

CONVOCATION OF UWA GRADUATES

SPRING GENERAL MEETING

MINUTES

18 September 2025

The Spring General Meeting of Convocation was held on Thursday, 18 September 2025 commencing at 6:30pm in person and online.

The meeting was attended by the following graduates and guests:

Laura N. Adolphus, Fiona M. Allan, Patrick H. Armstrong, Jack Bao, Anna Presser, Nathan J. Baxter, Ann V. Bell, Anne E. Bradley, Steven J. Bradley, Peter A. T. Brockhoff, Tim D. Brockhoff, Maria Calabro, Harriet L. J. Calverley, Craig E. Carter, Amit Chakma, Peter Y. B. Ching, Fah Chong, Tat Meng Chow, Rita A. Clarke, Stewart S. Cole, Malcolm J. Collier, Simone G. Collins, Devon J. Cuneo, Brett K. Davies, Tim W. Dawe, Ema Denby de Braganza, Chris G. Denby, Brian Devine, Mick B. Devine, Nora Dombrovskis Larsen, Anne Dunne, Thankam Abraham, Guest of Mrs Anne Dunne, Guest of Mrs Anne Dunne, Kate F. Dyson, Angela Evangelinou-Yiannakis, Jocelyn A. Everett, Felicity W. E. Farrelly, Haylee Felton, Chantelle R. Gaskell, Guest of Miss Chantelle Gaskell, Agi K. Gedeon, Sean S. Geoghegan, Billie Giles-Corti, Tanya Goel, Graham J. Goerke, Guest of Mrs Radha Goyal, Guest of Mrs Radha Goyal, Guest of Mrs Radha Goyal, Jenny A. Gregory, David C. Griffiths, Bruce T. Haynes, John D. Henstridge, Susan Hoddinott, Debra S. Judge, Vanessa Juliana, Shreya Kataria, Kevin F. Kenneally, Warren M. Kerr, Jimmy Kho, Jenni Cheng, Guest of Mr Jimmy Kho, Joanna H. Knowles, Estie Kruger, Raj G. P. Kurup, Louisa M. Lawrance, Bob Sullivan, Caixia Li, Phoebe Long, Tia D. Lynch, Bill R. Marmion, Doug A. McGhie, Rhoanna J. McNeill, Guest of Dr Rhoanna McNeill, Nikolaos Millios, Bang Lit Ng, Thu Nguyen, Jennifer L. Nicolao, Mike Acquarola, Sean C. Nienaber, David P. Nolan, Bob H. Olivier, Nee Nee Ong, Juanita Perez, Joan P. Pietersen, Cheryl E. Praeger, Anna L. Presser, Thomas B. Quinlivan, Dan Alain Quirante, Guest of Dr Rumayya, Johan Salim, Mona Salim, Angela M. Samec, Eros Scagnetti, Tim M. Shanahan, Linda M. Slack-Smith, Brian M. Sova, Ric Stern, Malou Hayles, Rebecca W. Steven, Jessica J. Cobley, Mark A. Stickells, Paulus H. L. Sui, Alison Sui, Felix Sui, Denise L. Sullivan, Nikhita Talluri, Manuel G. Tamayo, Ernie T. G. Tan, Cathy L. Tang, Marc Tennant, Michelle Teo H. M. Teo, Aleksandar Topalovic, Fiona M. Tremlett, Pauline Tremlett, Bronwen Tyson, Viknash Vm, Anne L. Willox, John R. Willox, Jing Zhi Z. Wong, Terry L. Woodings, Tami Xiang, Haoqian Xu, Siyun Mai, Shengsheng Tan, Dickson A. Yeboah, Allen G. Yeow and John N. Yiannakis

The following members of Convocation asked that their apologies be recorded:

Hasanul Abdul Hamid, Abu Iskandar Abu Hanzalah, Sabrina Ahmad, Tony Ahmat, Gavin Alexander, Mark Altus, Daniel Anderson, Theo Andily, Michael Andrews, Nola Andrews, Bernard Ang, David Anson, Emmanuel Anthony, Anne Appleton, Paul Appleton, ASHOK ARASU, Max Aravena-Roman, Karen Armin-Grimm, Lyn Atkinson, Liz Bailey, Susan Bant, Annette Barbetti, Pablo Barriga Campino, Lori Barry, Maureen Barton, Malcolm Basell, Bruce Baskerville, Bob Becu, Tom Beer, Brian Bell, Rose Benson, Brian Betts, Ro Birrell, Marion

Blackwell, Peter Blake, Aurore Blanchard-Scott, Nanthi Bolan, Angharad Booth, Elyse Bourgault Du Coudray, Deborah Bowen-Smith, Sue Boyd, David Boyer, Ivan Brabant, Nigel Branch, Maria Bravo-Rojas, John Bremner, Claire Brittain, Larina Bromley, Barry Broomfield, Ian Brumby, Matthew Budge, Andrew Burton, Tony Buti, Joe Calleja, Krystie Camisa, Lachie Carnachan, Joan Carney, Ian Carr, Nick Catania, Florence Cawley, George Chalkiadis, Betty Chan, Hugh Chaplin, Wei Cheah, Marina Chenaux, Trina Chua, Anna Ciffolilli, Peter Clifton, Douglas Clyde, Dolores Coffey RSM, Tim Colmer, Bill Combs, Arthur Conacher, Ann Contuzzi, Phyllis Costello, Margaret Cowlshaw, Christian Crisan, Joanne Cruickshank, Christi Cruz, Peter Cuffley, Lawrence Davidson, Robert Davies, Neal Davis, Christine Davy, Amy Dawson, Reginald Dawson, Sue Dean, Anne Dell, Tony Devitt, Luciano Di Labio, Danielle Dias, Brian Dick, Serena Dipierro, Helen Dowzall, Luisa Dropulich, Sheldrin D'Rozario, Jill Duncan, John Dunne, Paula Dunne, Krista Dunstan, Peter Eastlake, William Eborall, Robert Edis, Dora Edwardes, Alan Edwards, Colin Edwards, Looi Ee, Maren Eilenberger-Czwalinna, Jessie Ellis, Jane Emberson, Brian Evans, Frieda Evans, Wayne Fairhead, Gail Falconer, Robyn Farmer, Joanne Farrell, Peta Fereday, Gavin Fielding, Cletus Fimmel, Charlie Finkl, Michael Firth, Elizabeth Fisher, Monica Flattery, Sean Fletcher, Andrew Forrest, Alan Forsyth, Christopher Frame, Gareth Franklin, Shih Ching Fu, Roy Fuller, Yifan Gao, Michael Gardiner, Lynn Gattorna, Kathy Gecan, Rohan Gengatharen, Carlo Genovese, Nick Gerrard, Marina Gerzic, Nick Gianfrancesco, Daphne Gibson, Mike Gibson, Melvin Gn, Kevin Goh, Mohammadreza Gohari, Sharon Goodchild, Tilly Gorce, Ian Gordon, Patrick Gorman, Mohammed Gouda, Ross Gould, Rosemary Graham, Robert Graieg, Stephen Graves, Raymond Gray, Ruth Greble, Cliff Green, Ross Gregory, Tony Gummer, Dhruva Gupta, Joyce Hadley, Ruth Halbert, Chris Hall, Jack Hallam, Sean Hamilton, Lisa Hando, Graham Harmsworth, Dianne Harris, Fiona Harris, Gary Harris, Khim Harris, Josh Harrison, Greg Harvey, Andrea Hawkes, Richard Haynes, Barrie Heald, Helen Heggarty, Trevor Height, Michaela Hill, Wendy Hillier, Ew-Beng Ho, Isabella Ho, Joy Hocking, Kim Hoff, Jennifer Hole, Janet Holmes à Court, Tony House, Bryan Howieson, Paul Huddleston, John Hughes, Ian Hume, Lily Huupponen, Alan Imerito, Angelina Ingrassia, Anne Ismail, Kathleen Jakovcevic, Mohamed Jalloh, Gregory Jarosch, Edyta Jasinska, Neil Jensen, Rob Jewkes, Harun Johari, Doris Johnson, Jon Jokela, David Jones, David Jones, Jenny Jones, Joanne Jones, Sybe Jongeling, Ashley Joyce, Kai Kai, Wisam Kamil, Anthony Kane, Jansje Karajas, Robert Keane, Norman Kee, Sue Kee, Bob Kelliher, Ross Kelly, Tom Kendall, Phung Kha, Gary Khoo, Tony Kierath, Nalda Kingston, William Kininmonth, Leonie Kirke, Jan Kirkman, Christina Klisc, Daniel Klopper, Hwee Ping Koh, Jeremy Koh, Genevieve Konig, Fabian Krebs, Margaret Krych, Yuen Yee Kwong, Cheuk Lai, Michael Lai, Anne Lake, Mable Lam, Stephen Lamb, Donald Lamont, Jenny Larner, Andrew Lau, Hah Lee, Karen Lee, Bee Na Lim, Christine Lim, Dominic Lim, Rick Lim, Linda Lim Scriven, Ian Lindsay, Lene Lochte, Jenny Low, Nicola Lucano, Tara Lukan, Qian Luo, Helen Lynes, Roger Ma, Ngan Boon Mac, Stephen MacCarthy, Catherine MacDonald, Heather MacDonald, Angus MacDonald, Ross Magno, Jen Wei Mah, May Li Mah, Gail Mannucci, Innocent Mapendo, Odette Margot, Clive Mariano, Glenda Martinick, John Masarei, Trevor Mazzucchelli, Narelle McAuliffe, Wendy McCallum, David McCloughry, Peter McComb, Moira McDermont, Bianca McGoldrick, Macca McGoldrick, Lee McGovern, Michael McGuire, Paul McGurgan, Neil McKerracher, Elizabeth McLaughlin, Michael McLean, Pamela McLean, Jan McMillan, Ian McNaughton, Rachel Meier, Bronwyn Mellor, Dean Meredith, Despina Metaxatos, Brian Metcalf, Ian Middlemas, Edward Mildern, Susan Millar, Ayrton Miller, Georgiana Mirams, Darryn Mitchell, Alison Mitchell, Peta Monley, Henry Moo, Elizabeth Moore, Beverley Moriarty, Janet Muhling, May Mulholland, Paul Mullins, Ashleigh Murch, Malcolm Murray, Antonia Naarstig,

Jenni Nagel, Daniel Nahon, Jose Narvaez, Herbert Newland, Damian Ng, Evelyn Ng, Geok Meng Ng, Joshua Ngai Mun Ng, Kenneth Ng, Vincent Ngai, Jocelyn Nicholson, Peter Nicholson, Hannah Niklaus, Xianwa Niu, Rory O'Connor, Kozue Okoshi Awazu, Doina Olaru, Darren O'Neill, James Ong, Jeanne Jin-Hui Ong, Heather Osborne, Katherine O'Shea, Graham Owen, Marjan Oxley, Michael Page, Ann-Marie Page, Michael Pal, Enrico Palermo, Alexander Palmer, Peter Pang, Alana Papageorgiou, Marguerite Parker, Nicola Partridge, Sue Paterson, Ian Paton, Leigh Pattie, Joanne Payne, Alistair Peacock, Drusilla Pearson, Roy Penberthy, Zhenkai Pennells, Robert Perriam, Elizabeth Perron, Canaan Perry, Fran Pesich, Gabriela Pestell, Guy Peterson, Heather Phillips, Paula Phillips, Stuart Phillips, Paul Pielage, Bernadette Pilkington, Mary Pinder, Geoff Playford, Bill Plozza, Virginia Ponsonnet Roseberg, Margaret Poole, Benjamin Poppe, Dick Porter, Anthony Postle, Veronique Preau, Melissa Price, Diana Purcell, Gretel Purser, John Quealy, Pin Hou Quek, Melinda Randall, Mamun Rashid, Annette Raynor, Heidi Reinholz, Stefano Renzi, Paul Rich, Andrew Rinaldi, Emilee Rippon, Lance Risbey, Leonora Ritter, Duncan Robertson, Joan Robins, Sally Robins, Christine Robinson, Della Robinson, Ian Rockett, Francesco Rodino, Susan Rooney, Mary Rose, Harry Rowe, Peter Ruhen, Vaseefa Saeed, Wahyu Widodo Samsudin, Kerry Sanderson, Sueli Sano, Jesika Sarson, Lawson Savery, Lida Sayadelmi, Anthony Sayers, Diana Scott, Tony Scott, Jackie Scurlock, Margaret Seares, Cim Sears, Alexander Segal, Tim Setter, Arthur Shacklock, Susan Sharpe, Jason Shaw, Helen Shilkin-Reinhold, Mark Shuman, Peter Silinger, Mervyn Sims, Harpreet Singh, Melanie Sloss, Jenny Smith, Merle Smith, Michael Smith, Joanne Smith, Stuart Smith, Diane Smith-Gander, Jayantha Somasundaram, Stephen Spiers, Cornelia Staats, Jenni Stallwood, Peter Stallwood, Sandra Stevenson, Coral Stewart, Trevor Still, Barry Strickland, Peter Strickland, Lis Sugimin, Rick Sweeting, Sharifah Musairah Syed Abdul Mutalib, Ai Ling Tan, Tony Tate, John Templeman, Amy Thomas, Michael Thomas, Neville Threlfall, William Thung, Julia Thurloe, Ray Thurloe, Daina Timermanis, Blodwyn Timms, Bernard Tobin, Yik Kiet Toh, Robert Toia, Paul Townsend, Mike Trafalski, Glen Travers, Michael Trinick, Alan True, Jill True, Timothy Tucak, Elemer Turchanyi, David Turpin, Kari Maria Tveit, Peter Twiby, Joyce Van Leeuwen, Marco Vittino, Eva Vlahov, Domenico Volpicella, Van-Van Vu, Petar Vujovic, Claire Walker, Teresa Wang, Lionel Ward, Lisa Ward, David Watson, Ken Watson, David Watson, Michael Waymark, Mae Wei, Greg Wells, Chiu Chi Wen, Ryan Whiddett, Kevin White, Debbie Whiting, Sue Wicks, Coralyn Williams, Raymond Williamson, Kim Wilson, Peter Wilson, Richard Wittenoom, Dianne Wolfer, Sophie Wolfer, Eric Wood, Michael Wood, Sharren Wood, Colin Woods, Paulina Wroblewski, Shirley Wyburn, Jin Xie, Weiyang Xu, Zaw Zaw, Mharvie Zayco, Leo Zaza and Bungsu Zina

Ms Juanita Perez, Convocation Officer as Secretary

The Acknowledgement to Country was delivered by the Warden of Convocation.

The Warden declared the meeting open at 6.35pm.

1. WELCOME

In opening the Spring General Meeting for 2025, the Warden of Convocation, Emeritus Professor Jenny Gregory AM, welcomed the following guests:

- Professor Amit Chakma, Vice-Chancellor

- Ms Nikhita Talluri, Guild President
- Ms Haylee Felton, Chief Marketing Officer
- Ms Fiona Allan, Chief Advancement Officer
- Members of Senate
- Members of Convocation Council; and
- all members of Convocation, their guests and friends.

2. APOLOGIES

The Warden noted apologies from

- Chancellor, Dr Diane Smith-Gander AO
- Former Chancellor of UWA and Governor of WA, Dr Ken Michael AC CitWA
- And more than 400 graduates

The Warden asked that if anyone wished to convey any additional apologies, they should provide these to the Convocation Officer, Ms Juanita Perez, who would record the details.

3. MINUTES OF THE AUTUMN ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING 2024

A copy of the minutes of the Autumn General Meeting 2025 held on Thursday, 20 March 2025 appeared as Attachment A of the Spring General Meeting 2025 booklet.

No requests to amend the minutes had been received.

A motion to accept the minutes of the Autumn General Meeting 2025 held on Thursday, 20 March 2025 was proposed by Dr David Griffiths and seconded by Dr Angela Evangelinou-Yiannakis. The motion was accepted by show of hands.

4. PRESENTATION OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM REPORTS

4.1 GUILD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Guild President took her report as read. She then reaffirmed the Guild's mission to support students beyond academics, with thanks to Convocation and the Alumni Council for their ongoing contributions.

Special appreciation was extended for the Alumni Council's support of the Student Food Pantry through the Convocation Food Drive appeal, which provided essential aid during the cost-of-living crisis.

Cost-of-Living Initiatives

The cost-of-living crisis remained one of the greatest pressures on students, and the Guild had taken major steps this year to provide meaningful relief. In partnership with the University, they secured \$100,000 dedicated to cost-of-living projects, enabling new programs and expanded welfare initiatives.

Alongside this funding, the Guild itself has scaled up its core welfare services. The Food Pantry has expanded in size and capacity, supporting hundreds of students each semester as demand reached record levels. The emergency loans scheme has also been strengthened, offering timely support to students facing unexpected financial difficulties.

Together, these programs formed a stronger safety net for students struggling to make ends meet.

Additional initiatives rolled out this year include:

- **Essential Product Packs:** Over 1,000 free hygiene and toiletry packs distributed across campus.
- **Free and Discounted Meals:** More than 4,000 free dinners and 900 discounted breakfasts provided during exams, giving students vital relief during periods of high stress.
- **Food for Fines:** This program will allow students to pay off parking fines with food donations, directly benefiting the Food Pantry.
- **Free Pregnancy Tests & Nappies:** Practical support available at the Guild Pharmacy and in parents' rooms across campus.
- **Free Period Products:** For the first time, sanitary care was made available in all five UWA libraries.

Guild Precinct Renovation

- Major upgrades completed across the Guild Precinct.
- UWA Tavern renovations were completed in time for the Tavern's 50th Anniversary celebrations.

The Guild President once again thanked the Alumni Council and the Convocation members for their generosity and support.

4.2 WARDEN'S REPORT

The Warden took her report as read and highlighted the following from her written report:

General Acknowledgements

All Committee members were thanked for their dedicated service and many hours of voluntary work. Special recognition was given to

David Griffiths, Deputy Warden and

Committee Chairs:

Angela Evangelinou-Yiannakis – Events

Nee Nee Ong – Awards

Graham Goerke – Governance

Matt Budge – Finance

Warren Kerr – Honours and Resources

Marc Tennant – IT and Membership

Councillors present were invited to stand and were applauded.

Gratitude was also expressed to:

Vice Chancellor – for his ongoing interest and support of Convocation's integral role within the University.

Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor Tim Colmer – for regular engagement with Convocation leadership.

Other senior University staff – for their time and advice.

Fiona Allan, Chief Advancement Officer, and her team for their valued support.

The Joint Committee of Convocation Council and DAR was acknowledged as a vital bridge between groups.

David Griffiths, Deputy Warden, Chair

Angela Evangelinou-Yiannakis

Simone Collins

Fiona Tremlett

DAR representatives: Fiona Allan, Keiran Hargreaves, Milos Vaskovic, Jenn Parsons

Special thanks were extended to Juanita Perez, Convocation Officer, for over 20 years of loyal and diligent service to Convocation Council.

UWA Statute Amendments

The proposed amendments to UWA Statute presented at the 2024 Spring General Meeting were gazetted on 19 December 2024. The changes relating to Convocation came into effect on 1 June 2025. Key changes were as follows:

- Convocation Council renamed Alumni Council
- Council membership reduced from 20 to 14
- Council composition to include Warden, six elected Councillors (including Deputy Warden), two Convocation Senators, Chief Advancement Officer (Vice Chancellor's representative) and four co-opted members to broaden the skill base and improve diversity
- Council membership limited to nine consecutive years.

Senate Advancement Committee

The Senate Advancement Committee was established early this year by Senate with a view to further enhance the University's relationship with its alumni.

Convocation Day

Convocation planted the first of a row of Cherry Blossom trees along the west side of Riley Oval parallel to the Arts Building this year. New Chancellor Dr Diane Smith-Gander AO attended this special event.

Creator-in-Residence

An appeal to establish a fellowship for a Reid Library Convocation Creator-in-Residence was launched on Convocation Day. Convocation aims to raise \$100,000 to establish this initiative. Donations of \$1000 or more will be recognised by an inscription of the donor's name or the name of a loved one on a commemorative shelf of the spectacular Reading Wall.

Student Awards and Prizes

This year Convocation was able to provide 14 Postgraduate Research Travel Awards, 5 Undergraduate Prizes for Academic Excellence, and the Matilda Award for Cultural Excellence.

Annual Financial Report

The annual financial report and the auditor's report were endorsed by the Alumni Council on behalf of the members of Convocation and presented in the meeting booklet. The Report was without any qualifications and demonstrated that Convocation was in a healthy financial state and able to pay its debts when they fall due.

The Warden thanked Treasurer Mr Matthew Budge and Convocation Officer Ms Juanita Perez for all their work in the preparation of the report.

4.3 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

The Vice-Chancellor's Report's written report is taken as read.

5. 'UWA BRAND INSIGHTS AND MARKET PERCEPTIONS', PRESENTATION BY MS HAYLEE FELTON, UWA CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

The University regularly reviews how it is perceived by the broader community, and since October 2024 has been completing a comprehensive review engaging students, staff, stakeholders, and the broader community to ensure UWA remains relevant and connected to its audiences and understands future opportunities.

Challenges

- WA's ATAR participation (~28%) is much lower than eastern states (~55%), impacting traditional admission pathways.
- Economic pressures (low unemployment, high cost of living) are putting added pressure on higher education choices.
- Other WA universities have consistently positioned themselves strongly in areas of key relevance to future students.

UWA

- UWA continues to perform well in reputation, prestige and international recognition, however our ability to maintain differentiation and relevance have been somewhat eroded. Some traditional strengths are not considered as valuable to future students as they once were.
- UWA has an obligation to retain pride in, and project confidence in, our pedigree of excellence, prestige, and heritage.
- As the only university with Western Australia in its name, UWA should proudly reflect and celebrate the difference that it makes to WA and its people, through its education, research, innovation and campus life.
- UWA has to harness its strengths and "reframe" them in a way that better connects with its community in telling the UWA story of connection to the State and the success and impact the University has had for over 100 years.

6. 'THE FUTURE OF UWA IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT', A FIRESIDE CHAT WITH PROFESSOR AMIT CHAKMA, VICE-CHANCELLOR (MODERATED BY WARDEN OF CONVOCATION)

The Vice-Chancellor was invited to the stage for a 'fireside chat' moderated by the Warden.

Prior to addressing questions on notice and the audience, he emphasised his preference for conversational engagement over formal speech and reported on the following:

Alumni Engagement Highlights

- Recent alumni gatherings in Sydney (80 attendees) and Melbourne (65–75 attendees) showcased strong regional engagement.
- Upcoming visit to London for a long-standing alumni event hosted by "Friends of UWA in Europe," demonstrated continuing global outreach.
- Emphasised the worldwide presence and passion of UWA alumni.

Institutional Growth Snapshot (2020–2024)

- **Student Numbers:** Increased from 26,000 to 33,000 (headcount, not FTE).
- **Research Income:** Grew from \$214M to \$254M, used as a proxy for research activity.
- **Endowment:** Expanded by \$200M, now totaling \$1.3B across two funds.
- **Endowed Chairs:** 15 new positions added, funded in perpetuity, continuing the legacy of the original Hackett Chair in Agriculture.
- **University Budget:** Increased from \$950M to \$1.3B.
- **Global Expansion:** Plans underway to establish two new campuses in India.

Professor Chakma framed the university's trajectory as a "growth mission," inviting further discussion during Q&A.

Question 1:

The planned ferry terminal on Matilda Bay has created a lot of community concern.

- The UWA Boat Club, Perth Dinghy Club and Royal Perth Yacht Club are all against the proposed location because of the wash that the ferry may create and the risk to young rowers and sailors.
- Matilda Bay is a very popular and beautiful picnic area for families

However, staff and students from the other side of the river will be able to use the ferry to get to UWA, which may ease parking congestion on campus.

I know that you regularly walk along Matilda Bay and have even been seen paddle boarding there, what is your view about the ferry terminal and its location?

Emeritus Professor Jenny Gregory AM

Response:

The Vice-Chancellor strongly supports the introduction of a ferry service, citing student accessibility and safety concerns. Students commuting from south of the river face long travel times, limiting their ability to use campus resources like the Reid Library in the evenings. He personally experienced the commute via train and found it empty and unsettling at night.

The Vice-Chancellor further added that the University's Master Plan had long envisioned a ferry connection, identifying a site near the Boat Club. Government planners initially adopted this location, but the Boat Club objected due to operational disruption. He emphasised that Master Plans are guides, not mandates, and successfully advocated for reconsideration of the site.

The final proposed location was in the middle of the bay.

The University does not hold a formal position on the terminal's location but seeks to provide feedback during the planning process, especially regarding safety. Safety consultants have been engaged, and he acknowledges the complexity and subjectivity of expert opinions.

The University campus sits on government land under a 999-year lease, limiting its authority to object to infrastructure decisions.

Question 2:

Lately the media has been full of the financial troubles at other universities — ANU, Western Sydney, Wollongong — leading to mass redundancies and, in the case of ANU, the resignation of the Vice Chancellor. Can we be assured that all is well at UWA?

Emeritus Professor Jenny Gregory AM

Response:

The Vice Chancellor acknowledged widespread financial distress across global higher education. Amid widespread financial strain across global universities including mass redundancies and changes at institutions like ANU, McGill, and the University of Chicago, the Vice-Chancellor reassured stakeholders that UWA remains on stable footing. He emphasised that the sector's challenges are systemic, driven by declining public funding and competing national priorities. Drawing on 23 years of budgetary leadership, he underscored his philosophy of avoiding deficits and acting early to prevent gradual financial erosion from becoming sudden collapse.

UWA had been on a strong post-COVID trajectory, with growing revenues and ambitious plans for hiring and infrastructure. However, the federal government's cap on international students abruptly removed \$250 million in projected income, forcing the university to pause discretionary spending and rely on reserves. Thanks to prudent management, UWA has secured financial stability through 2025 and 2026. While challenges remain, the Vice-Chancellor remains cautiously optimistic and committed to avoiding the kind of restructuring seen elsewhere in the sector.

Question 3:

The opening of UWA campuses in India will be a major initiative for the university, can you tell us a little about it - how the initiative came about? what exactly is planned? And what do you expect the impact will be?

Emeritus Professor Jenny Gregory AM

Response:

The University's initiative to open campuses in India was driven by both idealistic aspirations and pragmatic needs. Historically, UWA has envisioned becoming a leading institution not just within Western Australia but across the broader Indian Ocean region. While this ambition has long been documented, geopolitical shifts and government policies, particularly concerns about over-reliance on international students from a single country have accelerated the University's plans. The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that depending on international student income to fund research is unsustainable and posed a risk to national knowledge development, noting that in today's world, knowledge is power.

On a practical level, the move to India addressed student capacity challenges in WA, where five universities compete for a limited pool of students. Establishing a campus in India opens new frontiers for student recruitment, allowing merit-selected students to begin studies locally and later transfer to Australia without being subject to government-imposed caps. The initiative also supports UWA's goal to become more research-intensive, inspired by Monash University's joint PhD model with IIT Mumbai. Furthermore, the Indian campus could offer scalable international experiences for local students, fostering global engagement and mutual benefit between Australia and India.

Question 4:

A number of universities in the United States have been impacted by the dictates of the Trump Administration, whether it be cuts to courses considered 'woke', funding cuts, staff cuts, or restrictions on political activities by students. Not to mention tariffs and the general economic uncertainty. What impact has this had on UWA?

Emeritus Professor Jenny Gregory AM

Question 5:

To Vice Chancellor

In view of the chaos in American higher education what can UWA do to attract American academic refugees and displaced international postgraduate students?

Dr Bruce Haynes

A consolidated response has been provided for Questions 4 and 5, as both pertain to the same subject matter.

The Vice-Chancellor said that while the chaos in American higher education presents theoretical opportunities, the scale and funding of the U.S. system far exceed Australia's capacity to absorb displaced talent.

Attempts to recruit high-profile academics such as a UCLA mathematics professor have proven impractical due to salary disparities and institutional limitations.

UWA's most viable strategy lies in welcoming Australian postgraduate students who wish to return from politically or logistically challenging environments abroad.

The Vice-Chancellor has extended offers to Australian students facing visa issues in the U.S., though uptake has been minimal.

He acknowledged that while attracting American academics is difficult, long-term relationship-building and sabbatical exchanges may yield gradual results.

Question 6:

Would selling parts of UWA to universities operating in the US such as Harvard free up finances for other areas? (Harvard Business School - UWA or a Robotics company in the computing department.) It would also allow them to continue to provide services to countries that are affected by restricted immigration to the US.

Dr Mark Flynn

Response:

In response to Dr. Mark Flynn's question about selling parts of UWA to U.S. institutions such as Harvard, the Vice Chancellor responded that financially, such arrangements are not viable and would not yield meaningful budget relief. More importantly, he emphasised that UWA's brand identity must be protected and strengthened, not diluted through external ownership.

He cautioned against comparisons with elite U.S. institutions whose scale and resources far exceed UWA's.

While collaboration is welcome, the Vice-Chancellor stressed that UWA must chart its own path and maintain its own identity.

Question 7:

Professor Chakma, in an era where careers may span 50 years with multiple industry shifts, how can UWA's relationship with its students evolve into a lifelong learning partnership? What steps can the university take to become the go-to institution for its graduates when they need to upskill or pivot, ensuring the UWA journey doesn't end at graduation?

Dr Brett Davies

Response:

The Vice-Chancellor affirmed the importance of lifelong learning and acknowledged the University's early steps, including successful pilots in micro-credentials.

Cultural inertia remains a challenge. UWA's traditional academic model has limited its ability to rapidly embrace new formats like internships and flexible upskilling.

Faculty enthusiasm is growing, with colleagues responding positively to pilot initiatives and the India campus rollout, despite initial limitations in capacity.

The Vice Chancellor emphasised that improving the student experience is foundational. Last year UWA ranked lowest in WA for student satisfaction, prompting a renewed focus on internships and practical learning.

Two new internship-linked courses are being launched to build momentum and institutional confidence.

He concluded that while alumni-focused lifelong learning is the goal, the University must first transform its culture and offerings for current students.

Question 8:

Could the Vice-Chancellor update us on the state of discussions for possible mergers of the WA universities into a California type model?

Emeritus Professor Dennis Haskell AM

Response:

The Vice Chancellor said UWA has engaged deeply with the government-led commission exploring university mergers.

UWA was the only institution to adopt a whole-of-state perspective, guided by The Hon. Robert French AC, rather than a UWA-centric stance. This positioned the university as a constructive partner.

Although the initial report was shelved post-election, the government has recently revived the conversation, now led by former Minister Alannah MacTiernan with a focus on cost-benefit analysis.

UWA is expanding its research to include financial modelling alongside academic considerations, evaluating scenarios such as mergers with Murdoch or Curtin University.

Early findings suggest that a UWA–Murdoch merger may offer long-term gains but carries reputational risks, while a UWA–Curtin merger presents fewer risks due to both being research-intensive.

The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that UWA's role is to ensure any outcome strengthens WA's knowledge infrastructure and serves the state's future needs.

He welcomed the government's engagement, urging continued collaboration and strategic investment in initiatives that benefit the state.

Despite the complexity and disruption such mergers entail, he expressed confidence that UWA will emerge stronger, given the government's intent to enhance the sector's effectiveness.

Question 8:

What is UWA's response to the recent report by Francesca Albanese for the UN on companies complicit in genocide? Will UWA divest from all named complicit organisations?

Dr Katherine O'Shea

Response:

The Vice-Chancellor declined to comment on the specific UN report, noting the volume and variability of such publications.

UWA's endowment is managed as a trust, with funds gifted by donors and governed by fiduciary responsibility.

The University does not invest directly in companies. Instead, it purchases units through Mercer, a third-party investment manager. Mercer receives an investment objectives statement from UWA's Senate, which includes ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) principles. Mercer relies on external ESG advisors to guide its investment decisions. Because UWA invests in pooled units, it cannot select or exclude individual companies.

The Senate remains accountable for the investment policy and monitors evolving standards through ongoing dialogue with Mercer.

A full review of the investment statement is scheduled for the end of the year, with Convocation invited to participate in a consultative process.

The Vice Chancellor expressed hope that this review will lead to a revised investment framework that reflects community values and ethical priorities.

Question 9:

I would like to ask about the process of initiating a Community Music Centre connected to the UWA Conservatorium of Music, similar to that of the ANU (Australian National University) model.

Dr Joan Pietersen

Response:

The Vice-Chancellor praised the Conservatorium's excellence in both performance education and partnership development.

The Conservatorium has long expressed interest in establishing a presence in the CBD, but previous initiatives have not materialized.

The Vice-Chancellor shared that he had explored a partnership with ECU, whose city location and complementary music programs offered potential for collaboration. Despite reaching out to ECU's former Vice-Chancellor, UWA was unable to secure space due to financial constraints and lack of reciprocal interest.

He expressed regret that UWA missed the opportunity to participate in shared space initiatives and acknowledged the value of inter-university collaboration.

The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that UWA remains interested in exploring future opportunities for a community music centre and welcomes ideas that align with the Conservatorium's strengths and community engagement goals.

Question 10:

An audience member raised two interrelated concerns: the deteriorating condition of Harold Taylor's "Black Stump" sculpture east of the Octagon Theatre, and the broader issue of accepting artworks that may become burdensome to maintain.

Response:

The Vice Chancellor confirmed that the sculpture is visibly disintegrating and acknowledged it is on the University's maintenance review list.

Historically, UWA has lacked the resources to proactively maintain campus assets, responding only when issues were flagged. A comprehensive audit of artworks and infrastructure is now underway.

The Vice-Chancellor admitted that many facilities, including laboratories, are or have been in disrepair, but a team is now assessing what renovations are required.

On the issue of accepting gifts, he emphasised that past administrations accepted artworks and other donations without fully considering long-term costs. Today's standards are more rigorous.

UWA has implemented a formal gift acceptance process involving legal, financial, and governance oversight. The Vice Chancellor has personally declined gifts deemed unsustainable.

He anticipates that restoring certain artworks may require launching a community campaign, with university contributions supplemented by public support.

Crawley Village was cited as another example of neglected infrastructure, with some buildings now being shut down for safety reasons.

The Alumni Council's role in raising concerns such as the condition of the Shaun Tan mosaic was acknowledged as instrumental in shaping responsible policy.

Question 11:

A member of the audience asked which degree programs were being considered for the Indian campuses? Additionally, what opportunities exist for alumni to participate in or contribute to the development of such endeavour?

Response:

The Vice-Chancellor responded that UWA's entry into India is governed by a two-year operational window granted by the Indian government. While not formally termed a "licence," this approval requires the University to launch programs swiftly.

The Vice Chancellor also noted that:

The initial degrees: Commerce and Computer Science, were chosen for their ease of implementation within this timeframe.

The University is working closely with Indian-based alumni to navigate local conditions and ensure cultural relevance.

Future expansion may include broader academic offerings and deeper alumni involvement from Australia.

He added that in Western Australia, UWA is developing proposals to expand its footprint in Albany, the Great Southern, and the Pilbara. Alumni are seen as vital partners in this effort. Local alumni can represent the University in community outreach and guide program development.

The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that alumni insight is essential to shaping business plans and ensuring regional relevance.

Closing Remarks

Celebrating Young Alumni Engagement

The Vice Chancellor took a moment to recognize the growing involvement of young alumni, highlighting it as a strategic priority for the Senate Advancement Committee.

He acknowledged the Alumni Council's active efforts led by the Warden and supported by the Strategic Advancement Committee to engage recent graduates in university life.

The Vice-Chancellor credited the Council's outreach with the visible presence of young alumni at the event, noting several in attendance and inviting them to stand for recognition.

This moment underscored the University's commitment to fostering intergenerational connection and cultivating future leadership within the alumni community.

CONCLUSION

The Warden thanked all the people who had assisted her in the preparation of this event.

A special thank you to Ms Juanita Perez, Convocation Officer; and to Arianne Torres Benz and Keiran Hargreaves – who have all played a major role coordinating the arrangements for this Meeting.

The Warden also thanked:

Manny Tamayo Photography. Photos taken by Manny Tamayo of Convocation events were used in the meeting booklet and slides for this meeting.

University Club of WA who provided the catering for this meeting.

Brightside Live who had recorded this meeting so that it could be made available online.

The Warden declared the Spring General Meeting of Convocation for 2025 closed at 8:10 pm.