

Chancellor: Candidate Information Pack

UNE is returning to its unconventional roots: a learner-first university that works with regions to convert aspiration into practical outcomes.



Acknowledgement of Country

The University of New England respects and acknowledges that its people, courses and facilities are built on land, and surrounded by a sense of belonging, both ancient and contemporary, of the world's oldest living culture. In doing so, the University values and respects Indigenous knowledge systems as a vital part of the knowledge capital of Australia. The University recognises the strength, resilience and capacity of the Aboriginal community and pays respect to the Elders past, present and future.



Introduction: A message from the Acting Chancellor

The University of New England (UNE) stands at a transformative threshold. As we activate our 2026–2035 Strategic Plan, we are seeking a pre-eminent leader to serve as our 11th Chancellor—a champion capable of stewarding this great University into a new era of innovation and regional impact.

Our new Chancellor will be the public face of an institution that is proudly unconventional by design. We seek an outstanding individual with a passion for the role of universities in society and a deep, authentic understanding of regional Australia and a passion for the transformative power of knowledge. This leader must possess the commercial acumen and board-level experience to guide our foundational excellence goals while fostering the community collaborations that ensure UNE remains a beacon for regional higher education worldwide.

The Council of UNE is committed to a best-practice governance approach that recognises our status as a vital “interface institution.” This unconventional model requires a leader who is mindful of the dual priorities of commercial vitality and community impact. A leader who excels at connecting individual aspirations to community outcomes to ensure geography is never a barrier to aspiration.

I invite leaders who share our commitment to diversity, equity, and the resilient future of our regional communities to explore this opportunity to shape the next chapter of Australia’s first regional university.

David van Aanholt

Acting Chancellor and Chair,
UNE Chancellor Selection Committee





The opportunity

The University of New England is seeking an exceptional leader to serve as its next Chancellor.

UNE is Australia's oldest regional university. For more than 70 years, it has expanded access to higher education, pioneered distance learning, and applied research and teaching to improve outcomes for regional communities.

The [Strategic Plan 2026–2035](#) sets a deliberately unconventional direction: UNE will measure success by how well it connects individual aspirations to community outcomes. This means building deeper partnerships with communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, industry and government as well as taking shared responsibility for outcomes where gaps exist between institutions.

At the same time, UNE is strengthening its foundations. Priorities include learner retention, a safer learner environment, stronger governance and operational fitness, renewal of essential digital and physical infrastructure, and long-term financial sustainability to support reinvestment in teaching, research and student experience.

As Chair of the University Council and UNE's principal ambassador, the Chancellor will work closely with Council and the Vice-Chancellor to progress the strategy from planning to delivery, all while ensuring the highest standards of governance, academic integrity and institutional stewardship.

The ideal candidate

Council seeks a person of integrity, sound judgement and recognised achievement who understands the public value of universities and the distinctive role regional universities play in creating opportunity and strengthening communities.

The successful candidate will have substantial board and governance experience in complex organisations, the confidence to chair a high-performing Council and the personal authority to represent UNE with credibility across government, community and industry.

They will be comfortable leading through change, able to test strategic assumptions, and are committed to strengthening trust, transparency and performance across the institution.

The appointment of the University's next Chancellor is a priority for Council and an important step in delivering UNE's long-term strategy.

The Chancellor Selection Committee

Acting Chancellor: Mr David van Aanholt (Chair)

Vice-Chancellor: Professor Chris Moran

Chair Academic Board: Professor Adrian Walsh

Council Member: Mrs Megan Aitken (Deputy Chair)

Council Member: Professor Jody Currie

Council Member: Mr Phil Hess

External Advisory Members: Two External Advisory Members will be appointed to the Selection Committee.



Our heritage

Founded to expand educational opportunity beyond Australia's major cities, UNE occupies a distinctive place in Australian higher education.

Established as an independent university in 1954, UNE traces its academic heritage to 1938 when the New England University College was established as a constituent college of the University of Sydney. The institution's lineage also encompasses the Armidale Teachers' College, founded in 1928, which underwent transformation to become the Armidale College of Advanced Education in 1972. This parallel institutional history converged in 1989 when the University amalgamated with the Armidale College of Advanced Education, thereby consolidating two significant educational traditions within the New England region.

Armidale has been the home of the University of New England since its foundation.

Today, UNE serves learners across Australia through one of the nation's most extensive regional higher education networks, supporting students wherever they choose to study.

UNE delivers teaching and student support through campuses in Armidale, Sydney (Parramatta), Tamworth and Taree, complemented by Regional Study Centres in Coonabarabran,

Glen Innes, Gunnedah, Guyra, Inverell, Moree, Narrabri and Tenterfield. Together, these locations provide study facilities, technology, academic support and opportunities for students to connect with the University closer to home.

Beyond its own facilities, UNE partners with the Country Universities Centre network, extending access to supported study environments across regional New South Wales and into Queensland and Victoria. Through these partnerships, students can access local study spaces, technology and support while remaining connected to the University community.

This distributed model reflects UNE's founding purpose: ensuring location is never a barrier to higher education. While most students now study online, they remain connected through a network of campuses, regional study centres and community partnerships that bring the University closer to the communities it serves.

UNE also has an on-campus residential college system comprising six colleges. These colleges provide academic support and leadership development opportunities for residents as well as community experiences.

Our strategy

Following decades in which higher education policy encouraged universities towards increasingly similar operating models, UNE is deliberately returning to the qualities that have always distinguished it: a commitment to learners, regional communities and practical outcomes.

Informed by consultation with staff, students, alumni, industry, government and community stakeholders, UNE's Strategic Plan 2026–2035 sets a clear direction: UNE will be an unconventional university that connects individual aspirations to community outcomes. Our stakeholders are seeking significant changes to what UNE represents and delivers. The Australian community, university staff and political leaders demand that universities listen to the discontent being expressed and respond.

We acknowledge that some aspects of our operations – both externally visible and internal – require fundamental change. The [Strategic Plan](#) establishes clear priorities, measurable objectives and a shared framework for delivery across the University. Our Vision, Purpose and Values provide a collective sense of meaning and urgency to guide delivery.

UNE's first Vice-Chancellor, Sir Robert Madgwick, declared that UNE students were here to become leaders. It was assumed they would show self-discipline in achieving their learning goals and it was the institution's role to develop their leadership capacity. In this strategy, we expect that achieving Foundational Excellence is analogous – we simply must do it to provide opportunities for more individuals to meet their aspirations and for us to deliver community outcomes. Accountability for foundational excellence is achieved by adhering to our Foundational Principles and meeting our measurable and timebound Foundational Objectives as defined in the [Strategic Plan](#).

In the immediate future, meeting these principles and objectives can only be assured through transition. UNE's physical heart remains in the New England North West. Armidale will continue as the University's principal campus while Tamworth expands as an important regional education and community hub.

A core element of the strategy is deeper regional embeddedness through long-term collaboration. UNE is positioning itself as an enduring anchor institution that can support partnerships across the practical interfaces of government, business and the not-for-profit sector, where gaps in services and capability often emerge in regional settings.

The strategy is delivered through two linked agendas:

- **Community collaborations** define five strategic focus areas through which UNE will direct its energy to create meaningful outcomes for the communities it serves. Embedded into UNE's teaching, research, and engagement activities, they represent a new and deliberate way of working. Rather than siloed projects, they form an integrated commitment to regional Australia's future.

These collaborations are given shape through five distinct areas of focus: strengthening resilient regional relationships; advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and self-determination; supporting people to live, work, and learn across their lifetimes; preparing regions for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow; and partnering in the renewable energy transition through REZ Alliances

Together, they represent UNE's commitment to being an active, purposeful partner in the communities it serves, translating strategic intent into real-world impact.

- **Foundational excellence** encompasses the seven core capabilities UNE must build and maintain to operate as a great university and deliver on its commitments to regional communities. Together, they form the organisational backbone that enables UNE to pursue its broader strategic ambitions with confidence and accountability.

These capabilities are defined through seven Foundational Principles: placing students at the centre of everything UNE does; producing research with real-world impact; investing in its people; ensuring financial sustainability; maintaining operational fitness; harnessing digital and data capabilities; and building a strong brand and reputation.

Each Foundational Principle has associated objectives that guide day-to-day operations and longer-term investment decisions, mapped to specific, measurable actions and timelines in the [Delivering the UNE Strategic Plan](#) document.

The Chancellor will play a central role in governing this work through Council: maintaining strategic discipline, strengthening trust with stakeholders and ensuring UNE's ambitions are translated into measurable outcomes.



Community Collaborations

Resilient Regional Relationships

We will focus on our relationships near (New England North West and Australia) and far (international) and on the major global challenges that unite us. We wish to have relationships that can recover from shocks and capitalise on opportunities. Each relationship will have at its core at least one of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Live and Work to Learn

We will provide commercially established arrangements that give our learners “wrap-around” support that aligns with their personal and professional aspirations, local service needs and the long-term growth of rural human capital.

Upholding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights to education

Informed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we will move beyond offering the opportunities of education and embrace the Indigenous-informed co-design of initiatives. This will position the University as a support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to access and realise lifelong education goals that meet their aspirations.

Regions of tomorrow

UNE has historically been a leader in applying technology to learning and industry. Rural regions should not be second in line for technological advances that boost businesses and regional economies. We will provide support for regional businesses near and far (particularly small and medium-sized ones) to succeed with new technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence.

Renewable Energy Zone alliances

The New England Renewable Energy Zone is unique in having a university at its heart. We will partner to assist with the issues of today, e.g., the co-existence of productive agriculture and energy systems. We will also work to pilot and develop industries of the future that use available renewable power to maximum effect.

Foundational Principles

Academic freedom is core to the existence of UNE and meeting our purpose.

UNE must be safe for all learners – physically, digitally, psychosocially and culturally.

UNE will be renowned for the quality of its research partnerships, which will create greater critical mass and broader research impact.

UNE must be a safe, enjoyable and productive work environment for all.

UNE will meet the expectations set by the Government in relation to university governance.

Financial sustainability is an outcome of a well-executed strategy rather than an objective in its own right.

UNE can only provide an enjoyable work environment and deliver the community and learner needs articulated in this Strategic Plan with a significantly improved Operating Model.



AI-enabled learning for a changing world

A defining feature of UNE's future is its ambition to reshape higher education for the age of artificial intelligence.

Building on its history as Australia's pioneer in distance education, UNE has rolled out a free, secure, university-managed AI ecosystem that supports learning, teaching and regional innovation. Every enrolled student has access to Madgwick Student, UNE's secure AI platform, providing equitable access to advanced AI tools while maintaining strong standards for privacy, security and responsible use.

UNE is also redesigning learning through AI-enabled teaching models that encourage critical thinking, problem-solving and academic judgement, positioning AI as a learning partner rather than an answer generator.

The University's vision is that graduates will leave UNE not only with disciplinary expertise, but with the confidence and capability to use AI responsibly in professional practice.

For UNE, artificial intelligence is an opportunity to strengthen learner success, expand educational access and reinforce the University's longstanding commitment to innovation that delivers practical outcomes for regional communities.

Student success

The Universities Accord has sharpened national expectations for equity, access and institutional accountability. UNE performs strongly on participation, including representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students from regional, rural and remote backgrounds.

UNE has also maintained a five-star result for overall student experience for a record 20 consecutive years (Good Universities Guide).

Many UNE students balance study with work, caring responsibilities and distance. UNE is focused on reducing avoidable barriers, strengthening students' connection with the University and improving completion rates.

In parallel, UNE is working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to reduce systemic barriers and co-design education pathways that support lifelong learning from early childhood through to employment.

Research focus areas

While regional areas worldwide are suffering a decline, the future presents exceptional opportunities, and UNE is applying its expertise to areas of promise. These include:

Sustainable agriculture, environment & technology

UNE has longstanding research capability in areas that matter to regions, including livestock genetics and production, agriculture and climate change, natural resource management, freshwater ecology and biological sciences. UNE's on-campus infrastructure includes 2,800 hectares of university-owned farms and two research feedlots. The SMART Region Incubator supports entrepreneurs to test and commercialise ideas with regional value.

Renewable Energy Zone & Emissions

UNE's Armidale campus sits within the New England Renewable Energy Zone. Renewable development at this scale raises practical questions for regional communities, including land use, biodiversity, infrastructure life-cycles, and social and economic change. UNE is contributing research and education capability to help communities, industry and government plan for long-term regional value, including through data and AI-enabled approaches where appropriate.

Regional resilience

UNE is supporting regional enterprises and communities to adopt new technologies in practical ways. This includes building capability that can be shared across regions to improve productivity and resilience, particularly for small and medium-sized businesses.

Support for Indigenous education

Supporting Australia's Indigenous people is a priority for UNE. The University's Oorala Aboriginal Centre recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. UNE is now introducing principles of co-designed education to its Indigenous communities, to support lifelong learning informed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



Quick Facts (at 3 June 2026)

Total students: ~ 19,544

Female: 69%

Male: 30%

Other: < 1%

Online: 86%

On-campus: 14%

Indigenous: 5%

**Low socioeconomic and
regional backgrounds: 19%**

International: 4%

Permanent staff: 1,373

Male: 58%

Female: 41%

Other: < 1%

Indigenous: 2%

Non-English speaking background: 9%

Total revenue: ~ \$378 million

**Campuses: Armidale, UNE Sydney,
UNE Taree and UNE Tamworth Central**
(under construction)

Regional study centres: 8

Residential colleges: 6

**Research institutes,
centres and facilities: 6**

Collaborative research initiatives: 8

Core research facilities: 5

Alumni: ~ 147,000





The shape of UNE

UNE's physical heart remains in the New England North West. Armidale will continue as the University's principal campus while Tamworth expands as an important regional education and community hub. In Armidale, we must consolidate campus infrastructure and begin the significant process of retiring infrastructure that is end-of-life. We also need to invest in new infrastructure to attract learners and partners to a new future of learning and discovery. This will include improvements to the farms and the introduction of new knowledge technologies and experiences. We envisage developing our campus surroundings to create a thriving local community embedded in its beautiful natural environment. We also aim to attract appropriate related businesses to establish experimental pilot facilities and other presences on our campus.

In Tamworth, our foundation campus and new building will be completed and become a thriving hub of regional education, partnering and community engagement. It will be a modern portal to the UNE distance education portfolio and provide a nucleus for the development of new courses and learning opportunities that capitalise on the strengths of Tamworth. As the city's arts and entertainment precinct develops around our campus, we expect to include accommodation, commercial services and entertainment opportunities. Further, we plan to become involved in Tamworth residential and community developments as a focus of several of our Community Collaborations. Our Tamworth regional relationships will be a template for the development of other regions near and far.

Across the New England North West, we will continue to provide regional study locations for learners at distance who benefit from access to resources and social interaction with others. Opportunities exist for UNE to collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to explore various ways to more deeply integrate on-Country learning and knowledges into our University.

UNE has always had a greater population of distance learners than those on campus. We expect this to continue and to further develop our virtual experiences and our utilisation of knowledge technologies. Many of our distance learners originally came from Western Sydney because, in the 1950s and 1960s, there were fewer pathways to established metropolitan universities for them. Later, UNE began servicing this important cohort by providing a physical presence in Parramatta. UNE has recently invested in strengthening this campus, improving teaching facilities and increasing staff numbers. We now have a modern and thriving environment that we intend to steward over the period of this [Strategic Plan](#).







The Chancellor

The Chancellor is the ceremonial head of the University, Chair of the University Council and principal ambassador for the institution.

The successful candidate will bring national standing, broad networks and a strong understanding of the role universities play in strengthening regional Australia. The position requires a regular presence on the Armidale campus and participation in major University events and stakeholder engagements throughout the year.

The Chancellor must satisfy the fit and proper person requirements established by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and demonstrate the highest standards of integrity, ethical conduct and stewardship. Consistent with our cultural foundation, the Chancellor will embody the principles that guide the University community:

- **Be Bold** – trying big things together and leading positive change;
- **Be Kind** – acting with care and courage;
- **Be Accountable** – taking responsibility and owning their impact; and
- **Be Connected** – building bridges to expand possibilities and strengthen communities.

Through their leadership and advocacy, the Chancellor will help ensure UNE continues to connect individual aspirations to community outcomes.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Leading the University's governing body to uphold exemplary stewardship, contemporary governance practice and transparent decision-making thus ensuring the Council fulfils its responsibilities for strategy, institutional performance, risk oversight, academic integrity, culture, compliance and long-term financial sustainability.
- Chairing University Council meetings, setting strategic priorities and ensuring the Council operates in accordance

with the University of New England Act 1993 (NSW), the Higher Education Standards Framework, and contemporary University Governance Principles.

- Fostering a culture of accountability, integrity and constructive challenge within the Council, ensuring decisions are evidence-based, transparent and made in the long-term interests of the University and the communities it serves.
- Maintaining oversight of the University's enterprise risk framework, ensuring appropriate assurance over financial sustainability, regulatory compliance, cyber security, student safety, reputation, academic quality and emerging strategic risks.
- Ensuring clear delineation and effective collaboration between the Council, Vice-Chancellor, Academic Board and senior executive, while preserving the independence of academic governance.
- Overseeing the appointment, performance review and remuneration of the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer, ensuring robust performance expectations and appropriate governance oversight.
- Acting as the principal ambassador for the University, building trusted relationships with government, industry, alumni, donors, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and regional stakeholders.
- Championing governance that reflects the University's public purpose, including openness, stakeholder engagement, ethical leadership and responsiveness to the expectations of students, staff and the broader community.
- Presiding over graduation ceremonies and major University events.
- Encouraging transparent, frank and constructive communication between the Council, Academic Board and University Executive.
- Exercising membership rights on any University committee, as required.

Selection criteria

The successful candidate will bring:

- Demonstrated commitment to, and extensive experience in, fostering a transparent, accountable and ethical governance culture with the capacity to guide strategy, risk, institutional performance and long-term financial sustainability in complex Board/Council environments.
- Evidenced experience in the governance of complex institutional transitions, including governance reform, operating model redesign, cultural change, innovation in highly regulated environments, and providing counsel and working constructively with the Vice-Chancellor on all issues concerning the wellbeing of the University.
- A strong understanding of the higher education sector, including the regulatory environment, governance principles, academic governance, sector trends, risks, and the opportunities the Universities Accord report brings to regional universities.
- Deep commitment to regional prosperity, including demonstrated understanding of the role of universities as civic institutions driving regional prosperity.
- Proven ability to build trust and sustain social licence through deep, ongoing engagement with diverse stakeholders, including staff, government and political representatives, corporate and business partners, domestic and international collaborators, and local communities.
- Demonstrated ability to represent the University and to influence at senior national and sector forums, including government, regulatory and industry environments, contributing to higher education policy and reform agendas.
- Eminence in chosen vocation, profession or community endeavour, and recognised leadership in the higher education, corporate, government or civic sectors.
- In addition, the following criteria will be highly regarded:
 - Relevant tertiary qualifications.
 - Experience as a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Governing Body of a Higher Education Provider.
 - A graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, or equivalent.



Representative annual commitments

The Chancellor's role involves a regular year-round commitment combining governance, ceremonial duties, stakeholder engagement and strategic leadership. Formal governance responsibilities include six University Council meetings each year, Council committee meetings, regular meetings with the Vice-Chancellor, governance workshops, planning days and strategic discussions.

The role also extends beyond the University through participation in the Universities Australia Chancellors Council and engagement with government, higher education leaders and sector partners.

In addition to governance responsibilities, the Chancellor is a visible ambassador for the University. This includes presiding over nine graduation ceremonies each year, attending major University events such as Orientation, Open Day, awards, donor and alumni functions, research launches and college activities, and representing UNE at civic, regional and industry events.

Regular visits to the Armidale campus and other UNE locations provide opportunities to engage with students, staff, researchers and community stakeholders. While some commitments are concentrated at key times of the year, the role requires a consistent presence and flexibility to support the University's strategic priorities and public profile.





Council Members

Official Members

Mr David van Aanholt

Acting Chancellor David van Aanholt, a distinguished UNE alumnus with over 30 years of executive leadership, has been a pivotal member of the UNE Council since 2016, most notably chairing the Finance and Infrastructure Committee during the University's recent financial turnaround. In his current role and as Chair of the Chancellor Selection Committee, he leverages his extensive commercial and governance expertise to lead the University's reform agenda, focused on ensuring long-term institutional resilience and furthering UNE's commitment to regional empowerment.

Professor Chris Moran, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer

Professor Moran is an experienced university leader with an academic background in agriculture, natural resources and sustainable development. An alumnus of The University of Sydney, his career spans early research at CSIRO, senior roles at the University of Queensland, and his most recent position as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at Curtin University. He focuses on driving practical outcomes across research, education, community engagement and workplace culture.

Professor Adrian Walsh, Chair Academic Board

Professor Adrian Walsh has a strong international research and teaching profile in political philosophy, the philosophy of economics, and applied ethics. He has authored six books and numerous journal articles, alongside holding research fellowships at the universities of St Andrews and Helsinki. Currently, he serves as an Associate Editor for the Journal of Applied Philosophy and is a Guest Professor at the University of Gothenburg.

Minister Appointed

Mr Ian Gillespie

Mr Gillespie is a Minister-appointed UNE Council member with senior executive experience across finance, strategy and governance in NSW government and the private sector. He currently serves on multiple Audit and Risk Committees including the Parliament of NSW, Communities and Justice, and the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. He is a Fellow of CPA Australia and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

UNE Council Appointed

Professor Pip Pattison AO

Acting Deputy Chancellor Professor Pattison is a quantitative psychologist and Emeritus Professor at the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney, with senior university leadership experience including Deputy Vice-Chancellor roles at Melbourne and Sydney and leading major education and curriculum reform at the University of Sydney until 2021. An AO and Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, her research applies statistical network modelling to challenges such as infectious disease transmission and post-bushfire recovery. She currently chairs the UNSW College Board.

Mrs Megan Aitken

Mrs Aitken is a senior executive with experience across digital transformation, online education and strategic communications in Australia and Asia, including leading TAFE Digital's online delivery for 100,000 students and establishing the TAFE NSW Digital Headquarters in Armidale. She now leads the NSW Government's Regional Digital Connectivity Program, investing in telecommunications infrastructure to improve mobile and internet access across regional, rural and remote communities.

Professor Jody Currie

Acting Deputy Chancellor Professor Currie is a First Nations leader and chief executive with more than 25 years' experience across Indigenous health, education and community services, and holds dual appointments at Queensland University of Technology as Professor and Assistant Dean (Indigenous Health). A former CEO of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service in Brisbane, she brings strong governance experience and deep expertise in health equity and culturally responsive education, strengthening UNE Council's First Nations representation.

Mr Phil Hess

Mr Hess is a senior executive with over 25 years' experience across legal and financial services, including roles at MinterEllison, Macquarie Group and Marsh. He has expertise in corporate governance, risk management and employment law. A UNE alumnus (BA/LLB Hons 1998) with postgraduate qualifications from Cambridge (LLM) and UNE (Grad DipEd), he lives in the New England region and is a strong advocate for ethical leadership and workplace mental health.

Mr Col Murray

Mr Murray is a retired construction industry business leader and former grazier who served 17 years on Tamworth Regional Council, including 11 years as Mayor. A long-time advocate for a university campus in Tamworth, he has worked closely with the UNE project since its inception and brings deep experience in local government and regional development.

Elected Members

Academic Staff:

Associate Professor Onoriode Coast

Onoriode Coast (known as Coast) is a Senior Lecturer in Crop Science at UNE whose journey spans Nigeria, the UK and Australia, shaped by a determination to succeed despite hardship and recognised early with First Class Honours and top graduating awards in agriculture. A Felix Scholar who completed his PhD at the University of Reading with research links to the International Rice Research Institute, he now leads a diverse HDR research group focused on lifting crop yields and efficiency in Australian cropping systems. He has been HDR Coordinator in the School of Environmental and Rural Science since January 2023. He brings a strong commitment to inclusive, community-serving regional education and to strengthening connections between UNE Council, staff, students and the local community.

Professional Staff:

Mr Robert Hughes

Incoming Council member, Mr Hughes, is dedicated to providing stewardship through an era of significant shift, ensuring that UNE's new strategic plan and rapid AI adoption are met with evidence-based governance that asks the hard questions. Before starting work at UNE, he directed a creative agency where he developed skills in communication, strategy, and organisational change. Drawing on his leadership in the UNE's Convenor Network and a professional background in strategic change, Mr Hughes will represent the voice of professional staff to foster an outward-facing 'interface

institution' that honours our commitment to people and delivers meaningful outcomes for the regional communities we serve.

Student:

Mr Oskar Staniucha

Mr Staniucha is a PhD student in Exercise and Sports Science at UNE. As an incoming Council member, he brings foundational experience in corporate and student governance, having served as both the Secretary and inaugural President of the Australian Catholic University Blacktown Student Association, where he managed complex finances and strategic planning frameworks. Beyond the university sector, he has served as a committee member of Women's Wrestling Australia and worked with organisations including the Sydney Kings and Flames, Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs, and the Solomon Islands National Institute of Sport. Mr Staniucha is dedicated to providing the oversight and accountability necessary to ensure UNE's governance structures remain both robust and responsive, directly supporting the University's vision. His focus is on delivering evidence-based decisions that bridge the gap between institutional policy and the lived realities of the UNE community, ensuring that the student voice is translated into strategic, governed action.

The search for UNE's Chancellor is being conducted through Heidrick and Struggles, a leading international recruitment agency. Applications can be emailed to unechancellor@heidrick.com for further information and confidential consideration.



