, absolutely, yes. If I may add one other thing, one of the things that are unique about the Australian National University is that we actually have the best student-to-staff ratio amongst the Group of Eight universities. So, even in these very difficult times, our student-to-staff ratio is part of our key educational offerings and our distinctive experience.

CHAIR: Yes, and I'm sure it's something that students seek out when they choose the ANU. I found those parts of the testimony today very alarming. As I said, I'm a former student of the ANU. I would find that deeply alarming if it happened when I was a student there, and I'd appreciate you coming back to the committee on those reports and your response to them.

Mr Churchill: We'd be happy to.

Answer

ANU takes these claims seriously and are looking into them. One student having to sit on the floor during tutorials is too many. However, we believe these are isolated incidents and not systemic. Access to teaching rooms have been further complicated by hailstorm remediation.

ANU must invariably manage a large number of students. Before each semester, the University monitors classes to ensure that there is enough seating available for the number of students enrolled. The Academic Portfolio and individual Colleges discuss options to ensure students learning will not be impacted in cases where there are more students than seating, including options for online, recording, or duplicate classes. Discussions commence before each semester and continues until issues are resolved.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian National University

Question No. GIQ 25-014

Senator Faruqi on 12 August 2025, Proof Hansard pages 40-41.

Performance development reviews

Question

Senator FARUQI: This morning, we heard from a member of council Mr Pintos-Lopez. I'm not sure if they're still a member of council, but, basically, Mr Pintos-Lopez said that a copy of their performance development review was requested by the COO, which is you. Could I ask why you requested that and is it normal practice for you to request performance development reviews of staff members?

Mr Churchill: As Millan testified this morning—and he's not currently a member of council—in his role as a representative of the NTEU, there is a time relief that he's given. What I did request was just confirmation that he was working the hours and in keeping with those obligations. That is a matter of mutual obligation between the university and the employee. I don't think it's unreasonable for both sides to confirm that mutual obligation was met. I'm pleased to report it was. In terms of the assessment of performance, I did ask whether the process had been completed. We have introduced a new performance management tool that gives visibility that we didn't have before on the degree of PDR compliance that exists around the university.

Senator FARUQI: How many staff members' performance development reviews did you check?

Mr Churchill: In terms of aggregated data, I'd have to take that on notice.

Answer

Eight.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian National University

Question No. GIQ 25-015

Senator Faruqi on 12 August 2025, Proof Hansard page 42.

Staff satisfaction

Question

Senator FARUQI: So what are you going to do you about this? You say you are concerned about this level of dissatisfaction. What will you do about this?

Ms Witenden: I'm happy to take this on notice. I'm happy to work with our community and my fellow leadership here to work on how we can rectify those concerns. We are a data-based institution, so for me that requires real data, which means we probably need to do our own staff survey. I appreciate there's a survey running out in a public forum, but we need to have a look at our own survey data here.

Answer

Staff, student and community engagement is at the centre of Renew ANU. We are actively consulting and receiving feedback. We recognise change is challenging and support is available for staff and students.

The last staff engagement survey, a pulse survey, was held under a year ago, in September 2024. The results for this survey have been tabled in a response to a separate Question on Notice (GIQ 25-008).

There is a publicly available Frequently Asked Questions website on the Survey (<https://services.anu.edu.au/human-resources/supporting-development/anyou-employee-engagement-surveys/frequently-asked-questions-faqs>, ANU weblink).

Since July 2025 work has been underway on the next phase of regular staff engagement surveys, including a proposed staff engagement pulse survey by the end of 2025. The aim of these regular surveys is to listen to our staff consistently, and act through continuous improvement, based on the evidence in the results of each staff engagement survey.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian National University

Question No. GIQ 25-016

Senator Pocock on 12 August 2025, Proof Hansard page 43.

Grievance process

Question

Mr Churchill: I think, as I said in my opening statement, it's very difficult for us to talk about details of the grievance procedure while that process is still in place. It is our intention, because it's still an active process, to properly complete the process—to follow our procedures, to gather the correct evidence from all individuals and to come to a determination. It's important that we do that.

Senator DAVID POCOCK: And how will discussing the process affect the grievance process?

Mr Churchill: How will discussing the process affect the process?

Senator DAVID POCOCK: Yes. How will it affect the other process that is now underway, given Mr Carr has resigned and is no longer investigating it independently?

Mr Churchill: I've said that Mr Carr is no longer undertaking that piece of work.

Senator DAVID POCOCK: What's the timeframe for this process? I was made aware of this in June.

Mr Churchill: It has been ongoing for some time. I'm happy to take it on notice and come back to you. But, as I said, it's difficult to discuss the details of the grievance procedure whilst that procedure is on foot.

Answer

Dr Allen formally raised concerns on 23 March 2025 through a confidential WHS incident notification. On 27 March 2025, she confirmed she wished for these matters to be treated as a formal complaint about workplace conduct. After assessment, the University determined the grievance process was the most appropriate pathway.

The progress of this activity was affected by several factors, including Dr Allen's unavailability to engage with the process, procedural challenges, which required resolution before substantive matters could be progressed, and additional matters alleged by Dr Allen during the course of the investigation.

This matter remains under investigation and Council is taking appropriate steps. The University is committed to managing it with sensitivity while working toward a timely and appropriate resolution.